To identify issues that impact upon the acculturation and adaptation of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students taking undergraduate studies in British business schools

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Abstract

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2020), In 2018-19, the amount of student enrolments domiciled from China reached 115,435, 32% of non-UK domiciled students for their first year studies come from China. Despite the trend of more Chinese students studying in the UK, the problems and difficulties of acculturation and adaptation into local life and their academic studies are always challenging the Chinese students. This research aims to identify the impacting factors upon the acculturation and adaptation of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students during their business education at undergraduate level in the UK, so as to provide implications for all the stakeholders, including Chinese students, academics, and business schools, towards developing a more satisfying outcome for students during the period of their living and learning experience.

Supporting this research investigation, the literature review works constructs a theoretical framework which encompasses the cultural difference at national, organisational, and personal level, the acculturation strategy and acculturation outcomes, the comparison of Chinese and British pedagogies, and the influencing factors in the intercultural learning environment. Eight research themes are identified from the theoretical framework, based upon which, to answer the research questions and to realise the research aims and objectives.

Adopting interpretivism as the research philosophical stance, this research investigation chose to use the convergent parallel mixed methods, so as to collect and analyse data deductively and test the existing theories. A web based survey among three groups of total 172 Chinese students was administrated to collect quantitative data, who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK within three months, and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months. Interviews with nineteen students and eighteen academics were conducted to collect the qualitative data concurrently.

Theoretically, this research project implies that, for Chinese students, the short term immigrants who are pursuing academic achievement in the UK, the academic adjustment during their studies, should be added into the acculturation outcomes of their acculturation strategy that they may adopt, which is parallel to their sociocultural and psychological adjustments. Moreover, the trend of the effects on their acculturation during their life and studies is becoming mitigated from the sociocultural and psychological perspectives. Practical contributions from this study include propositions about the delivery of pre-departure training with the content of cultural and academic knowledge, the awareness of the Chinese students' mindset development when an enquiry is formulated in the classroom, and the identification of the mediating role of the sociocultural adjustment in general life between Chinese students' academic adjustment and their overall acculturation level.

Based on the formulated theoretical framework and its underpinning research themes, and the mixed methods adopted within this research project, further research could be implemented on the acculturation of other ethnical student groups, Chinese visiting scholars, and professionals under the intercultural learning or business environment.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2020), the number of full time Chinese students in the UK was much larger than the international student numbers from any other country. In the year of 2018-19, the amount of student enrolments domiciled from China reached 115,435, with a 34.27% increase compared to the number in 2015-16 when it totalled 85,970. Since 2012-13, the number of student entrants from China each year has overpassed the total number from all of European countries. Furthermore, in 2018-19, 32% of non-UK domiciled students for their first year studies come from China (HESA, 2020).

Yet despite the trend of more Chinese students who benefit themselves from studying in the UK, research consistently suggests that Chinese students continue to confront a number of transitional challenges into a new educational system (Jindal-Snape & Rienties, 2016; Johan & Rienties, 2016; Spurling, 2007; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). These young Chinese students also confront the stress of adapting to a different and new country, language, and culture (Burnett & Gardner, 2006; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Zhang and Goodson (2011) enumerated these issues after further investigation, which include academic challenges, acculturative and life stress, lack of social support, and low identification with the host culture. In terms of their working experience in one of the British universities to provide counselling services to Chinese students, Xu and Roddy (2019) contended that these issues have become perennial problems.

Gu (2011) highlighted that the problems and difficulties for Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into their British local life and academic studies, may result from the cultural and pedagogical differences found between China and the UK. Acculturation has been documented as a potentially stressful process during their overseas studies, and their acculturation orientations or strategies when adopted,

impact upon their multi-dimensional adjustments (Makarova & Birman, 2015).

1.2 Rationale of research

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), the rationale of research should demonstrate what the research is going to do, why it worth doing, how the research is related to what has been done before in this subject area. This study concentrates on the acculturation and adaptation of Chinese students within an intercultural learning context in the UK, who are aiming to achieve a positive short term outcome in their academic performance (Wu & Hammond, 2011). Students' acculturation and adaptation, and intercultural learning are thereby addressed by this research.

In terms of Berry's (2005, p. 698) illustration, acculturation refers to "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members". These changes happen in all groups and individuals who make contact with each other (Berry, 2017). As one of the acculturation outcomes, adaptation, refers to "the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to external demands" (Berry, 2006, p. 52). Ward and colleagues (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 1996, 2001; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Ward & Kennedy, 1994) proposed and validated psychological and sociocultural adaptations as the two acculturation outcomes. Psychological adaptation involves the acculturative individual's psychological well-being, while sociocultural adaptation is engaged with the acculturating individual's daily life management in the new cultural context.

Intercultural learning refers to the learning which takes place when learners or teachers move across or between cultures of learning(Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). As an aspect of the cultures of learning approach, intercultural learning is applied in contexts where learners travel to a place where other cultures of learning are dominant and into which they are usually expected to adapt. Meaningful intercultural learning occurs where learners and teachers "share mutually defined practices, beliefs, and

understanding" (Wu, 2015, p. 765).

As one of the elements in cultural studies, acculturation research is subjected to "multidisciplinary influences from psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology", in varying degrees (Ward, 2001, p. 412). Intercultural learning relates to the issues around learning or teaching associated with contemporary education in schools or universities around the world (Jin & Cortazzi, 2013). As an interdisciplinary piece of research positioned between cultural studies and management education in higher education, this study discusses the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students' acculturation and adaptation into a specific part of the UK higher education sector. What the undergraduate Chinese students experience and the acculturation approaches that they adopt, during their life and academic studies in British business schools, are factored into their acculturation context. Reviews of existing literature for this research include the conceptualisation of acculturation, acculturation and adaptation models, the culture difference at national, organisational, and personal levels, the pedagogical difference between China and the UK, and issues within the intercultural learning environment.

The international students' educational or academic adjustment is highlighted as a crucial element in intercultural learning settings (Quan, He, & Sloan, 2016; Wu & Hammond, 2011; Zhou, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2011), and should be depicted as one of the sociocultural domains for the international students' acculturation (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). However, few researches in the literature, either within the intercultural learning or acculturation studies, include academic adjustment as a separate element of the acculturation outcomes experienced by international students. When studying the immigrant youths' adaptation into a different culture, Berry, Phinney, Sam and Vedder (2006) justified the existence of psychological and sociocultural outcomes of acculturation, but they only attributed school adjustment to an element of sociocultural adjustments, rather than clearly separating academic adjustment as another one of a range of the acculturative outcomes.

This research investigation, studying Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation within the UK, aims to fill the gap in this area of academic research, by exploring the influence of academic adjustment on their acculturation, clarifying the relationship between Chinese students' academic adjustment and their psychological and sociocultural adaptation, and highlighting the academic adjustment from other acculturation outcomes for international students.

Practically, awareness and clarification of the adjustments, in their general life and academic studies made by international students, may render it possible to offer guidance and suggestions to the current and prospective students, in relation to their life and studies. This research and its findings here about a specific predefined group, herein the Chinese Mandarin-speaking business students at undergraduate level, could be mirrored in other groups, elsewhere, and in different contexts. Moreover, such awareness may also inform the provision of institutional support and the delivery of optimum service (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Ryan, 2005), which could result in an enhanced student experience, a more positive institutional reputation, and improved recruitment of international Chinese students.

1.3 Research subject definition

This research investigation confines its research subjects to the Chinese Mandarin speaking students, who are undertaking business and related programmes at undergraduate level in British business schools. The following four "Whys" guide and justify the definition of research subject for this study.

Why Chinese students?

Providing education to overseas students has become an important source of income for many higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK (Gbadamosi, 2018). According to HESA (2020), about one third of non-UK domiciled students came from China for their first year studies in 2018-19, which makes the group of Chinese students the biggest fund contributors among the fee-paying students. Given the

economic dependence on Chinese student recruitments, it is not only a moral duty, but important for HEIs to clearly understand the acculturative and transitional issues that Chinese students are confronting, so as to offer them the optimum services (Ryan, 2012).

From the cultural perspective, the distinctive culture difference at national level between China and the UK, makes it meaningful, to study the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation within the UK. Compared to the Western culture, the Chinese culture may be seen as one with a large power distance, collectivism, and long term orientation (Guo, 2015; Hofstede, 1997). Moreover, by focusing on the research of the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation in the UK, an justifiable case could be formulated, which identifies that, this activity is also beneficial for further research into other ethnically different students (Zhou et al., 2008).

Why undergraduate students?

The existing research concerning the Chinese students' academic adjustment and adaptation into their life and studies specifically at undergraduate level is under-investigated, though there exists a wealth of research on students' acculturation at postgraduate level (Durkin, 2008; Wu, 2015; Zhao & Bourne, 2011; Zhou et al., 2011). Due to the one year postgraduate studies in the UK (PhD studies excluded), some Chinese students might think it is not necessary to change and so to hold onto their learning approaches, which was inherited from their previous schooling (Turner, 2006). Moreover, the international students' effective adaptation practice is "difficult to achieve, if their stay only lasts one academic year or less" (Shannon-Little, 2012, p. 266). Another possibility is that, some postgraduate students may abide by two sets of values, "one for China and another for here", as they "do not want to be treated as a foreigner in either context" (Gu, 2011, p.227).

This research, studying undergraduate Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation

in the UK, attempts to fill in this gap. However, the outcomes from the literature studying the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation during their postgraduate studies will be carefully considered and may be mirrored within this study.

Why students in a business discipline?

The business management discipline is most popular among Chinese students studying in the UK; 46% of Chinese students in British higher education have chosen business management or a related discipline at different levels in the year 2015-16 (HESA, 2017). Figures from HESA (2020) also indicate that in the year 2018-19 entry, 41% of the student entrants from China are studying at undergraduate level, with the number totalling 47,485. The reason for this research investigation concentrating on the Chinese students studying business management disciplines, therefore, links not only to the large amount of research subjects currently available for sampling, but to the participatory nature of the pedagogical tools used in business classrooms, despite them being initially designed for Western students, rather than for those students from the Chinese culture (Foster & Stapleton, 2012).

Why Chinese Mandarin-speaking students?

Another research boundary is concerned with the Chinese language that Chinese students speak. The official language in China is standard Mandarin, spoken by 70 percent of the population together with all sort of variations of Mandarin, while Cantonese is more popular in the Hong Kong, Macao, Guangdong, and Guangxi provinces (British Council, 2016). Because Cantonese-speaking students from Hong Kong and Macao are deeply influenced by British and Portuguese cultures, due to well-documented historical reasons, they are intentionally excluded from this research project. The words of Chinese students in this research, hereinafter, refer only to the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

This research investigation aims to extend the understanding around issues that may impact upon the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students' acculturation and adaptation, during their business studies education at undergraduate level in the UK, so as to provide implications for all stakeholders (the Chinese students, academics, and business schools) towards developing a more satisfying outcome in the acculturation of students.

By combining the outcomes of the literature review with the overall aim of this research, the following research objectives are identified in order to achieve the aim of the study:

1. To clarify issues that impact upon the acculturation of Chinese students studying at undergraduate level in British business schools.

2. To offer current and prospective Chinese students guidance and suggestions in order to support their studies and life in the UK.

3. To provide recommendations for the management authorities and academics in British business schools, to help with and support the Chinese students' adaptation and acculturation.

1.5 Research questions and underpinning themes

Based on the research aim and objectives, this study focuses on exploring the answers to the following two research questions:

Question 1: What kind of issues may impact upon the Chinese students' acculturation within their undergraduate studies in the UK?

Question 2: How could Chinese students and other stakeholders in British higher education fields cope with these issues, in order to improve and develop the Chinese students' acculturation in Britain?

Drawn from the research's literature review, there are eight research themes underpinning these two research questions. Investigation around these themes aims to reply to the two research questions, and thereby, to realise the overall aims and objectives of the research.

1. Culture difference, which includes the cultural differences at national, organisational, and personal levels that Chinese students may experience, during their acculturation and adaptation into British higher education settings.

2. General life, which corresponds to the sociocultural adjustment that Chinese students may commit to in their daily life.

3. Psychological issues, which correspond to the psychological adjustment that Chinese students may make during their life and studies in the UK.

4. Learning and assessment, which is drawn from the comparison of Confucian and British pedagogies, reflecting upon the pedagogical issues that Chinese student may confront during their adaptation into academic studies.

5. Staff student relationships, which reflects upon the interaction between Chinese students and their academics and both parties' expectation management.

6. English proficiency, a fundamental factor in helping to support Chinese students with their academic studies and daily life.

7. Classroom participation, which considers the Chinese students' engagement within classrooms.

8. Acculturation level, which refers to the extent to which Chinese students adapt into their life and studies in the UK.

1.6 Structure of the research development

Having explored the overall research aims, objectives, research questions, and underlying themes, the development of this research investigation follows a "down to up" model, from analysing research themes, answering research questions, and reaching objectives, to meeting the overall research aims (See Figure 1.1). This research investigation attempts, first, to explore the outcomes of the eight underlying

research themes, then, based upon the findings from the research themes, to attempt to answer the two research questions posted. By synthesising and analysing the answers to the research questions, the research aim and three underpinning research objectives may be reached and so met.

Figure 1.1: The framework of the research development
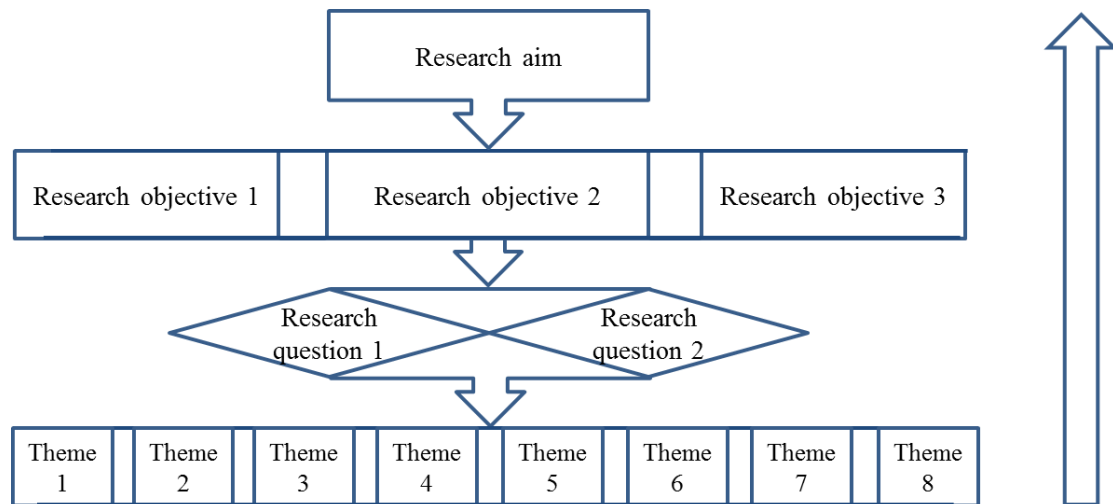
1.7 Consideration of the methodology adopted

Upon the identification of the research development framework for this research project, the methodological design for this research investigation is developed. The nature of the research objectives and underpinning research questions here, determine the typology of the research, as being a combination of exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory studies. Mixed methods, with both quantitative and qualitative strands, are adopted for this research project, studying the Chinese students' acculturation in the British higher education context. Scholars who uphold this method, for instance, Chirkov (2009), believed that within a research investigating the sophisticated culture values and acculturative attitudes, the qualitative elements are advantageous in preventing potentially arbitrary conclusions from being drawn out of a purely quantitative research design.

This research investigation is undertaken as a cross-sectional study. An on-line survey and interviews are administrated among three groups of Chinese students who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK for a period of three months, and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within the coming three months. The quantitative outcomes aim to provide answers to the research *Question 1* commencing with "*What*", in order to meet the demand of Objectives 1, which attributes this research to be classified as being descriptive and exploratory.

By providing abundant and in-depth understanding of the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into their UK life and studies, the qualitative strand develops through the interviews with Chinese students and their academics, reflecting the exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory natures of the research. Outcomes from the qualitative strand of the research can be related to and compared with the outcomes from the quantitative strand, in order to corroborate each other and realise all of the research objectives posed, by answering the *Question 1* commencing with "*What*" and research *Question 2* with "*How*". Whereby, the aims and objectives of this research investigation ought to be reached, and knowledge contribution in relation to Chinese students' acculturation within the intercultural learning settings, can be added to the findings of the wider academic knowledge base.

The methodology adopted for this study and its underpinning research philosophy are presented in Chapter 3- Research philosophy and methodological design.

1.8 Outlines of the thesis

This section outlines the chapters developed throughout the research process for this research project.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The background information around the research topic of the Chinese students'

acculturation and adaptation is introduced in this chapter. Gaps in the academic research are identified in order to elicit the research's overall aims and objectives; research questions and associated research themes are clarified; the development structure and methodological design of this research are briefly discussed; and the outlines of each of the chapters of this thesis are determined.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter critically explores the existing literature and previous studies around the acculturation research and intercultural learning studies Chinese students' acculturation studying overseas. Drawing on reviews of the acculturation strategy and adaptation outcomes, the cultural differences at national, organisational, and personal levels, the comparison between British and Chinese pedagogies, and issues within intercultural learning environment, a theoretical framework with its associate eight research themes, are formulated in order to lay a foundation for this study.

Chapter 3: Research philosophy and methodological design

In this chapter, the research philosophy and the methodological design for the research investigation are justified. Data collection techniques and data analysis procedures are identified. Issues around guaranteeing the research validity and reliability, which include the pilot tests of this research, are discussed. Insights into ethical issues within this study are provided.

Chapter 4: Findings from the survey investigation among Chinese students

This chapter reports the findings and hypotheses testing results from the quantitative strand of the research investigation, by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Chapter 5: Findings from the interview with academics and students

This chapter presents the qualitative findings and data analysis around the eight identified research themes from the interviews with academics and Chinese students.

This enables the outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study to be inter-related to and inter-compared with one another, for further analysis and discussion.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter brings together and discusses the outcomes theme by theme from the qualitative and quantitative strands of this research, so as to test the existing theories in the literature, and prepare answers to the research questions.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Based on the theory testing results and discussions on the outcomes from both the quantitative and qualitative strand of this study, this chapter concludes this research investigation by providing answers to the research questions, so as to meet the aims and objectives of this research project. Furthermore, knowledge contributions from this research project are reported, limitations of this research are clarified, and further research opportunities are identified.

2. Literature review

Having introduced the rationale of the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation for this research in Chapter 1, this chapter presents first a critical assessment on the literature in relation to the acculturation conceptualisation, acculturative outcomes, the acculturation process, and their application into the specific context of Chinese students during their life and studies in the UK. The psychological and sociocultural adaptations are addressed, in order to partially answer the research *Question 1 of what*.

Since the cultural factors are crucial in influencing the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation, culture difference at national, organisational, and personal levels are reviewed. Corresponding to the culture difference at different levels, measures of enhancing acculturation and adaptation taken by Chinese students and other stakeholders are considered, so as to reply the research *Question 2 of How*.

Another purpose of reviewing culture difference within this research is to assess the cultural influence upon the teaching and learning domain. By reviewing and comparing the Chinese and British pedagogies in this chapter, the pedagogical differences in terms of the students' learning and assessment are extensively explored. Together with the factors assessed in the literature under the intercultural learning environment, variables influencing Chinese students' adaptation in their academic studies are discussed, for the sake of exploring issues that impact Chinese students' academic adaptation to give answers to *Question 1 of what*. Therefore, Chinese students' overall acculturation (*Question 2 of how*) could be further investigated through the linkages with their psychological and sociocultural adaptations.

This chapter ends with the construction of a theoretical framework to guide this research, based on the literature reviewed. Research themes, hypotheses, and a measurement model are also justified and presented.

2.1 Acculturation and adaptation

As a focus of this research, this key part of the literature review illustrates in-depth the conceptualisation of acculturation, and discusses intensively Berry's (1990, 1997) acculturation strategy framework, the ABC's acculturation and adaptation model developed by Ward and colleagues (Ward, 2001; Ward et al., 2001), the interactive acculturation model (IAM, Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997), and the five-stage acculturation process (Pedersen, 1995). Corresponding to the two research questions, this section aims to clarify the experiences that Chinese students may confront within their acculturation and how they handle their acculturation and adaptation into their UK life and studies.

2.1.1 Acculturation conceptualisation

This section reviews the influence of globalisation on acculturation studies, and presents the definition of acculturation and its conceptual difference from the cultural shock, interculturation, and enculturation. Furthermore, the theoretical developments of acculturation and adaptation studies are also included, by summarising the popular acculturation models, other acculturation studies, and the empirical studies on other ethnic students' acculturation besides Chinese ones'.

2.1.1.1 Globalisation and acculturation

The ever rapid technological developments in communication and transportation have resulted in the world entering a borderless era, in which interactions become common between people with tremendously diverse cultural backgrounds (Ward, 2001). The "worldwide increase in intercultural contact and mutual influence" (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 479), or the "increased global interconnectedness" (Foster & Stapleton, 2012, p. 301), is commonly known as globalisation.

The force of globalisation leads to the rapid and worldwide movement of people, services, goods, and even ideas (Leask, 2008). The increasing student mobility across

cultural and national borders has been perceived as a key feature of globalisation in the higher education sector (Knight, 2005). Roberts and Tuleja (2008, p. 454) noticed the trend and highlighted the mobility of Chinese students specifically, "one obvious impact of globalisation within the university sector has been the dramatic increase in international students, particularly the native Chinese speakers".

In the context of globalised interconnection, individuals of mobility will experience cultural differences between their heritage culture and the receiving culture (Dutot & Lichy, 2019). Berry (2008) emphasised globalisation is a complex process, which happens when individuals or groups engage in international or intercultural contact. Exploring the conceptual relationship between globalisation and acculturation, Berry (2008, p. 332) perceived globalisation as the "contact that provides the starting point of acculturation", while acculturation focuses on acculturative outcomes, depending on the acculturative approaches or strategies adopted when people tackle the intercultural environment where they posit.

2.1.1.2 Acculturation definition

In consideration of the identification of the adaptation and acculturation issues confronted by Chinese students who study in the UK, the definition of acculturation entails the following features. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defined acculturation, in 2004, as "the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behaviour, and institutions) by persons, groups or classes of a given culture". However, Sam (2006) argued that this version of IOM definition neglected the possible options of resistance to or rejection of the alien culture elements. In 2011, the IOM revised the definition of acculturation as "a series of changes in cultural mores (ideas, words, values, norms, behaviour, institutions) resulting from direct and continuous contact between groups of different cultures". This conception on acculturation abandoned the words of adoption, but highlighted the "changes" that arise from mutual "contact" of different cultural groups.

The academic definition of acculturation can be traced back to Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, p.149), who presented acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups". Graves (1967) identified that acculturation, as a collective or group conception, is distinct from psychological acculturation, which describes the changes in the psychology of individuals within the group experiencing acculturation.

Berry (1997, p. 8) referred to acculturation as "the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contacts". While profound changes are enacted at group level when acculturating, the psychological stance of each member within the group may vary greatly, as all of their participation levels are not to the same extent (Berry, 1990, 1997). In order to enrich its meaning at either group or individual level, Berry (2005, p. 698) redefined acculturation as "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members". At the cultural group level, it involves changes in social structure and cultural norms. For individuals, the changes involve their behavioural repertoires and their eventual adaptation to the intercultural environments where they posit. The process of acculturation is multifaceted and mutual, where these changes happen in all groups and individuals who make contact with each other (Berry, 2017).

2.1.1.3 Acculturative stress and culture shock

According to Berry (2006, p. 43), Acculturative stress is "a response by people to life events that are rooted in intercultural contact". It stems from the experience of having to deal with two cultures in contact. Generally, the response or cultural interactions involve heightened depression which is linked to the original cultural loss, and anxiety caused by uncertainty about the new life in a new society.

Berry (2006) argued that the notion of acculturative stress is similar to the one of

culture shock (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014; Ward et al., 2001). Culture shock is defined as anxiety that results from losing the original signs and symbols within the social intercourse that are familiar with, and experiencing their substitutions that are strange (Oberg, 1960). Although an experience of a "shock" may be experienced at the early stage of the acculturation process (Brown & Holloway, 2008), acculturative stress is preferably adopted within acculturation studies (Berry, 2006). The stressful experiences result from the interaction between cultures, while the culture shock is triggered only by the new receiving culture (Berry, 2006). Moreover, the negative term of shock implies only the difficulties caused by cultural contact. In contrast, the term stress has a theoretical basis of coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to deal with the negative stressors, eventually leading to some form of adaptation . Zhou et al. (2008, p. 65) contended that due to the transformation of "culture shock" into contact-induced stress that can be ameliorated, "adaptation and acculturation have been increasingly used instead".

In relation to the studies on international students' acculturation, Smith and Khawaja (2011) summarised the acculturative stressors that international students may confront: (1) language proficiency barriers; (2) educational challenges, including different teaching styles, academic stress, and mismatched expectations between students and their academics; (3) sociocultural stressors, including loneliness, isolation, difficulties in making friends, and living away from one's family and friends (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006); (4) discrimination, including sense of inferiority either implicit or explicit, verbal or nonverbal acts by members of the host society; (5) practical stressors, including financial, legal, or emotional problems.

2.1.1.4 Acculturation, interculturation, and enculturation

Although some French scholars developed interculturation as another parallel conceptualisation to acculturation, Berry (1997) addressed that interculturation shows an interest in forming up a new culture, which is a distinguishing feature differentiating it from acculturation.

Kizgin, Jamal and Richard (2018) highlighted the importance of distinguishing the conceptual difference between acculturation and enculturation within their study of the immigrants' attitudes and behaviour under a different culture. Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga and Szapocznik (2010) believed acculturation is a multidimensional process, which consists of the conflux among practices, values, and identifications from the heritage and host culture, while enculturation is a process of selectively retaining some elements of one's heritage culture and intentionally acquiring some elements from the host culture (Weinreich, 2009).

2.1.1.5 Acculturation models

An acculturation model accounts for the acculturation orientation from the immigrants within their home and host culture contact (Bourhis et al., 1997). Smith and Khawaja (2011) summarised the prevailing acculturation models that have been empirically tested on the migrant and refugee groups, so as to determine which and the extent to which models could be applied to the acculturation experience of international students. Seven acculturation models are thoroughly reviewed in this study.

John Berry, as a pioneer, has led the contemporary acculturation studies in the past a few decades (Ward, 2008). Berry and colleagues' main contribution (Berry, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2017; Berry et al., 2006; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Sam & Berry, 2010) is the definitional development of acculturation as a bi-dimensional process of co-occurring changes at individual and group level in both cultures, which is universally accepted in academia (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Besides, Berry (1990) proposed his framework of acculturation strategy and identified four acculturation attitudes (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation) that the immigrants may adopt potentially, based on the level that the immigrants decide upon retaining their heritage culture and participating in the host culture. Theoretically, this acculturation strategy model laid a solid foundation for acculturation studies (Smith & Khawaja, 2011), which has been incorporated into the subsequent acculturation models.

With attempts to discover the key factors influencing the acculturation process, a number of acculturation models have been developed, based on Berry's (1990) acculturation strategy framework. Ward and her colleagues made the distinction between the psychological and sociocultural adaptations (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). They further developed their findings into three perspectives: affective, behavioural, and cognitive changes in the acculturation process, which are termed as the ABC's acculturation (Ward et al., 2001). Besides the three predictors, the multidimensional individual difference acculturation model (MIDA) developed by Safdar, Lay and Struthers (2003) incorporates individual characteristics and personal hassles in daily life as predictors also. The Arends-Toth and van de Vijver's (2006) model includes the personal acculturation attitude and the herritage society's cultural characteristics as the component predictors of acculturation.

The remaining three acculturation models steer their concerns onto the perspective of the host societies, which becomes a central component influencing the immigrants' acculturation process (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

The integrated acculturation model (IAM) proposed by Bourhis et al. (1997), integrated the acculturation attitudes of the immigrants and the host society, which yields three relational outcomes: consensual, problematic, or conflictual. Piontkowski, Rohmann and Florack (2002) developed the IAM model to the concordance model of acculturation (CMA) and outlined its four concordance outcomes: consensual, culture-problematic, contact-problematic, and conflictual ones, between the immigrants and host acculturation attitudes. Based on Berry's acculturation strategy framework, the IAM, and the CMA models, Navas et al. (2005) designed the relative acculturation extended model (RAEM). This model distinguishes the preferred acculturation attitudes by the host and immigrants group, which may vary across several sociocultural domains (Navas et al., 2005), for example, the assimilation strategy might be adopted in the workplace while separation for religion or beliefs.

The assertion from Smith and Khawaja (2011) is incorrect that only the MIDA model

was empirically tested using the international student group. Berry et al. (2005) adopted school adjustment as a component predictor of the sociocultural adjustment to test the acculturation strategy model. Ward and colleagues had tested the psychological stress and sociocultural adjustment among Singaporean, Malaysian, and Japanese students in New Zealand (Ward & Kennedy, 1996, 1999; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998).

2.1.1.6 International students' acculturation

Robinson (2006) highlighted the dearth of acculturation research into how the ethnic minority individuals or groups living in the UK handle the intercultural contact. This situation lies at the acculturation research on international student groups in the UK also. However, Table 2.1 below summarises some acculturation research on international student groups with different ethnical backgrounds in other countries, for example, the United States and New Zealand, which could be mirrored into this research on the Chinese students' acculturation.

Table 2.1: Acculturation studies on other ethnical student groups

Author(s)	Research subjects	Main research findings
Bai (2016)	Middle East students in the United States	The cohort of students have higher level of acculturative stress significantly than those from other areas.
Hashim and Yang (2003)	African and Western students in china	Both African and Western international students in China rate academic studies as the most commonly occurring stressor.
Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker and Al-Timimi (2004)	Asian and European students in the United States	Asian students, compared with their European counterparts, show higher level of acculturative stress and lower level in English proficiency.
Ra (2016)	Korean international students in the United States	The acculturative stress experienced by Korean international students in the US is significantly related to their academic success and psychological well-being.
Swami (2009)	Malaysian and Chinese students in the UK	Malaysian students tend to find sociocultural adjustment more problematic than their Chinese

Author(s)	Research subjects	Main research findings
		counterparts.
Ward and Kennedy (1996)	International students from Singapore and Malaysia in New Zealand	Their psychological stress and sociocultural difficulties are greatest at the point of their entry, but decrease over time.
Ward et al. (1998)	Japanese students in New Zealand	Adjustment problems are greatest at entry point and decrease over time. The magnitude of the correlation between psychological and sociocultural adjustment increase over time.

Zhou et al. (2008) realised that the acculturative experiences of international students from other cultures may differ to some extent. They suggested that, by focusing on the research of the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation in the UK, an extreme case could be formulated, considering the considerable amount of Chinese students found in the British universities' campuses. This would be beneficial for the research into other ethnically different students in general (Zhou et al., 2008).

2.1.1.7 The developing acculturation studies

To broaden the studies on acculturation dimensions, some researchers advocated a bilinear prospective in recent studies, which demonstrates that one cultural identification does not necessarily lessen within another culture (Miller, 2007; Rudmin, 2009). Zhang and Goodson (2011) discovered that social connectedness with the local community plays a mediating role between the Chinese students' adherence to the host culture and their psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Another direction in academia is to discover other factors that may impact international students' acculturation within another cultural context, for example, Gómez, Urzúa and Glass (2014) found that the international students' acculturation is positively associated with the leisure and social events participation.

Ferguson and Bornstein (2015) claimed that the remote acculturation, as a modern form of non-immigration acculturation, may occur through vehicles of the indirect

intercultural contact, for instance, media and food, between the American and Jamaican culture orientations. Anderson and Guan (2018, p.445) defined implicit acculturation as the "processes relating to culturally derived identity, values, and attitudes that occur beyond the realm of conscious control as a result of contact between two distinct cultures". Chinese international students may not be able to intentionally choose self-integration within the Australian education context; however, the implicit cultural reaffirmation is beneficial for them to ameliorate their academic outcomes (Anderson & Guan, 2018).

It is noted that these developing studies did not suggest any new acculturation model, however, they either proposed some new propositions and some new factors, or applied the existent acculturation theories into the new domains.

This research aims to explore the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students' acculturation issues into a section of the UK higher education sector. What the Chinese students undergo and the acculturation strategies they adopt during their academic studies at undergraduate level, are factored into their acculturation context. With the aim to identify the research themes to answer the research questions for this study, the next several sections examine the interrelated acculturation models in detail.

2.1.2 Acculturation strategy

As a pioneer studying acculturation, Berry (1990, 1997) proposed, in his acculturation strategy framework, that the immigrants may adapt into the host community but aligned with their heritage culture. There are two issues (dimensions) for the immigrant group to be decided: one is whether or not the heritage culture should still be retained, and the other is to what level or extent the immigrants should have contacts and participation into the host culture. Following the two given dimensions, Berry (1990) developed and identified four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Acculturation strategy in terms of the immigrants' orientation


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                              ┌─────────────────────────┐
                              │         ISSUE 1         │
                              ├─────────────────────────┤
                              │ Is it considered to be of │
                              │ value to maintain  one's  │
                              │ identity and              │
                              │ characteristics?          │
                              │                           │
                              │ YES   ←────→   NO         │
                              └─────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────────┐
│   ISSUE 2   │
├──────────────────────────┤
│   YES   │
│ Is it considered to be   │   Integration   Assimilation
│ of value to maintain   ↑
│ relationship with   ↓
│ larger society?   │   Separation/
│   NO   │   Segregation   Marginalization
└──────────────────────────┘
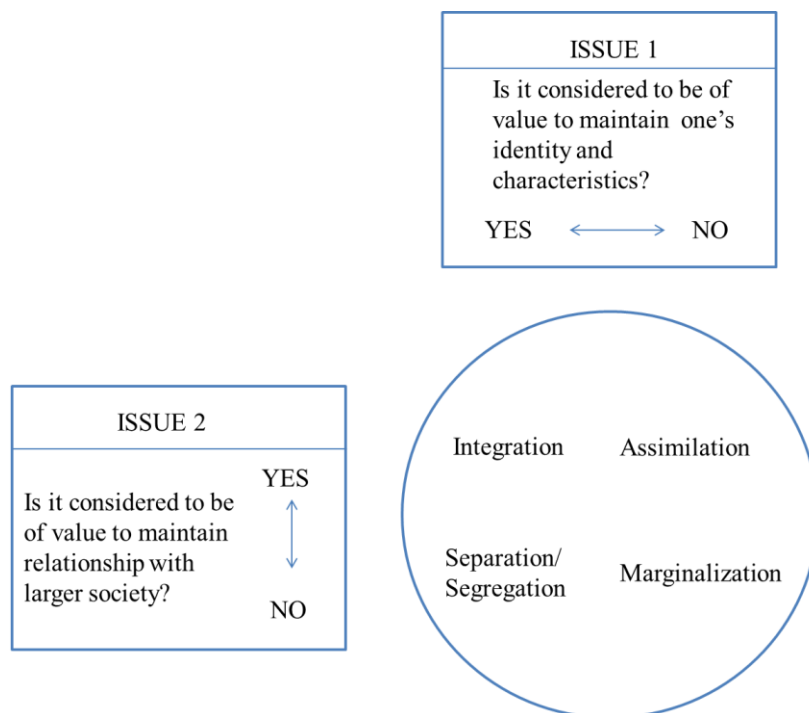
Source: Berry (1990, p. 245)

From the perspective of immigrant individuals, the integration strategy is applied under the condition of being interested in both the dominant culture (host culture) and retaining their inherited culture context. Whereas there is no or little interest in maintaining the immigrants' heritage culture and no or little contact with the host community, a marginalisation strategy will be applied by immigrants. When the immigrants only attempt to be "shelled" by their original culture, and have no or few interactions with the host community, the separation strategy is an option for them. Where the immigration group members avoid maintaining their own cultural identities but value the daily interaction with the host communities, the assimilation strategy is defined (Berry, 1990).

Berry (1997, 2017) emphasised the relationships between the acculturation strategies adopted and the immigrants' positive transition into the intercultural environments. The most successful one is integration strategy, which leads to high level of well-being for immigrants, while the marginalisation is the least, and assimilation and

separation strategies occupy intermediate positions. Berry (2008) strengthened these opinions through undertaking some empirical studies, when he investigated the relationship between globalisation and acculturation. Shafaei, Abd Razak and Nejati's (2016) empirical survey findings, from 1,186 international postgraduate students in Malaysia, corroborated that integration strategy is the most prevalent acculturation attitude.

Berry's (1997) acculturation strategy delineated the four different outcomes of acculturative activities, based on the presumable dichotomy of one's self identification of the individual's culture of origin and participation into another given culture. However, the dichotomisation, though convenient, can hardly do justice to the cultural and intercultural complexity existing in reality (Wang, 2010). Other factors, for example, personal development, need to be considered for different sojourning groups' acculturation. Murphy-Lejeune (2003, p.113) justified this, by depicting the experience of adaptation and acculturation into other cultures from international students as a "maturing process rather than a total personality change".

Berry's assertion, that integration strategy is most adaptive to sojourners who endorse the host culture while being committed to their original culture, also has been challenged by Ryder, Alden and Paulhus (2000) who viewed that assimilation and integration are equally adaptive strategies. Echoing this, Makarova and Birman (2015) identified the ethnic minority students' assimilative orientation in the school context as being conducive to their psychological well-being, behavioural adjustment, and academic achievements.

Furthermore, Burnett and Gardner (2006) claimed that the sojourners may deliberately adopt different acculturation strategies at different stages of their sojourn or from different aspects of their acculturative development. Gu (2011) agreed with this proposition, who found that some of the Chinese students, taking one-year postgraduate studies in the UK, abide by two set of culture values- one is for their Chinese groups and the other for UK and other international students, and some of

them can easily switch from the one to the other. As another weakness, Berry's model does not illustrate the difference between people's intention and behaviours, and the impact of the attitude towards the sojourners' "invasion" from the members of host community is obviously neglected (Burnett & Gardner, 2006).

2.1.3 Adaptation and ABC's acculturation model

Adaptation reflects the long-term and stable acculturation changes that take place in an individual or group in response to intercultural contact (Berry, 2005). Ward and colleagues (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 1996; Ward, 1996) proposed and validated the psychological and sociocultural adaptations that may happen, when an acculturating individual copes with the psychological stress and makes behaviour shift within an intercultural context. Psychological adaptation relates to acculturating individual's emotional and psychological well-being, while sociocultural adaptation involves daily life management and behaviour shift within a new cultural context (Berry, 2005; Ward, 1996). Studies on psychological adaptation generally focus on mental health acculturation outcomes, such as depression and anxiety. The sociocultural adaptation engages sociocultural skill acquisition, behaviour problems, and social competence (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Adaptation is not a synonymy to acculturation, but the acculturation outcome from changes (Sam & Berry, 2010). Predictors for psychological adaptation include the personality variables, life-change events, and social support, while sociocultural adaptation is predicted by cultural awareness and knowledge, degree of contact, and inter-group attitudes (Ward, 1996). Although the psychological and sociocultural adaptations are conceptually distinct, to some extent, they are empirically related to each other (Berry, 2005). The two acculturation outcomes are also empirically distinct from having different time courses. Psychological stresses or problems generally boom after immediate intercultural contact, followed by a variable decrease over time; on the other side, sociocultural adaptation typically improves with time, following a linear path (Berry, 2005).

Sam and Berry (2010) claimed the acculturation strategy that immigrants adopt is related to the degree of their adaptation. Four acculturation modes (strategies) are differentially associated with the two adjustment domains: sociocultural adjustment and psychological adjustment (Berry et al., 2006). Separation results in a high level of adaptation psychologically, but the decrement of the immigrants' sociocultural adaptation competence. Assimilation is associated with enhanced sociocultural adjustments, but brings problems to their psychological well-being (Berry et al., 2006).

Integration has been empirically tested in several settings to be the most adaptive acculturation strategy, as it is not only connected with a strong commitment to the host and co-national identifications (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), but with least psychological problems and sociocultural difficulties (Ahtarieva, Ibragimova, Sattarova, & Turzhanova, 2018; Berry et al., 2006; Curran, 2003; Liebkind, 2001; Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008). Marginalisation is entirely the opposite of integration (Berry et al., 2006). Integration results in a form of double competence and double available resources, which are derived from an individual's both home and host culture, and could double one's capabilities to cope with their acculturation and adaptation (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Based on the identification of psychological and sociocultural adaptations as the acculturation outcomes, Ward and colleagues (Ward, 2001; Ward et al, 2001) elaborated on the ABC's acculturation framework, with the attempt to look for theoretical approaches to support these acculturation outcomes (adaptations). Corresponding to the affective (A), behavioural (B), and cognitive (C) adaptation perspectives, stress and coping, culture learning, and social identification are underlying theoretical approaches to describe and explain the psychological adjustment, sociocultural adaptation, and cultural identification, which are the acculturative outcomes within the acculturation process (Ward, 2001).

The ABC's acculturation framework accommodates the affective perspective under

the stress and coping approach leading to psychological adjustment, the behavioural analysis in relation to the culture learning approaches which result in sociocultural adaptation, and the cognitive perspective of the social identification theories as a complement. However, Zhou et al. (2008) argued that the cognitive perspective of acculturation appears not to be tightly integrated with the whole acculturation model. Furthermore, when applying this model to test on an international student group, the relationships between students' academic adaptation, and their psychological and sociocultural adaptation, remain unclarified and needs further investigation (Quan et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2008). From Ward and colleagues' further research, for example, Ward and Geeraert (2016), the cognitive aspects of acculturation is no longer put as an emphasis, but the psychological and sociocultural adaptations should be developed under an ecological context, which requires the familial, organisational, and societal coordination.

The ABC's acculturation model's extraordinary contribution is that, it provides a theoretical framework for interventions into acculturation and adaptation, which could be applied to answer the research *Question 2 of how* for this study. However, it has not taken into account the influence of the host society's acculturation orientation during the intercultural contact (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). The following IAM model makes complements for this point, by portraying the host society as an important dimension, impacting the immigrants and international students' acculturation.

2.1.4 Interactive acculturation model

Based on Berry's acculturation strategy (model), Bourhis et al. (1997) reformulated Berry's dimensions (Issues) and developed one of the acculturation strategies, marginalisation. They argued that, in Berry' model, the first dimension assesses attitudes towards the immigrants' own identities for their ethnical culture, whereas the second one measures the extent of activities/intention to make contact with the host culture. Bourhis et al. (1997) developed the notion of the two dimensions adopted by Berry (1990), and made them consistent in nature: Dimension 1 (issue 1) is "where it

is considered to be of value to maintain the immigrant culture identity?", and Dimension 2 (issue 2), "where it is considered to be of value to adopt the culture identity of the host community?"

Bourhis et al. (1997) also developed Berry's marginalisation strategy into two parts: anomie and individualism. Under the condition in which the immigrants are rejecting both their heritage culture and the host culture, they might experience the culture alienation, which was introduced as anomie (Bourhis et al., 1997). Some of the immigrants, who are marginalised, may prefer to identify themselves as individualists responding to their strategy of individualism, as they would rather remain independent from either their ethnical group or the host majority.

With the reformulation and refinement of the dimensions and concepts in the acculturation model developed by Berry (1990), Bourhis et al. (1997) explored the interactive acculturation model (IAM), a theoretical framework of the components of the relations between the ethnical and host community, which includes three elements:

1). the acculturation strategy adopted by the individual immigrants;
2). the acculturation orientation adopted by the host/majority community;
3). the interpersonally relational outcomes that are the combination products of the immigrants and host community acculturation orientations.

Similar to Berry's (1990) acculturation model, Bourhis et al. (1997) formulated the host community acculturation model with regards to their attitude to immigrants which covers five classifications: integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion, and individualism. The formulation was based on two similar dimensions also. One is whether it is found acceptable that the immigrants maintain their heritage culture, and the other is whether to accept the immigrants' adoption of the culture of the host community. The first three classifications are inherited from Berry's acculturation strategies. For the remaining two, Bourhis et al. (1997, p.381) defined exclusion as an orientation "in which members of the host community are not only intolerant of the maintenance of the immigrant culture, but also refuse to allow immigrants to adopt

the features of the host culture", while individualism is an orientation in which "host community members define themselves and others as individuals, rather than as members of the group categories such as immigrants or host community members".

Table 2.2 shows how the acculturation orientations from the host community and the immigrants group interact. Combining the acculturation attitudes together, between the host community and immigrants group, the IAM model makes predictions to produce consensual, problematic, or conflictual relational outcomes.

Table 2.2: The interactive acculturation model (IAM)

Host community	Immigrants Community				
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Anomie	Individualism
Integration	Consensual	Problematic	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Assimilation	Problematic	Consensual	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Segregation	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Exclusion	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Individualism	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Consensual

Source: Bourhis et al. (1997, p.382)

Although the three types of relational outcomes, either consensual, problematic, or conflictual, are derived from the pairwise combinations of the acculturation strategy adopted by the host community and immigrants' community, the IAM model does not make assertions as to which type of strategy and related outcomes should be advocated. Moreover, the IAM model does not report from which perspectives, intentional or behavioural, the relational outcomes are derived (Burnett & Gardner, 2006). However, within the educational context, Makarova and Herzog (2013) believed that, the integrative attitudes of academics (who represent here the host

community for minority students) towards cultural diversity, are supportive for the ethnic minority students' positive engagement into classrooms.

2.1.5 Five-stage acculturation process

Berry's (1990) acculturation strategy, adaptation and ABC's model by Ward et al. (2001), and Bourhis et al.'s (1997) IAM model present the outcomes of acculturation and adaptation for a sojourning group or individuals within a host culture. In light of the adaptation process at the individual level, including the outcomes of the acculturative stress (Berry et al., 1987) and culture shock (Oberg, 1960) that individual sojourners may experience, Pedersen (1995) described a five-stage culture shock model to reflect the acculturation process explicitly. Since the culture shock is similar to acculturative stress that may be experienced by immigrants or sojourners (Berry, 2006) and could be replaced by acculturation or adaptation (Zhou et al., 2008) (See Section 2.1.1.3), the Pedersen's (1995) model could be introduced in this research project and adapted into the five-stage acculturation model as an acculturative process (Figure 2.2), either for the normal immigrants or the short-term international students studying within another culture.

Figure 2.2: The five-stage acculturation process
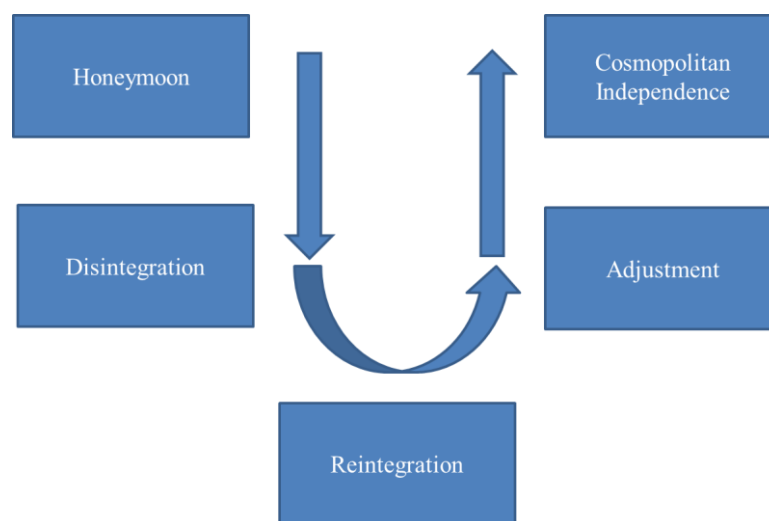
Source: adapted from Pedersen (1995)

The five stages are defined below,

Stage 1: Honeymoon, when sojourners relocate into another culture, everything is new and exciting；

Stage 2: Disintegration, when frustration and embarrassment are unpredictably caused by the conflicts with the host community, and so cultural issues begin to gradually create negative feelings of anxiety, isolation, and homesickness；

Stage 3: Reintegration, when the sojourners realise the difference between the culture of origin and the host, often with feelings of rejection and distance；

Stage 4: Adjustment, when the sojourners make efforts to tackle problems by following the ways and rules of the new culture, and find their emotion of anxiety is being reduced；

Stage 5: Cosmopolitan independence, when the sojourners feel easy to deal with daily affairs, based on their cross-cultural awareness. Becoming a "cultural hybrid", they place certain attributes of the host culture above their origins when enacting within two cultures, which leads to a status of cosmopolitan independence (Hill, 2000).

The longitudinal studies from Ward et al. (1998) on Japanese students' cross-cultural transition in New Zealand, did not lend extensive support to the five-stage U-curve model of the sojourners' adjustment, despite its popularity and intuitive appeal. Haigh (2013) and Byram (2013) criticised that the five-stage model does not justify the complexity of the cultural adaptation. Antoniadou and Quinlan (2020) found that acculturation is not experienced in linear stages by immigrant academics in British universities, but instead, it is an ongoing process when immigrant academics thrive in the new environments that are challenging them.

Despite these arguments, other scholars made propositions similar to the five-stage model, for instance, Burnett and Gardner's (2006) five stage acculturation model, and the Double-Swing model developed by Yoshikawa (1988, p.142), who elucidated "double swing" as the individuals' fully flexible and "independent, yet simultaneously

interdependent" status between the two cultures. Other evidence of supporting the five stage model comes from Zhao and Bourne's (2011) empirical studies on the Chinese students' learning experience within a British MBA programme. Their findings indicate that both Chinese students and their UK academics encounter unfamiliarity and frustration at the start of the learning and teaching. When the teaching and learning activities happen, the problems of expectation gaps, intercultural academic identity conflict, and psychological struggles from both sides exist. However, after one year's operation of the programme, both Chinese students and academics experience comfortable relaxation and adaptation to each other.

One of the objectives of this research investigation aims at providing Chinese students with the guidance and support to improve and develop their acculturation during their life and studies in the UK. Considering the time constraints of this research project, limitations of resource available, and the access to insufficient research subjects (Chinese students), it is not feasible for this study to strictly follow the five stages acculturation model developed by Pedersen (1995). Following the 3-stage approach to test the students' acculturation process adopted by Zhou et al. (2011), however, this research investigation attempts to compare the (expected) acculturation status of three groups of the Chinese students who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK within three months, and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months.

2.1.6 Section summary

This section has reviewed the conceptualisation of acculturation and adaptation and the relative acculturation models. It indicates that, the integration strategy should be adopted by Chinese students during their acculturation and adaptation into their life and studies in the UK, as integration is connected with the least psychological problems and sociocultural difficulties. The two acculturation outcomes of sociocultural and psychological adaptations could be developed into two research themes for this study. Sociocultural adaptation is related to the Chinese students'

adaptation into their social and general life, while psychological adaptation is coping with the psychological issues that may arise during their life and studies.

The Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation in the UK may follow a five-stage and U-shaped curve within their acculturation process. The acculturation level at different stages reflects the extent to which Chinese students can adapt into their life and studies. The acculturation level could be developed into another research theme for further examination within this study.

The ABC's acculturation model by Ward et al. (2001) indicates that, the cultural factors from the society of origin and society of settlement are crucial, and may affect the sojourners' acculturation. Berry (2005) suggested the acculturation researchers should emphasise culturally rooted differences. Moreover, in order to enhance the Chinese students' sociocultural adaptation, culture learning and culturally relevant social skill training should be developed (Zhou et al., 2008). These propositions lead this research to review the literature concerning culture difference.

2.2 Culture difference

As the acculturation process starts with intercultural contact, it is important to understand the nature and characteristics of the home and host culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). For international students coming to study in the UK, one of the purposes is to improve their cultural knowledge and celebrate cultural differences within the intercultural learning environment (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014). According to Marshall and Mathias (2016, p. 134), there are many cultural differences when educating international students in British universities, which can "enrich the learning experience for everyone, but…can also lead to tensions and resistance to learning". This necessitates that the literature review considers the culture difference at national, organisational, and personal levels, for the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into their UK life and studies.

2.2.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch sociologist and anthropologist, made his meritorious contribution to the research community, through his research into the differences and similarities between national cultures (Korsakienė & Gurina, 2012). Based on an empirical study of IBM's personnel from its branches located within more than 50 countries, Hofstede (1980, 1991) proposed four cultural dimensions at national level, by introducing the cultural dimension index (CDI) to group aggregately the national culture: power distance (PDI), individualism versus collectivism (IND), masculinity versus femininity (MAS), and uncertainty avoidance (UAI). When restructuring his research with the involvement of Chinese researchers to avoid any deliberate Western bias, Hofstede (2003) introduced the fifth cultural dimension, long term orientation (LTO), which was originally labelled as Confucian dynamism (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). These five dimensions are universally accepted in academia (Bond, 1988; House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001; McSweeney, 2002; Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009).

Acknowledging the mentoring from Hofstede (Littrell, 2008), Minkov (2007) defined three additional culture dimensions which are derived from the analysis on the public database of the World Values Survey 2006 (WVS): 1), exclusionism vs. universalism, which is similar to Hofstede's IND dimension, 2), indulgence vs. restraint, and 3), monumentalism opposed to flexumility, a neologism which is created by the combination of flexibilities and humility (Hofstede, 2009), and later renamed to self-effacement. Although Hofstede (2009) would attribute the last two dimensions of Minkov's (2007) to the further depiction of the composition of UAI and LTO categories, indulgence vs. restraint and monumentalism vs. self-effacement were incorporated into the version of Hofstede's Values Survey Module 2008 (Korsakienė & Gurina, 2012; Littrell, 2008).

Some of the culture dimensions developed by Hofstede and colleagues could be linked to the teaching and learning environment, while others cannot. The relevant

dimensions to this research are power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, and long term orientation, which will be further illustrated.

Hofstede (1980) believed that the dimension of power distance presents the perception on relationships between individuals with different hierarchical authorities in a specific nation. In large power distance countries, one can perceive marked privileges and different ways of interaction and/or behaviour between individuals, compared with more egalitarian interactions in small power distance nations. Table 2.3 illustrated the difference when applying the power distance into teaching and learning domain.

Table 2.3: Large/small power distance societies and teaching and learning cultures

Large power distance societies	Low power distance societies
• A teacher merits the respects from his students (Confucius)	• A teacher should respect the independence of his/her students
• Teacher-centred education	• Student-centred education
• Students expect the teacher to initiate communication	• Teachers expect students to initiate communication
• Students speak up in class only when invited to by the teacher	• Students may speak up simultaneously in class
• Effectiveness of learning is related to excellence of teacher	• Effectiveness of learning is related to the amount of two-way discursive communication in class

Source: Hofstede (1986)

Hofstede (1991) conceptualised the collectivist nations as those where a group's interests prioritise the individuals' within the group, to describe the power allocation between an ethnical group and its members (individuals). Collectivism, in some sense, means that all the group members' interests are protected, and in return, members' loyalty and commitment to the group is necessitated. Individualism prioritises a person's and his immediate family's interests upon others.

Within educational context, Hofstede (1991) observed in collectivist nations, such as

China, students give great concern to "how to do", while in individualist nations, such as the UK, "how to learn" is encouraged among students by teachers. Moreover, the collectivist nature may lead to Chinese students being always taught in large groups with little hands-on tutorials (Xiao & Dyson, 1999). This pedagogical practice still prevails contemporarily, which is also due to the big amount of Chinese students at different levels and comparatively limited education resources in China. The teaching approach may, in turn, impact the students' capabilities to express their own opinions (Heffernan, Morrison, Basu, & Sweeney, 2010). Huang (2012) noted that transitional challenges are especially difficult for Chinese student within an individualistic culture context rather than collectivist, though Kingston and Forland (2008) challenged this generalised assumption.

Uncertainty avoidance, the third national culture dimension identified by Hofstede (1980), defines how a person reacts and looks when he or she confronts situations which are unpredictable, unclear, and unstructured.

The fourth culture difference dimension at country or national level, is masculinity versus femininity, which was developed by Hofstede (1991) to describe different gender roles that are being played out in the society and families. The masculine role reinforces aggressiveness and competition, while the female role emphasises nurturing, tenderness, and concern for relationship maintenance. Reflecting in classrooms, students derived from masculine nations tend to make them visible and uphold open competition, and the teachers are highly valued for their academic fame and brilliance in teaching activities.

Long-term oriented societies foster pragmatic virtues oriented towards future rewards, such as saving, persistence, and adapting to changing circumstances (Hofstede, 2003). Short-term oriented societies foster virtues related to the past and present, in particular, the national pride, respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations.

Despite its widespread acceptance and significant influence, Hofstede's national culture dimensions framework has been extensively criticised from the aspects of its theoretical basis, the methodological scaling, conceptualisation of culture dimensions, and equating nations to cultures, and so forth. Triandis (1993, p.133) pointed out that Hofstede "makes no attempt to link with recent social science literature". Beyond this, Baskerville (2003, p.2) asserted that Hofstede "might not have studied culture at all" owing to the weak theoretical basis of Hofstede's works on cultural dimensions.

McSweeney (2002, p.94) identified the "scale problem" of Hofstede's research due to the "narrowness of the population surveyed". The respondents are from a single multinational company (i.e. IBM) and largely, its marketing and sales practitioners. Signorini et al. (2009) also argued that Hofstede's data sets have been over-applied in relation to time and scale. Chinta and Capar (2007) believed that no matter how large the sampling is in Hofstede's research, it may not be reflective enough of their countries, and not represent the respective culture of different nationalities. Going further, McSweeney (2002, p. 108) argued that it is not national culture in terms of what Hofstede identified from his data measurement and analysis, but "an averaging of situationally specific opinions" from which "dimensions…of nature culture are unjustifiably inferred". Eringa, Caudron, Rieck, Xie and Gerhardt (2015) replicated Hofstede's research among the international business students who originate from five countries, and found the outcomes are incongruent with many of Hofstede's national culture dimensions, either the country values or the measurements of culture difference between nations. They predicted the discrepancies may result from the instability status of the cultures (Eringa et al., 2015).

The constructs and dimensions formulating Hofstede's national culture framework are also questioned. Few items which "relate to the intended constructs" render the culture dimensions framework as a "hodgepodge" (Robinson, 1983). Dorfman and Howell (1988) identified that the items incorporated into the construct of uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) by Hofstede (1980) seem disparate, as their research found the

UAI dimension is irrelevant to Chinese population, which means UAI should be downgraded to a dimension at a non-universal level. Hofstede depicted the dimension of individualism vs collectivism as the opposite poles in a sense that they are "composed of contrasting positions" (McSweeney, 2002, p.105), but Triandis (1994, p. 42) stated that individualism and collectivism could "coexist and are simply being emphasised more or less…depending on the situation. All of us carry both individualist and collectivist tendencies". Supported by researches on collectivism vs individualism in the United States (Grossmann & Varnum, 2015), in China (Zhou, Yiu, Wu, & Greenfield, 2018), and in Japan (Hamamura, 2012), Beugelsdijk and Welzel (2018) reported a shift towards individualism among younger generations, which is not inconsistent with the clear demarcation between the collective and individualist nations advocated by Hofstede (1991).

Baskerville (2003) and Signorini et al. (2009) demonstrated that "cultures" should not be equated to different "nations" or regional geopolitical constructs, as cultures are dynamic, flexible, and mutable. Wildavsky (1989) noted that cultures are not nations and generally, there is more than one culture within a country at any one time. It is overused grossly to prefix the national dimensions to name a country so as to imply a national uniformity (Shearing & Ericson, 1991). McSweeney (2002, p. 111) believed that the national heterogeneity "destabilises Hofstede's analysis", when a nation reunites or fuses with another, for instance, Hong Kong's "reintegration" with the People's Republic of China. According to Hofstede's allegation, the cultural characterisation of Hong Kong must be also the same of the newly reunited multiple nations. As described in Chapter 1, Hong Kong is heavily influenced by the British culture, the measurements on national culture dimensions of Hong Kong's are not necessarily defined as those for China. This also corroborates the preclusion of the students from Hong Kong and Macao into this research.

Signorini et al. (2009) suggested the differentiation on the ranges of culture research should be introduced, such as cross cultural, multicultural, and intercultural research,

and so forth. In addition, they advocated delivering culture research by starting with the micro-cultures or micro-environments, for example, the specific bicultural learning environment in the higher education field, which is combined with the individuals' learning experience. Signorini et al. (2009) believed that students who typically engage in prolonged international activities are not typical of the whole student body; therefore, they may have different expectations and interactions from other "home" students. Their willingness to engage in international learning activities enables them to adapt to differing learning styles and new educational experiences.

2.2.2 Project GLOBE

The most influential development after Hofstede, within the national culture dimensions framework, is the Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness), which was designed with multi phases and multi methods, to examine the interrelationships between societal culture and organisational culture and leadership, by 150 social researchers from 61 countries (House et al., 2001).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed within Project GLOBE to present abundant and scientifically valid descriptions of cultural influences on leadership and the organisational process. Quantitative data covered the measurements on the societal culture, organisational culture, and leadership attributes and behaviours. Parallel to the quantitative analysis, the qualitative research was conducted in the same cultures with interpretations of local behaviours, norms, and practices, being developed through content analysis of the data derived from personal interviews, focus groups, and published media.

Two indicators applied to test the cultural attributes within Project GLOBE, are values within collectives and the modal practice. Shared values are ventilated in the form of judgements on *what should be*, which originated from the anthropological tradition of cultural assessment (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Contemporaneously, the modal practice under cultural attributes is measured by assessing *what is/what are,* the

people's common behaviour and practice under a certain culture background. This approach to culture measurement grows out of the psychological/behavioural tradition, in which shared values are conceived to be identified from behaviours, social policies, and practices generally being followed (House et al., 2001).

Project GLOBE identified nine cultural dimensions (scales): uncertainty avoidance, power distance, collectivism I: societal collectivism, collectivism II: in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, and humane orientation. Table 2.4 details the definition of these dimensions.

Table 2.4: Cultural dimensions and their definitions by Project GLOBE

Culture dimensions	Definition
Uncertainty avoidance	Uncertainty avoidance describes the extent to which members of an organisation or a society rely on social norms, rituals, bureaucratic practices and other prescribed regulations to evade from uncertainty and to mitigate the future unpredictability.
Power distance	Power distance reflects the degree to which members of an organisation or a society endure and accept the power allocation among them.
Collectivism I:	Collectivism I: Societal collectivism is defined as the degree to which institutional practices within an organisation or a society encourage and reward collective resources distribution and consequently conduct the collective action.
Collectivism II:	Collectivism II: In-group collectivism reflects the degree to which individuals express pride and commitment towards, and cohesiveness in their organisations or families.
Gender egalitarianism	Gender egalitarianism mirrors the extent to which gender differences within all aspects and sexual discrimination are minimised with an organisation or a society.
Assertiveness	Assertiveness is defined as the degree to which being assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships individuals advocate in an organisation or a society.
Future orientation	Future orientation reflects the extent to which members in an organisation or a society conduct future-oriented practice and behaviours such as future plans, investing and saving for the future, and gratification deference.

Culture dimensions	Definition
Performance orientation	Performance orientation refers to the degree to which the group members within an organisation or society are encouraged and rewarded for performance improvements and excellence on progress. This dimension includes the future-oriented component of Confucian dynamism raised by (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), later on renamed to long term orientation (LTO).
Humane orientation	Humane orientation refers to the degree to which individuals in an organisation or society are encouraged and rewarded if being altruistic, generous, and fair in caring of other individuals. This dimension has similarities to the dimension of kind heartedness proposed by Hofstede and Bond (1988).

Source: adapted from House et al. (2001)

GLOBE project is heavily influenced by Hofstede's work in terms of the option of variables assessed. The labels of GLOBE's nine societal scales are shared with the Hofstede cultural dimensions (Shi & Wang, 2011). Even House et al. (2001) admitted that the first six culture dimensions within Project GLOBE originate from the culture dimensions identified by Hofstede (1980). For the first three GLOBE dimensions, the same constructs are reflected as Hofstede's dimensions named uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and individualism. The collectivism I dimension measures the extent to which collectivism is emphasised, with its high score reflecting collectivistic emphasis and low score reflecting individualistic one, by means of laws, social system, and practices. The collectivism II dimension measures in-group collectivism from the standing point of the members of a family, clan, and organisation, having pride and being adherent to the group to which they belong. The other two dimensions labelled gender egalitarianism and assertiveness are seen as the substitute and expansion of Hofstede's masculinity dimension.

Besides the similarity of the cultural dimensions developed by Project GLOBE to his own, Hofstede (2006, p. 885) criticised the survey question items adopted in the Project GLOBE research and he believed the corresponding survey findings might not have reflected what the researchers are supposed to measure, due to the formulation of "high level of abstraction, rather far from the respondents' daily concerns".

Moreover, Hofstede (2010, p. 1,339) asserted that his national culture dimension paradigm is adopted by the GLOBE project, which extends his five culture dimensions into nine, for the sake of seeking the "psychological face validity and political correctness".

Warner-Soderholm (2012) perceived that in early 21st century, the most influential achievements on cultural dimension theory are from two foremost research teams, namely, Hofstede (2003) and House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004), who took the lead in Project GLOBE. However, critiques on these two approaches were also published, either fostering one "camp" to criticise the other in a written battle, or showing the preference to one of the two theories. For instance, Smith (2006) questioned the complexity of a research design with 116 items built into it, from which Project GLOBE's nine culture dimensions were derived. Minkov & Blagoev (2012) criticised Project GLOBE's vague meaningfulness of the culture dimensions in nature, and indicated that only a new dimension, assertiveness, is validated, besides Hofstede's five cultural dimensions at national level. Standing in the Project GLOBE "camp", Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges and De Luquet (2006) debated Hofstede's research methodology, which is not based on action research and lacks the spiral steps of fact finding, planning, evaluation, plan amendment, and further action.

Within Warner-Soderholm's (2012) comprehensive paper on these critiques, Metaphors were employed with the depiction of the two research groups as two "elephants" (great forces), and the research environment as the "grass" for battlefield where two elephants meet and fight. Warner-Soderholm (2012) applauded the debates and critiques, which could lead to further development and improvement on their research project, making studies on culture dimensions flourish.

After re-examining critically the national culture dimensions, underpinning items, and scores from the Hofstede and GLOBE, Venaik and Brewer (2013, p.469) argued that, these dimensions "do not form a valid and reliable scale for the culture dimensions at the level of individuals or organisations". The national culture dimensions, therefore,

should not be applied to categorise individuals or groups, which may commit the ecological fallacy and lead to the formation of stereotypes (Brewer & Venaik, 2014).

2.2.3 Organisational culture (corporate culture)

According to Ohmae (1991), the impact of national culture on organisational culture appears to continue weakening. However, Hofstede (2003) and Tayeb (1996) persisted in that, multi-national organisations need to be aware of cultural differences at national level and the influence of these differences upon their organisational culture. National and organisational cultures are treated by Hofstede (2010, p. 1,342) as the "complementary constructs" .

From the acculturation perspective, the society of settlement (for international students, their host universities) is highlighted as an important variable impacting the international students' acculturation and adaptation (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Comprehensive interventions developed from the ABC's acculturation model by Ward et al. (2001), which coordinate the affective, behavioural, and cognitive aspects of adaptation, are found to be deliverable and effective to enhance the acculturation of international students (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Zhou et al., 2008).

Culture learning approaches include practical guidelines for intervention into international students, such as behavioural social skills training and acquisition of appropriate sociocultural skills to increase cultural awareness; whereas, stress and coping approach focuses on psychological well-being, such as counselling service and stress management training to alleviate their depression and anxiety symptoms (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008).

For the Chinese students undertaking undergraduate studies in business and management in the UK, their acculturation is inevitably influenced by their national culture, and also the corporate culture of their studying institutions in China and the British business schools, which might intervene into their life and studies.

Denison (1984, p.5) defined corporate culture as "the set of values, beliefs, and behavioural patterns that form the core identity of an organisation". Denison and Mishra (1995) embarked on their research from exploring the impact of the corporate members' participative involvement on corporate effectiveness, and notably, they had developed an organisational culture model which is composed of four traits of organisational cultures: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Figure 2.3 below shows that each trait decomposes into three more specific areas, giving a total of twelve indices. After the introduction of the four traits, this research illustrates how the trait of adaptability of organisational culture could influence international students' acculturation and adaptation, which gives implications, partially, to answer the *research question 2-* how the British business school could conduct to help with the Chinese students' acculturation.

Figure 2.3: Denison and Mishra's (1995) organisational culture model
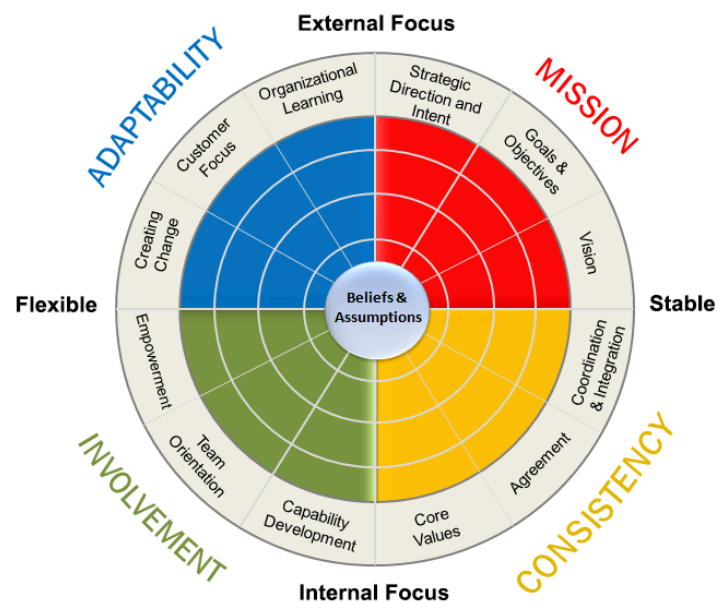
Source: Denison, Lief and Ward (2004), also available at:
https://www.felixglobal.com/denison-culture/

Involvement describes the empowerment and teamwork which are necessary to address the competitive environment. Indices which measure involvement are: empowerment, teamwork, and capability development. Consistency covers "the

collective definition of behaviours, systems, and meanings in an integrated way that requires individual conformity rather than voluntary participation" (Denison & Mishra, 1995, p.214), and measures the unified approach to goal achievement and problem resolution that allow for dealing with external challenges (Denison et al., 2004). Consistency creates a "strong" culture based on beliefs, values, and symbols that are widely and commonly understood by all of the organisational members (ibid). Indices which measure consistency are: core values, agreement, and coordination. The two traits of involvement and consistency are internally focused within organisations.

The trait of adaptability assumes translating the demands of the business environment into action, and describes organisation's efforts to balance its internal identity with external events and impetus to change (Denison et al., 2004). The measuring indices of adaptability include creating change, customer focus, and organisational learning. The trait of mission emphasises on combining economic and noneconomic organisational objectives together, in order to define a long-term and meaningful direction for the organisation and its members. The indices of mission are strategic direction and intent, goals and objectives, and vision. The four-trait organisational culture model focuses on the contradictions involved in simultaneously achieving internal integration and external adaptation (Fey & Denison, 2003).

Catering for the changes of their own internationalisation strategy and the enormous international students emerging in the campus, the lack of cultural awareness within HEIs implies potentials to alienate international students (Hammer, 2018). For the sake of the enhancing corporate adaptability, those HEIs need to focus on the international students' requirements by becoming familiar with difference cultural values, beliefs, and traditions (Chalungsooth & Schneller, 2011; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014). Under such circumstances, organisational learning include those cultual knowledge and culture difference, enabling academics to increase initiatives of approaching students and making them aware of the available services (Li et al., 2017; Yan & Berliner, 2011), of providing perceived support (Bai, 2016), and of developing

social connectedness between academics and international students (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Essentially, these organisational learning measures to increase corporate adaptability are the same as intervention practices from HEIs to help with international students' acculturation (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Denison and his followers carried out testing of the organisational culture model in different geographical areas, for instance, in Russia (Fey & Denison, 2003), Turkey (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008), and Japan (Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2004). These research findings indicate, for the most part, the existence of the four traits. Similar results can be drawn from the comparison of the verification between family and non-family businesses (Denison et al., 2004). Surrounding the organisational culture model, some researchers (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis, & Shook, 2009; Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008) supplemented the employee satisfaction and attitude as a potential mediator of the relationship between the organisational culture and the diverse measures of organisational effectiveness.

However, when testing the involvement hypothesis by Denison and Mishra (1995), the measure of corporate performance is only based on return on assets from five subjects (firms), by the expression as the percentile ranking of each firm within its respective industry. Obviously, the firm's effectiveness or performance might not be measured by one aspect alone. Besides the return on assets, other indicators for effectiveness, for instance, market share occupation, corporation income level, long term growth, employment rate, and social contribution, and so forth, should be included as well. Moreover, it is suggested that a broader range of organisational members, not only the senior management team, should be introduced in Denison and Mishra's (1995) research, to provide a richer context of the model.

The Denison's organisational culture model is derived from management practice. It doesn't measure how or to what extent the organisational culture can impact upon its members' behaviour. This research also studies the Chinese students' behaviours and

perceptions from the influence of their former organisations before their arrival in the UK, for instance, Chinese high schools, the Chinese universities, and/or centres for Sino-British joint programmes in China. In order to understand the relationship between existing organisational culture within an organisation and its members' behaviour and performance, the culture elements pervading organisations need to be identified. Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders (1990) believed that the manifestations of the organisational culture can be classified into four anthropological categories: "symbols, heroes, rituals, and values" (p. 291).

However, the cultural web advocated by Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Pyle and Johnson (2011, p.176) may be more comprehensive, which indicates the "behavioural, physical and symbolic manifestations of a culture" as the influencing elements on organisational culture. The cultural web identifies six main elements that make up the working environment "paradigm" as the taken-for-granted assumptions within an organisation: stories, rituals and routines, control systems, symbols, organisational structures, and power structures (See Figure2.4). Among the six elements, three elements of stories, rituals and routines, and control systems of the organisation are related to this research on the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK.

Figure 2.4: The cultural web of an organisation
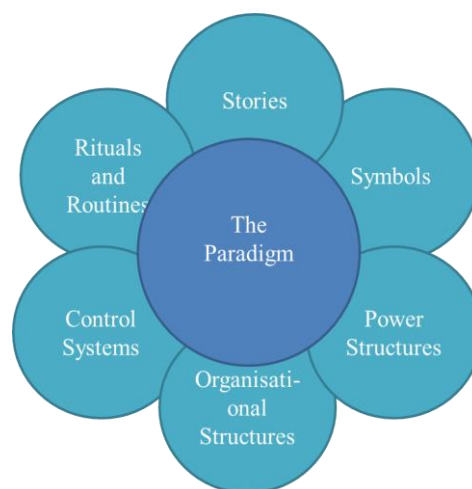
Source: Johnson et al. (2011, p.176)

Stories

Stories refer to the people, events, and other historical issues, which are still talked about within an organisation, giving insights into what is important conventionally in the organisation. A Chinese student who tends to study in the UK may be encouraged by the legendary stories of academic achievements from the previous students who come from the same Chinese university, high school, and/ or the same centre for the Sino-British joint programme. These stories may also exert influence on the Chinese student's option of universities for their further studies in the UK.

Rituals and routines

These are defined as the typical daily behaviours with a long history, and particular activities or special events that "emphasise, highlight or reinforce what is important in the culture" (Johnson et al., 2011, p.177). For well-developed Sino-British programmes in China, where accommodate the Chinese students who intend to study in the UK, there have been formulated yearly events to provide supporting services to their students, like counselling sessions to their students from a cohort of British universities, outstanding alumni guest lectures, and pre-departure training, which are normally co-delivered with the British universities. All of these supports and services will impact the extent to which Chinese students adapt into their future life and academic studies in the UK.

Zhou and Todman (2009) identified the distinct adaptation process between the Chinese students coming to the UK in groups (from a same Sino-UK joint programme) and those coming individually (application on their own or through agencies for the entry into British universities). Quan et al. (2016) argued that Chinese postgraduate students having early familiarisation with the British pedagogy are likely to attain a higher degree level. This implies the importance of the intervention into the Chinese students' pre-departure stage at organisational level, enabling Chinese student to gather more knowledge of the difference between the British and Chinese learning

and teaching systems. Zhou et al. (2011) found that the adaptation of Chinese students from Sino-UK collaborative programmes, who might have benefited from specific pre-departure programmes within their previous learning organisations, appears much smoother than the adaptation of those coming to the UK individually.

Control systems

Control systems imply measurements and reward schemes for monitoring and supporting people, and emphasise deliberately the expected behaviours around an organisation (Johnson et al., 2011). The Chinese universities and high schools, where are delivering the Sino-British programmes, generally award the high achieving students with an excellence scholarship. Besides that, the students with full attendance are awarded, which encourages them to work hard during their pre-UK studies. Those are controlling measures to encourage the students' engagements.

Another three elements includes symbols, organisational structures, and power structures. Symbols are "objects, events, acts or people, etc" (Johnson et al., 2011, p.177), and any visual representations which could convey the difference of an organisation from others. The organisational structures refer to the position of roles, responsibilities definition, the assumed hierarchy and reporting systems, and so on. It indicates the value of each person's contributions within an organisation. The power structures relate to the allocation of power within different groups of people within an organisation (Johnson et al., 2011).

Denison and Mishra's (1995) organisational model delineates the traits and characters of the organisational culture from the management perspective, while the culture web developed by Johnson et al. (2011) analyses the elements of organisational culture at operational level. For the Chinese students studying in the UK, the intervention practices, which are embedded in the organisational culture of their studied and studying institutions, bring influences and impacts upon their acculturation.

2.2.4 Psychic distance

When Bell, Ireland and Swift (2014) were conducting their research in relation to the process of cross-cultural decision making between international HEIs, they drew on the measure of "psychic distance" (Beckerman, 1956) to evaluate the cultural influence on the development and maintenance of a cross-cultural relationship. Psychic distance is a "matter of perception" (Fletcher & Bohn, 1998, p.49), and a distance within individuals' minds, depending on the way how they perceive the world.

The notion of psychic distance is universally introduced to deal with decision making in international business, such as the selection of foreign markets (Whitelock & Jobber, 2004), entry strategies (Ellis, 2007), and the influence on the performance of foreign subsidiaries (Dikova, 2009). This research applies psychic distance to evaluate the interaction between Chinese students and their intercultural learning environment during their life and studies in the UK.

Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul (1984, p. 17) provided a useful definition of psychic distance as the "difference in perceptions between buyer and seller regarding either needs or offers" in international business operations. They suggested that psychic distance is composed of three elements: cultural affinity, trust, and experience. These elements exert influence upon each other (Bell, et al., 2014), and are influential variables corresponding to the three different cultural levels separately: the national, organisational, and personal culture level (Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1984).

As construed by Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul (1984), cultural affinity refers to the cultural similarity between the buyers and sellers in language, business habit, culture, and legal environments where they are, etcetera. Though not clarifying these as the reason for cultural similarity, Hofstede (1978) found that the coursework of executive students in an international business school, whose values are closest to faculty members, were favoured unintentionally. Hadjikhani and Thilenius (2005) addressed

that trust, which is defined as the willingness and confidence of one party to rely on the other party (Moorman, Deshpande´, & Zaltman, 1993), ensures the development and continuance of a relationship between two parties, achieved by experience of interaction (Ford, 1989). Individual experience refers to the "consequence of first-hand contact with other people and their organisations, and previous experience tends to influence current attitudes towards people" (Bell, et al., 2014, p. 361). Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul (1984) stated that, individual experience, either in the past or currently, can result in preconceptions, affecting attitude and behaviours during the interaction, which leads to a relationship, either positive or negative, being formed.

In terms of interaction of the three variables for psychic distance, Swift (1999) introduced a metaphor of cultural affinity being a "catalyst" for the relationship built in the first place, and even before the relationship begins. It is echoed and upheld by Bell et al. (2014) who believed that cultural affinity may be a key variable at the start of a relationship. Heffernan (2004) agreed that a relationship can be staged, and Bell et al. (2014, p.360) further illustrated that "by the time the relationship has reached maturity, trust and experience have assumed greater importance".

Ward an Kennedy (1999) found that cultural and/or ethnic similarity is associated with sociocultural adjustment. Their empirically studies showed that international students from Singapore come across fewer sociocultural difficulties than other international students in New Zealand. The multicultural society in Singapore with broad exposure to Eastern and Western culture has fostered intercultural awareness and cultural similarity or affinity. Similarly, diversification of ethnicity in academics group should be represented within British universities wherever possible, to provide support and clear explanations of the new educational system, enhance cultural affinity, and shorten the psychic distance to Chinese students (Bartram, 2008; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014).

From the Chinese international students perspective, it is particularly important for them to establish personal trust with their academics and peers in the university

campuses (Marshall & Mathias, 2016), since the development of trust is prerequisite for achieving openness to social interaction (Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998). Based on the established trust, Chinese international students need to break through their comfort zone and become proactive in participating in socialising activities, interacting with others, and acquiring help if needed, so as to enrich their intercultural experience, foster inclusiveness, and shorten the psychic distance (Li et al., 2017; Mitchell, Del Fabbro, & Shaw, 2017).

Essentially, psychic distance depicts the perceptions on interpersonal difference between people who are from different cultural backgrounds. Borrowing the notion of psychic distance to the research on the Chinese students' transition into British higher education, cultural affinity could be mediated in the process of the relationship built-up between Chinese students and others in the campus. Generally, there is little culture similarity for Chinese students with their peer students and the university academics teaching them (besides a few circumstances, under which an ethnically Chinese academic works for the university, though the academic might behave in the British way). However, in the course of close interaction and communication between Chinese students and their peers and academics, cultural affinity can be nurtured and cultivated through many means. Alongside the willingness and personal experience from each party, a well-connected relationship can be developed, which will benefit Chinese students' transition and adaptation. Moreover, if a Chinese student's pre-UK studies are connected with a British university's involvement, for example, a Sino-British joint programme delivered in China, trust from the university academics is easily imposed onto these students who have received their prior experience of the British educational context.

2.2.5 Cultural intelligence

In order to explain why some people behave and act appropriately while others not in a new culture or among the people with different culture backgrounds, Earley and Mosakowski (2004, p.140) made a proposition labelled as cultural intelligence (CQ),

which is defined as "an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures in the way that a person's compatriots would". Earley and Mosakowski (2004) believed that natural CQ could be deliberately cultivated, in order to meet the demand of successful engagement within an international environment. A person with high CQ, either inherited or cultivated, can understand the situation where he posits, and do the right things under the circumstance that crossing national boundaries is routine.

An electronic book: "Inter-Cultural Intelligence: From Surviving to Thriving in the Global Space", written by Knowledgeworkx, a business organisation (its web link http://knowledgeworkx.com/articles/12-dimensions-of-culture), described the insights into a person's culturally behavioural preferences, which cover twelve cultural dimensions: growth, relationship, outlook, destiny, context, connecting, expression, decision-making, planning, communication, accountability, and status (Table 2.5). These preferences are not personal characters or personalities, but they are changeable responding to the requirements of the intercultural environment. Each dimension is a spectrum with two opposing tendencies towards either extreme. Selecting a point alongside each of those spectrums, and combining of these points or snapshots together, identifies a unique cultural profile individually.

Table 2.5: Twelve cultural dimensions by Knowledgeworkx

12 dimensions by Knowledgeworkx	Definitions
Growth	Your investment in material growth, or personal growth
Relationship	Does everything have an effect on your reputation, or are your relationships and reputational risks/rewards compartmentalised?
Outlook	Focus on lessons from the past, or potential for the future
Destiny	In your hands, or you are carried along by external forces
Context	How broad is the spectrum of acceptable behaviour in your culture
Connecting	The degree to which information is freely shared
Expression	How open with your emotion are you? What are the 'display rules' in your culture
Decision-making	Do you build trust through procedures and rules, or by getting to know people and relationships

12 dimensions by Knowledgeworkx	Definitions
Planning	People-focused or time-focused
Communication	Direct or indirect
Accountability	How do you view your contribution and belonging to a group
Status	Achieved status, or ascribed status

Source: http://knowledgeworkx.com/articles/12-dimensions-of-culture

Cultural intelligence is an important factor to achieve success in international operations (Creque & Gooden, 2011). The causes which give rise to it are attributed to the fact that an individual with higher cultural intelligence may find himself easily able to adjust and adapt to the intercultural situations (Thomas & Inkson, 2009). Under cross-cultural environmental situations, including within the international higher education context, cultural intelligence ameliorates cultural challenges so as to arouse effective communication (Olotuah & Olotuah, 2018). For Chinese students within British higher education settings, being culturally intelligent may lead to smoother communication with academics, and develop a good relationship with them, which also add benefits to their acculturation.

2.2.6 Section summary

In such an ever changing and expanding world, human being's cross-border mobility in either business transactions or service exchanges, for instance, alien students studying overseas, highlights the acknowledgement and recognition of the culture difference between different countries. The cultural dimension frameworks developed either by Hofstede and his colleagues (Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 1991, 2003, 2009, Hofstede & Bond, 1988) or Project GLOBE (House, et al., 2001), convey the awareness of culture difference at national level, and provide implications of acculturation for immigrants who might be seeking permanent residency, and even for international students who are in a host nation for a temporary period to study, for instance, the Chinese students studying in the UK.

At group level, organisational culture could be posited to influence the behaviour of

organisational members (Schein, 1985). The behavioural influence exists, because individual members behave in ways consistent with a set of values shared by all of them. Consequently, the culture of an organisation would create behavioural expectations which direct its members to behave in the ways consistent with the organisational culture. Moreover, Gregory et al. (2009) suggested specifically that organisational culture impacts its members' attitudes which have an influence on organisational outcomes. For the Chinese students that this research project studies, the intervention practices and inherited corporate culture of the institutions where they are studying, impact upon their acculturation and adaptation in the UK.

Psychic distance lies in the interaction or relationship between two subjects (people and/or the organisations which they belong to) from different cultural backgrounds. Stereotyped images and "prejudice" (Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1984) exist and impact mutually between each other. These pre-perceptions are derived from cultural affinity, organisational trust, and personal experience. As for Chinese students in British higher education context, national culture differences, specific group values and organisational culture in their previous and current learning environment, and psychic distance from their academics and their peer mates, impact their acculturation and adaptation during their UK life and studies.

As a supplement to the review of cultural difference at national, organisational, and personal levels, cultural intelligence is flagged in this research, which could help sojourners develop their sensitivity of acculturation into a different culture. Chinese students, who encounter challenges or difficulties in adapting to their life and studies in the UK, may also learn from their peer students who have higher culture intelligence and transit well into the intercultural learning settings.

Having reviewed the culture difference at national, organisation, and personal levels, the factor of culture difference may develop into a research theme for this research of the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK, since the measures can be taken by Chinese students and other stakeholders to enhance cultural awareness at different

levels, to implement intervention strategies at organisational level, and to promote cultural affinity at personal level, so as to help with their acculturation.

Another purpose of reviewing culture difference within this research is to identify the cultural influence from distinct cultures onto the teaching and learning domain. Based on the reviewing outcomes of cultural difference, this research ought to incorporate the knowledge of Chinese and British pedagogies and the difference between the two ones, so as to further clarify the academic or school adjustments that Chinese students may best conduct during their undergraduate studies in the UK.

2.3 Chinese and British pedagogies

When applying acculturation models into the international higher education context, Ward and Kennedy (1994, p.341) implied that the programmes in international high education should be designed for international students "to foster good intergroup relations with host nationals, while simultaneously working to maintain a sense of identity of culture of origin". Berry et al. (2006) agreed and suggested that, from the aspect of sociocultural adaptation, the international students should make the school adjustment accordingly.

International students may discover that it is necessary for them to develop different study patterns and new learning strategies from those used in their previous schooling (Chalungsooth & Schneller, 2011). Gu and Maley (2008) suggested that personal, psychological, and pedagogical factors are equally important in influencing international students' intercultural adaptation process and outcomes. Zhou et al. (2008) focused their research on how to match the pedagogical expectations between academics and international students, which lead to the smooth delivery of teaching and learning, and the more fruitful inter-adaptation by the two parties. Hofstede (1986) proposed that the teacher should primarily bear the burden of student adaptation in the cross cultural situation. And the two strategies, to "teach teachers how to teach" and to "teach students how to learn", ought to be introduced, for the sake of bridging the gap

within the cross-cultural teaching and learning (Hofstede, 1986, p.316).

This section starts with reviews of the Chinese and British pedagogies, and afterwards compares with the two ones. It aims to identify the pedagogical issues that Chinese students and their academics in British business schools may encounter within the teaching and learning activities, so as to elicit the research theme(s) to answer research questions for this study.

2.3.1 Chinese Pedagogy

2.3.1.1 Confucianism

Pedagogy, is defined as all that relates to teaching, instruction, training, or guidance within English dictionaries (Cheng, 2011). For instance, in the Collins English Dictionary, Pedagogy refers to the study and theory of methods and principles of teaching. Many academic papers illustrate Chinese pedagogy in different ways by comparing the teaching and learning style with Western one or exploiting the culture difference between the East and the West, but there are no clearly agreed definitions to be given (Wu, 2014). Instead, the Chinese pedagogy is traditionally more closely related to Confucianism and the Confucian heritage culture (De Vita & Bernard, 2011; Greenholtz, 2010; Wu, 2014).

With over two thousand years of scholarly tradition of philosophy which have been universally accepted and well developed as a most influential part of Chinese culture within Chinese communities, such as the China Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or some Southeast Asian countries, Confucianism and Confucian thoughts are complex and multi-layered (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Littrell, 2006; Oldstone-Moore, 2012). Aguinis and Roth (2005) argued that Confucianism can be summarised into four points: hierarchical levels within society and unequal relations between people leading to social stability; the family constituting the prototype of all of organisations of the society; virtuous behaviour being encouraged to develop self-control and position one's proper place within society; education and skills which are expected to

acquire by hard working and perseverance rather than intelligence. Echoing the fourth points, Wan (2001) stated that the cultural values prevalent in Chinese educational system encourage a "hard work" ethic.

Studies of the traits and nature of Confucianism were undertaken by exploiting pedagogical facets within it, which cast light on Chinese education over thousands of years. Wu (2014, p. 328) asserted that the spirit of Confucian pedagogy is WEN (文 in Chinese, which means texture or pattern), which can be defined as the deepest sense of clarity and intelligibility, and "has acted and will act like milk to nourish Chinese pedagogic discourses". Grounded on WEN, Chinese pedagogic discourse not only "secures the attainment of deep understanding of the world, and of moral virtue to act properly in the society, but also yields all of the possibilities for learners to achieve practical competence and skills that contemporary education desires" (ibid, p.328).

Morality and ethical behaviours connected to morality are the main purpose of education in Confucian thoughts, other than the mastery of knowledge and intellectual achievements which only lead to personal self-cultivation. Whereby, the true essence of education, "being what" overpassing "having what", is emphasised (Haller, Fisher, & Gapp, 2007). Reflecting on the foundation of morality, the idea of moral learning that universally accepted in Confucian societies has had great influence on contemporary students in countries with a Confucian heritage culture. From the outcomes of a piece of quantitative research conducted within college students in China, Li (2002) found that they are more likely to consider learning as fulfilling a need to cultivate personal virtue instead of knowing the world.

2.3.1.2 The factors influencing Confucian pedagogy

Confucianism and Confucian thoughts are permeated into every aspect of social life within Chinese communities, thus gradually constituting the social framework and social order, and positioning the relationship among community members, which

could be inherited by the next generation through education. Reciprocally, the educational pedagogy under Confucian culture is seriously affected by the inherent ideas, views, and the formation of society.

Cultural dimensions impact on Chinese pedagogical discourses. When illustrating the theory of cultural dimensions, Hofstede (1991) attributed most of East Asian countries under Confucian heritage culture, for instance, China, into collectivist nations. Under collective culture, people are reluctant to be standing out from their strongly coherent group/community, which they think could result in conflicts and an inharmonious sphere (Tafarodi, Marshall, & Katsura, 2004). Reflected in the classroom, students perform quietly and seldom raise questions, and this may recur when Chinese students are undertaking group work also (Wu, 2014).

Power distance, another culture dimension at national level developed by Hofstede (1991), refers to how the power is allocated unequally within a group or society, and the extent to which junior levelled members expect and accept the unequal power allocation. When being applied to the Confucian teaching and learning context, power distance elicits the acceptance of teacher centred pedagogical activities by Chinese students. Students within a large power distance culture expect teachers to rule strictly over the classroom (Guo, 2015). They respect teachers, the classroom instructors, and the textbooks chosen by teachers, as the highly authoritative sources of knowledge that should not be questioned (Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1999).

Some practitioners in the British higher education classrooms observed that Chinese students remain extremely reticent, rarely raising hands to ask questions, being passively involved in class activities, and seldom sharing their ideas with their peers. Probing the rationale behind, Guo (2015) claimed that throughout the history of Confucian teaching, there are few debates or discussion about the connection between talking and thinking. In the Confucian traditions, being silent in classrooms is not only an indication of the students' cognitive involvement with deep thinking, but also a gesture of courtesy shown from them to teachers.

With the reform and opening-up policy having implemented in China since late 1970's, the societal aspects have seen overwhelming changes. The transformation of Chinese pedagogical discourse is on-going and it has been articulated to the Western pedagogy (Wu, 2011). Sharing the same opinion, Liu (2011) proposed there is no clear divide between the so-called Chinese and Western pedagogical discourses, as the Chinese pedagogy has been hybridised with something Western, which implies the difficulties in distinguishing them from each other. Cheng and Xu (2011) also acknowledged that Chinese contemporary pedagogy is essentially inhabited in Confucianism and other indigenous traditions, but now entangled actively with Western discourse in the process of modernisation and industrialisation in China. The meaning of Confucian traditional pedagogy could not be "recovered" from the past, but should be "found" at the present (ibid).

2.3.1.3 The "Paradox" surrounding Chinese students' achievements

Vita and Bernard (2011) discovered that, there is a common view from the West that the teaching and learning context within Confucian culture holds a highly didactic conception of pedagogy, with a teacher-centred mode utilised to transmit knowledge while students taking notes and accepting this in a reticent and passive way. Greenholtz (2010) noted that the students under Confucian heritage culture appear to have a lack of creativity, criticality, and autonomy of thought. Liu and Jackson (2011) and Parris-Kidd and Barnett (2011) perceived that many students remain reticence even with anxiety, when being asked to answer the questions from academics, to offer comments, and to engage in classroom discussion. Parris-Kidd and Barnett (2011) ascribed the anxious condition to the fact that the Chinese students, during their overseas studies, are unfamiliar with their academics' pedagogical approach and expectations on their independent learning.

However, some researchers (Marton, Dall'Alba, & Tse, 1996; Renshaw & Volet, 1995) highlighted that the Chinese students under Confucian culture have achieved remarkable excellence in their international mathematics and science tests. These facts

result in a kind of "paradox", wherein Chinese students are labelled as both rote and highly cognitive learners, but excel in their academic studies overseas. Similar finding by Biggs (1996) and Saravanamuthu (2008) echoed that, the Chinese students' learning behaviours are often observed as rote learning by positivists, yet Chinese students demonstrate high achievements in their academic performance, which implies that a high quality of cognitive learning is adopted.

Further research raises the paradox of how an apparently superficial way of learning, adopted by Chinese students, can also lead to deep understanding. Kember (2000) and Marton et al. (1996) revealed that, meditation, memorisation, and repetition within the Confucian learning environment, are not merely the rote learning process, but a route to a deeper learning and understanding strategy. Li and Wegerif (2014) explained that, under Confucian traditions for teaching, Chinese students have learnt from their early schooling to value and practice silent reflections on the meaning of the taught content. Trans' (2013) view of adjustment on learning approaches showed that the passiveness of Asian students may result from specific situations involving particular teaching methodologies, learning requirements, learning habits, and language proficiency, rather than just cultural factors. Students' perceptions on course requirements rather than their personal characteristics or cultural difference, may greatly influence their option of learning approaches (Volet, Renshaw, & Tietzel, 1994).

An insightful proposition on the Chinese students' adoption of learning approach is developed by Pratt et al. (1999), who advocated that both academics and students annotate learning in Confucian heritage cultures as a sequential four-stage process: 1). memorising fundamental knowledge; 2). understanding; 3). applying the knowledge to problems solving; 4). questioning or critical analysing.

Memorisation and repetition ensure that knowledge is available when needed. Appropriate and deep understandings by repetitive learning ensure knowledge is applied properly to problems solving under certain circumstances. Questioning and higher level critical learning is expected only at the last stage of learning, usually

when encountering new problems or new situations (Pratt et al., 1999). The mental processing stages can partially explain why Chinese students, especially the newly enrolled ones, are quiet and reticent in British classrooms, as they might be indulged in repetitive learning and deep understanding, attempting to utilise the knowledge, just learned, to resolve the problems that they have met. From the Chinese students' perspectives, only after knowledge is fully commanded, can critical thinking be developed. In addition, this sequential process is indivisible and irreversible; otherwise, students would become frustrated to handle their psychological journey of learning. This explains why Chinese students do not intend to abandon their memorisation activities at the start, for the sake of implementing a critical analysis of what they have learned at later stages.

Eloquently, Lee (1996, p.35) delineated the Chinese concept of learning as,

> "…indeed a process of studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly…"

2.3.2 British pedagogy

As illustrated in the section 2.3.1, the transmission of Chinese pedagogy is on course (Wu, 2011), and there is no clear divide between Chinese and Western pedagogical discourses (Liu, 2011), because the Chinese pedagogy has been hybridised and entangled with the Western one. However, the paradox of abundant achievements attained by Chinese students in their studies assessment, in spite of the problems encountered from the start of their exposure to British learning environment, elicit this research turning to a review of British pedagogy.

It is acknowledged in this research project that the conceptual distinction between Western pedagogy and British pedagogy might exist. Vandermensbrugghe's (2004) research findings justified the diversities of teaching styles across Europe. However, due to the limitation of the researcher's language competence, the literatures reviewed within the research are in English mainly. Moreover, studies in relation to Western

issues in this literature were mostly conducted within Anglophone counties, such as Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Considering the homogenous origin of all of Anglophone higher education, wording concerning Western society, culture, education, and pedagogy studied in this research, refers to the British norms, with no intention of deliberate discrimination of other countries.

2.3.2.1 Bloom's taxonomy

Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill and Krathwohl (1956) classified people's cognitive process into six major levels. Being arranged in a hierarchical order from the simplest level to the complex ones, these levels are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Universally accepted in academia, the framework has been developed and referred as "Bloom's taxonomy" with three domains: the cognitive (knowledge based), the effective (attitudinal based), and the psychomotor (skills based) ones.

Bloom's taxonomy makes a significant contribution to educational context, as it develops a method of classifying of thinking behaviours that is important in the process of learning (Forehand, 2012). Serving for different education functions, it has been universally used by different educators, for instance, curriculum designers, teaching academics, researchers, and administrators. Throughout years, the cognitive framework has been often delineated as the stairway guiding educators to encourage students climbing to the high level of thought (ibid).

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) made some seemingly minor but actually significant revisions or enrichments on Bloom's taxonomy. These revisions occur in three categories: terminology, structure, and emphasis (see Appendix 1 for the revisions). The structural changes from the original one dimension to two dimensions make the revised Bloom's taxonomy more practicable. One dimension is identified as the knowledge dimension, which encompasses four levels that are defined as factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta-cognitive ones. The other is the cognitive process

dimension, defined as six levels of remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. The intersection of the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions forms a taxonomy table with twenty-four separate cells (Table 2.6).

Using the taxonomy table to ascertain teaching objectives, activities, and assessments provides a "clear, concise, visual representation of a particular course or unit" (Krathwohl, 2002, p.218). The taxonomy table enables educators to examine relative emphases and curriculum connections, to identify the missed educational assignments, and to decide where and how to improve their curriculum plan and instructions delivery.

Table 2.6: Taxonomy table

The knowledge dimension	The cognitive process dimension					
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyse	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual knowledge						
B. Conceptual knowledge						
C. Procedural knowledge						
D. Metacognitive knowledge						

Source: adapted from Anderson and Krathwohl (2001)

A dramatic contribution of Bloom's taxonomy is that its cognitive dimensions has become the conventional framework underpinning Western education systems (Cheng, 2011). The innovations on Western pedagogical discourse have developed, based on the clarification of educational objectives by the Bloom's taxonomy. Hinett (2002) believed that reflection is a way of thinking about learning and can assist individual learners understand what, how, and why they learn. Goel and Sharda (2004) suggested that, flexible curricula aiming to engage engineering students towards high cognitive

levels should be employed, so as to foster students' learning ability development in creative thinking, critical analysis, and innovative problem-solving.

Bloom's taxonomy and its revised version have been applied and extended to a variety of situations. The revised taxonomy includes specific verbs linked with each level of the cognitive process dimension, hence that, the revised taxonomy provides a more powerful instrument to help design lesson plans (Forehand, 2012). Ramirez (2017) advocated that it is important to assess the quality of learning at early stages before moving onto more complex cognitive levels. Wang and Farmer's (2008) empirical study on the adult education in China enables them to argue that, teaching higher-order thinking skills to Chinese adult students, such as analysis and evaluation, might widen their horizon and engage them in open learning. Besides the theoretical developments of the Bloom's taxonomy and its practical applications, enhanced student engagement also supports them to step onto higher cognitive level of learning.

2.3.2.2 Student engagement

Astin (1984) proposed his developmental theory of college student involvement, which was widely endorsed as a straightforward and universally used model in pedagogical discourses in relations to the students' academic achievement and developmental outcomes (Heiberger & Harper, 2008). Astin (1984, p. 297) defined student involvement, which he later named student engagement, as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that student devotes to the academic experience". Five tenets could be used to measure the level of involvement under particular circumstance (Astin, 1984). Table 2.7 indicates the illustration and definition of the five tenets.

Table 2.7: Five tenets for student involvement theory

Tenet	Definitions
Tenet 1	Engagement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy;
Tenet 2	Engagement occurs along a continuum (One student may be more engaged than others. Individual student is engaged in different activities to differing extents);
Tenet 3	Engagement has both quantitative and qualitative features;
Tenet 4	The amount of student learning and development connected with an educational programme, is directly related to the degree of the quality and quantity of student engagement in the programme;
Tenet 5	The effectiveness of any educational policy and practice is directly related to the extent of that policy or practice to increase student engagement.

Source: adapted from Astin (1984)

By using the learning process questionnaire (LPQ) developed by Biggs (1987), surface, deep, and achieving approaches of learning are distinguished. Table 2.8 below defines the motives and strategies associated with different learning approaches, which reflect the extent or degree of student engagements into their academic studies.

Table 2.8: Motives and strategies associated with learning approaches

Approaches	Motive	Strategy
Surface	Surface motive is instrumental in the sense that its primary aim is to satisfy requirements in a minimalist fashion.	Surface strategy is reproductive because it targets the bare essentials and reproduces through rote learning.
Deep	Deep motive is intrinsic study that actualises interest and competence in particular academic subjects.	Deep strategy is meaningful because it involves reading widely, and interrelating with prior knowledge.
Achieving	Achieving motive is based on competition and ego-enhancement seeking to obtain highest grades regardless of whether the subject matter is interesting or not.	Achieving strategy involves organising time and working space by behaving as a model student.

Source: Biggs (1987, p.11)

The surface approach adopts different forms of extrinsic motivation to balance avoiding failure against working too hard. Under this circumstance, student only does

the required and compulsory schoolwork and no more. The deep approach is based on intrinsic motivation, which is likely to guide the student going beyond the boundaries of prescribed work. The achieving approach is connected with the adoption of a particular type of extrinsic motivation, ego enhancement through good grades, where careful attention to the prescribed task requirements is needed (Biggs, 1987).

With empirical studies on the correlation of student grades and different approaches adopted, Ainley (1993) concluded that the different approaches adopted by students with similar general ability, are directed to different styles of engagement in learning, and thereby they display significant differences in school achievement. Sun and Richardson (2012) administered a comparative study on the perceptions of approaches to studying in higher education, between Chinese and British postgraduates in several British business schools. Their findings indicate Chinese students are less likely exhibiting deep approaches to studying. The reasons may lie at that, the Chinese postgraduate students are newcomers to the British one year master's programme, being less able to engage themselves with the "content and academic demands" (ibid, p. 312). The perceptive difference on learning approaches between Chinese students and their British counterparts might disappear, under the circumstances of undertaking undergraduate programmes in the UK, which require longer time period of studies (Sun & Richardson, 2012).

Marks (2000, p.155) conceptualised engagement as a psychological process, specifically, "the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning", which involves both emotional and behavioural participation in the learning process. Marks's (2000) conception on engagement is basically congruent with some other researchers' definitions, such as students involvement with school (Finn, 1989, 1993), the "psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p.12), and the students' interest and emotional involvement with school together with their

motivation to learn (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996).

Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) defined student engagement as a multifaceted construct, which unites its behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components in a meaningful way. Behavioural engagement is related to student conduct and on-task behaviour (Karweit, 1989). Emotional engagement is related to student attitudes, interests, and values (Eccles, 1983), while cognitive engagement to the motivational goals and self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 1990).

Student engagement is an important facet of the students' school experience, due to its logic relationship with academic achievement and optimal student development (Marks, 2000). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a strongly positive relationship between engagement and student performance across diverse populations (Finn, 1989, 1993; Finn & Rock, 1997; Marks, 2000). Beyond that, the relationship between student engagement and academic outcomes is an ongoing cycling process (Finn, 1993). High-levelled school engagement results in academic success, which reciprocally influences the affective dimension of engagement with school, such as valuing, belonging, and attribution, thereby enhances the likelihood of future engagement.

2.3.2.3 Emerging technology in learning

Gloeckler (2008) termed the group of student population as net generation who were born between the year of 1980 and 2000 and grew up in a world with the changing culture and the explosive technology revolutions. Black (2010, p.95) described the "net generation" students as "digital natives" who heavily rely on technology, acquire information instantly, and use many technological tools for their daily life and communication purpose. Using variety of digital devices fluently, students of net generation have easy access to vast information by internet whenever and wherever they like (McAlister, 2009; Worley, 2011), which makes them "the most informed generation in history" (Junginger, 2008, p. 3). This section is to review the influence

brought onto pedagogical changes by the emerging technologies applied to the teaching and learning domain.

Because students from net generation are becoming technologically advanced, Worley (2011, p. 33) believed that "understanding the different attitudes, motivations, and approaches to learning by this new generation in the classroom is essential to enhance learning". Considering the impacts of applying emerging technology to educational settings and the characteristics of technological savvy of the net generation, Worley (2011) suggested the teaching strategies should adjust accordingly, by incorporating technology application into the course design and delivery, providing on-line teaching tools and materials, and allowing students to submit their assignments on line and to communicate via emails and social media.

Edutainment, another concept arising with the net generation, refers to the combination of education and entertainment in the learning process (Corona, Perrotta, Polcini, & Cozzarelli, 2011; Corona, Cozzarelli, Palumbo, & Sibilio, 2013). Relying heavily on knowledge transmission by visual material and other interactive formats, edutainment could help learners engage into their studies informally and inexpensively, by taking advantage of technology to make knowledge readily available and easily referenced (Corona et al., 2011; Corona et al., 2013). Effective learning outcomes that include student engagement, their motivation to learn, enjoyable learning experiences, and a desire of more learning and knowledge application, could be achieved by edutainment (Makarius, 2017).

Makarius (2017) advocated the appropriate edutainment technology should be carefully introduced to cater for the learning aims and goals, in particular, the numbers of animations, videos, and features should be cautiously inserted into an exact task of teaching activity. Schultz and Quinn (2014) suggested involving students in designing the edutainment class, which may lead to self-motivated and self-directed studies with better learning achievements.

The application of emerging information technologies by students, educators, and the educational organisations grows continuously. Researchers have started to check empirically if social media, multimedia, and other digital technologies can be best used in enhancing student engagement and other educational purposes (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011).

From an empirical study on how student engagement with on-line educational videos is affected by approaches to produce them, Guo, Kim and Rubin (2014) stated that, for the purpose of maximising student engagement, instructors must design their video classes specifically with the characteristics of being short, with more personal feel, enthusiastic instructors, and an emphasis on first-watch experience. Some scholars, including Heiberger and Harper (2008), Junco et al. (2011), and Junco (2012), discovered that using Twitter and Facebook effectively in educationally relevant events, can increase student engagement and improve their academic achievements, as a result, the controlled social media can be utilised as educational tools and help students reach the desired college outcomes. Another interesting finding by Wu (2015) indicates that, the social media and other alternative on-line learning tools universally adopted by British universities, could diminish significantly the Chinese students' frustration and stress on the threshold of their transition into the changed academic context. The reason may lie in that, Chinese students prefer to take on-line staff-student communication mode, rather than face-to-face talks at the initial stage of their academic adaptation in the UK, considering their need-to-improve oral English and the existing power distance (Hofstede, 1997) with academics.

In curriculum development practice, Leigh, Rosen, Charnely, Howarth and Gillaspy (2016) advocated that, embedding digital technology at the development phase of the curriculum, enables students to immerse themselves into the real world experience. Sharples et al. (2015) argued that understanding how an emerging technology best supports the pedagogical process is important, rather than adopting it simply because it is new. Following this, Leigh et al. (2016) made a list of newly emerging

technologies or applications (See Appendix 2), including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, Snapchat, Survey Tools, and so forth, which can be embedded into each stage of the four key concepts of curriculum design (Biggs, 2003).

Nevertheless, some critiques on edutainment and emerging technology voiced concerns on the imbalance between fun and learning in classrooms (Black, 2010; Okan, 2003; Worley, 2011). These critiques include the elimination of hands-on learning practice between academics and students, the neglect of real meaning and purpose of learning, the sense of loneliness by using technology daily, and the loss of basic skills in spelling and maths, and so forth. Makarius (2017) acknowledged that, regardless of being presented through edutainment, the teaching contents per se are more important, as edutainment is only a medium to transfer the contents to learners and engage them in an innovative way.

2.3.2.4 Culturally responsive pedagogy

Within a multi-cultural learning environment, students from minority cultures face specially self-esteem threats from the dominant culture (Erickson, 1987). When looking into minority students' performance at schools, Cummins (1986, p. 23) found that the "insecurity and ambivalence" from minority group "about the value of their own cultural identity as result of their interactions with the dominant groups", might lead to their school academic incompetence. Quite similarly, Newmann et al. (1992) recognised that students with minority cultural background may feel excluded, when their school curriculum and extracurricular practice do not take their unique experience into account. In order to avoid the academic incompetence and psychological exclusion from minority students, Erickson (1987) believed culturally responsive pedagogy is necessarily to be introduced to transform student alienation into memberships in schools.

Gay (2013, p. 53) made a definition of culturally responsive pedagogy as a personal and professional developmental process, advocating for "teaching to and through

cultural diversity to improve the achievement of ethnically diverse students". Gay's (2013) definition is concerned with the aims and target of the culturally responsive pedagogy but not with the operationalisation in practice. Actually, studies in relation to the concept of the cultural difference indicate that, the academic performance of students from diverse cultural backgrounds would improve, if schools and educators attempt to conduct their classroom instructions in a way responsive to the student's original culture (Phuntsog, 1999). Though classroom instructions taking cultural factors into account are illustrated in a number of different ways, such as culturally compatible (Jordan, 1984), culturally responsive (Erickson, 1987), culturally congruent (Au & Kawakami, 1994), and culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), the wording of culturally responsive pedagogy is accepted and used in the literature review for this research.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is to accommodate cultural diversity or where international students' previous learning norms differ. Nevertheless, Stier (2003) noticed that, international students might view their overseas study as an opportunity of experiencing new way of learning, and developing new skills and intercultural competence. International students would rather study at home if they are offered with same knowledge in the same way or approaches, because during their overseas studies, there is "educational benefit in detecting differences between here and there" (Stier, 2003, p.79). For a university dedicated to attracting international students, equipping its academics with knowledge concerning cultural learning style is necessary (Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Moreover, Biggs (2003) advocated an approach of "teaching for education", which focuses on the similarities rather than differences to refine the appropriate learning behaviours and practice for all students, no matter what kind of cultural backgrounds they have.

In the practice of delivering culturally responsive teaching in a multicultural classroom, Wu (2015) proposed that, an appreciation of pluralism of cultures and values contributes to the formation of an open and positive attitude towards classroom

engagement and intercultural learning, when selecting course resources and designing learning tasks. Cole, David and Jiménez (2016) suggested that for the sake of operationalising culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers or educators should get to know the students themselves not just their culture. It is consistent with the opinions from Kitchen (2005) and Reynolds (2011) that good relationship could be an effective tool overcoming the tension from students, especially when the teaching academics are from the host culture while students are minorities or from overseas.

However, Han et al. (2014) thought that the courses structure in HEIs does not allow academics to have more time and space for the relationship building with students. Alternatively, in order to manage a culturally diverse group, professional academics are not only enthusiastic about their subject knowledge but also capable to provide good rapport, which require them to modify their teaching behaviours, such as slow-paced teaching, unambiguous instructions, using cross cultural examples, and increasing thinking time (Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Echoing this, Cole et al. (2016) advocated that frequent paraphrasing, tapping into students' expertise, and using on-line resources, are manifestations of a mature culturally responsive educators, who can act as the agency in improving the students' academic achievements and their overall well-being (Banks, 2002; Howard, 2003).

Sleeter (2012) acknowledged the potential threats of marginalisation of culturally responsive pedagogy, because it has been replaced universally by standardised curriculum and pedagogy. The persistence from teaching academics, few concerns on the connection between culturally inclusive pedagogy and student achievements, and the fear of losing "hegemony" from Western elites and "Whites societies", evoke the trend (ibid, p. 562). The evidence based research should be developed to redefine the connection between the culturally responsive pedagogy and the students' academic outcomes. Furthermore, there is a need to educate stakeholders, such as the students' parents, academics, and education leaders to be informed of what culturally responsive pedagogy is, and what it looks like when being delivered in classrooms.

Learning other cultures and embracing difference when teaching students under standardised curriculums(Gunn & King, 2015), is actually an effective way of developing culturally responsive pedagogy.

2.3.3 Pedagogical comparison

International mindedness, knowledge about global issues, awareness of cultural differences, and critical thinking capabilities to conduct analysis and elicit solutions are prerequisite for a successful international education (Hill, 2012). Having reviewed the Chinese and British pedagogies separately, critical thinking seems salient as one of the pedagogical difference between the two. This section elaborates on further analysis of the comparisons between Chinese and British pedagogies with the purpose of finding more pedagogical distinctions. Besides critical thinking, other pedagogical factors of independent learning, group work, and academic writing are identified. These factors related to students' learning and assessment are occupying the central position of pedagogical distinctions, which may heavily impact upon the Chinese students' academic studies and their acculturation.

2.3.3.1 Critical thinking

According to Norris and Ennis (1989), critical thinking means thinking reasonably and reflectively, in order to decide what to believe or what to do. As shown in Section 2.3.1, Confucianism ascribes educational success to hard working and perseverance, rather than intelligence or cognitive abilities (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Wan, 2001). Critique is not privileged and advocated under Confucian heritage culture, accompanying this view of accumulative construction of learning achievements (Turner , 2006).

International students relying on rote learning pedagogy may find it difficult, though beneficial, to adapt to the interactive teaching style and critical thinking approach to learning in Western universities (Bell, 2016). Under Confucian heritage culture, where respects for teachers and published textbooks predominate over enquiries and doubts,

being critical is interpreted as showing disrespects and challenging authorities (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Insightful critique is only reserved and presented cautiously by those who have completed learning with excellence (Turner , 2006).

Durkin (2011, p. 282) illustrated that the Western-style academic critiques and debate are perceived by many Chinese students as "insensitive and unnecessarily offensive", as a result, there is no impetus for them to embrace the mindset of critical thinking and argumentation. The reason might lie in the genuine dislike of the polarised style debate, risk aversion from losing face, the pressure to be consistent with other members of their cultural group, and the perception of little usefulness of the critical thinking and debating skills when they return to China (Durkin, 2011).

Neither embracing the Western approach entirely nor rejecting it fully when being involved in the academic debate, Chinese students favour the empathetic and constructive thinking (Thayer-Bacon, 1993) and conciliatory reasoning (Orr, 1989) which value relationship maintenance over posing one's opinion onto others. With the attempts to find a solution, Durkin (2011) introduced a theoretical concept of "the middle way" to interpret the Chinese students' mindset and perception on academic debate, which merges the best qualities of both conciliatory dialogue advocated within Chinese culture, and the "wrestling" debate after critical thinking within Western culture. By this means, the expectations around academic debate from both Chinese students and their UK academics can move closer, and the Chinese students' capabilities of critical thinking can be enhanced.

2.3.3.2 Independent learning

According to Hockings, Thomas, Ottaway and Jones (2018, p. 146), independent learning, as one of the cornerstones of UK higher education, is a "key feature of university education". Xu and Roddy (2019) believed that independent learning is perceived as a key factor under the British higher education system. Chinese students should preview their lecture slides, regurgitate what they have learned from lectures,

and read the recommended reference materials independently.

Marshall and Mathias (2016) found that time management is the most difficult academic challenge for many Chinese students who have just progressed into undergraduate studies within an overseas university. They feel lost and shocked when they are aware of managing their studies on their own. Chinese students have few experience of being independent in both living and learning. Furthermore, they somewhat resist independent learning which is believed not helpful for examinations. However, under Western pedagogy, learning is not only concerned with classroom activities, but also with the independent and self-directed knowledge discovery without guidance from academics (Marshall & Mathias, 2016).

From the cultural and pedagogical perspectives, the universal acceptance of teacher centred pedagogical activities may lead Chinese students to expect academics to rule their learning process (Guo, 2015), and to give concern to the instructions of "how to do" from academics (Hofstede, 1991). The subservient role of students under Chinese pedagogy hinders them from becoming independent learners. Chinese students require some time to appreciate the style of independent learning within the British higher education context (Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Li et al. (2017) suggested before leaving their home country, Chinese students may benefit from some training on the basics of how to live independently.

2.3.3.3 Group work

The entanglement of Chinese pedagogy with Western discourse has lend that "more interactive approaches of pair and group work are not unusual" in Chinese universities (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006, p. 8). In spite of these previous experiences, some Chinese students still believe they should learn from academics rather than their peers, because there are pedagogical problems in group work such as communication issues, unequal group commitment (Trahar & Hyland, 2011; Turner, 2009), cultural stereotypes, language incompetence, and no training for participation skills, which could challenge

international students (De Vita, 2007). However, the culturally mixed group work proves to be an appropriate pedagogical tool to encourage intercultural interaction between host and international students (Johan & Rienties, 2016), and a good means to realise internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask, 2008).

Hu and Smith (2011) believed the role of monitoring the students learning in students' group work and providing information and intervention when needed, is important for academics. Mittelmeier, Rienties, Tempelaar and Whitelock (2018) suggested interventions from academics, such as in-depth inductions or icebreaker activities, may dissipate social tensions and benefit less active students in group work. Echoing this, Xu and Roddy (2019, p. 98) agreed that, the academics' intervention into group work ensures Chinese students get to know other group members, and also makes them "aware of the expectations on group work from the academics". Group work, as one of the pedagogical approaches adopted in the intercultural learning, benefits Chinese students their intercultural communication skills and critical thinking capabilities enhancement, in a facilitative environment with support from their academics and interactive contact with different cultures (Wang, 2012).

2.3.3.4 Academic writing

Academic writing does not equal to the English proficiency. It is related to how to organise the structure of essays and theses, develop the written works in a logical way, make source citation and referencing properly, and how academic language is used for essays and theses, all of which may result in difficulties for the international students to be understood, and even cause them the psychological frustration (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Chinese students' weakness in academic writing is derived from a relative lack of emphasis on developing English writing within Chinese pedagogy (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Chinese students may use an inductive pattern to present ideas that develops from background information to the main points, which is easily misunderstood by

British academics who might expect to see these points at the forefront. Jin and Cortazzi (2006) argued that Chinese students are unfamiliar with British academics' expectation on written assessment, with the required critical responses, and with the style of presenting ideas in academic work.

Another typical example of pedagogical difference in academic writing, Edwards and Ran (2006) highlighted that British academics should pay particular attention to the issue of plagiarism that Chinese students may easily commit. Though plagiarism is perceived as being morally wrong and a violation to original authors within the British higher education setting, Chinese students are commonly apt to adopt it as a coping strategy for their early academic writing works, since it is universally accepted in the Chinese pedagogy. Under such circumstances, "explicit instruction on referencing and support for paraphrasing" from academics to Chinese students necessitate (Edwards & Ran, 2006, p. VII).

2.3.4 Section summary

This section of Chinese and British pedagogies has addressed the influencing factors to Chinese pedagogy, for example, Confucianism and Chinese culture, and explored the reasons why the paradox of Chinese students being passive learner but with great academic achievement. It has also enumerated and illustrated theories prevailing in the British pedagogy, which include Bloom's taxonomy, student engagement tenets, the cultural inclusive pedagogy, and the influence from emerging technologies onto the Western approach of teaching and learning. Having compared the distinctions between Chinese and British pedagogies, the pedagogical factors, such as critical thinking, independent learning, group work, and academic writing were identified. These pedagogical factors are central to Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into their academic studies in the British higher education context, which could develop into a research theme of learning and assessment for this study.

2.4 Intercultural learning

The campus presence of international students "does not automatically trigger cross-culture learning" (De Vita, 2001, cited from Shannon-Little, 2012, p.265). The authentic cultural learning for international students must go through the real "experiences of cross-cultural interaction that involve real tasks, and emotional as well as intellectual participation"(De Vita & Case, 2003, p.388), rather than a merely one-sided adjustment and adaptation to the dominant host culture in universities (Thom, 2010), and rather than positioning "home" students in the centre of teaching and learning approaches, whereas international students on the periphery to adopt the "home" contexts of knowledge and behaviours (Ryan, 2012). Besides the influence from pedagogical factors, this section will review the emerging issues within intercultural learning environment, though all of these factors or issues are related to the Chinese students' academic studies in the UK.

2.4.1 Cultural synergy

As two well-known scholars in the fields of intercultural contacts and communication, Jin and Cortazzi (1998, 2002, 2016) advocated that, cultural synergy should be introduced into the intercultural teaching and learning settings. Jin & Cortazzi (2016, p.9) described cultural synergy as that, "in which participants, culturally, may be both learners and teachers of each other and all can extend their repertoires of ways of learning". Hence that, teachers or academics have a positive learning attitude to learn from and with international and local students; equally, different groups of students learn, understand, and appreciate each other's culture and interpretations from each other, so as to formulating a status of cultural synergy with no threats to loss of their own culture identity (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002).

Sharing similar views, Zhao and Bourne (2011) attributed the process of intercultural adaptation to be two-way and reciprocal, within their research of the adaptation process between Chinese Mainland students and their UK academics and peer

students in a British MBA programme. Likewise, Ryan (2012, p. 287) advocated that transcultural learning in international education fields should focus on "reciprocal learning", rather than a process of "one-way transaction".

In order to reach a status of cultural synergy within an intercultural learning environment, Jin and Cortazzi (2002, 2013, 2016) suggested that the prevailing student-centred teaching and learning should be developed to engage with cultures of learning systematically. The conception of cultures of learning includes "learning about learning" and put emphasis on the needs for all participants, either the academics, administrative officers, or international and home students in higher education, to learn "about, from, and with each other's cultures of learning" (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016, p.5). Engaging in cultures of learning draws attention to the different culture content and emphases of learning brought by students and teachers from their diverse cultural backgrounds. Hence that, the attitudes, beliefs, and values concerning learning methods, recognition on the standard of academic works, and expectations of classrooms roles, relationships, interaction activities between the participants, can be learned from each other, under the concept of cultures of learning.

Jin and Cortazzi (2016) also advocated that curiosity, modesty, and respect for others are required, during the process of cultures of learning. When students realise that their teachers are learning from them, they feel being valued and can develop their self-esteem, dignity, and confidence. As depicted by Jin and Cortazzi (2016), practising cultures of learning within HEIs, benefits the stakeholders' personal and professional development, cultivates their communication skills in intercultural relationships, and formulates the cultural synergy between learners and teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Jin and Cortazzi (2016) have studied cultural synergy since early 1990 and proposed valuable practices in the implementation of cultural synergy. However, the theoretical foundation of the concept of cultural synergy seems scant. In other words, they did not combine the existing theories about intercultural studies and develop a theoretical

framework for cultural synergy.

2.4.2 Journey of learning

Prior to their overseas studies, many international learners, including Chinese students, may not be aware of the difference between the new learning and teaching style that they are going to experience, and their own which have been set up during their previous schooling. Once they realise that a different learning style is being applied, specifically at the start of their overseas learning journey, some of them tend to be afraid of the new challenges, doubt about their own learning competence, and may lose their learning confidence (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016).

Gu (2011) claimed that studying abroad is a personal journey, which means different Chinese students might undergo different emotional and behavioural context. However, by analysing a number of metaphors on learning provided by Chinese students and academics, Jin and Cortazzi (2011, p. 87) found that, from the cultural perspectives of the Chinese participants, they share the common viewpoint of "learning is a journey", which is "long, hard, difficult, continuous, and endless". Feedback on metaphors of learning from different ethnical students testifies the proposition that learning is a journey but the emphases are different (Cortazzi & Jin, 2012). Chinese students emphasised that learning is an extreme journey "from hell to heaven", which can be interpreted as a process of "pain, bitterness, happiness, and sweetness". British students tend to perceive their learning journey as "an interesting exploration, a surprising adventure, and a roller coaster ride" (ibid, p.8).

Jin and Cortazzi (2011) advocated that being awareness of metaphors on the Chinese students' journey of overseas learning benefits Chinese students themselves. The learning process starting from the "hell" of difficult moments, moving through the "bitter-sweet" stage, to the "heaven" of successful achievements, enables Chinese students to concentrate on assignments and other learning tasks, to cope with the feeling of being unfamiliar psychologically, and to attain encouragement and

improvement for their adaptation into their studies in the UK (ibid).

2.4.3 Student learning expectations

Gu and Schweisfurth (2006, p.82) identified three principal motivations for Chinese students to study in the UK, "obtaining a higher degree and/ or qualification, enriching themselves for a better career, and improving English and learning knowledge". Instead of the intrinsic interests in knowledge learning, expectations of the degree certificate orientation, immediate employment for fashionable and well-paid jobs, catering for the demands from families, and achieving high grades beyond others to have more "face" (Li &Wegerif, 2014), make their overseas learning go beyond the scope of its meaningfulness (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Fawcett and Brenner (2013) explained that these utilitarian motivations are likely to be encouraged by their parents, who hold the views that gaining a degree qualification overseas adds value onto their children's career development in the future.

Despite the diversity of the learning purpose and expectations from Chinese students in the British higher education settings, they may find their academics' expectations different from theirs, due to the cultural and pedagogical reasons. Zhou et al. (2011) addressed the issue that acceptance of authority commonly prevails in the Chinese traditional education environment, while autonomy of learning and critical evaluation are highly encouraged in the British classrooms. The mismatched cross-cultural expectations exist in intercultural classrooms (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998), and may easily result in a difficult start for Chinese learners (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006).

However, the expectations and motivation from learners may vary when their learning continues. Pilcher, Cortazzi and Jin (2011) found that, after continual meetings or supervision sessions between learners and their supervisors for their postgraduate dissertation writing, the learners' utilitarian motivation for a degree qualification and afterwards a fashionable job might alter to an authentic educational motivation.

2.4.4 Staff student relationships

The growing number of Chinese students appearing in the British university campuses arouses interests in the studies of the relationships and interactive behaviours between Chinese students and their academics. Aspland (1999) believed that academics expect collegiality with students, but to keep the professional independence and initiatives from either party. In contrast, Chinese students tend to remain a hierarchic distance from academics, meanwhile, expect a professional closeness (Edwards & Ran, 2006). The hierarchic distance away from academics may be derived from the power distance at national level (Hofstede, 1986). However, Nield (2004, p. 193) indicated that, for Chinese students in the UK, "the student-teacher relationship is especially important", and "the qualities of friendship and empathy are cherished". Xu and Roddy (2019) believed that through the build-up of interpersonal relationships to nurture cultural affinity, a good and professional relationship could be developed between Chinese students and their academics.

Jones, Sutcliffe, Bragg and Harris (2016) found that, more contact time between academics and students, either informally or formally, is highly expected and prioritised from both home and international students. More contact enables academics and students to know each other personally, and appreciate their home cultures mutually, to reach a conciliatory status (Durkin, 2011). However, Han et al. (2014) believed that in contemporary higher education, time and space are not preserved in the course design and curricular structure for academics to keep in touch with students regularly, and develop a good relationship. Edwards and Ran (2006) suggested that, teaching in small groups would encourage the students' participation, diminish the students' anxieties associated with communication problems, and result in more opportunities for staff student relationships development. Despite this, Wu (2015) claimed that, the process from slow learning at the outset to reach a stage of efficient and effective learning, allows for relationship improvements to be grounded on mutual trust (Moorman et al., 1993; Bell et al., 2014) and tolerance between

Chinese students and academics.

Pilcher et al. (2011) inspected the interaction process between Chinese postgraduates and their supervisors for their dissertation completion in British universities. Chinese students make changes gradually to adapt their ideas to the expectations of their supervisors, who impose upon them directions or ask them to be more independent in dissertation writing. In the meanwhile, through interaction between Chinese students and their UK supervisors, behaviours from supervisors are gradually shaped by the learners' expectations. The supervisors become more patient, empathic, and responsible, in the course of supervising Chinese learners.

2.4.5 English proficiency

Most Chinese students studying in the West are considered diligent, co-operative, intelligent with a solid knowledge foundation, and studying with self-discipline and high motivation (Jin & Cortazzi, 1993). However, despite Chinese students' high achievement in tests and examinations, their initial language problems exist in speaking, listening, and writing at practical level, which may result in difficulties and academic barriers for them to engage in classrooms and other academic events (Jin & Cortazzi, 1995).

Cortazzi & Jin (1996) identified that the language proficiency problems for Chinese students mainly lie in listening comprehension, academic writing, and communication with local English speakers. Reflecting on Chinese students' academic studies, these problems may lead to difficulties for them in aligning with academics, taking notes, interacting with supervisors, and writing essays or theses by using an acceptable style of academic writing in the UK. Yen and Kuzma (2009) reported that, English language is perceived as one of the key obstacles to Chinese students during their life and studies in the UK, irrespective of that they commonly have the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test results with band 6.0 overall or equivalent, which are universally accepted by British universities as the language

criteria for international students to take undergraduate studies.

Although English teaching has been introduced to primary schools in China (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006), it is heavily affected by examinations in the junior and senior secondary schools. Indicated by the EF Education First (2002, cited in Fawcett & Brenner, 2013), the purpose of English learning in senior secondary school in China is to enable students to pass the English part of Gao Kao examination, the annual university entrance examination for undergraduate studies in China. The compulsory English test of Gao Kao put emphasis on English grammar, reading comprehension, translation ability, and vocabulary. As a result, only a small proportion of class time is designed for applying English in daily life for students' speaking skills development. While grammar rules and vocabulary may be developed sufficiently for Chinese students, their English communication practice in speaking, listening, and writing for academic purpose, are far less than that should be for Chinese senior secondary school graduates to transit smoothly into undergraduate studies in the UK.

Quan, Smailes and Fraser (2013) and Wu and Hammond (2011) observed that English language incompetency has an enormous impact upon the Chinese students' early stage of adaptation into UK education. International students with weak English capabilities are more likely to achieve academic incompetence, compared with the ones with higher levels of English proficiency (Zhou & Todman, 2009). In particular, Li, Chen and Duanmu (2010) indicated that the English writing ability is one of the significant predictors of the Chinese students' performance in their academic accomplishment. Beyond that, the not-fully-developed English language competency might be interpreted as "lack of criticality and complex thought" (Ryan, 2012, p.284). Another disadvantage, poor English oracy brings barriers to international students in forming and developing social relationships with home and other international students, which may results in their psychological loneliness and anxiety (Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson & Pisecco, 2002).

However, despite the negative impacts that may occur due to weak English, Gu and

Maley (2008, p. 236) reported that, "improved linguistic competence" is one of the key aspects of improvement during Chinese students' life and studies in the UK. For English language learning, Coleman (2004, p. 582) suggested that "extended immersion" into an English environment would enhance international students' English proficiency, particularly their oral-aural skills.

2.4.6 Classroom participation, anxiety, and reticence

Chinese students feel anxious and are reticent to engage themselves in classroom discussion and other works that require their participation, for instance, answering questions and offering comments upon request. Hofstede (2002, cited from Littrell, 2006) attributed the student reticence when interacting with academics to the inequality of expectations resulting from the large power distance between students and academics. China, where Chinese students are originally from, was categorised as a country with the culture dimension of large power distance (Hofstede, 1991). Asking questions in classrooms might be seen by Chinese students as challenging academics and showing disrespect to authorities.

Parris-Kidd and Barnett (2011) elucidated that the anxiety and reticence may derive from the students' unfamiliarity with the academics' dialogic approach to teaching. Culturally, Liu and Jackson (2011) argued that Chinese students' high anxiety and risk aversion, come from the worries of losing face in public if they fail to offer perfect answers. They are reluctant to stand out from their strongly coherent Chinese students group, since they are from a collective nation (Hofstede, 1991).

Jin and Cortazzi (2008) supplemented the facts that Chinese students tend to ask questions to academics after class, which may lead to their reticent performance in classrooms. They are brave enough to raise questions in class, but these should be worthwhile questions which take time for them to consider. In addition, since the time of lecturing is limited, the Chinese students may think that it is inconsiderate to other classmates if they ask personally focused questions, especially the ones which they

are not sure relevant and shared by others. Instead, listening carefully in classrooms with active mental activities in relation to the course content is perceived by Chinese students as the deepest approach of learning, rather than interruptions from time to time caused by asking questions. Jin and Cortazzi (2016) compared the preference for asking questions in class between Chinese and British students (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Preferences of asking questions in classrooms

Chinese	British
Ss prepare questions in mind but are reluctant to interrupt T, believing T may explain later and Ss learn by listening;	Ss ask spontaneously, knowing T will explain answers, believing T welcomes questions to promote discussion and learning through interaction;
Ask afterwards; this shows respect for T	Ask now; this shows respect for T and Ss
Ss think first to get initial understanding, using questions mainly for confirming understanding;	Ss ask as part of overall process of understanding, using questions for heuristic interaction;
Ask for authoritative confirmation by T	Ask for expansion by T and classmates
Ss ask on basis of knowledge	Ss asks to get basis of knowledge
Ask to know more	Ask in order to know

Source: Jin and Cortazzi (2016, p.7) (Ss = students; T = teacher)

Jin and Cortazzi (2016) advocated that, in order to encourage active classroom participation and meet the expectations from Chinese students and academics, the different role in their relationships during interactions and within the classroom activities, should be clearly clarified. Echoing this, Girardelli, Kelly, Chen, Zhou and Gu (2020) believed that both students and academics play a crucial role in affecting the students' intention for classroom participation.

2.4.7 Suggestions and summary

Jin and Cortazzi (2016) suggested that the academic, administrative, and technical staff in HEIs need to have intercultural awareness for their professional development. Within the intercultural teaching and learning settings, Baker (2012, p. 65) defined cultural awareness as "conscious understanding of the role culture plays" in cross

cultural communications, which covers "the culturally based norms, beliefs, and behaviours" of the participants' own and other cultures. Increased understanding of culture may result in successful intercultural communication. Going further, cultural awareness is "key to a successful cross-cultural negotiation" (Olotuah & Olotuah, 2018, p. 89) in any intercultural operations. Xu and Roddy (2019) believed that both academics and Chinese students should nurture cultural awareness and develop cultural affinity, to help Chinese students with their academic transition into the British higher education context.

Zhao and Bourne (2011) proposed two pedagogical recommendations to the British HEIs in relation to the Chinese students' intercultural academic adaptation. First, an unbiased pedagogical culture and assessment system should be established to support the Chinese students' intercultural learning in the process of their academic adaptation. Second, both Chinese students and their UK academics should develop their intercultural sensitivity and adaptation competence, by adding knowledge of each other's culture, improving a sense of orientation from the other party, and cultivating their intercultural communication skills.

From the academic achievement perspective, Chinese students do not perform a significant difference from the UK domiciled students at undergraduate level (Morrison, Merrick, Higgs, & Le Métais, 2005). Gu and Maley's (2008) empirical findings revealed that, despite various challenges and struggles, most Chinese students have managed to survive in the intercultural learning context, to meet the demands of the learning and living environments, and to adapt and develop gradually in the UK. Wu (2015) concluded that, the Chinese students' entry into a new academic context enables them to adopt new practices to minimise the contradictions, between their own learning expectations and abilities and the external demands upon them.

This section has reviewed the theory of cultural synergy (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016) and its concerns on the journey of learning and Chinese students' learning expectations within the intercultural learning settings. Afterwards, three factors of staff-student

relationships, English proficiency, and students' classroom participation within the intercultural learning environment, which appear relevant to the context of Chinese students' academic studies, were discussed. Though being peripheral to the academic studies compared with pedagogical factor, these three constructs, which are relevant to the intercultural learning environment, may develop into research themes to study the Chinese students' acculturation for this research project.

2.5 Theoretical framework development and formulated hypotheses

2.5.1 Theoretical framework and research themes

A theoretical framework is a collection of theory and models from the literature which underpins the research questions (Collis & Hussey, 2014). In order to guide this research project's proceedings to answer the research questions, a theoretical framework in relation to students' acculturation and its eight associated research themes, have been developed by synthesising the outcomes from reviewing the existing literature. Figure 2.5 below showcases the theoretical framework and its associated research themes for this research investigation.

Figure 2.5: Theoretical framework and research themes
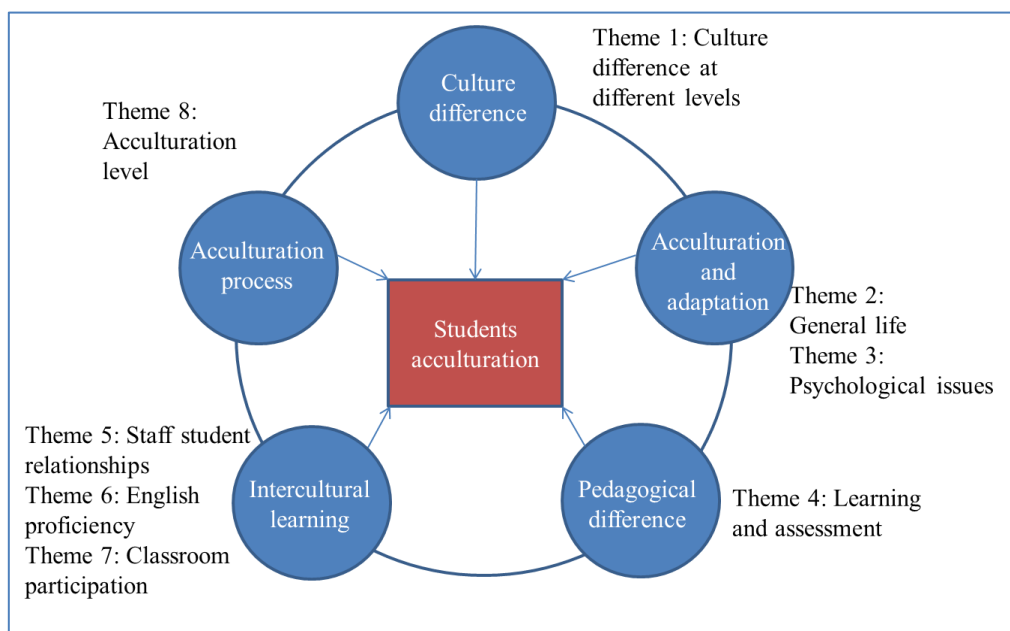
The framework incorporates five parts of theories that may affect the Chinese student's acculturation and adaptation during their life and studies in the UK. It incorporates the acculturation strategy that Chinese students may adopt and their adaptation outcomes, the cultural differences at national, organisational, and personal levels, the pedagogical distinctions between Confucian and British pedagogies, the acculturation process, and theories and practice that may apply to the intercultural learning environment in which Chinese students are involved.

Eight research themes are elicited from the existing theories to guide this research project for the follow-on works of data collection and data analysis. Implementing studies around these themes, which relate to and associate with the Chinese students' acculturation within the British higher educational context, attempts to provide answers to the research questions of this research investigation. The eight themes and their theory orientation are here reiterated.

The theme 1 of culture difference at different levels is derived from the analysis of cultural difference (Section 2.2) at national (Hofstede, 1991, 2003, 2009; House et al., 2001), organisational (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Denison et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2011), and personal levels (Bell et al., 2014; Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul,1984; Li et al., 2017; Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Though implicit, the factors of cultural rooted difference between the host and home society (Berry, 2005; Ward et al., 2001; Zhou et al., 2008) are crucial for Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation during their life and studies in Britain.

Further analyses around theme 1 in relation to Chinese students' acculturation and overall adaptation (within their general life, psychological issues, and academic studies) include the measures taken by Chinese students and other stakeholders to enhance their cultural awareness at national level, to implement intervention strategies at organisational level, and to promote cultural affinity at personal level, as a result, to help answer the research *Question 2*. These analyses are conducted mainly in the qualitative strand of this research project; however, the influence from Chinese

students' pre-UK learning organisations on their acculturation, could be investigated quantitatively through the variables of the recruitment channels that they choose for the entry into British universities, and the pre-departure training that they receive within their previous learning organisations in China.

Having claimed in Section 2.1.6, the theme 2 of general life corresponds to the sociocultural adjustment that Chinese students may commit in their social and daily life, while the theme 3 of psychological issues is related to the psychological adaptation that Chinese students may experience. The sociocultural and psychological adaptations (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 1996; Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 1996) are two acculturative outcomes from adopting a specific acculturation strategy (Berry, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2017).

The theme 4 of learning and assessment is elicited from the comparison of Chinese and British pedagogies, which includes the aspects of critical thinking (Durkin, 2011; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Turner, 2006), independent learning (Guo, 2015; Hofstede, 1991; Li et al., 2017; Marshall & Mathias, 2016), group work (De Vita, 2007; Hu & Smith, 2011; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Johan & Rienties, 2016; Leask, 2008; Mittelmeier et al., 2018; Trahar & Hyland, 2011; Wang, 2012; Xu & Roddy, 2019), and academic writing (Edwards & Ran, 2006; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003). This theme reflects the pedagogical issues that Chinese students may confront during their adaptation into academic studies.

The following three themes: theme 5 of staff-student relationships, theme 6 of English proficiency, and theme 7 of classroom participation, are identified from the section of intercultural learning (Section 2.4) as the influencing factors on the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation within the intercultural learning environment.

The theme 5 of staff student relationships stands for the approaches of interaction and communication between Chinese students and academics (Jones et al., 2016; Nield, 2004; Pilcher et al., 2011; Wu, 2015; Xu & Roddy, 2019), and their expectation

management (Aspland, 1999; Edwards & Ran, 2006). The theme 6 of English proficiency is a fundamental factor in supporting Chinese students with their academic studies and daily life in the UK (Coleman, 2004; Jin & Cortazzi, 1995; Quan et al., 2013; Wu & Hammond, 2011; Yen & Kuzma, 2009). The theme 7 of classroom participation considers the Chinese students' classroom engagement and performance (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016; Liu & Jackson, 2011; Parris-Kidd & Barnett, 2011).

Compared with the theme 4 of learning and assessment, which is elicited from the pedagogical factor impacting upon the Chinese students' academic studies, the theme 5, theme 6, and theme 7 are derived from the intercultural learning environments. However, since these four themes are all related to the Chinese students' academic adaptation in the UK, they can be combined with and formulated into a second order construct, which is labelled as academic studies. Joint with the research theme 1 of culture difference at difference levels, theme 2 of general life, and the theme 3 of psychological issues, the newly formulated construct of academic studies explores the Chinese students' overall acculturation.

The theme 8 of acculturation level reflects the extent to which Chinese students adapt into their life and studies, aggregating the outcomes of the above seven themes. This theme is drawn out of the reviews of Pedersen's (1995) five-stage acculturation process (Section 2.1.5) and theories of the learning journey of Chinese students within intercultural learning settings (Gu, 2011; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011) (See Section 2.4.2).

Based on the illustrations of the eight research themes, Table 2.10 below further clarifies their order levels and their key underlying literature.

Table 2.10: Research themes and their underlying literature

Themes	Theme level	Underlying literature
Theme 1: culture difference at different levels	First order	National level (Hofstede, 1991, 2003, 2009; House et al., 2001), organisational level (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Denison et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2011), and personal level (Bell et al., 2014; Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul,1984; Li et al., 2017; Marshall & Mathias, 2016)
Theme 2: general life	First order	Searle and Ward (1990); Ward (1996); Ward et al. (2001); Ward and Geeraert (2016); Ward and Kennedy (1994, 1996);
Theme 3: psychological issues	First order	Searle and Ward (1990); Ward (1996); Ward et al. (2001); Ward and Geeraert (2016); Ward and Kennedy (1994, 1996);
*Academics studies	Second oder	The theme of academic studies is composed of four themes studied: theme 4 of earning and assessment, theme 5 of staff student relationships, theme 6 of English proficiency, and theme 7 of classroom participation.
Theme 4: learning and assessment	First order	Critical thinking (Durkin, 2011; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Turner, 2006), independent learning (Guo, 2015; Hofstede, 1991; Li et al., 2017; Marshall & Mathias, 2016), group work (De Vita, 2007; Hu & Smith, 2011; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Johan & Rienties, 2016; Leask, 2008; Mittelmeier et al., 2018; Trahar & Hyland, 2011; Wang, 2012; Xu & Roddy, 2019), and academic writing (Edwards & Ran, 2006; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003).
Theme 5: staff student relationships	First order	Jones et al. (2016); Nield (2004); Pilcher et al. (2011); Wu (2015); Xu and Roddy (2019)
Theme 6: English proficiency	First order	Coleman (2004); Jin and Cortazzi (1995); Quan et al. (2013); Wu and Hammond (2011); Yen and Kuzma (2009)
Theme 7: classroom participation	First order	Jin and Cortazzi (2016); Liu and Jackson (2011); Parris-Kidd and Barnett (2011)
Theme 8: acculturation level	First order	Gu (2011); Jin and Cortazzi (2011); Pedersen's (1995).

* The adjustment in academic studies (AS), as a second order factor, is composed of four themes studied: Learning and assessment (LA), Staff student relationships (SSR), English proficiency (EP), and Classroom participation (CP).

2.5.2 Research hypotheses and measurement model

Collis and Hussey (2014) suggested that, if a theory or theories exist, the testable hypotheses could be developed within research. A hypothesis is a proposition or statement that can be tested about the relationship between two or more events, concepts, or variables (Saunders et al., 2016). Having defined the eight research themes, ten hypotheses are framed to test if the theories and related themes elicited from the literature are impacting the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation, and thereby, to formulate a measurement model for this research. These hypotheses are enumerated in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11: Hypotheses formulated for this research

Hypotheses	Related themes
H1：The acculturation level (AL) of three student groups is significantly different, who are going to study in the UK (Group 1), who have been studying in the UK within three months (Group 2), and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months (Group 3).Group 2's acculturation level is the lowest.	Acculturation level (AL)
H2：The acculturation level of Chinese students coming to the UK in groups from Sino-UK collaborative programmes is significantly higher than those coming individually.	Culture difference, Acculturation level
H3: The acculturation level of Chinese students who have received pre-departure training is significantly higher than those who have not.	Culture difference, Acculturation level
H4: * The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their general life adaptation.	The adjustment in Academic studies (AS), and General life (GL)
H5: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is negatively related to their adaptation experience on psychological issues.	The adjustment in Academic studies, and Psychological issues (PI)
H6: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their overall acculturation level.	The adjustment in Academic studies, and Acculturation level
H7: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life is positively related to their acculturation level.	General life , and Acculturation level
H8: The Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues is negatively related to their overall acculturation level.	Psychological issues, and Acculturation level
H9: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life	General life, The adjustment in

Hypotheses	Related themes
mediates positively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	Academic studies, and Acculturation level
H10: The Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues mediates negatively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	Psychological issues, The adjustment in Academic studies, and Acculturation level

* The adjustment in academic studies (AS), as a second order factor, is composed of four themes studied: Learning and assessment (LA), Staff student relationships (SSR), English proficiency (EP), and Classroom participation (CP).

Following the 3-stage approach adopted by Zhou et al. (2011), hypothesis could be drawn out to test the difference of acculturation levels from different Chinese student groups, rather than the five-stage acculturation process developed by Pedersen (1995) (Section 2.1.5 illustrates the reasons). The acculturation level of the three groups of Chinese students who are going to study in the UK (Group 1), who have been studying in the UK within three months (Group 2), and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months (Group 3), will be compared with to check if there are significant differences. Thus, Hypothesis 1is set up.

Hypothesis 1: the three student groups' acculturation level is significantly different, who are going to study in the UK (Group 1), who have been studying in the UK within three months (Group 2), and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months (Group 3).Group 2's acculturation level is the lowest.

Having reviewed the influence on Chinese students' acculturation from the organisational culture of their previous organisations, Zhou et al. (2011) found that the Chinese students coming in groups from Sino-UK collaborative programmes adapt smoother than those coming to the UK individually. Furthermore, Chinese students having received pre-departure training with the knowledge of the British culture and pedagogy are likely to attain a higher degree level of acculturation (Quan et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2011). Hypothesis 2 and 3 could be formulated to test the influence from the culture difference at organisational level.

Hypothesis 2: the acculturation level of Chinese students coming to the UK in groups from Sino-UK collaborative programmes is significantly higher than those

coming individually.

Hypothesis 3: the acculturation level of Chinese students who have received pre-departure training is significantly higher than those who have not.

Berry et al. (2006) ascribed school adjustment to one of the two main factors measuring the relationship between the sociocultural adaptation and acculturation, indicating the existence of relevance between the international students or ethnical minorities' school (academic) adjustment and how well they acculturate (acculturation level). According to Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi and von der Heidt (2016), the international students' transition into the local academic norms concerning research, assignments, and examinations, indicates their higher acculturation level and may lead them to more positive academic commitments.

A significant relationship prevails between the psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Ward et al., 1998; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). When studying the college students' acculturation, Berry et al. (2006) found that the psychological and sociocultural adaptations (including the academic adaptation) are empirically related, though the two are conceptually distinct. Better sociocultural adaptation may lead to better psychological adaptation (Berry, 1997, 2005). Academic achievement is negatively related to the psychological stress experienced by Chinese students (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006). Furthermore, international students' adaptation to a new educational environment may be impeded by issues that happen in their daily life, and the academic stress proves to be a significant predictor of their daily life stress (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

This research attempts to separate the academic (school) adaptation from the sociocultural adaptation as one of the acculturation outcomes for Chinese students studying in the UK, whose purpose is to pursue short term academic achievement. As a result, the relationships between their academic adaptation or adjustment, and their psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and overall acculturation level, need to be tested and clarified. Grounded on the literature review and the analyses

above, three hypotheses about the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies could be developed as Hypothesis 4-6.

Hypothesis 4: the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their general life adaptation.

Hypothesis 5: the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is negatively related to their adaptation experience on psychological issues.

Hypothesis 6: the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their overall acculturation level.

The psychological and sociocultural adaptations have been comprehensively tested to check their relationships with how well sojourners acculturate, namely, the acculturation level (Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006; Goh & Lopez, 2016; Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 1998; Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). However, the increasing mobility of international students has become a key feature of globalisation in the higher education sector (Knight, 2005). These student immigrants will experience cultural differences between their home and host cultures (Dutot & Lichy, 2019). The emerging technology and universally used social media may be used in enhancing student engagement (Junco et al., 2011) and diminishing psychological frustrations (Wu, 2015). These changes render it meaningful to re-check the two acculturative outcomes under the ever changing environments. This research studying the Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK, formulates two similar hypotheses to test the relationship between the Chinese students' acculturation level, and their adaptations in their general life and their experience of psychological issues.

Hypothesis 7: the Chinese students' adaptation in their general life is positively related to their acculturation level.

Hypothesis 8: the Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues is negatively related to their acculturation level.

There is a trend that the mediating factors are introduced in recent researches of acculturation. For instance, Ng, Tsang and Lian (2013) found social support and

sociocultural adaptation for Chinese Mainland students are two mediators between the integration strategy adopted and their psychological adaptation. In addition, the social connectedness with locals for Chinese students in the United States mediates the links between adherence to the American culture and their psychosocial adjustment (the psychological and sociocultural adjustments) (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). As for this research, Hypothesis 4 tests the effect of the relationship between the adjustment in academic studies (AS) and the adaptation in their general life (GL), and Hypothesis 7 between GL and acculturation level (AL). Since Hypothesis 6 is to check the direct effect between the relationship between AS and AL, it appears that AS has also indirect effect on AL with the mediator of GL in between. The student experience of psychological issues (PI) has the same possibility as GL to be a mediator between AS and AL. Thus, two hypotheses testing the indirect mediating effects of GL and PI between AS and AL, are proposed separately for this research.

Hypothesis 9: the Chinese students' adaptation in their general life mediates positively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.

Hypothesis 10: the Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues mediates negatively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.

Based on the above Hypotheses 4-10 formulated for this research, a proposed measurement model could be developed to guide the next steps of data collection and data analysis for this research investigation (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: The proposed measurement model for this study
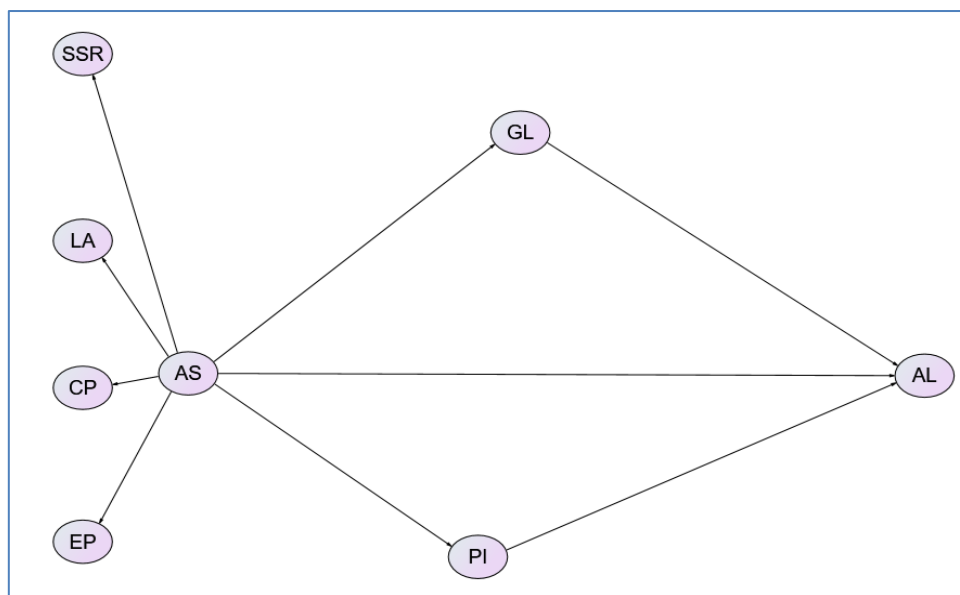
2.6 Chapter summary

The acculturation conceptualisation and relative acculturation models have been reviewed in this chapter. It indicates that, the integration strategy (Berry, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2017) should be adopted by Chinese students during their acculturation and adaptation into their life and studies in the UK, as integration is connected with the least psychological problems and sociocultural difficulties. The psychological and sociocultural adjustments are two acculturation outcomes to be considered (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2001).

This chapter also reviewed theories in relation to culture difference at national, organisational, and personal level. As for Chinese students in the British higher education, national culture difference inherited from their home country, specific group values abided by, and psychic distance away from their student peers and academics, impact their acculturative adaptation enormously. Measures are crucial for Chinese students and other stakeholders to be taken, to mutually enhance their cultural awareness at national level, to proactively implement intervention strategies at organisational level, and to promote cultural affinity actively at personal level.

The Chinese contemporary pedagogy is actively entangled with Western discourse in the course of the modernisation and industrialisation of China (Cheng & Xu, 2011). Having addressed the influential factors within the Chinese pedagogy and illustrated the theories prevailing in the British pedagogy, the two pedagogies were compared, and the distinctive pedagogical factors of critical thinking, independent learning, group work, and academic writing were identified. These pedagogical distinctions could develop into a research theme for this study: learning and assessment, which is central to Chinese students' adaptation into academic studies within the British higher education context.

Having reviewed the theories and literature in relation to the intercultural learning environment, three peripheral factors but relevant to the context of Chinese students' academic studies: staff-student relationships, English proficiency, and students' classroom participation, were discussed. Together with the pedagogical factor of learning and assessment, these factors related to the intercultural learning environment, may integrate into a research theme of academic adjustment for this research to check and assess the Chinese students' academic adaptation and acculturation.

After reviewing the relevant literature in relation to the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation, a theoretical framework was set up, eight research themes were identified, ten hypotheses were developed, and a proposed measurement model was formulated for this research. The next chapter of research philosophy and methodology is to decide how to implement this research project, based on these themes, hypotheses, and the measurement model developed from this chapter.

3. Research philosophy and methodological design

3.1 Introduction

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) emphasised that the research philosophy is the most impartant part of methodology, as it attempts to clarify and inform the research design. This chapter starts by evaluating a variety of research philosophies and the philosophical assumptions upon which they are based, and the various approaches to theory development that underlie the research progression. Afterwards, the most appropriate philosophical stance, research methodology, and research methods for this research, are justified. Issues about the validity and reliability of this study and the related research ethics are also explored.

It is noted that the words research paradigm, research philosophy, and worldview, are often interrelated in the literature. The concept of the research paradigm is originally expounded by Kuhn, who believed that a paradigm is a set of "generalisations, beliefs, and values of a community of specialists" (Kuhn, 1970, cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p.35). According to Collis and Hussey (2014, p. 43), a research paradigm is "a philosophical framework that guides how scientific research should be conducted". They suggested that, the particular research paradigm adopted within a piece of research, is determined not only by the philosophical assumptions, but by the nature of the research question(s) per se. A paradigm goes further than designing the philosophical framework, and guides how the research is conducted and implemented.

Philosophy is delineated as "a set or system of beliefs (stemming from) the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence" (Waite and Hawker, 2009, p.685, cited in Collis and Hussey, 2014). Similarly, Saunders et al. (2016, p. 124) defined research philosophy as a system of beliefs and assumptions "about the development of knowledge" or that guide inquiries (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Although Saunders et al. (2016, p.132) argued that the research paradigm is "another dimension" relating to "ideological orientation" to differentiate between different philosophies，

they also incorporated positivism and interpretivism as parts of the major philosophies.

The third word "worldview" in relation to "philosophical assumptions about knowledge" that inform the researchers' studies was introduced and favoured by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017, p.35), who also admitted that the word of "paradigm" can be synonymously used with "worldview".

For the sake of consistency and coherence, the word "research philosophy" is used in this study to guide and inform the research implementation. Table 3.1 summarises the comparison outcomes among the three conceptions.

Table 3.1: Conceptual comparison among research paradigm, philosophy, and worldview

	Advocated by	Definition	Roles
Research paradigm	Collis and Hussey (2014)	A philosophical framework	Designing philosophical framework; Guiding the research's implementation.
Research philosophy	Saunders et al. (2016)	A system of beliefs and assumptions	Development knowledge; Guide enquiries.
Worldview	Creswell and Plano Clark (2017)	Philosophical assumptions about knowledge	Synonymously used with "paradigm".

This chapter follows the order of Saunders et al.'s (2016) research onion diagram (Figure 3.1 below) to be carried out, moving from outer layers of the philosophy and approach to theory development, to the inner layers of methodological choice, methods (strategies) and the time frame (time horizon), and moving eventually to the core of the onion, the techniques and procedures for data collection and data analysis.

Figure 3.1: The research onion
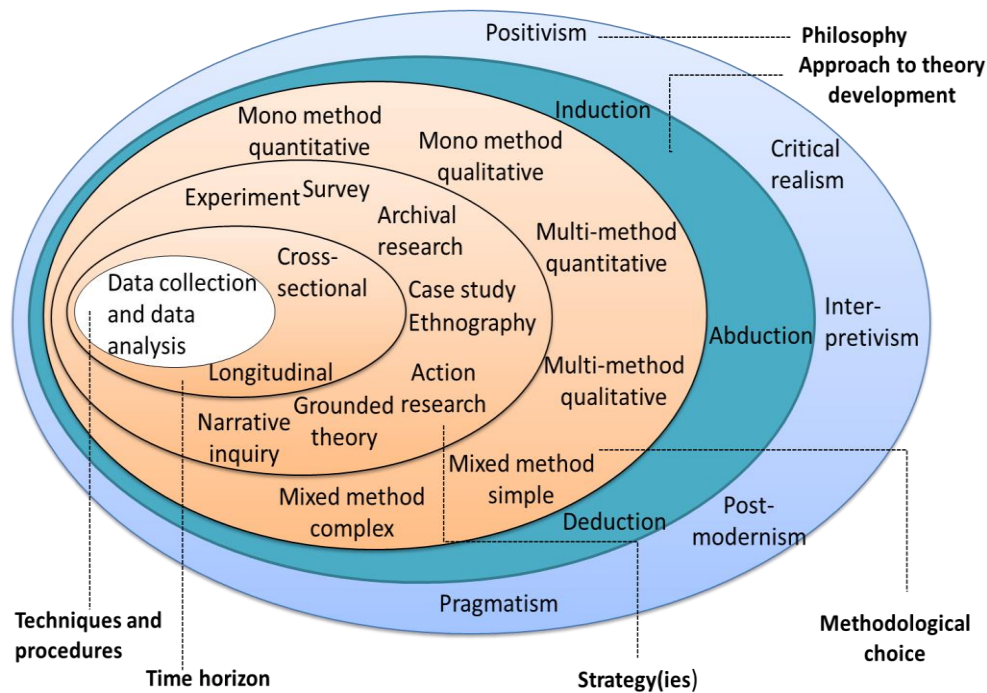
Source: Saunders et al. (2016, p.124)

When contrasting different editions of Saunders et al.'s (2009, 2012, 2016) works, the content of different layers of the research onion is found enriched, and the order of onion layers is adjusted. For example, in contrast to previous editions, the philosophy of critical realism is addressed and incorporated into the outer layer in the 2016 version of Saunders et al.'s works, which focuses on "explaining on what we see and experience, in terms of the underlying structure of reality that shape the observable events" (Saunders et al., 2016, p.138). Another change in 2016 edition's research onion highlighted that, the layer of methodological choice locates outer to the one of strategies chosen for the research, but in 2012 edition, it lies at an inner layer to the research strategies, despite no reasons being given.

3.2 Research philosophy

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 5) defined research as that "people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge". Philosophy is "a set or system of beliefs" from "the study of the fundamental nature

of knowledge, reality, and existence" (Waite & Hawker, 2009, p.685, cited in Collis and Hussey, 2014). Combining the concepts of research and philosophy together, Saunders et al. (2016, p.124) stated that research philosophy (its plural, philosophies) refers to the "systems of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge". Some scholars, such as Collis and Hussey (2014) and Saunders et al. (2009), believed that the research is based on two main philosophies: positivism and interpretivism, which are located at two extremes of the philosophical continuum, while other philosophies lie between the two.

3.2.1 Positivism and interpretivism

If a research study reflects positivism, as indicated by Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz (1998, p.32), the philosophical stance of the research relates to "working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can appear as law-like generalisations, similar to those produced by many physical and natural scientists". Glaser and Strauss (2017) believed that, in positivism, reality is seen as existing independently and externally to human cognition, which often underpins research studies in natural sciences. In contrast, when adopting interpretivism in the research of social science, reality is generally seen as being constructed socially through the meanings and cognitions of the social actors (people), in terms of their experiences.

Gill and Johnson (2002) advocated that, positivist researchers are likely to use a highly structured methodology, in order to facilitate replication. Moreover, the positivist researchers ought to remain neutral and detached from their research, which is undertaken in a value-free way, in order to keep their research findings uncontaminated (Crotty, 1998). In contrast, interpretivism allows researchers to understand and incorporate the differences between humans in their social roles (Saunders et al., 2009). This empathetic stance is crucial as the approach to be adopted by the researchers who are interpretivists. In addition, the challenge for interpretivism is to enter the social world of the research subjects and understand their

world from their particular perspectives and perceptions. Interpretivists concentrate on exploring complex social reality and phenomena, with the purpose of retaining the interpretive understanding through interaction between researchers and research participants that are being researched (ibid).

Morgan and Smircich (1980, p.492) sketched out a continuum to offer "a rough typology about the various views that different social scientists hold", where objectivism and subjectivism are being put at the two extremes. Collis and Hussey (2014) adapted the two main extremes as positivism and interpretivism. Positivists assume that the social world is external and real, akin to the physical world which can be measured and analysed using quantitative methods. On the contrary, interpretivists assume that the reality in the social world is the "projection of human imagination" and is not apart from the individual's mind (ibid, p.49). Collis and Hussey (2014) delineated the features of the two main paradigms (Table 3.2) as being the opposite two extremes of the paradigm continuum.

Table 3.2: Features of the two main paradigms

Positivism tends to	Interpretivism tends to
Use large samples	Use small samples
Have an artificial location	Have a natural location
Be concerned with hypothesis testing	Be concerned with generating theories
Produce precise, objective, quantitative data	Produce rich, subjective, qualitative data
Produce results with high reliability but low validity	Produce findings with low reliability but high validity
Allow results to be generalised from the sample to the population	Allow findings to be generalised from one setting to another similar setting

Source: Collis and Hussey (2014, p.50)

3.2.2 Pragmatism

Positivist and interpretivism are exclusively based on the different philosophical assumptions about the social world and the features of knowledge. However, some pragmatists advocated that social research should be set free from a single paradigm

approach and choose mix methods to answer the same research questions (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Pragmatists contended that the research question(s) should "determine the research philosophy and more than one paradigm can be used in the same study" (ibid, p.54).

Curran and Blackburn (2001, p.123) acknowledged pragmatism attempts to offer "cross the divide between the quantitative and the qualitative and the positivist and the non-positivist". This argument is supported by Saunders et al. (2016, p.135) who indicated that pragmatists "seek to overcome dichotomies such as objectivism versus subjectivism" (positivism versus interpretivism) and tend to "engage in multi-paradigmatic research". Mertens (2010) argued that pragmatism is not ignoring the research philosophy, but placing emphasis on the selection of the appropriate ways of undertaking research. Saunders et al. (2016, p.143) believed that a piece of pragmatist research "starts with a problem" and aims to "contribute practical solutions" for use in future practice.

Drawing on his own views and interpretation of the works from other scholars (Cherryholmes,1992; Morgan, 2007), Creswell (2014, p. 11) compared the philosophical basis of pragmatism with his illustration on mixed methods research and believed pragmatism is not "committed to any one system of philosophy and reality". Consequently, mixed methods research applies when research enquiries are drawn from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions. To best address research problems and cope with real world issues, pragmatist researchers are "free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures" when undertaking research, by focusing on the *what-and-how* of the research problems (Creswell, 2014, p. 11).

3.2.3 Philosophical assumptions

Research inquiries are guided by philosophical assumptions, which consist of fundamental beliefs or assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). All research philosophies make three major types of assumptions labelled as ontological,

epistemological, and axiological issues. Research philosophies can be differentiated in terms of where their assumptions fall on the objectivism and subjectivism continuum. Collis and Hussey (2014) summarised the three types of assumptions for the two main research philosophies: positivism and interpretivism (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Comparison of the two main research paradigms

Philosophical assumption	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological assumption (the nature of reality)	Social reality is objective and external to the researcher; There is only one reality.	Social reality is subjective and socially constructed; There are multiple realities.
Epistemological assumption (what constitutes valid knowledge)	Knowledge comes from objective evidence about observable and measurable phenomena; The researcher is distant from phenomena under study.	Knowledge comes from subjective evidence from participants; The researcher interacts with phenomena under study.
Axiological assumption (the role of values)	The research is independent from phenomena under study; The results are unbiased and value-free.	The researcher acknowledges that the research is subjective; The findings are biased and value-laden.

Source: Collis and Hussey (2014, p.46)

Ontology simply refers to assumptions about the nature of reality which shape the way that researchers see and study the research objects, consequently, to determine the choice of what to research (Saunders et al., 2016). Ontologically, interpretivists believe there is no one fixed social reality and beyond that, the reality is evolving and changing continually (Gialdino, 2009).

The components of this research fall into the attitude, perceptions, and feelings of the Chinese students', which are subjective to and constructed by their life and study experience in the UK. Different students, who hold different ontological assumptions against the real world, might have different cognitive contexts individually during their life and studies. Therefore, multiple realities perhaps arise when conducting this research. For instance, some Chinese students may have attended some pre-departure

briefing activities; as a result, they may be aware of the possible cultural and academic differences, and the psychological frustration and depression that may confront them, while another cohort of students may seldom consider the possible challenges and difficulties that they may come across during their acculturation in the UK. Chinese students' social realities in relation to their acculturation and adaptation may be multiple and different from each other, which would be interpreted by the co-creation between the researcher and the research participants who are involved in this research. Because of the above views about the multiple realities within this research, ontologically, the interpretivist stance may be more appropriate.

Epistemology is a general set of assumptions, concerned with how knowledge is acquired and accepted as being valid about the real world (Collis & Hussey, 2014). An epistemological interpretivist conducts research on searching for the explanations of human action, by understanding the way in which the world is understood by individuals (Sexton, 2003). Individual opinions and narratives are considered as acceptable knowledge, which is from the subjective evidence from the research participants. The epistemological assumptions examine the relationship between the researchers who interact with the phenomena under study and that which is being researched. The distance between the two should be minimised by the interpretivist from an epistemological perspective (Collis & Hussey, 2014)

Findings acquired from the research of the Chinese students' acculturation present their opinions and personal perceptions, on the issues they confront in their UK daily life and academic studies, which are reflected and demonstrated frequently by narratives and stories. Through the close interaction with Chinese students and academics in interviews, issues that impact the Chinese students' acculturation and the ways of how they cope with these issues are revealed. Furthermore, the acceptable knowledge also partially derives from the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the research outcomes. The researcher's involvement in the research reflects that the knowledge, from the research on the Chinese students' acculturation

and adaptation, is subjective.

The axiological assumption is related to the role of values in research (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). Axiology describes what and how researchers may do to deal with their own values and those of the research participants. For the researcher's part, the researcher's personal values help heighten the judgements used, when adopting data collection techniques and interpreting data findings and analysis. As an interpretivist, the researcher values interaction with the research participants (Chinese students and their academics) through on-site interviews, in order to collect data for this research which is value laden. Data analysis, the interpretation of findings in the format of narratives or stories from Chinese students and academics, is determined by what the researcher values, which is naturally biased and value laden too. In order to mitigate the biases from the interview data, another source of data collection, such as a quantitative survey, may be needed within the spectrum of this research.

3.2.4 Research approaches to theory development

Research approaches to theory development are crucial to answer research questions and are determinants that influence the aim and objectives of the research (Maylor, Blackmon, & Huemann, 2017). There are two main research methodological approaches here: the deductive and inductive approaches, as portrayed by Saunders et.al. (2016). A deductive approach is adopted when "a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed and then tested by empirical observation, thus, particular instances are deduced from general inferences", while an inductive approach means that "theory is developed from observation of empirical reality, thus, general inferences are induced from particular instances" (Collis &Hussey, 2014, p. 7).

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) highlighted the importance for researchers embarking on their research projects to select the most appropriate research approaches to theory development. Research approaches are informative and

reflective with regard to the research design, during which the appropriate research strategies and methodological choices are identified. Moreover, knowledge about research approaches enables researchers to adapt and adjust their research design so as to cater for constraints that might arise in the process of the research project, for instance, the issue of limited access to data, and so forth.

Creswell (2003) and Patton (2002) believed the way that existing literature and theories are used as guidance for research differentiates these two approaches. The deductive approach is designed for theory testing; thus, literature is used to identify questions, themes, and their interrelationships ahead of data collection. By contrast, the inductive approach develops a theory by identifying themes throughout the research process and discovering relationships between them. In this approach, different topics concerning research questions ought to be explored in the current literature.

Saunders et al. (2007, 2016) suggested that a way of combining deductive and inductive approaches within the same research project is not only perfectly possible, but advantageous. Abductive approach, the combination of deductive and inductive approaches, moves back and forth from data to theory in combining deduction and induction effectively (Suddaby, 2006). With regards to their logic, generalisability, data use, and theory developments, Saunders et al. (2016) distinguished the major differences among the three approaches (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Deduction, induction, and abduction: from reason to research

	Deduction	**Induction**	**Abduction**
Logic	When the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true.	Known premises are used to generate untested conclusions.	Known premises are used to generate testable conclusions.
Generalisability	Generalising from the general to the specific.	Generalising from the specific to the general.	Generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general.
Use of data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory.	To explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework.	To explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection
Theory	Theory falsification or verification.	Theory generation and building.	Theory generation or modification; Incorporating existing theory where appropriate, to build new theory or modify existing theory.

Source: Saunders et al. (2016, p.145)

When combining deductive and inductive approaches into the same piece of research, Saunders et al. (2016) argued that, whichever one takes dominance in a particular situation, depends on the nature and emphasis of research topic. A research topic, which has a wealth of literature enabling researchers to formulate a theoretical framework and then test it through research findings, may push researchers toward applying the deductive approach. For a new research field that has much debate and/or little existing literature to base the study on, an inductive approach might be adopted by researchers to conduct data collection and data analysis, thereby, to build a new theory. A research topic which has an abundance of information in one context or field but not in another, may lend researchers to adopt the abductive approach.

3.2.5 Selection of the research philosophy and approaches to theory development

This research is to identify the impacting factors upon the acculturation and adaptation of the Chinese students during their UK studies in the business area. Ontologically, there are different realities existing among Chinese students and their academics' perceptions, which are unable to be measured by numerical or repeated experiments. From epistemological perspectives, knowledge is presented through the medium of texts, from the narratives or stories of different Chinese students and academics. During the interaction between the researcher and research participants, their personal values are entangled with their perceptions on cultural and academic adaptations for Chinese students, and with the understanding and recognition of these perceptions by the researcher. At the data collection and data analysis stages, works on the data selection and interpretation on findings are determined by what the researcher values axiologically. Therefore, interpretivism has been selected as the most appropriate philosophical stance for this study project.

In terms of the research approach within this research, it is believed that adopting a deductive approach is most appropriate. A theoretical framework, research hypotheses, and a proposed measurement model have been formulated from the literature review for this research (See Chapter 2), which guides the research towards verifying the existing theories and testing these hypotheses deductively.

Going further into philosophical discussion, a pragmatic approach is adopted in this research, based on the proposition from Creswell (2014, p. 11) which encourages researchers are "free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research" that best meet the research needs. Secondly, pragmatism looks to the "*What*" and "*How*" of the research questions, and thereby to explore and interpret the social phenomena in practical settings. As this study aims to identify "*What*" the issues are that Chinese students may confront and "*How*" they could cope with these issues during their acculturation and adaptation in the UK, pragmatism offers a rationale for the reasons why to collect and mix quantitative and qualitative data within the

research. Thirdly, it is expected that the findings based on mixed methods would be more valid due to the adoption of a pragmatic view.

Parallel to interpretivism, Saunders et al. (2016) have incorporated pragmatism into their research onion as one of the potential research philosophies. However, the researcher does not concur with this view and would not apply it as the philosophical stance for this research. Pragmatism is only the "philosophical partner" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.16), particularly for mixed method research. In addition, pragmatism opens a door for researchers to adopt practical, pluralistic approaches, and different forms of data collection techniques and analysis procedures, which means it is "not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality" (Creswell, 2014, p.11).

3.2.6 Section summary

In this section, the major philosophical stances and assumptions were investigated and evaluated. Different research approaches to theory development were contrasted and discussed. Research philosophy and approaches to theory development underpinning this research investigation were identified. The nature of the research questions and the value held by the researcher focus the research towards adopting a pragmatist, ultimately interpretivist approach.

Collis and Hussey (2014, p.59) stated that the selected research philosophy and associated research design may "represent a blending of some of the philosophical assumptions". Under an interpretivist research investigation, it is necessary for a stronger rationale to be provided to underlie the research methodology, to give a more detailed explanation of the chosen methods, so as to prove that the research is rigorous and methodical.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) advocated that the chosen research philosophy is important for a research project, because it enables researchers not only to identify which research design works while others not, but to create a research design which

researchers might not have experienced. The next sections demonstrate how or in which way the design of this research is developed and formulated.

3.3 Research design

Having reviewed and justified the research philosophies and approaches to theory development, an interpretive and deductive approach is introduced into the research project, following the research "onion" approach to formulating a research strategy (Saunders et al., 2009, 2016). It is now possible to develop an appropriate and suitable research design to guide the development of this research.

Research design is a process that turns the research question or questions into a research project, which includes selecting the methodological stance, research strategy or strategies, and time horizon for the research (Saunders et al., 2016). Aiming to answer research question(s), research design specifies "the sources" from which researchers intend to collect data, how they propose to undertake data analysis, and discusses "the ethical issues and constraints" that are inevitably encountered (ibid, p.163). Across the research design, coherence and consistency with the research philosophy should be demonstrated, based on the nature of the research question(s) and objectives, wherein decisions on each elements of the research design are justified and concluded.

This research investigation, under a cross-sectional time frame, incorporates a questionnaire survey among Chinese students and the parallel semi-structured interviews with students and their academics as the main aspects of the research design, in order to enable the data collection and data analysis works to be viable. The next sections justify these choices after the clarification of the purpose of the research investigation.

3.4 Types of research investigation

The purpose of research design needs to be clarified prior to the justification of this

work. Saunders et al. (2016) contended that in the light of the nature of research topic, the research can be designed to fulfil an exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or combined purpose. An exploratory study, which discovers what is happening and gains insights into a research topic, is particularly useful, when a phenomenon and its nature have not been precisely clarified. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) claimed that the preliminary works should be done extensively to familiarise researchers with the phenomena being studied, in order to undertake an exploratory study successfully.

Robson and McCartan (2016, p.59) believed that descriptive research aims to "portray an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations". Saunders et al. (2016) described descriptive research as an extension of an exploratory study, or a precursor for further explanation. Collis and Hussey (2014) contended that explanatory research, which refers to the research that establishes and measures the causal relationship between variables, is the continuation of descriptive research, although they used another synonymous term, analytical research. Explanatory research not only involves describing the features of a phenomenon or situation, but the analysis of why or how it takes place. Saunders et al. (2016) acknowledged that a research may incorporate more than one purpose into the research design, which could be attained by combining quantitative and qualitative methods within a research investigation.

With regards to the topic of this research investigation: the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation when studying undergraduate programmes within business schools in the British higher education, this study initially takes exploratory and descriptive research by looking into the phenomena (outcomes) of their acculturation at different instances, which focus on three independent student groups. The first group is accessed before their departure to the UK, the second group accessed three months after their arrival, and the third group around their graduation period. The three instances incorporate different sets of students, due to the time limitation of this research. From this, explanatory research will be undertaken to illustrate how they perceive their resultant experiences. Therefore, a combination of

exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory studies facilitates this research investigation. Having clarified the research philosophy to be embraced and the types of this study investigation, the research project ought to adopt the choice of research methodology during its enactment.

3.5 Methodological choice

Prior to the illustration of the methodological choices in this research project, there is a need to distingush the difference between the terms of research methodology and research methods. Research methodology refers to the approach to the process of the whole research which describes and justifies the overall research philosophy and research design, while the research method is the techniques that are spercifically used to collect and analyse data (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Saunders et al. (2016) concured with this distinction and described research methodology as the theory of how research should be undertaken.

The methodological choice is influenced by the nature of research and the philosophical preferences that researchers hold, and developed through the literature review. In addition, the access that researchers are able to negotiate, the type of dada available, and the research questions per se, are all important elements to be considered (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This section starts with exploring methodological choices to decide which method, the quantitative, qualitative, or the mixed methods, will be followed.

3.5.1 Quantitative and qualitative method

Saunders et al. (2016) recognised that the methodologcial choice for a research project is to determine initially which method, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, is adopted. Collis and Hussy (2014) explained that quantitative research refers to the adoption of quantitative approach to address the research questions, and involves collecting and analysing quantitative data by applying statistical analysis. In contrast, qualitative research embarks on a qualitative based approach in order to

address the "meaning" to be found in the research questions, and involves qualitative data collection and data analysis, from an interpretivist perspective.

Saunders et al. (2016) identified that the difference between quantitative and qualitative research design encompasses four aspects: 1). Research philosophy, 2). Approaches to theory development, 3). their own characteristics, 4). Research strategies. Before the quantitative and qualitative approaches are compared and contrasted, it is important for researchers to remember, no method of research, either the quantitative or qualitative one, is intrinsically better than another (Silverman, 2013).

3.5.1.1 Research philosophy

Generally, quantitative research is associated with positivism (Saunders et al., 2016), especially under the circumstance of using predetermined and highly structured data collection techniques and statistical analysis procedures. Conversely, qualitative research is often associated with the interpretivist philosophy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), because the subjective and socially constructed meanings, are interpreted by researchers to gain understanding into the social phenomenon being studied. However, Saunders et al. (2016) argued that, survey research being conducted to collect quantitative data based on opinions and perceptions, could be referred as a set of "qualitative" numbers, and "fit partly within an interpretivist philosophy" (ibid, p.166).

3.5.1.2 Approach to theory development

Quantitative research usually adopts a deductive approach to test and verify theory or hypotheses formulated within the research, while an inductive approach may be applied by qualitative researchers in order to develop theory or provide a richer theoretical perspective than that currently exists (Saunders et al., 2016). However, Yin (2014) contended that by undertaking qualitative procedures, some qualitative research tends to test an existing theory with a deductive approach.

3.5.1.3 Characteristics of quantitative and qualitative methods

Quantitative research tends to look into the relationship between variables, which can be numerically measured (Saunders et al., 2016). In quantitative research, data are collected using probability sampling techniques in a standard manner, presented in graphics or tables, and analysed statistically. A quantitative researcher is independent from the research respondents.

Comparatively, qualitative research works on the research participants' meanings per se and the relationship between them, in order to develop a conceptual framework and make theoretical contributions. In qualitative research, non-probability sampling techniques are used to conduct data collection, which is non-standardised, and therefore, questions and procedures might alter or emerge in the research process; data presentation often relies on "text or image data" through quotes or citations (Creswell, 2014, p. 183). Successful qualitative researchers are dependent on gaining physical access to participants and also cognitive access to the participants' perceptions or feelings.

3.5.1.4 Research strategy adopted

Quantitative research, in principle, is associated with experiments and survey strategies which are normally conducted by using questionnaires, structured interviews, or structured observation, while some of the qualitative research strategies are categorised as action research, interviews, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative research (Saunders et al., 2016).

Both quantitative and qualitative research may adopt either a single data collection technique and corresponding analytical procedures, which is called the mono method quantitative or qualitative research, or, more than one quantitative or qualitative methods (not a mix of the two), which is named as multi method research (Saunders et al., 2016). In the area of business and management research, the use of multiple methods has been advocated (Bryman, 2006). Saunders et al. (2016) explained that,

the use of multiple methods to conduct research may provide the possibility of overcoming the weakness of each method, and a "richer approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (ibid, p. 166).

3.5.2 Mixed methods

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines the "use of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analytical procedures" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 169). The mixed methods approach provides more complete understanding of a research inquiry than one that relies only upon the use of either the quantitative or qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014). Mason (2002) believed that the mixed methods approach produces complementary results and a deeper understanding of the research topic being studied. Silverman (2013) noted that a fuller picture of aspects of research topic could be provided by the mixed methods approach.

Four characteristics of the mixed methods approach are enumerated by Creswell (2014), which include: 1), it incorporates the open-ended qualitative data and closed-ended quantitative data in response to research questions or hypotheses formulated. 2), the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data is included. 3), the techniques for collecting quantitative and qualitative data and procedures for analysing data need to be rigorously conducted. 4), by merging, connecting or embedding the quantitative and or with qualitative data, the mixed methods are integrated in the procedures of data analysis.

The mixed methods approach might provide advantages or better opportunities to address the research question or problems (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 8) suggested that research is suited to using mixed methods with those problems where "one data source may be insufficient, results need to be explained, exploratory findings need to be generalised, a second method is needed to enhance a primary method, a theoretical stance needs to be employed, and an overall research objective can be best addressed with multiple groups or projects". Collis and

Hussey (2014) contended that, a large study might incorporate elements of both quantitative and qualitative, as their merits are often considered to be complementary in gaining understanding of a social phenomenon. By synthesising propositions from Bryman (2006), Molina-Azorín (2011), and Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), Saunders et al. (2016, p.173) itemised ten aspects of advantages using mixed methods (See Appendix 3).

Quantitative and qualitative research may be applied to mixed methods research equally or unequally. This is connected to the timing sequence of the collection of different data and the emphasis of each database within research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Saunders et al., 2016). Similar to conducting quantitative or qualitative research, the mixed methods design encompasses basic processes: initiating a question, data collection, analysing data, and interpretation based on the data collection and analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) contended that there are several factors to be considered when making choices on the appropriate mixed methods design for a research investigation, which covers the relative priority and timing of the quantitative and qualitative strands, the two strands level of interaction, and the procedures for mixing the two strands. Depending on the consideration of these factors, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) presented four types of the basic mixed methods designs, which are the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, and the embedded design. One of the four typologies could be followed, whereby the research question(s) could be best matched to guide the implementation of a research project.

When researchers implement their quantitative and qualitative strands concurrently and equally, the convergent parallel design occurs. The two stands are independent from each other during the process of data collection and analysis, and then the results from each strand are compared, merged, and interpreted. The explanatory sequential design begins with collecting and analysing the quantitative data followed

subsequently with the collection and analysis of qualitative data. At data interpretation stage, qualitative results help explain the initial quantitative results. Conversely, the exploratory sequential design starts with and prioritises the collection and analysis of qualitative data, and then the results from the qualitative strand inform the next stage of the quantitative research. The embedded design occurs when a qualitative strand is added into a traditional quantitative design, or a quantitative strand is added into a traditional qualitative design, as a result, one of them is embedded into another. In a more intuitionistic way, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) portrayed these basic mixed methods designs in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Basic mixed methods designs
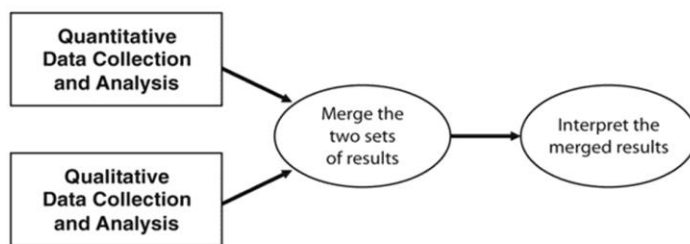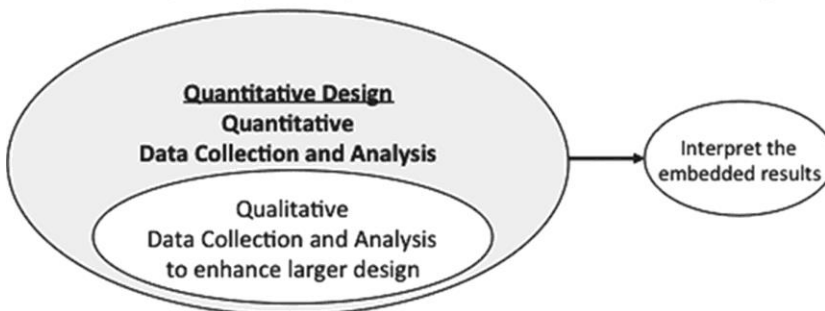
Source: Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p.69)

3.5.3 Convergent parallel design

In a convergent parallel mixed methods approach, both the quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently or roughly at the same time, and analysed separately using the traditional techniques associated with each data type, afterwards, the results are compared to see if the findings confirm each other or otherwise (Creswell, 2014).

Morse (1991, p. 122) highlighted that for the purpose of better understanding of the research problem, the convergent mixed methods design is to "obtain different but complementary data on the same topic". Patton (1990) emphasised that using the convergent mixed methods design aims to bring together the strengths of the qualitative methods, for example, in depth information collected through small sized samples, and those of quantitative methods by which generalised and standard data are presented. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 77) added that, using a convergent parallel design is a way of triangulating the research methods for corroboration and validation, by comparing and contrasting the statistical (Quantitative) with the contextual (qualitative) results, in a bid to develop a more "complete understanding of a phenomenon".

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) acknowledged that there may be some challenges that the mixed methods researchers confront. Much effort and high levels of expertise in the two strands of data collection and analysis are required. Merging two different sets of data in a meaningful way can be challenging to implement. Furthermore, contradictions between the quantitative and qualitative results might occur, though new insights may arise. Under such conditions, researchers need to double check the data reliability and potentially, the additional data collection may be required (ibid).

3.5.4 Selection of methodological choice

Prior to the decision on the methodological adoption for this research, the research methods commonly adopted by the studies on acculturation and international learning

from the year of 2010 to 2019, which are reviewed within this research, are enumerated for reference. It indicates that, among the total fifteen studies in Table 3.5, the qualitative (with an amount of 6), quantitative (5), or mixed methods (4) are almost equally adopted, either for the purpose of theory development or verification. These four mix methods studies adopt either the explanatory sequence design (quantitative method ahead of qualitative) or exploratory sequence design (qualitative method first).

Table 3.5: the commonly adopted research methods by other researches

No.	Authors	Researches	Research methods
1	Anderson and Guan (2018)	implicit acculturation strategies adopted by China-born student in Australia, and the relationship to academic outcomes	Quantitative method (go/not go association task experiment, GNAT, n=104)
2	Durkin (2011)	Chinese students' adaptation to the Western norm of critical argumentation	Qualitative methods (interviews with 42 Chinese students and 8 British students)
3	Gómez et al. (2014)	The relationship between students social adjustment and leisure and social networks	Quantitative method (survey, n=346)
4	Gu (2011)	Chinese students' intercultural, personal, and academic experiences and changes in the UK	Mixed methods (survey and narrative interviews. sample amount not reported)
5	Johan and Rienties (2016)	learning and social interaction through small group work by international students	Quantitative methods (survey, n=151)
6	Makarova and Birman (2015)	The relationship between acculturation attitudes and their culture transition and academic adjustment.	Qualitative research (archival and documentary research, n=28)
7	Marshall and Mathias (2016)	Culture difference under intercultural learning environment between Chinese students and Non-traditional British students	Qualitative method (interviews and focus group, n=25)
8	Quan et al. (2016)	The Chinese international students' academic adjustment process in the UK	Qualitative method (interviews, n=20)

No.	Authors	Researches	Research methods
9	Ra (2016)	Social support and acculturative stress among Korean international students in the United States	Quantitative method (survey, n=164)
10	Wu (2015)	Chinese students' learning beliefs and practices evolve during their authentic participation in the British teaching and learning environment.	Qualitative method (semi-structured interviews, n=14)
11	Wu and Hammond (2011)	International students' university adjustment in the UK should be facilitated with adequate preparation and appropriate academic attainment.	Mixed methods (survey: n=35, 33, and 24 at three time points; student interviews, n=8)
12	Xu and Roddy (2019)	Cultural awareness and cultural affinity need to develop between Academics and Chinese students for the Chinese students' academic transition.	Qualitative method (interviews with academics, n=18)
13	Zhang and Goodson (2011)	The mediating and moderating effects of social contact and social connectedness with host nationals upon the acculturation–adjustment linkages.	Quantitative method (web based survey, n=508)
14	Zhao and Bourne (2011)	A three-stage intercultural adaptation process between Chinese MBA students and their British academics	Mixed methods (survey, n=55; observation, n=58; interviews, n=152)
15	Zhou et al. (2011)	During the course of student adaptation, preparation and support need to shift among their general, social and study issues	Mixed methods (survey, n=257; interviews with 26 students, and 26 academics)

Taking into consideration the research questions (w*hat* and *how*) of this study and looking through the features of the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, it is believed that, adopting the mixed methods to implement this research project is appropriate, not only for the sake of methodological triangulation, but for the aggregation of the combined strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods that could be achieved.

Furthermore, the implementation of this research investigation follows a convergent parallel mixed methods design. Under this research format, the qualitative and quantitative strands of this research are conducted concurrently, which is different

from the studies which adopt the mixed methods design in Table 3.5. As for the qualitative part of this research, qualitative data will be acquired from interviews with Chinese students and their academics to convey their in-depth perceptions and understanding of what the factors are impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation and how they cope with. These qualitative data from both Chinese students and academics could be combined first and afterwards, mixed, related, and compared with the quantitative outcomes from the quantitative part, in order to test and verify the existing theories, the formulated hypotheses, and the proposed measurement model for this research investigation. Thus, the answers to the two research questions of *what* and *how* could be acquired.

3.6 Research strategies and techniques for data collection

Research strategy is the methodological link between the research philosophy and the option of selecting research methods to collect and analyse data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Saunders et al. (2016) defined research strategy as a plan of how the research question(s) are to be answered; however, the research strategies are not mutually exclusive, and a combination of different strategies may be applied in the mixed methods approach.

Saunders et al. (2016) introduced the word "techniques" to refer to the data collection approaches. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) used "instruments" for data collection when combining with research strategies. The word "techniques" is preferred within this research, as some research strategies, for instance, interviews and observations would not rely on physical tools or instruments. Adopting the convergent parallel mixed methods design in this research, survey and semi-structured interviews as the main research strategies and relevant techniques for data collection, are here considered and discussed with regards to their appropriateness.

3.6.1 Survey strategy and questionnaire design

3.6.1.1 Survey strategy

A survey is designed to "collect primary or secondary data from samples with a view to generalising the results to a population" (Collis & Hussey 2014, p. 62). A survey provides quantitative or numeric description of the "trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population" (Creswell, 2014, p. 155). Practically, the survey strategy allows researchers to collect quantitative data and analyse deductively by descriptive and inferential statistics (Saunders et al., 2016).

A survey strategy using questionnaire allows the collection of standardised data and easy comparison of results from analysis to be conducted in a highly economical way (Saunders et al., 2016). In addition, a survey within a research investigation elicits the rapid turnaround of data collection (Fowler, 2014). However, questionnaire is not the only data collection technique in survey studies. Structured observations and structured interviews, in which standard questions and options are provided to research participants for their answers, are categorised as the survey strategies also.

Traditionally, the survey strategy is associated with a positivist philosophy and deductive research approach. However, Collis and Hussey (2014) argued that it also can be applied under the interpretivist research paradigm. It is not crucial for an interpretivist research investigation to select large sized and unbiased samples. Because rather than providing a generalisation from samples to population, an interpretivist research adopting survey strategy, allows its aim to be confined to gaining insights from the samples (ibid). Contrasted with statistical generalisation, Yin (2014) proposed a concept of analytical generalisation, which means, based on relevant theories and theoretical propositions, findings elicited from survey can extend to other situations that are not the part of the study. This proposition gives support to the usage of a survey strategy under an interpretivist philosophical stance.

3.6.1.2 Survey questionnaire design

The designed survey questionnaire for the quantitative part of this research investigation includes twenty-nine question items. The first seven questions are designed to identify the student respondents' demographic information, and ensure that the questions reach the appropriate respondents being studied, who are the Chinese students studying undergraduate programmes within British business schools. Question items from No. 8 to No. 28 are associated with the research themes and the scales identified from the literature review. These twenty-one question items fall into two parts: Part 1, the student perceptions of their UK life, which includes question items from No. 8 to No.12; Part 2, the experience and perceptions of their academic studies, which covers the question items from No.13 to No. 28.

The final question item within the questionnaire, item No.29, is designed to identify candidates for the post-survey interviews, because the qualitative data collected with a small number of interviewees would aid the "interpretation and validity" of the findings resulting from the questionnaire survey (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p.156).

Before the question items development, the acculturation index (AI) developed by Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) to gauge the immigrants' acculturation was carefully reviewed. Considering of the different purpose of Chinese student's for short term academic achievement in the UK, the appropriateness of applying AI for this research is under question (Zhang-Wu, 2018). These adopted measures (question items) are actually either developed for this research project, or taken directly or with some adaptations from the existing scales from Zhou et al.'s (2011) research on the intercultural adaptation of Chinese students and their UK academics.

As a former member of a British university staff and an affiliate body to Ministry of Education, China, the researcher has been working in the Sino-UK higher education sector for more than thirteen years, who were responsible for student counselling and admission service in the China market. The self-developed measures are derived from

the researcher's working experience and constant contact with students and their parents. The other question items within the survey questionnaire are adopted from Zhou et al.'s (2011) research, which focuses on testing the extent to which the Chinese students adapt into their daily life and academic studies in the UK. This results in high degrees of reliability for this research investigation.

Table 3.6 below enumerates the question items in the survey questionnaire, their corresponding research themes, research objectives, and their origins of either being self-developed or from Zhou et al. (2011).

Table 3.6: The question items in the survey questionnaire

Measures (question items)	Research objectives	Corresponding themes	The origin of measures
1. Are you studying a business related programme?	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
2. Are you studying an undergraduate programme?	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
3. Which type of student are you of?	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
4. Your gender is	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
5. In which year did you start your undergraduate programme in the UK? (Not the year you are currently learning)	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
6. Which city in China are you from?	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
7. How have you been enrolled into your British university?	N/A	N/A	Self-developed
8. How important are the reasons below for you to choose the UK as your life and study destination? (Eight reasons, GL1-8)	1, 2	Theme 2 General life (GL)	Zhou et al., (2011)
9. I think I can handle the balance of my life and my studies in the UK, in terms of time and energy required. (AL1) *	1, 2	Theme 8: Acculturation level (AL)	Self-developed
10. How serious do you think the issues below make you worried about? (Eight issues, PI1-8)	1, 2	Theme 3: Psychological issues (PI)	Zhou et al. (2011)
11. I think I can manage the negative experiences associated with the daily life	1, 2	Theme 8: Acculturation	Self-developed

Measures (question items)	Research objectives	Corresponding themes	The origin of measures
in the UK. (AL2)		level (AL)	
12. Did you attend the pre-departure training about the British culture and the British way of learning? If you attended, how valuable was the pre-departure training?	1, 2	Theme 1: Culture difference	Self-developed
13. The UK academics expect Chinese students in the UK higher education to utilise independent learning more than in China. (SSR1)	1, 2	Theme 5**: Staff student relationships (SSR)	Zhou et al. (2011)
14. The relationship between students and academics in the UK universities is equal, hence, students can challenge the academics' opinion and this can be looked upon as constructive and supportive. (SSR2)	1, 2	Theme 5: Staff student relationships (SSR)	Zhou et al. (2011)
15. I expect that the UK academics can give me more guidance in learning and teaching supports and that I can approach them for help. (SSR3)	1, 2	Theme 5: Staff student relationships (SSR)	Self-developed
16. My English level has met the requirement from the University, which provides evidence that I can cope with the language demands within a UK degree studies. (EP1)	1, 2	Theme 6: English proficiency (EP)	Self-Developed
17. My IELTS results did give an indication of my capability to use English for my academic studies, either in oral communication or in writing. (EP2)	1, 2	Theme 6: English proficiency (EP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
18. Within a specific course module, the UK academics will not recommend a textbook and indicate the most important chapters. On the contrary, a list of reference books and papers is provided to help with my study. (LA1)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Zhou et al. (2011)
19. I can manage and complete the assignments outside of classrooms, for instance, homework, small essays, and the handouts issued by academics. (LA2)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed
20. The comments from academics and their feedback upon my assignments are valuable. (LA3)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed

Measures (question items)	Research objectives	Corresponding themes	The origin of measures
21. I think the examination is the best way to assess what I have learned. (LA4)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed
22. I think homework and small essays are the components of the assessment too. (LA5)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Zhou et al. (2011)
23. I think that, Information technology (including social media) introduced to my studies in the UK, can help my communication with other students and academics, and increase my study efficiency and innovation. (LA6)	1, 2	Theme 4: Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed
24. I think a lecture for students in China means listening and taking notes in the classroom.(CP1)	1, 2	Theme 7: Classroom participation (CP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
25. I think the classroom discussion and debates, group work, and the students-academics oral interaction, are much encouraged in the UK higher education. (CP2)	1, 2	Theme 7: Classroom participation (CP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
26. Personally, I am happy to raise any questions immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in China. (CP3)	1, 2	Theme 7: Classroom participation (CP)	Self-developed
27. Personally, I am happy to raise any question immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in the UK. (CP4)	1, 2	Theme 7: Classroom participation (CP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
28. I believe I would adapt or have adapted to the academic studies in the UK. (AL3)	1, 2	Theme 8: Acculturation level (AL)	Self-developed
29. If a face to face interview is arranged by the researcher, I am very glad to attend to discuss in-depth what I have experienced during my life and studies in the UK.	N/A	N/A	Self-developed

Note:

*Each question item is given a code, for instance, AL1 (the first question item underpinning the theme of acculturation level), with the aim to be properly measured by computer software.

** The adjustment in academic studies (AS), as a second order factor, is composed of four themes studied: Learning and assessment (LA, theme 4), Staff student relationships (SSR, theme 5), English proficiency (EP, theme 6), and Classroom participation (CP, theme 7).

3.6.2 Interview strategy and interview design for this research

3.6.2.1 Interview strategy

Wu (2015) contended that the interview strategy is a powerful and flexible method for qualitative data collection, especially in gathering more in-depth information from individuals. Researchers (interviewers) ask the selected participants (interviewees) questions，in order to attain information about what they do, think, and feel (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Under an interpretivist study, the interview is associated with exploring "data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common" (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 2).

Jones (1985) highlighted the first issue that researchers need to consider for a successful interview design is to decide the extent of structuration to be embedded. In terms of the levels of formality and structure applied to the interviews, interviews are categorised into three approaches: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured ones (Saunders et al., 2016).

Wengraf (2001) put forward a spectrum of interviewing, varying from the unstructured to the fully structured end with a research purpose of developing a theory or model (Figure 3.3). When moving from theory building to theory testing on the spectrum, the planned interview strategy or design should be moving from the unstructured to the fully structured end. However, the lightly structured interviews are "perfectly appropriate" for testing the existing theories, under the condition that these theories require "data that a heavily structured interview schedule discourages" (ibid, p. 60).

Figure 3.3: Spectrum from unstructured to fully structured interviewing, and possible relationship to phases in the development of a theory

Model building   Model testing
Theory building   Theory testing

Unstructured   Lightly structured   Heavily structured   Fully structured
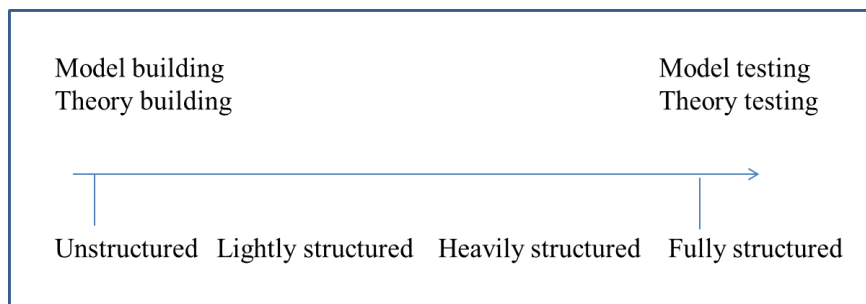
Source: Adapted from Wengraf (2001, p. 61)

To avoid the common problems of bias, poor recall, and inaccurate articulation from interview with individual participant, Yin (2014) advocated that data collection from other sources or by other techniques is recommended, in order to corroborate the interview data. Eisenhardt (1989, p. 534) suggested that, for a mixed methods research, it is usually appropriate to "combine data collection methods such as…interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The evidence may be quantitative (numbers), qualitative (words), or both".

3.6.2.2 Interview design

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson and Jaspersen (2018, p. 179) suggested that it is appropriate to use unstructured or semi-structured interviews when interviews aim to gain an understanding of the respondents' "opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation". For the sake of gathering valid and reliable data from interviews, the interview questions should be relevant to the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2016).

In order to reply the two research questions of this study together with the quantitative findings, the interview questions with academics and Chinese students are developed separately (Appendix 11 and Appendix 12), based on the eight themes identified from the literature review. Apart from some structured questions asking for the academics and student participants' demographic information, the other interview questions do

not impose any restriction on the interviewees. They are able to develop their perceptions and illustrate their viewpoints following their own way in interviews. Therefore, a semi-structured approach is adopted in the interviews.

The interview questions developed for this research are similar for the interviewed academics and for the different student groups, who are making responses from different standing points. These interview questions are categorised into three sections: the participants' background information, their perception on the students' life in the UK, and their perceptions on the Chinese students' academic studies. The last two sections include question items corresponding to the eight research themes elicited from the literature review.

Table 3.7 and Table 3.8 present separately the interview questions with academics or Chinese students (exampled with students who are going to graduate within three months), the corresponding theme to each question item, and their source of development, from either being self-developed by this research or being adapted from Zhou et al. (2011). It is noted that, because the interviews with academics and students occur concurrently, comments from academics may have marginally influenced some of the self-developed questions within student interviews.

Table 3.7: the interview questions with academics

Question category	No.	Question items	Research theme	Questions developed from
Introductive questions	1	How many years have you been teaching or in contact with Chinese undergraduate students in the UK?	N/A	Self-developed
	2	What is your general impression of the group of Chinese students?	N/A	Self-developed
	3	In which aspects do you think the Chinese students need to improve, for the sake of adaptation into their life and studies in Britain?	General life(GL), Psychological issues (PI), and AS	Self-developed

Question category	No.	Question items	Research theme	Questions developed from
Students' general life	1	What challenges and problems did the Chinese students come across during their lives in the UK, particularly from the very start?	GL and PI	Zhou et al. (2011)
	2	Are there any suggestions from you on how they cope with these challenges?	GL and PI	Zhou et al. (2011)
	3	Do you think that their lives in the UK affect the Chinese students' academic studies?	GL and AS	Self-developed
Students' academic studies (AS)*	1	Are there any suggestions for Chinese students to build up a professional relationship with their UK academics?	Staff student relationship (SSR)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	2	Do you think the Chinese students' English proficiency supports their academic studies? Are there any suggestions for them to improve their English capabilities, although you are not an English teacher?	English proficiency (EP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	3	Generally, what kind of performance Chinese students have in your class?	Classroom participation (CP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	4	Do you think the technology and social media applied into teaching and learning is important?	Learning & Assessment (LA)	Self-developed
	5	What kind of challenges and problems do you think the Chinese students come across while studying in the UK?	Learning & Assessment (LA)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	6	What kinds of measures are that the teaching and supportive staff should take, in order to help with the Chinese students' academic studies?	Academic studies (AS)	Self-developed
	7	What kinds of measures are that your business school should take, to accommodate Chinese students' life and academic studies in campus?	General life, Academic studies (AS)	Self-developed

* The higher order theme of academic studies (AS) includes the themes of Learning and assessment (LA), Staff student relationships (SSR), English proficiency (EP), and Classroom participation CP).

Table 3.8: the interview questions with Chinese students who are going to graduate within three months

Question category	No.	Question items	Research theme	Questions developed from
Introductive questions	1	How many years have you been in your undergraduate studies in the UK?	N/A	Self-developed
	2	Did you go to the UK for studies individually or from a Sino-British joint programme? If you were from a joint programme, what is that?	N/A	Self-developed
Students' general life	1	What the main reasons are that you chose the UK as your study destination?	General life (GL)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	2	What do you think are the differences in your general life between your expectations before you arrived and your experience in the UK?	GL	Self-developed
	3	What challenges and problems did you come across while living in the UK, particularly from the very start?	GL	Zhou et al. (2011)
	4	How did you cope with these challenges? For the future Chinese undergraduate students, what will you suggest them to live in the UK?	GL	Zhou et al. (2011)
	5	Do you think what kind of influences was brought to your studies by your daily experience in the UK?	GL, Academic studies	Self-developed
Students' academic studies (AS)*	1	Do you think the study strategy or method you formed up in China can still help you to achieve high academic performance? Why is that?	Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed
	2	What do you like mostly when studying in the UK? And why is that?	Learning and assessment (LA)	Self-developed
	3	Generally, what kind of relationship you have set up with your UK academics is? Can you give me an example to explain how the relationship was built?	Staff student relationship (SSR)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	4	Do you have difficulties in your academic studies due to your English level? If yes, how did you do to improve your English during your studies?	English proficiency (EP)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	5	How did you participate in your classroom learning? And how your classmates did? Which way do you think is more effective and	Classroom participation (CP)	Zhou et al. (2011)

Question category	No.	Question items	Research theme	Questions developed from
		beneficial for your learning in the classroom in the UK?		
	6	How much you know about the use of social media and other emerging technologies which are introduced to your studies in the UK? In which aspects these could influence your studies?	Learning & Assessment (LA)	Self-developed
	7	Can you please give me a list of academic challenges you have met? And can you explain further on how you dealt with these academic challenges?	Academic studies (AS)	Zhou et al. (2011)
	8	For the future Chinese undergraduate students, what will you suggest in terms of their academic studies in the UK?	Academic studies (AS)	Self-developed

* The higher order theme of academic studies (AS) includes the themes of Learning and assessment (LA), Staff student relationships (SSR), English proficiency (EP), and Classroom participation CP).

3.6.2.3 Interview data transcription

Silverman (2013) highlighted that, transcribing audio records from interviews needs a great deal of time, and the quality of transcription should be emphasised. Transcribing interview records is not suggested to conduct in one action but to revisit over timing (Silverman, 2013). Practically, Saunders et al. (2016) suggested a checklist for transcription, which covers accuracy check, data clean-up, a check for consistencies, and so forth.

The researcher is ethnically Chinese. English is not his first language. Transcribing works on the interviews with eighteen academics take more time than anticipated. Although eight academics for interviews are ethnically Chinese and the transcripts are written in Chinese, each audio record after interview allows the researcher to spend about two working days on transcribing and double check, which represents a workload of about six weeks in total on transcribing the eighteen interview records

with academics. A sample copy of transcripts is shown in Appendix 14.

Considering the heavy workload of transcribing works from interviews with nineteen Chinese students, sixteen out of the total eighteen audio records from academic interviews are transcribed independently by the researcher. The other two audio records from interviews with academics are outsourced to a Manchester based transcribing company for transcription. However, upon receipt the textual copy of the two transcripts, the researcher has a careful double check, by transcribing a selective section within each of the two audio files and then comparing with the outsourced transcripts, so as to ensure the quality to meet the demand of further data analysis. Finally, the transcripts from interview with students and academics reach to a file with words count of more than 112,000.

3.6.2.4 Interview administration

The quality of data attained within an interview is "largely dependent on the interviewer" (Patton, 2002, p.341). Researchers using interviews to collect data play a crucial role in the interviewing process. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) noted that the aim of qualitative interviewing is to obtain information that interprets a specific phenomenon in relation to the interviewee's worldviews. Thus, interviewer should be sensitive and skilled to understand the interviewees' views, and on most occasions, aid them explore their perception and beliefs (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Reflecting on the interviewees' own experience and perception, open-ended answers could be promoted by interviewer with quality interview questions, and if needed, with some intervention questions throughout the interview process, so as to keep the interview on track and ensure its validity (Wengraf, 2001).

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, p. 186) advocated a "natural conversation" within a successful interview, trying to avoid "abstract theoretical concepts, jargon, and scholarly talk". Qualitative researchers should treat interview as "a meaningful conversation, and allowing it to develop naturally" (ibid, p.195). During the course of

interviews, researchers should not attempt to lead or impose their own reference frame onto interviewees to receive what they have expected to get, when asking interview questions and interpreting the answers from interviewees.

Selecting typical cases for this research project is highlighted as criteria to generate right interviewees (Chinese students and their academics), by convenience sampling and snowball sampling to ensure their representativeness. Purposefully, the researcher selects Chinese students and their academics for interviews with different demographic backgrounds from the British universities in different categories, so as to diversify the representativeness of data collection, and increase reliability of this research. In total, interviews with eighteen academics and nineteen Chinese students are conducted over a 6-month period, while on-line student survey is delivered in parallel.

Twelve academics and ten students working or learning in three Manchester based universities are interviewed face to face either in the university campus or a quiet café nearby. Following the suggestion from one of academic interviewees in pilot studies, the other six academics and nine students, who locate in other cities in Britain or in China, are purposefully selected for interviews to avoid possible bias on the city location of universities. Considering the cost and logistical arrangements, these interviews are delivered remotely by on-line audio applications such as Skype or WeChat. In contrast with the format of face to face interviews, remote interviews might have a lack of "immediate contextualisation and non-verbal communication"; however, the remote interviews offer flexibility and enhance work efficiency (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018, p.179).

Ahead of interviews, a formal email attached with participation information sheet and consent form is sent to each interview participant to ensure the content of this research project being informed, and then, to confirm the appointment arrangements for meet-up. With the interview participants' permission, all the interviews are audio recorded for the purpose of future transcription and data analysis. During interviews,

leading questions are cautiously avoided, for the sake of preventing the data collection from being skewed. At the end of interviews, academics and Chinese students are asked for their suggestions and comments, so as to improve the quality of future interviews and data collection. Permission is asked too if the interview transcripts could be sent back for their further comments. These measures may ensure the research validity for the qualitative strand of this study.

3.6.3 Selection of research strategies and techniques

Having justified the application of a convergent parallel mixed methods design into this research and reviewed the research strategies and techniques for data collection, the research strategies and data collection techniques applying to the quantitative and qualitative strands of the research are selected separately. A survey questionnaire is conducted to collect quantitative data; concurrently or at roughly the same time, the qualitative data collection is conducted by adopting semi-structured interviews with students, their UK academics, and some of academics from their previous learning institutions prior to their study in the UK.

It is believed that Survey questionnaire is the most suitable way to explore numerically what the Chinese students' perceptions, attitude, and opinions are, in terms of their acculturation and adaptation. The findings from survey can corroborate the ones from qualitative data derived from the concurrent interviews with Chinese students and academics. Moreover, a question within the survey questionnaire is designed purposefully to identify the interested student candidates for interviews. Semi-structured interviews are selected for the qualitative strand of the research. Interviewing with individual students and their academics enables them to think deeply and talk freely, so that outcomes from data collection could be more precise and abundant, providing a richer explanation of the Chinese students' acculturation.

3.7 Time horizon

Another important issue is the time horizon of the research that deserves meditation

within the research design. Saunders et al. (2016) portrayed two options for the research timeframe: cross-sectional and longitudinal. A cross-sectional study involves a *snapshot* of a particular phenomenon at a particular time. As a contrast, a longitudinal timeframe offers a series of *snapshots* or a representation of processes over a longer time period.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) argued that the cross-sectional studies, providing a snapshot of study phenomena at a particular time, apply a potential positivist philosophical stance and employ a quantitative approach. However, Saunders et al. (2016) suggested the cross-sectional study could also be employed in a qualitative or mixed methods study, for instance, an interview-based study needing a shorter period of time.

This research is a cross-sectional study in terms of its time horizon. The features of this research investigation appear to be consistent with the ones that a longitudinal study encompasses, but the time constraints for this research make it not possible. A four year full-time PhD study does not allow the researcher to follow a certain group of undergraduate students from their start of year one to their year three; as a result, the students within the three different groups are not necessarily the same ones. Another important reason here is that, the research purpose of this study is to explore what the issues are impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation and how could they cope with these issues. This research put emphasis on the interpretation of total findings from the three groups under different research themes, rather than the comparison of three student groups, though comparing the three groups' acculturation level is a small part of this research. In addition, a longitudinal study generally goes through at least one year time period in practice (Saunders et al., 2016), but the data collection works for this research investigation allows for eight months only, that is to say, from May to December 2018.

For this research project investigating the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK, the data collection among the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students are designed to

have three independent groups, in terms of their studying status when being interviewed.

Group 1, students of pre-studies, before departure for their studies in the UK;

Group 2, students during their UK studies, three months after their enrolments into the British higher education setting;

Group 3, students of post-studies, within three months before their graduation.

Each group is subjected to two stages for data collection that take place approximately at the same time. An on-line questionnaire survey (JISC on-line survey software is adopted, formerly called BOS, Bristol On-line Survey) conducted within Chinese students, is designed as *stage I* to collect quantitative data. The semi-structured interview with the student participants identified from the on-line survey, is designed as *Stage II* to collect qualitative data concurrently. According to Quan et al. (2013), the time frame of first three months in a new learning environment appears particularly challenging for international direct-entry students. Within data collection works for each group, a time period of three months is purposefully allowed to maximise the Chinese students' availability.

In addition, across the three student groups of data collection, interview with academics in British business schools and from the Chinese institutions where Chinese students studied before their departure for the UK, are regarded as another source of qualitative data to facilitate the interpretation and validity of the findings from interview with Chinese students.

The numbering of the student groups is following the time sequence of the students' pre-studies, during studies, and post-studies. However, due to the time constraints for this research project, the data collection works from different groups are forced to be conducted around the time when the student subjects are accessible during a calendar year. Table 3.9 clarifies the definition of the different groups, the time period for data collection from each group, and the data collection activities within each group.

Table 3.9: Time horizon of data collection

Group	Timeframe	Description	Works	
			Student groups	**Academics**
Group 1	July to September 2018	pre-studies, before their departure for degree studies in the UK	Stage I: on-line survey to collection quantitative data from students Stage II, interviews with students to collect qualitative data	Interviews with academics in British business schools and from the Chinese institutions where Chinese students have studied before their departure for the UK
Group 2	October to December 2018	during studies, within three months after their enrolments into UK higher education	Stage I: on-line survey to collection quantitative data from students Stage II: interviews with students to collect qualitative data	
Group 3	May to July 2018	post-studies, within three months before their graduation	Stage I: on-line survey to collection quantitative data from students Stage II: interviews with students to collect qualitative data	

3.8 Sampling techniques

Having justified the research methodology, research strategy, and time horizon applied in this research investigation, it is important to formulate an understanding of sampling techniques, which enables researchers to reduce the data collection works from a sub-group (samples), rather than all of the possible cases (the population) (Saunders et al., 2016).

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012, p. 222) defined the population as "the whole set of entities that decisions relate to", while the term "sample" is "the sub-set of those entities from which evidence is gathered". Since all the entities of a population may be difficult for investigators to identify and to negotiate access to, Saunders et al. (2016, p. 277) suggested that identifying a sampling frame, which refers to a "complete list of all the cases in the target population" that samples can be drawn from, enables the research to become manageable. If research questions concern a

particular set of people, the sampling frame is the complete list of the group members.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) distinguished two choices of sampling techniques, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is where every sample entity is selected equally with an equal chance of selection as part of the sample. Conversely, for non-probability sampling, the probability of each entity or case in the sample is unknown and there is not a criterion for sampling from the population (ibid). Saunders et al. (2016) argued that choosing sampling techniques is dependent on research questions and objectives. When the research questions and objectives require statistical generalisation of the characteristics of a population from its samples, probability sampling techniques are needed. On the contrary, non-probability sampling is adopted, when a piece of research focuses on a small number of cases, with the purpose of gaining information-rich details to answer research questions and obtain theoretical insights therein (ibid). Non-probability sampling may be adopted, when probability sampling is not feasible, under the condition of unavailable sampling frame or where it is not clearly defined.

Patton (1990) contended that the adoption of sampling techniques is directly linked to the researchers' philosophical stance and the research methods selected for their specific studies. For quantitative and qualitative research, there are fundamental differences in the sampling approaches chosen and the decisions undertaken over sample size (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Generally, the quantitative method depends on large sample numbers selected in a statistically random fashion, while qualitative research purposefully selects a small number of samples, in order to develop a more in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon.

3.8.1 Quantitative sampling techniques

Saunders et al. (2016) advocated that the quantitative research uses probability sampling techniques to enable generalisability from the sample to its target population. However, a combination of different sampling techniques can be used, considering the

resources availabilities, in particular, the financial supports and time constraint of a research project. Moreover, all the choices of sampling techniques are dependent on the researchers' ability to negotiate access to the required research samples. Collis and Hussey (2014, p. 63) argued that it is not crucial for an interpretivist researcher to select sufficiently sized and unbiased samples for survey strategies, as the interpretivist research using the quantitative method, aims at gaining "insights from the cases in the sample rather than generalising" for a population.

Interpretivism is adopted as the research philosophy for this study. A convergent parallel mixed methods design is developed as the methodological choice to deliver this investigation. In relation to the quantitative strand of the study, this research adopts a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data with comparatively small but achievable sample numbers of Chinese students. The findings attained from quantitative research ought to be mixed, compared, and combined with the abundant and in-depth findings from the qualitative strand on the Chinese students' acculturation, with the aim of testing existing theories deductively.

The population of research subjects in this study incorporates all the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students, studying business management and related courses at undergraduate level within British business schools. However, due to data protection issues, negotiation of direct access to all of the research subjects is difficult. The features of the sampling frame do not ensure the samples are chosen at random, even if the sampling frame could be confined to the Chinese students within one or several British universities. Having taken into consideration these aspects, such as the philosophical stance of this research, the inaccurate features of forming up a sampling frame, the difficulty of access negotiation to all of the research subjects, and small sized samples needed from the methodological design of this study, therefore, the non-probability sampling technique has been adopted, to conduct the students' survey for this research project.

Creswell (2013, p. 158) produced a typology of non-probability sampling techniques,

which are enumerated as: "1). maximum variation, which involves finding the criteria of differentiating people and choosing a sample of quite different people; 2), critical case; 3), convenience cases easily accessed. While this approach can save time, money, and effort, it may be at the expense of information validity and credibility; 4), snowball or chain, to identify cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases of information are rich."

The sampling techniques suited to the quantitative stand of this study, prove to be the snowball sampling and convenience sampling, among the initial contacts of the researcher's within the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)[1]. To build up rapport with the sample subjects of Chinese students, the researcher was actively involved in the CSSA social events, such as the Chinese students welcome schemes, ice-breaking social events, and the Chinese student outings, etcetera. The initial contact with the research subjects allows for the researcher to get easy access to them, either in the University of Salford (where the researcher is studying) or in the other universities in Northwest England. The target amount of effective response is initially expected to be minimum 50 in each group, as a result to make a total 150 responses within three groups. Thereby, further data analysis becomes viable statistically.

In order to arrive at the target figure of 150 effective survey responses, three campaigns within each student group were conducted. Invitations to undertake the on-line survey were firstly circulated among the initial contacts of the researcher's in nine CSSA branches within their universities in Northwest England (See Appendix 4 for the university codes). Secondly, upon completion of a copy of the questionnaire, the respondents were offered a small "thank-you-gift" to encourage them to circulate the on-line survey to other qualifying candidates nearby, which could be labelled as a snowball sampling strategy. Thirdly, as a complementary measure, the researcher visited university campuses and met students face to face who are eligible for this

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[1] The Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) is the official organisation for overseas Chinese students and scholars registered in most colleges, universities, and institutions outside of the People's Republic of China. The associations in different institutions share a same name. The primary function of CSSA is mostly responsible for helping away-from-home Chinese in their life, study, work, and other issues, to bring Chinese students together on campus. Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Students_and_Scholars_Association

research, asking them to do the on-line survey on site with the researcher's iPad and laptop computer.

Purcell, Elias and Atfield (2009) introduced an approach to categorising British universities and other HEIs, through their access tariff points attained by the enrolled students under twenty-one years of age. However, this research would adopt the classification of British universities claimed by Iannelli and Huang (2014), which is dependent on the universities' historical and administrative features. This classification provides three categories for British universities, which is universally accepted: the twenty four "Russell Group" universities that pursue high quality research, the "other old universities" that were founded prior to the year of 1992 but excluded into the Russell Group, and the "new British universities" which received a royal chart to become universities based on "Further and Higher Education Act 1992".

The nine British universities, where the samples are drawn for the quantitative strand of this research, fall into the three different categories (Iannelli & Huang, 2014). The University of Manchester coded as U2, the University of Liverpool (U4), and the University of Lancaster (U12) are "Russell Group" members. The University of Salford (U1) and the University of Bradford (U5) were founded in 1960's which are generally seen as the "other old universities". Manchester Metropolitan University (U3), the University of Huddersfield (U6), the University of Chester (U8), and Sheffield Hallam University (U7), are recognised as the "new universities".

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) believed the representativeness and precision of samples are crucial for sampling. In this research investigation, the samples drawn from the nine British universities, which fall into different categories, are an assurance of their representativeness. Furthermore, different categories of British universities, which may have different entry requirements and orientations for international students, provide another evidence of the samples' representativeness and precision. For example, the University of Manchester (U2), one of the "Russell Group" member universities, requires its international students studying business related disciplines to

reach to minimum IELTS 6.5 overall as the entry point for undergraduate studies (From its website: www.manchester.ac.uk). On the contrast, at the University of Salford (U1) which highlights both teaching and research, it is IELTS 6.0 generally for the English proficiency requirement (From its website: www.salford.ac.uk).

3.8.2 Qualitative sampling techniques

Interviews with Chinese students and their academics to collect qualitative data are selected for the qualitative strand of this research project. As illustrated in research strategies (Section 3.6), the student participants for interviews are identified concurrently from the survey respondents, who show their interests in participation therein when completing the on-line survey questionnaire.

The "maximum variation" sampling technique (Creswell, 2013) proves to be suitable for the qualitative strand of this study, because it can provide a wider variety of opinions, understandings, and perceptions from the different Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation experience. The features found among different interviewees, for instance, university background, gender, and the time period of being interviewed (pre-departure, just being enrolled into British universities, and prior to graduation), are taken into account to maximise varied samples. Under the condition of insufficient sample numbers for interviews identified from the survey questionnaire stage in any of the three student groups, volunteers who can be easily accessed by the researcher are invited to attend interviews as a contingency plan.

After sampling techniques were confirmed, nineteen semi-structured interviews were delivered with Chinese students from seven universities within the three aforementioned university categories. Table 3.10 demonstrates that nineteen Chinese students from the pre-categorised universities attended interviews within different groups.

Table 3.10: Number of interview participating students from British universities

Student group	Russell Group universities	Other old universities	New universities	Total
Group 1	1	2	3	6
Group 2	1	4	2	7
Group 3	2	2	2	6
Total	4	8	7	19

Another important source of qualitative data, to aid interpretation and validity of the findings from interviews with Chinese students, is from the interviews with academics in British business schools and the Chinese institutions where Chinese students studied before their departure to the UK. The rationale for interviews with UK academics in business schools for this research, is linked to the interactive acculturation model (Bourhis et al., 1997), which indicates that the interaction between Chinese students in this research (the immigrants group) and their UK academics (the host community) during the students' acculturation and adaptation, and the intercultural learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016; Zhao & Bourne, 2011) that requires both the academics and Chinese students' cooperative participation and engagements. The theoretical implications from the elements of the cultural web (Johnson et al., 2011) that constitute the organisational culture of the Chinese students' previous learning institutions, for instance, the stories of outstanding students, the routinely arranged pre-departure training, and scholarships awarded to well performed students as one of the screening control systems, makes it necessary to interview the academics in these institutions too, so as to acquire additional insights into the research on the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK.

Convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques are adopted, in order to negotiate and gain access to the academics for interviews. In practice, seven academics from Salford Business School are interviewed. Using snowball sampling, another nine academics from other British universities are invited to participate in interviews for the research to collect the qualitative data. Two staff from the China based Sino-UK joint programmes are involved in the additional interviews for this

study also, which in total provide a sample size of eighteen academics.

In total, interviews are conducted with nineteen Chinese students (in three groups) and eighteen academics from different universities for the qualitative strand of this research investigation. In order to address the issue of sample size for qualitative studies, Saunders et al. (2016) suggested that the qualitative data should continue to be collected until data saturation is reached, referring to the potential situation where little new information is provided or no new themes are being revealed. Following this suggestion, the data collection activities for this study are not stopping until no new information arouse.

3.9 Data analysis

As described in the time horizon section, the data collection works in this research investigation are conducted with three student groups, which fall into the timeframe from April to December 2018. Each group is comprised of two stages: one is for the quantitative strand and the other for the qualitative strand of the research, which take place approximately at the same time. Once the quantitative and qualitative data collection is complete, this research project moves onto the data analysis activities, in order to comprehensively present the research findings.

3.9.1 Quantitative data screening

In each group of the quantitative data collection, invitations are sent separately to CSSA member students using social media or emails, asking them to complete the on-line questionnaire for this study. Three filters are adopted to identify the effective questionnaire responses, which include,

1). Five consent items from the start of the questionnaire, which are designed and posited before the formal questionnaire;

2). Question item 1, selection of the respondents who are going to study or studying business management or related programmes in business schools;

3). Question item 2, identification of the respondents currently studying undergraduate programmes;

Respondents who disagree with the first five consent items are automatically excluded from the survey. The remaining respondents are filtered by question item 1 and item 2 asking them whether they are studying degree programmes at undergraduate level in business schools. As the remaining question items are designed compulsorily to provide an answer (unless the respondents drop out in the middle), no missing data are recorded within the completed samples. In total, 172 (49.86%) valid responses are attained from the total 345 survey responses within the three student groups. Table 3.11 below presents the data screening results.

Table 3.11: Outcomes of quantitative data screening

	Group 1: Aiming to study in the UK very soon	Group 2: Currently studying in the UK (having arrived within the last three months)	Group 3: Currently studying in the UK (within three months of Graduation)	Total
Survey responses	99	80	166	345
Responses filtered by consent items 1-5	25	28	31	84
Responses filtered by item 6 and 7	19	7	63	89
Sample records with missing, duplicate, and other wrong data	0	0	0	0
Valid responses	55	45	72	172
Valid response ratio	56%	56%	43%	49.86%

The sample size of 172 effective responses in this study is in accordance with the suggestion from Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2009) on sample size requirements: a sample size of minimum 150 under a measurement model with less than seven constructs. And, the aim of the quantitative part of this study is not generalising from sample to population, but for gaining insights from samples (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Furthermore, findings from the quantitative strand of this research will be combined with the qualitative one for further analysis, so as to test the existing theories and answer the research questions cooperatively. Therefore, the total sample size of 172 effective responses is acceptable.

3.9.2 Statistical data analysis

Compared with qualitative data analysis, the advantages of quantitative data analysis are demonstrated to be more systematic, less influenced by the researcher's personal and subjective bias, and thereby having a greater ability to provide potential comprehensive generalisations (Punch, 2013).

The quantitative data attained from the Chinese student respondents are analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24 and IBM SPSS Amos software. The process of quantitative data analysis for this research is conducted, firstly, to present the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics of the demographic information from the sample students.

SPSS Amos software is then applied to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as the second step, with its aims to measure the reliability and validity of constructs and underlying items. Confirmatory factor analysis is "a type of structural equation modelling" (Brown, 2006, p. 1) that deals with the relationship between observed variables (items or questions) and latent variables (constructs).

Thirdly, t-tests and analysis of the variance (ANOVA) processed by SPSS statistics version 24 software are applied to test whether the mean difference between different categories is significant, for instance, whether the Chinese students' acculturation levels (expected or real) are significantly different over three different student groups who are going to study in the UK, who have been enrolled into their undergraduate studies in British business schools within three month, and who are going to graduate with three months' time period.

It is noted that the total sample size of 172 Chinese student respondents is not very large for the group comparisons within this study, and the sample size of sub-groups (45, 55, and 72) shares the same situation. However, according to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012), for causal-comparative studies, a minimum of 30 participant within each group is recommended. Moreover, some researches in relation to acculturation studies and students adaptation have conducted ANOVA or t-test analyses, using the comparatively small sized samples also, for instance, Poyrazli et al.'s (2004) research with a total sample size of 141 to conduct ANOVA, Bai's (2016) with 152, and Zhou et al.'s (2011) with a sample size even lower than 100 to test the perceptive difference at three stages among a group of Chinese students.

As the fourth step, SPSS Amos software is applied to deliver path effect analysis by testing if the relationships among Chinese students' academic studies (AS), general life (GL), psychological issues (PI), and their acculturation level (AL) are positively or negatively related. It is noted that the AS construct is introduced in the proposed measurement model as the second-order factor (See Figure 2.6), which is underpinned by four first-order factors in this study: learning and assessment (LA), staff student relationships (SSR), English proficiency (EP), and classroom participation (CP).

The final step of quantitative analysis is the mediating effects test. By using Amos software, mediating effects are tested as to whether the Chinese students' general life (GL) and their psychological issues (PI) play mediating roles separately, between the adjustment in their academic studies (AS) and their acculturation level (AL).

3.9.3 Qualitative data analysis

Defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79), thematic analysis is a method or approach for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data". They further explained that a theme, which can be identified by the use of coding, represents a patterned response or meaning within data. Basit (2003) argued that the coding, which allocates units of meaning to descriptive or inferential information to make sense of

the textual data by tags or labels, is one of the most significant steps taken within data analysis. It is not just a way of labelling, Richards and Morse (2013, p.154) believed, the coding is also a link "from data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea". Practically, the search for research themes, within a thematic analysis, starts after the coding of all of the data sets is done (Saunders et al., 2016).

3.9.3.1 Template analysis

Template analysis is a type of thematic analysis in qualitative data analysis, in which a coding template with an initial list of codes and themes is developed when coding only part of the data items (Saunders et al., 2016). According to King (2012, p.426), template analysis balances between a "high degree of structure" and "the flexibility to adapt it to the need of a particular study" in the process of data analysis. The formulation of an initial coding template allows researchers using template analysis, to "focus on those areas of greatest relevance to the research, avoiding potentially lengthy repetitious and/or redundant coding" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 34). A 7-step template analysis procedure (Figure 3.4) was devised by King and Brooks (2017) to ensure the validity and rigour of the qualitative data analysis.

Figure 3.4: Template analysis procedures
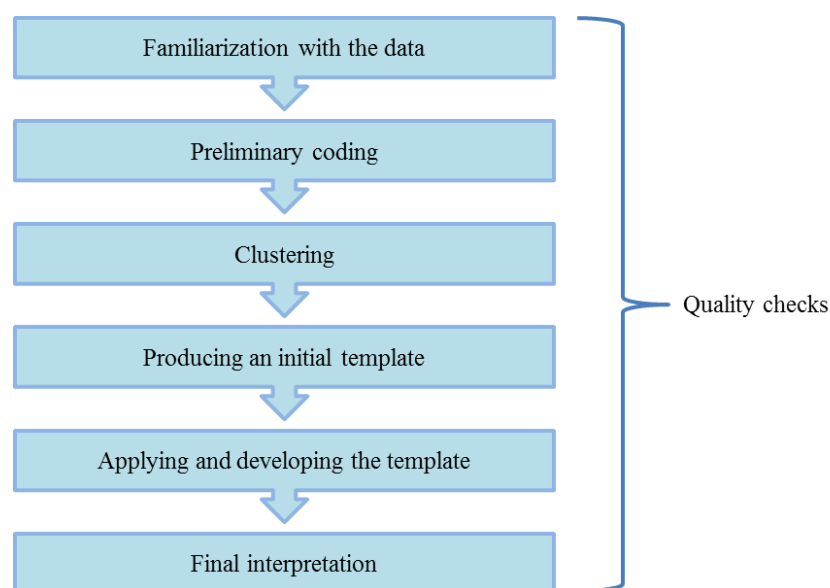
Source: adapted from King and Brooks (2017, p.26)

Argued by Tuckett (2005), the primary thematic analysis happens concurrently at the stage of the literature review, or even before the data collection, in that this can make researchers sensitise on the features of data set. As for this research investigation, since the themes underpinning the research questions have been identified at the stage of reviewing literature, it is reasonable for the researcher to code a proportion of the data sets collected to formulate a coding template, and afterwards, follow the suggested analysis process by King and Brooks (2017), to condense qualitative findings and develop interpretations. Moreover, the data analysis process of this research investigation serves to emphasise the similarities between the three student groups (Trahar & Hyland, 2011). Consequently, the template analysis is suited to and adopted for the analysis of the qualitative data from interviews with Chinese students and academics within this research project.

King and Brooks (2017) suggested that preliminary coding on four out of twenty transcripts from the interviewees, which have generally similar perspectives on the research topic, could be introduced to develop an initial template. As for this research investigation, preliminary coding on three transcripts is applied to formulate an initial coding template (Appendix 7), since the total number of eighteen interviews with academics is conducted. However, when approaching new data for analysis, the researcher keeps an open mind to further develop the coding template, and where necessary, to insert new codes, delete redundant codes, redefine existing ones, and change the scope or the hierarchy of codes within the initial template. In practice, the researcher perceives reading transcripts every time and coding every transcript are necessary steps of modifying and developing the initial coding template, and gradually, a formulation of final coding framework emerges in the qualitative component of this research. A sample coding record from interview with academics by NVivo 11 software package is attached as Appendix 8.

3.9.3.2 Approach to data analysis

After confirmation of the analytical approach to qualitative data from interviews with

Chinese students and academics, there comes the option to adopt a computer aided software package or a manual approach for data analysis within this research investigation.

Saunders et al. (2016) believed Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) software is the best in supporting the procedures of certain types of qualitative data analysis. Saldaña (2015) emphasised that the CAQDAS package is an indispensable tool for analysing large amounts of data. At functional level, Silverman (2013) believed that software is useful when storing, filing, searching for, and retrieving bits of qualitative data. Writing notes or memos through the CAQDAS package allows emerging ideas to be recorded in an appropriate place during the data analysis process. Moreover, utilising the CAQDAS package can provide a higher degree of accuracy (Welsh, 2002) and greater speed for handling large volumes of data (Silverman, 2013), than by using a manual approach for data analysis. Lewins and Silver (2009, p. 6) suggested that, the CAQDAS package can "aid continuity and increase both transparency and methodological rigour", whichever the research purpose is for theory building or theory testing. Silverman (2013) illustrated further that the CAQDAS software helps improve the rigour of the data analysis, by producing counts of the phenomena and searching for deviant cases.

The qualitative data sets in this research are mainly comprised of transcripts from the interviews with Chinese students and academics, which contain a large amount of textual data. Due to the availability of QSR NVivo software license and its popularity with over 1.5 million users in more than 150 countries (QSR International, 2019), QSR NVivo software is adopted for this study, from the outset of conducting qualitative data collection. Considering the software's nature of being an indispensable tool for analysing large amount of data (Saldaña, 2015), its versatility with large range of searching possibilities (Saunders et al., 2016), the improvements in rigor within the analysis process (Welsh, 2002), and the improving visualisation of analysis outcomes experienced by the researcher, NVivo Version 11 Professional is

also selected to deliver the interview data analysis for this research project.

However, researchers should be aware that successful data analysis depends on their own judgement, not merely the computer software (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). The computer and CAQDAS package do not do the data analysis for researchers (Basit, 2013), because researchers still have to "think through the codes, read all of materials or texts, and apply the coding scheme to them" using a manual based approach (Silverman, 2013, p. 269). Arguably, there is a potential issue that the attention of novice researchers is easily distracted from the actual analysis process to the software per se (Gibbs, 2014). Another disadvantage for the CAQDAS package is that, adequate time is required for researchers to familiarise themselves with the computer software needs (Silverman, 2013). Under these conditions, Saunders et al. (2016) believed either the CAQDAS package or a manual approach helps with coding the qualitative data.

In practice, when conducting the textual data analysis in this research project, the NVivo package is initially adopted to work on three interview transcripts to receive a coding template, and then codes are modified by applying the manual approach; afterwards, the second coding on all transcripts is undertaken by using the software package. At the writing-up stage of the data findings and discussion, the software and manual approaches are combined, in order to achieve the most appropriate results and findings. It is important for the researcher not to ratify "either electronic or manual methods, and instead combine the best features of each" (Welsh, 2002, p.9).

3.10 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are key judgements regarding the quality of research and its findings, which involve the underpinning rationale of the research design (Saunders et al., 2016). Validity is defined as the "extent to which the research findings accurately reflect the phenomena under study" (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p.130). In short, validity refers to the accuracy level of the research. Reliability is defined as the the extent to

which the consistent findings could be yielded by data collection techniques (Saunders et al., 2016). Reliability simply refers to the consistency of the research being undertaken.

In terms of the relationship between validity and reliability within research, Saunders et al. (2016, p. 202) believed unreliable research also proves to be "invalid since any error or bias (from researchers and participants) will affect the results and subsequent interpretation, and possibly cast doubt on the means to measure the phenomenon being studied". Under different research philosophies, validity and reliability play different roles. Collis and Hussey (2014) argued that reliability is of importance and strength in positivist studies, but validity is likely to be of higher importance in an interpretivist study. From an interpretivist perspective, reliability might be seen as having less importance or can be interpreted in a different way. Importance, for a piece of qualitative research, is placed on whether the "interpretations made on different occasions and/or by different observers can be explained and understood" (ibid, p.53).

In order to ensure and aid reliability and validity within the findings of this research investigation, some critical strategies are discussed and implemented separately within the quantitative and qualitative strands of this research.

3.10.1 Quantitative strand

Quantitative reliability means the scores (values) received within a piece of quantitative research, either from experiments or survey respondents, are of consistency and stability. The reliability needs to be formulated before addressing the assessments of validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative validity examines the "appropriateness of the measures used, accuracy of the analysis of the results, and generalisability of the findings" (Saunders et al., 2016, p.202).

It is important for research investigators to conclude upon any causal relationship among variables (internal validity) and the application of the research results to

another setting or a larger population (external validity). Saunders et al. (2016) presented a series of approaches to assess the research validity, among of which, pilot test was highlighted as the crucial one. The reason is that, a pilot test enables researchers to refine survey questions, based on the feedback from pilot respondents, and to "obtain some assessments of the question's validity and the likely reliability of the data" (Saunders et al., 2016, p.473).

3.10.1.1 Pilot survey design

The survey questionnaire is adopted to collect statistical data among Chinese students in the quantitative strand of this research. Bell and Waters (2014) advised that, researchers should run the questionnaire in a trial no matter how time pressed they are, before the formal data collection period. Pilot testing is crucial to formulate and ascertain the content validity of the scores on the given themes, and to improve the quality of questions, their format, and range scales (Creswell, 2014).

The pilot samples and the number of pilot studies depend on the research question(s) and objectives, the size of the research project, and the resources available (Saunders et al., 2016). Yin (2014, p. 96) suggested "convenience, access, and geographic proximity" are chosen as the main criteria for the selection of pilot samples. For a small scale survey, no less than ten pilots is applicable (Fink, 2016). Following suggestions from Saunders et al. (2016), Yin (2014), and Fink (2016), seven students from the University of Salford and another three students from the University of Manchester, are invited to participate in the on-line survey pilot study; they are all CSSA members in their universities within which their access are easily negotiated by the researcher. Afterwards, a follow up phone call conversation is made to each respondent, in order to gain their feedback and comments on the pilot survey.

3.10.1.2 Pilot survey results

The follow up checks with the pilot survey respondents are administrated by the researcher, to ensure that the future respondents could understand the questions

clearly and answer them properly, so as to enhance the reliability and suitability of the questions (Fink, 2016). Yin (2014) indicated that, the report on the pilot studies should be explicit about the lessons, that researchers have learned within the creation of the research design and field procedures.

The feedback from the pilot respondents, particularly their suggestions, enables the researcher to reconsider the wording and layout of the survey questionnaire, and whether the question items in the pilot questionnaire authentically inform the research's overall aim and objectives. Lessons that the researcher has learnt from the pilot survey tests are summarised as follows,

1). the pre-departure training. The pre-departure training reflects the organisational culture of the institutions in China, where the students have been studying prior to their studies in the UK. The question item No. 12 in relation to pre-departure training is split into two new question items, which could make the respondents clearly understood.

2). avoidance of jargon. In response to the feedback from pilot studies, paraphrasing is made on some words in the question items, such as "sojourners" and "acculturation", which might not be frequently used in the students' daily life, so as to improve clarity and avoid confusion.

3). Enquiry about the acculturation measures. A pilot respondent has made an enquiry that, no items in the survey questionnaire are designed to ask for their acculturation measures, which provide an evidence to corroborate the selection of mixed methods for this research investigation. It is because a quantitative survey is difficult to look into the in-depth understanding of research questions of "how" or "why" (Saunders et al., 2016). Through interviews with either Chinese students or their academics, insights can be attained on how Chinese students handle the acculturation issues. The respondent is informed of the explanations and invited to attend the pilot interviews afterwards.

4). the scale of "no opinion". As one of the five Likert scales within survey

question, this scale is replaced with the wordings of "neither agree nor disagree", which might be more easily understood by survey respondents (Chinese students).

5). font size shown on mobile applications. After re-investigation, the font size of the questionnaire title shown on the mobile phone screen is not changeable, as it is fixed by the adopted on-line survey computer software. A thanks-email with explanations is purposefully sent to the pilot respondent who has identified the issue of layout.

Accordingly, the revision on question items, scales, and themes, are conducted after the pilot survey studies. A revised copy of questionnaire for the formal survey among Chinese students is attached as Appendix 13.

3.10.2 Qualitative strand

The purpose of adopting questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews as mixed methods for this research project is to aid its reliability and validity, and the methodological triangulation (Cohen et al., 2011). Particularly, the qualitative data collected from post-survey interviews with a small number of interviewees from the same sample frame, aid the "interpretation and validity" of the quantitative findings from survey (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p.156).

3.10.2.1 Validation techniques for qualitative studies

For a piece of qualitative research, Saunders et al. (2016) introduced two validation techniques, triangulation and participant validation, to assess the accuracy of findings. According to Collis and Hussey (2014), triangulation introduces multiple sources of data, different methods, and/or more than one researcher into a research investigation to look into the same phenomenon, reduce bias, and increase the validity of research data, analysis, and interpretation. For the interpretivist researchers, the value of using triangulation lies in that, it adds depth, breadth, complexity, and richness to their research (Denzin, 2012).

This research incorporates methodological triangulation by adopting the quantitative survey and the semi-structured interviews concurrently. For the qualitative research strand, interviewing with Chinese students, their British academics, and those from students' former educational institutions in China, illustrates that the researcher is striving to diversify the sources of qualitative data for this research project, therefore, to incorporate data triangulation.

Participant validation involves sending transcripts, themes, and interpretations to the research participants, so as to allow them to determine the accuracy of qualitative findings (Saunders et al., 2016). Within this research project, all the transcripts from interviews with the nineteen students and eighteen academics are sent to them for their comments. Based on their feedback, the transcripts are revised accordingly before being processed for data analysis.

Moreover, Creswell (2014) recommended that spending a prolonged time in the research field enhances the researchers' ability to assess the accuracy and validity of their research findings. The qualitative data collection for this research is conducted within approximate eight months. Within this time period, the researcher becomes more experienced in interviewing students and academics and understanding their personal settings, so that the research outcomes are getting more accurate and valid.

Although Collis and Hussey (2014) argued that reliability is of little importance under an interpretivist philosophy, Yin (2014) suggested that, documenting the procedures and formulating interview protocols are necessary, thus, other researchers could follow these processes and check the reliability and consistency of the research. Transcript check, rigid definition of codes, and frequently comparing data with pre-determined codes, are also useful procedures to ensure qualitative reliability (Gibbs, 2007). All of these measures are carefully flagged and taken, when conducting the qualitative strand of this research investigation.

The pilot interview is another important approach to ensure the reliability and validity

of the qualitative research. Silverman (2013) suggested that, by careful pilot testing within interview schedules, the reliability of interviews can be enhanced, for instance, each interviewee can be assured of understanding the questions in the same manner. Pilot interview tests enable researchers to eliminate potential misunderstanding and errors aroused within their studies, and provide an opportunity to justify the suitability, logic, and relevance of the interview questions used (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.10.2.2 Pilot interview design

Besides Chinese students, the academics interviewed are providing another important source of qualitative data for this research investigation. Two academics in Salford Business School, one ethnically British, and the other one, Chinese, were interviewed as part of the pilot interviews. Both of them have had more than five years' experience of teaching Chinese undergraduate students.

After pilot interviews with academics, two Chinese students, one from the University of Salford and the other from the University of Manchester, attended the pilot interviews with the researcher, as another part of the pilot studies for the qualitative strand of this research.

Unlike the equal status with academics within pilot interviews, the researcher strived to develop rapport with the Chinese student interviewees before the pilot interviews commenced. They were encouraged to call the researcher by his name, instead of "Teacher Smith". The first five minutes of the pilot interviews were allowed to develop discursive conversation between the two parties about the weather, food, and even football in the UK, so as to shorten the psychic distance (Widedershein-Paul, 1984). Only when the students felt comfortable and relaxed, did the interviews start.

3.10.2.3 Pilot interview results

Feedback and outcomes from pilot interviews push the researcher into reconsidering the interview questions and the fieldwork procedures, which, thereby, could develop

through pilot studies (Yin, 2014). Lessons learnt from the pilot interviews with academics are summarised as follows,

1). concerns on the equality of different ethnical student groups. Interview questions, such as "the measures that business schools and universities should be taken to help Chinese students adapt into their academic studies", should be paraphrased to avoid any concern regarding ethnical discrimination that may arise.

2). familiarity with interview questions. The researcher should be familiar with the interview questions in advance. Some academics might discursively link the answer to a specific question with other questions that the researcher has planned to ask at a later time. The sequence of questions may adjust flexibly depending on the situational development within interviews.

3). city bias and skewness. Qualitative data might be skewed, if collected only by interviews with the academics from the Manchester based universities, and if the Chinese students are coming to the same city (Manchester). It is suggested that, the researcher should conduct interviews with university academics, who are working in other cities in the UK to intentionally avoid any "city" bias.

4). Time consumption on transcribing. The pilot interviews make the researcher aware of transcribing as a time consuming area of research work. For instance, though the outcome from one of pilot interviews is a 57-minute audio file, it takes about eight to ten hours to be transcribed into textual forms.

5). Academic transcripts. Transcripts from interviews are going to be used for academic purpose. The oral words in daily use, such as "gonna", "wanna", and "yeah", need to be modified into the ones in academic format when transcribing. Some short oral phrases need to be reworded also, to avoid unnecessary confusion and the omission of clear meaning.

Initially, the lessons learned from the pilot interviews with two Chinese students reflect somehow the intrinsic nature of culture difference. Through convenience sampling, five Chinese students were encouraged to participate in the pilot interviews.

However, only two of them agreed and participated in, despite the positive rapport developed before the invitations by the researcher. Although the researcher has neither taught them nor provided them with admission and counselling services, they are all aware of the researcher's working background as a former member of the university staff, which, reflects upon the power distance (Hofstede, 1991) existing between these students and the researcher. The lessons learnt from the pilot interviews with Chinese students are summarised as follows,

1). Emphasis on student interviewees' own viewpoints and perceptions. During the pilot interviews, there is a tendency that Chinese students tend not to provide direct answers about their perception on their own acculturative experience, but in the name of their Chinese student group. They would rather say "we Chinese students…" or "we all think…" to avoid uncertainty on whether their answers are right or wrong (Hofstede, 1991).

2). Guidance and encouragement in interviews. Due to their young age and less maturity, the students might be less capable of illustrating their opinions and perceptions. Guidance and encouragement are critical factors in conducting interviews with the students, in order to achieve fruitful outcomes. Clear and short questions are introduced, and follow-up questions are applied from time to time, guiding student interviewees to think in depth and talk in an informal manner.

3.11 Research ethics

Research ethics refer to the moral values or principles that form the basis of research conducted (Collis & Hussey, 2014). According to Saunders et al. (2016), delivering research involves ethical integrity, in relation to the role of researchers, the rights of research subjects and the organisational gatekeepers who help researchers negotiate access to undertake research, and/or any others that are affected by the research. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) indicated that ethics in business research are concerned with the way that the research is conducted, with regard to what is expected by societal norms. From the ethical perspective, researchers ought to internalise the

values of thinking and acting ethically, during each aspect and stage of their research or studies (Saunders et al., 2016).

Robson and McCartan (2016) argued that a series of ethical issues lie in the research process. From the initial stage of research planning, research design, gaining access to the research subjects, data collection, to the stage of research analysis and reporting, ethical issues are crucial throughout the research period (Saunders et al., 2016). It is believed that for an ethical piece of research, the principle of prevention from causing harm is central and the research participants should benefit from the research that involves them (Farquhar, 2012). Various researchers prioritised the need of informed consent for ethically primary researches, whatever the research methodologies are adopted (Ali & Keylly, 2004; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). According to Saunders et al. (2016, p. 251), informed consent involves ensuring the research subjects are provided with "sufficient information, the opportunities to ask questions, and time to consider without any pressure or coercion, to be able to reach a fully informed, considered, and freely given decision about whether or not to take part". Bell and Bryman (2007) have identified eleven principles of research ethics that researchers are suggested to abide by, and guide their research projects. Those principles are categorised and presented in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12: Ethical principles and definitions

Ethical principles	Definitions
Harm to participants	The potential to cause harm through the research process and the need to ensure physical and psychological well-being either of research participants, the researcher, or others.
Dignity	The requirement to respect the dignity of research participants, researchers or others and avoid causing discomfort or anxiety.
Informed consent	The need to ensure the fully informed consent of research participants.
Privacy	The need to protect privacy of research subjects or avoid invasions of privacy.
Confidentiality	The requirement to ensure confidentiality of research data whether relating to individuals, groups, or organisations.
Anonymity	The protection of anonymity of individuals or organisations.
Deception	The potential for deception through the research process, either through lies or behaviour that is misleading.
Affiliation	The need to declare any professional or personal affiliations that may have influenced the research, including conflicts of interest and sponsorship, including information about where funding for the research has come from.
Honesty and transparency	The need for openness and honesty in communicating information about the research to all interested parties, including the need for trust.
Reciprocity	The idea that the research should be of mutual benefit to researcher and participants or that some form of collaboration or active participation should be involved.
Misrepresentation	The need to avoid misleading, misunderstanding, misrepresenting or false reporting of research findings.

Source: Bell and Bryman (2007, p.71)

With regard to this research project, ethical issues are highlighted, particularly around informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, participants' sensitive privacies, and the researcher's safety, so as to deter the research participants and the researcher from being harmed. The consent requests are embedded into the questions of the on-line survey, hence that, informed consents from the respondents are ensured to be attained. If the respondents would not choose to answer the consent items or answer negatively, automatically, they are unable to continue completing the remaining research questions covered in the on-line survey. Prior to the semi-structured interviews, the participants are provided with hardcopies of the Consent form (Appendix 9) and Participation information sheet (Appendix 10) for the research project. Only once the

hard copies of consent form are reviewed and signed off by the participants, could the interviews be carried on thereafter.

During interviews, the participants are assured that, they can leave the interview or reject a question, if they want to at any time without any reason. For the privacy protection purpose, all the interview participants are given a certain code in the researcher's records, which are only known to the researcher, so as to ensure their identity and demographic information are anonymised and confidential. The publications yielded by the research project are written by using pseudonyms or random numbers so as to disguise the research participants. Where the interview participants share their unpleasant experience, or talk about sensitive feelings in their life and academic studies, the researcher adopts sensitive interview approaches, asking them if the audio recording needs to switch off, taking notes only, and where necessary, to cease the interview.

The interviews for the data collection are mainly arranged during "office times" in a designated meeting room at university campuses. However, when off-site travel is required to interview with participants from other British universities, the interviews are arranged in a meeting room or in public areas, such as a cafeteria within the university that the researcher visits. In addition, the venue details for the interview during off-site events, are given to a contact person of the researcher ahead of time, to protect both the participants and the researcher's personal safety.

This research ensures that all of other ethical principles in Table 3.12, identified by Bell and Bryman (2007), are considered and followed throughout the research project. Prior to data collection, an application for ethics approval for this research project has been submitted to, and approved by the research ethics panel of the University of Salford, where the researcher is studying.

3.12 Chapter summary

By following the research onion developed by Saunders et al. (2016), the research philosophy embraced in this research investigation has been justified, and the methodological design for the research investigation has been established. This research project adopts the interpretivist philosophy with the deductive approach to test the existing theories, in relation to the Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK. In terms of the purpose of the research, a combination of exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory studies facilitates this research project.

After careful scrutiny of the research methodologies, the convergent parallel mixed method design is applied to the research project, using quantitative and qualitative methods concurrently for data collection and data analysis. An on-line students survey and the semi-structured interviews with Chinese students, their British academics, and those from the students' former educational institutions in China, will be adopted as the research strategies, by which to collect data in a multi cross-sectional way. This is followed by the review of sampling techniques, and the non-probability sampling is determined for this study. Approaches to the quantitative and qualitative data analysis for this research are identified. The application of computer software packages for each strand of this study is justified and confirmed. For the sake of the quality assurance of the research implementation and its findings, strategies and techniques guaranteeing validity and reliability of the research process, particularly the pilot tests for the quantitative and qualitative strands of this research, are reviewed. Finally, insights into issues on research ethics for the study are presented.

Having confirmed the philosophical stance and research methodology for this study, the next chapter will report the research findings from the quantitative strand of this research investigation.

4. Findings from the survey investigation among Chinese students

Qualitative data aims to explain the "meaning" of information, while quantitative data calculates the "mean" (Saldaña, 2015). This chapter presents the results of the findings and analyses from the quantitative data, collected by the on-line survey among Chinese student respondents. The layout of this chapter begins with the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics of the demographic information of the student respondents. Then, in terms of the two-step approach of structural equation modeling (SEM), the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) upon the factors involved in this research is conducted as the first step of SEM. Next, t-tests and ANOVA test are delivered using IBM SPSS software, to display the findings and analyses investigating the difference in their acculturation level for different student categories. Finally, together with the mediating effect tests within the measurement model, the path effect tests, as the second-step approach of SEM, are conducted by using IBM Amos software for this study.

4.1 The frequency distribution

Within the quantitative strand of this research investigation, the Chinese student respondents' demographic data is firstly investigated, by considering their different characteristics (scales).

The scale of "Student group" categorises the Chinese students who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK within three months, and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months; The "Start year" is when they will start or have started their undergraduate studies in the British universities; The "City" is where they are from in China; The Scale of "pre-departure training" is the event if Chinese student respondents actually have attended, prior to their life and studies in the UK.

The scale of "Enrolment channel" is the channel through which Chinese students

apply for the British universities' entry by themselves, agents, or through Sino-UK joint programmes. There are two categories of the enrolment channel to group student respondents. One is Do-it-yourself (DIY), which labels the students who apply for the entry into British universities by themselves or through agencies. The other is from Sino-UK joint programmes in China (JP), which refers to students from HND, NCUK programme, or other joint programmes in China. Table 4.1 details the demographic information of the students who participate in the on-line survey.

Under the categorical scale of "Student group", 55 (31.98%) students who "aim to study in the UK very soon" are categorised as Group 1; 45 (26.16%) students are in Group 2 as "currently studying in the UK (having arrived within the last three months)"; Group 3 includes the students who are "currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation)", with its group number accounting for the largest (72) and occupying 41.86% of the total respondents.

Under "Start year", the students undertaking the first year contribute the largest number of responses (86, 50%), compared with the second year (28, 16.28%) and the third year (58, 33.72%). Considering the fact that students' acculturation levels is not related to the year that they start to study, but to the length of time period of having been studying in the UK before they respond to the survey, the categorical scale of "Start year" becomes unhelpful and potentially confusing, and thus, is excluded into further analysis.

Under "Gender", the female students account for a larger number and proportion (89, 51.74%), while the males account for slightly less (83, 48.26%).

Under "Enrolment channel", respondents who come from Sino-UK joint programmes (JP) account for the number of 94 (54.65%), while "DIY" (application by student themselves and through agencies) occupy the number of 78 (45.35%).

Under "Pre-departure training", there are 91 respondents with the ratio of 52.90% who respond to have accepted the pre-departure training, while 81 (47.10%) reply

negatively.

Under the scale of "City" in China, where the respondents (Chinese students) come from, they are scattered into fifteen different city options, among of which, the respondent number of fourteen categories is lower than 30, and the size ratio between the smallest and largest category is lower than 1: 45. Following Barton and Peat's (2014, p. 114) suggestion that "the cell size ratio is no larger than 1:4", the scale of "City" is not adopted for further ANOVA analysis.

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution

Variable	Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student group	Aiming to study in the UK very soon;	1	55	31.98	31.98
	Currently studying in the UK (having arrived within the last three months);	2	45	26.16	58.14
	Currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation).	3	72	41.86	100.00
		Total	172	100.00	
Start Year	1st year	1	86	50.00	50.00
	2nd year	2	28	16.28	66.28
	3rd year	3	58	33.72	100.00
		Total	172	100.00	
Gender	Female	1	89	51.74	51.74
	Male	2	83	48.26	100.00
		Total	172	100.00	
Enrolment Channel	DIY	1	78	45.35	45.35
	Joint programme	2	94	54.65	100.00
		Total	172	100.00	
Pre-departure training	YES	1	91	52.90	52.90
	No	2	81	47.10	100.00
		Total	172	100.00	
City	Beijing	1	24	13.95	13.95
	Shanghai	2	26	15.12	29.07

Guangzhou	3	15	8.72	37.79
Shenzhen	4	5	2.91	40.70
Qingdao	5	3	1.74	42.44
Xi'an	6	6	3.49	45.93
Nanjing	7	4	2.33	48.26
Chengdu	8	24	13.95	62.21
Chongqing	9	3	1.74	63.95
Wuhan	10	8	4.65	68.60
Changsha	11	1	.58	69.19
Suzhou	12	3	1.74	70.93
Fuzhou	13	1	.58	71.51
Xiamen	14	3	1.74	73.26
Other	15	46	26.74	100.00
	Total	172	100.00	

4.2 Descriptive statistics

The option of responses to question items within the survey questionnaire follows a 5-point Likert scale, with the value of 1 that stands for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree". From Table 4.2, there are 172 valid responses within the range of 1-5 that have the minimum value of 1 and the maximum value of 5, which indicate there are no errors for values in the dataset. The average values (mean) are between 2.38 and 4.66.

The skewness ranges from -1.51 to 0.50 and the kurtosis values from -0.91 to 2.75, which are consist with the suggestions from Kline (2015) that the absolute value of skewness should be less than 3 and the absolute value of kurtosis is less than 8. Therefore, the dataset is normally distributed. As shown in Table 4.2, GL1 has the highest mean 4.66 while PI2 has the lowest 2.38, which indicates the respondents disagreed with PI2 and agree with GL1 the most. The standard deviation of all questions is between 0.53 and 1.23, showing the consistency of each of the questions to which the survey participants have responded.

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Table 4.2: Descriptive analysis

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
GL1	172	4.66	0.53	-1.51	2.75	2	5
GL2	172	4.31	0.69	-0.72	0.24	2	5
GL3	172	4.13	0.86	-0.82	0.37	1	5
GL4	172	4.37	0.73	-1.15	1.99	1	5
GL5	172	3.99	0.87	-0.48	-0.54	2	5
GL6	172	3.84	0.99	-0.62	-0.30	1	5
GL7	172	4.51	0.64	-1.24	1.56	2	5
GL8	172	4.24	0.81	-1.15	1.56	1	5
AL1	172	4.13	0.70	-0.49	0.23	2	5
AL2	172	3.95	0.77	-0.77	1.16	1	5
AL3	172	3.95	0.76	-0.40	-0.08	2	5
PI1	172	2.76	1.22	0.21	-0.91	1	5
PI2	172	2.38	1.15	0.50	-0.68	1	5
PI3	172	2.41	1.09	0.49	-0.44	1	5
PI4	172	2.91	1.16	-0.02	-0.85	1	5
PI5	172	2.61	1.17	0.47	-0.67	1	5
PI6	172	2.46	1.12	0.32	-0.84	1	5
PI7	172	2.99	1.19	-0.06	-0.87	1	5
PI8	172	3.52	1.23	-0.55	-0.48	1	5
SSR1	172	4.10	0.74	-0.34	-0.56	2	5
SSR2	172	3.91	0.77	-0.47	0.51	1	5
SSR3	172	3.99	0.84	-0.68	0.36	1	5
EP1	172	3.78	0.83	-0.68	0.40	1	5
EP2	172	3.81	0.87	-0.71	0.78	1	5
LA1	172	4.03	0.74	-0.40	-0.10	2	5
LA2	172	3.94	0.74	-0.59	0.50	2	5
LA3	172	4.02	0.79	-0.68	0.67	1	5
LA4	172	3.38	0.96	-0.11	-0.54	1	5
LA5	172	3.88	0.80	-0.80	1.26	1	5
LA6	172	4.06	0.76	-0.50	-0.07	2	5
CP1	172	3.70	0.94	-0.52	-0.03	1	5
CP2	172	4.13	0.72	-0.86	1.83	1	5
CP3	172	3.63	0.97	-0.58	-0.08	1	5
CP4	172	3.69	0.92	-0.40	-0.38	1	5

Table 4.3 below reports that, the mean values of the constructs in the measurement model range from 2.76 to 4.26, and the values of standard deviation range from 0.37 to 0.85.

Table 4.3: The mean value of constructs

	GL	AL	PI	EP	LA	CP	SSR
N	172	172	172	172	172	172	172
M	4.26	4.01	2.76	3.80	3.88	3.79	4.00
SD	0.52	0.37	0.85	0.72	0.51	0.57	0.61

4.3 Confirmatory factor analysis

This study examined its measurement and structural model for theory test and development, by adopting a two-step approach of structural equation modelling (SEM) proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the first step measures the construct reliability, validity, and model fit in the measurement model. The second step tests the path effects and their significance between the constructs in the structural model.

Kenny (2006) believed CFA is the best approach to test a measurement model, though CFA problems may lead to the poor-fitting of structural equation models. A high quality CFA supports construct validity, reliability of measurement, reduction of the number of variables, and the pattern of item-factor relationship (factor loading). The following two sections of 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 demonstrate the detailed examination work of the first-order and second-order constructs in the measurement model by CFA.

4.3.1 First-order CFA

When the relationship between items and constructs is being tested, Chin (1998) suggested that the standard factor loading should be at least .60 and ideally .70 or above, which indicates that each item is accounting for 50 percent or more of the variance of its underlying construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) believed the factor loading of each items should not be lower than .50. They also recommended that the composite reliability (CR), which refers to the internal consistency or reliability of all indicators in a construct, should be higher than .60. Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008) claimed the factor loading cut-off point should be .45, and items with factor

loading lower than the cut-off point should be removed from the measurement model, so as to avoid extra measurement errors in the next test of the structural model. The above criteria are adopted when doing CFA for this research.

There are three first-order constructs in the measurement model of this research project (See Figure 2.6): GL (General life), PI (Psychological issues), and AL (Acculturation level), which are examined individually by the first-order confirmatory factor analysis.

4.3.1.1 The construct of "GL"

Eight items underlying the construct of "GL" were tested by CFA. Among them, item GL2 was removed due to its factor loading being lower than .45 (Hooper et al., 2008). The values of standard factor loading of the other seven items range from .650 to .772; the values of squared multiple correlations (SMC) fall into the .423-.596 range; the composite reliability (CR) of the "GL" construct is .87, which exceeds 0.70, the lower limit recommended by Nunnally and Berntein (1994). These parameters indicate the "GL" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.4 and 4.5 report the CFA results on the construct labelled as "GL".

Table 4.4: First-order CFA on the construct of "GL"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	*p*-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
GL	GL1	1.000				0.671	0.450	0.870	0.490
	GL3	1.462	0.194	7.517	0.000	0.650	0.423		
	GL4	1.388	0.172	8.093	0.000	0.705	0.497		
	GL5	1.638	0.204	8.035	0.000	0.716	0.513		
	GL6	1.675	0.226	7.405	0.000	0.653	0.426		
	GL7	1.428	0.163	8.743	0.000	0.772	0.596		
	GL8	1.607	0.195	8.238	0.000	0.726	0.527		

*Unstd: Unstandardised factor loading; STD: Standardised factor loading

Table 4.5: The status of items related to "GL" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
GL1	High quality of UK higher education (GL1)	Hold
GL2	The University has a strong brand (GL2)	Remove
GL3	Free thinking education (GL3)	Hold
GL4	English language learning (GL4)	Hold
GL5	Making friends from different countries (GL5)	Hold
GL6	Traveling overseas (GL6)	Hold
GL7	Self-development (GL7)	Hold
GL8	Personal choice (GL8)	Hold

4.3.1.2 The construct of "PI"

Eight items underlying the construct of "PI" were tested by CFA. Among them, item PI1 was removed due to its factor loading being lower than .45. The values of standard factor loading of the other seven items range from .620 to .786; the values of SMC fall into the range of .384-.618; the CR of the "PI" construct is .871. All of these parameters indicate the "PI" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.6 and 4.7 report the CFA results on "PI".

Table 4.6: First-order CFA on the construct of "PI"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	p-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
PI	PI2	1.000				0.654	0.428	0.871	0.493
	PI3	1.010	0.126	8.022	0.000	0.697	0.486		
	PI4	1.036	0.139	7.466	0.000	0.672	0.452		
	PI5	0.961	0.137	7.038	0.000	0.620	0.384		
	PI6	1.016	0.132	7.715	0.000	0.686	0.471		
	PI7	1.237	0.148	8.344	0.000	0.783	0.613		
	PI8	1.284	0.156	8.214	0.000	0.786	0.618		

Table 4.7: The status of items related to "PI" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
PI1	Different foods	Remove
PI2	Language problems	Hold
PI3	Local accents	Hold
PI4	Financial problems	Hold
PI5	Different learning styles	Hold
PI6	Poor learning achievements	Hold
PI7	Finding friends	Hold
PI8	Going shopping for daily life	Hold

4.3.1.3 The construct of "AL"

Three items underlying the construct of "AL" were tested by CFA. Among them, item AL2 was removed due to its factor loading being lower than .45. The values of standard factor loading of the other two items range from .647 to .845; the SMC values fall into the range of .419 to .714; the CR of the "OCE" construct is .72. These parameters indicate the "AL" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 below show the CFA results on "AL".

Table 4.8: First-order CFA on the construct of "AL"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	p-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
AL	AL1	1.000				0.647	0.419	0.720	0.566
	AL3	1.216	0.176	6.931	0.000	0.845	0.714		

Table 4.9: The status of items related to "AL" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
AL1	I think I can handle the balance of my life and my studies in the UK, in terms of time and energy required.	Hold
AL2	I think I can manage the negative experiences associated with the daily life in the UK.	Remove
AL3	I believe I would adapt or have adapted to the academic studies in the UK.	Hold

4.3.2 Second-order CFA

It is common to present a second-order structural model in a piece of research. Several first-order latent factors may be affected by a higher level of common factor, which is called the second-order construct or factor. In other words, the higher level factor is considered accountable for the lower order factors (Byrne, 2016). The higher-order factor does not have any observed variables (items), though it is linked indirectly to those observed variables measuring the lower-ordered factors. Similar to first-order models, the second-order model requires evaluating the CFA, and examining whether the second-order factor (construct) directly links to the first-order factors, and relates to the other factors in the structural model (Chin ,1998).

According to Kline (2015, p. 319), a second-order CFA model should cover at least "three first-order factors", each of which being measured with "at least two indicators, but more is better". In this research, AS (Academic studies) is designed as the second-order factor accounting for the four first-order factors: SSR (Staff student relationships), LA (Learning and assessment), CP (Classroom participation), and EP (English proficiency). The five factors (constructs) were all examined within the second-order CFA model in this study.

4.3.2.1 The construct of "SSR"

Three items (indicators) underlying the construct of "SSR", were tested by CFA. Among them, item SSR3 was removed due to its factor loading being lower than .45. The values of standard factor loading of the other two items range from .525 to .878; the values of SMC fall into the .276-.771 range; the CR of the "SSR" construct is .667. All the parameters indicate the "SSR" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.10 and Table 4.11 present the CFA results on "SSR".

Table 4.10: First-order CFA on the construct of "SSR"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	*p*-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
SSR	SSR1	1.000				0.525	0.276	0.667	0.523
	SSR2	1.736	0.354	4.901	0.000	0.878	0.771		

Table 4.11: The status of items related to "SSR" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
SSR1	The UK academics expect Chinese students in the UK higher education to utilise independent learning more than in China.	Hold
SSR2	The relationship between students and academics in the UK universities is equal, hence, students can challenge the academics' opinion and this can be looked upon as constructive and supportive.	Hold
SSR3	I expect that UK academics can give me more guidance in learning and teaching support and that I can approach them for help.	Remove

4.3.2.2 The construct of "LA"

Six items (indicators) underlying the construct of "LA", were tested by CFA. Among of them, item LA3, LA4, and LA5 were removed, due to their factor loadings being lower than .45. The values of the standard factor loading of the other three items range from .602 to .722; the values of SMC fall into the .362-.521 range; the CR of the "LA" construct is .711. All of the parameters indicate the "LA" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 present the CFA results on "LA".

Table 4.12: First-order CFA on the construct of "LA"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	*p*-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
LA	LA1	1.000				0.686	0.471	0.711	0.451
	LA2	1.075	0.142	7.551	0.000	0.722	0.521		
	LA6	0.911	0.138	6.618	0.000	0.602	0.362		

Table 4.13: The status of items related to "LA" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
LA1	Within a specific course module, UK academics will not recommend a textbook and indicate the most important chapters. On the contrary, a list of reference books and papers is provided to help with my study.	Hold
LA2	I can manage and complete the assignments outside of classrooms, for instance, homework, small essays, and handouts issued by academics.	Hold
LA3	The comments from academics and their feedback upon my assignments are valuable.	Remove
LA4	I think the examination is the best way to assess what I have learned	Remove
LA5	I think homework and small essays are the components of the assessment also.	Remove
LA6	I think that, Information technology (including social media) introduced to my studies in the UK, can help my communication with other students and academics, and increase my study efficiency and innovation.	Hold

4.3.2.3 The construct of "CP"

Four items (indicators) underlying the construct of "CP", were tested by CFA. Among of them, item CP1 and CP3 were removed due to their factor loadings being lower than .45. The values of standard factor loading of the other two items range from .546 to .916; the values of SMC fall into the .298-.839 range; the CR of the "CP" construct is .683. These parameters indicate the "CP" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.14 and Table 4.15 present the CFA results on "CP".

Table 4.14: First-order CFA on the construct of "CP"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	*p*-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
CP	CP2	1.000				0.546	0.298	0.683	0.569
	CP4	1.922	0.463	4.153	0.000	0.916	0.839		

Table 4.15: The status of items related to "CP" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
CP1	I think a lecture in China means listening and taking notes in the classroom.	Remove
CP2	I think the classroom discussion and debates, group work, and the students-academics oral interaction, are encouraged more in the UK higher education.	Hold
CP3	Personally, I am happy to raise any question immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in China.	Remove
CP4	Personally, I am happy to raise any question immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in the UK.	Hold

4.3.2.4 The construct of "EP"

Two items (indicators) underlying the construct of "EP", were tested by CFA. The values of standard factor loading range from .603 to .696; the values of SMC fall into the .364-.484 range; the CR of the "EP" construct is .592. The above parameters indicate the "EP" construct has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.16 and Table 4.17 present the CFA results on "EP".

Table 4.16: First-order CFA on the construct of "EP"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	p-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
EP	EP1	1.000				0.696	0.484	0.592	0.424
	EP2	0.901	0.155	5.812	0.000	0.603	0.364		

Table 4.17: The status of items related to "EP" after CFA

Item	Labels	Situation
EP1	My English level has met the requirement from the University, which provides evidence that I can cope with the language demands within a UK degree studies.	Hold
EP2	My IELTS results did give an indication of my capability to use English for my academic studies, either in oral communication or in writing.	Hold

4.3.2.5 The second-order construct of "AS"

SSR, LA, CP, and EP, the four first-order factors underlying the second-order factor of "AS", were tested by CFA. The values of standard factor loading range from .533 to .968; the values of SMC fall into the .284-.937 range; the CR of the "AS" construct is .854. These parameters indicate the second-order factor of "AS" has its internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.18 presents the second-order CFA results on "AS".

Table 4.18: Second-order CFA on the construct of "AS"

Construct	Item	Significant test of parameter estimation				Item Reliability		Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	p-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
AS	SSR	1.000				0.761	0.579	0.854	0.603
	CP	1.104	0.303	3.649	0.000	0.533	0.284		
	EP	1.399	0.363	3.856	0.000	0.781	0.610		
	LA	1.650	0.393	4.200	0.000	0.968	0.937		

To evaluate whether the second-order factor can represent all of the first-order factors in a measurement model, Marsh and Hocevar (1985) proposed the target coefficient (T) to understand the representativeness of the second-order construct. The target coefficient is the ratio of the chi-square (χ2) of the first-order full-correlated model to the chi-square of the second-order model. If the T-value is closer to 1.0, the second-order model can be considered more adoptable than the first-order model (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). Doll, Xia and Torkzadeh (1994) considered that a Target-coefficient above 0.74 is reasonable and acceptable.

As for the second-order model with construct of "AS", the chi-square of the structural saturated model is 57.288; the chi-square of second-order model is 63.128; the target coefficient is 57.288/63.128=0.907 (Table 4.19). Namely, 90.7% variance of the fully-correlated model can be explained by the second-order factor. The value of target coefficient (0.907) justifies the representativeness of "AS" as a second-order factor in this research project.

Table 4.19: Target coefficient Model

Construct	Model	χ^2	DF	$\Delta\chi^2$	ΔDF	*p*-value	Target coefficient
AS	First-order	57.288	21	5.84	2	0.01	0.907
	Second-order	63.128	23				

4.3.3 Convergent validity

Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed that there are three indexes for assessing convergent validity of the measurement items: a), item reliability of each measure (factor loadings) or square multiple correlations; b), CR of each construct; and c), the average variance extracted (AVE). AVE should be at least .36 and ideally .49 or above (Chin, 1998). The standard factor loading should not be lower than .50 and the composite reliability (CR) should be higher than .60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

There are eight constructs in total in the measurement model for this study: GL, PI, AL, AS, SSR, LA, CP, and EP (AS is a higher order construct, underpinned by SSR, LA, CP, and EP). The convergent validity of all of the constructs is tested. Table 4.20 demonstrates a summary of the test results, which covers the parameters like unstandardised factor loadings, standardised factor loadings, standard errors, significance tests, square multiple correlations, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). All the standardised factor loading of the items (questions) are from 0.525 to 0.968, indicating all constructs have their internal consistency; all the CR values of the constructs are from 0.592 to 0.895, falling into a reasonable range; the values of AVE from .424 to .682 demonstrate each of the eight constructs has its own convergent validity.

Table 4.20: The total CFA results

| Construct | Item | Significant test of parameter estimation | | | | Item Reliability | | Composite Reliability | Convergence Validity |
		Unstd.	S.E.	Z-value	p-Value	STD.	SMC	CR	AVE
GL	GL1	1.000				0.671	0.450	0.870	0.490
	GL3	1.462	0.194	7.517	0.000	0.650	0.423		
	GL4	1.388	0.172	8.093	0.000	0.705	0.497		
	GL5	1.638	0.204	8.035	0.000	0.716	0.513		
	GL6	1.675	0.226	7.405	0.000	0.653	0.426		
	GL7	1.428	0.163	8.743	0.000	0.772	0.596		
	GL8	1.607	0.195	8.238	0.000	0.726	0.527		
PI	RPI2	1.000				0.654	0.428	0.871	0.493
	RPI3	1.010	0.126	8.022	0.000	0.697	0.486		
	RPI4	1.036	0.139	7.466	0.000	0.672	0.452		
	RPI5	0.961	0.137	7.038	0.000	0.620	0.384		
	RPI6	1.016	0.132	7.715	0.000	0.686	0.471		
	RPI7	1.237	0.148	8.344	0.000	0.783	0.613		
	RPI8	1.284	0.156	8.214	0.000	0.786	0.618		
AL	AL1	1.000				0.647	0.419	0.720	0.566
	AL3	1.216	0.176	6.931	0.000	0.845	0.714		
CP	CP2	1.000				0.546	0.298	0.683	0.569
	CP4	1.922	0.463	4.153	0.000	0.916	0.839		
EP	EP1	1.000				0.696	0.484	0.592	0.424
	EP2	0.901	0.155	5.812	0.000	0.603	0.364		
LA	LA1	1.000				0.686	0.471	0.711	0.451
	LA2	1.075	0.142	7.551	0.000	0.722	0.521		
	LA6	0.911	0.138	6.618	0.000	0.602	0.362		
SSR	SSR1	1.000				0.525	0.276	0.667	0.523
	SSR2	1.736	0.354	4.901	0.000	0.878	0.771		
AS	SSR	1.000				0.761	0.579	0.854	0.603
	CP	1.104	0.303	3.649	0.000	0.533	0.284		
	EP	1.399	0.363	3.856	0.000	0.781	0.610		
	LA	1.650	0.393	4.200	0.000	0.968	0.937		

More visually, Figure 4.1 reports the total CFA results of the relationship between the items (questions) and their corresponding constructs in the measurement model.

Figure 4.1: The total CFA results in the measurement model
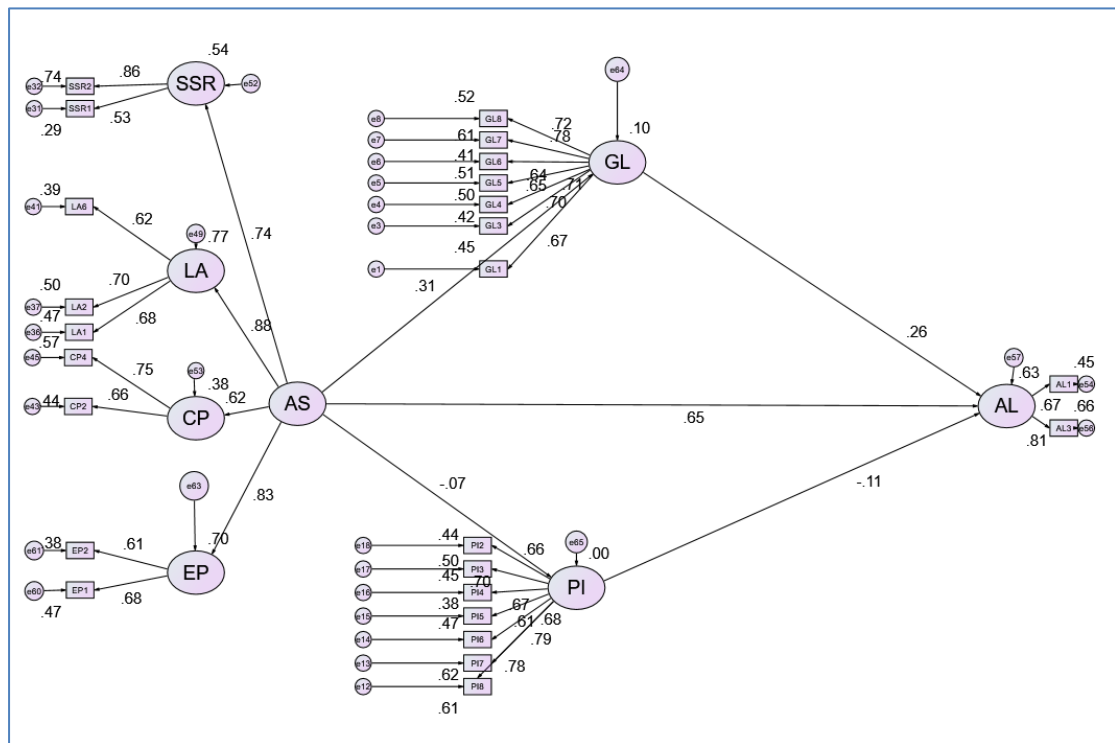
4.3.4 Discriminant validity

When checking the discriminant validity between constructs, the square root of AVE of a given construct is compared with its correlations to the other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The square root of the AVE of a construct, being greater than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns, implies the indicators are more closely related to the construct than the others.

Shown in Table 4.21, the bold numbers in the diagonal direction represent the square roots of AVEs of the corresponding constructs. Because all of the numbers in the diagonal direction are greater than the off-diagonal numbers, the discriminant validity among these constructs for this research exists.

Table 4.21: Discriminant validity for the measurement model

	AVE	GL	PI	AL	AS
GL	0.490	**0.686**			
PI	0.493	-0.021	**0.702**		
AL	0.566	0.467	-0.166	**0.752**	
AS	0.603	0.307	-0.068	0.744	**0.777**

4.3.5 Constructs correlation

The two step approach was adopted in this research to test the collinearity of the constructs in the measurement model. When the correlation coefficients between every two constructs fall into the range from .3 to .75, it implies the existence of reasonable discriminant validity between the constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Table 4.22 indicates the results of the pairwise constructs' correlation within the measurement model.

Table 4.22: Constructs correlation analysis

Relationships	cov.	S.E.	z-value	p-Value	corr.
PI ↔ GL	0.033	0.025	1.319	0.187	0.119
AL ↔ GL	0.085	0.024	3.533	0.000	0.441
AL ↔ PI	-0.049	0.039	-1.281	0.200	-0.125
SSR ↔ GL	0.020	0.014	1.399	0.162	0.138
SSR ↔ PI	-0.018	0.027	-0.656	0.512	-0.061
SSR ↔ AL	0.105	0.030	3.454	0.001	0.519
LA ↔ GL	0.020	0.019	1.068	0.286	0.107
LA ↔ PI	-0.017	0.037	-0.455	0.649	-0.044
LA ↔ AL	0.155	0.036	4.290	0.000	0.590
LA ↔ SSR	0.143	0.037	3.888	0.000	0.729
CP ↔ GL	0.066	0.022	2.958	0.003	0.372
CP ↔ PI	-0.024	0.035	-0.706	0.480	-0.067
CP ↔ AL	0.151	0.041	3.673	0.000	0.606
CP ↔ SSR	0.070	0.031	2.281	0.023	0.375
CP ↔ LA	0.087	0.035	2.496	0.013	0.360
EP ↔ GL	0.107	0.027	3.904	0.000	0.499
EP ↔ PI	-0.037	0.046	-0.792	0.428	-0.084
EP ↔ AL	0.187	0.048	3.886	0.000	0.625

Relationships	cov.	S.E.	z-value	*p*-Value	corr.
EP ↔ SSR	0.110	0.033	3.318	0.001	0.492
EP ↔ LA	0.225	0.043	5.214	0.000	0.776
EP ↔ CP	0.133	0.045	2.943	0.003	0.482

*cov (covariance coefficient); corr (correlation coefficient)

4.4 The model fit

The model fit determines the degree to which the sample data fit the structural equation model. Eight commonly used model fit indices, recommended by Jackson, Gillaspy and Purc-Stephenson (2009), are introduced to report the model fit of this study: Kai-square (χ^2), Degree of freedom (*df*), Normed Chi-square (χ^2/df), Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), Comparative fit index (CFI), Goodness of fit index (GFI), and Adjusted GFI (AGFI). Because Kai-square is sensitive to a large sample, detailed results of model fit test were adjusted by bootstrapping (Bollen & Stine, 1992). The adjusted model fit indices lie in the recommended ranges (shown in Table 4.23), which proves the results of the measurement model are acceptable for the next inferential statistics.

Table 4.23: Adjusted model fit indices after bootstrapping

Model fit	Criteria	Model fit of research model
χ^2	The small the better	322.10
df	The large the better	266
Normed Chi-sqr (χ^2/df)	1<χ^2/DF<3	1.21
RMSEA	<0.08	0.04
TLI (NNFI)	>0.9	0.96
CFI	>0.9	0.97
GFI	>0.9	0.93
AGFI	>0.9	0.90

4.5 Independent t-test

A t-test examines "whether two groups of scores are significantly different at a selected probability level" (Gay et al., 2012, p.351). The t-test was first proposed by

William Sealy Gosset in 1908 under his pseudonym "Student", which resulted in another name for the t-test, Student's t-test (Zabell, 2008). In the t-test, the independent variables are categorical; and the dependent variables are continuous. A t-test is used to test whether the mean difference of the dependent variable between the categories divided by the independent variable is statistically significant. If the t value is greater than 1.96 or the *p*-value is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference between these two categories.

4.5.1 Hypotheses tested by t-test

Section 2.5.2 enumerates the research hypotheses that have been formulated for this study. Table 4.24 below demonstrates the Hypothesis 2 and 3 that are tested by the t-test in this section.

Table 4.24: The hypotheses tested by t-test

Hypotheses	Themes related	Analysis tool	Test result
H2：The acculturation level of Chinese students coming to the UK in groups from Sino-UK collaborative programmes is significantly higher than those coming individually.	Culture difference, Acculturation level	SPSS T-test	Rejected
H3: the acculturation level of Chinese students who have received pre-departure training is significantly higher than those who have not.	Culture difference, Acculturation level	SPSS T-test	Accepted

4.5.2 T-test based on the scale of "Enrolment channel"

Enrolment channels refer to the channels by which the survey respondents are enrolled into British universities. There are two enrolment categories in this study: do-it-yourself (DIY) and Sino-UK joint programmes in China (JP). H2 is to test if the acculturation level (AL) of Chinese students coming to the UK from Sino-UK joint programmes (JP) is significantly higher than those coming individually (DIY).

Table 4.25 demonstrates that 78 students are grouped into the DIY category while 94

into the JP one. On the construct of "AL", the mean of "DIY" is 3.66 (SD, .37) and "JP" is 3.74 (SD, .37). The test result is not significant(t=1.25，p=.212＞0.05), which indicates that, the acculturation level of the Chinese students who come from joint programmes in China is not significantly higher than the ones coming to study in the UK individually. H2 is rejected.

Table 4.25: Mean difference of the acculturation level based on their "Enrolment channel"

	Enrolment Channel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	S.E. Difference	t	Df	Sig.
AL	DIY	78	3.66	.37	.07	.06	1.25	170.00	.212
	JP	94	3.74	.37					

4.5.3 T-test based on the scale of "Pre-departure training"

The pre-departure training reflects the influence on the Chinese students' acculturation from the organisational culture (See Section: 2.2.3). Table 4.26 indicates that, before their studies in the UK, there are 91 (Yes) Chinese students who have attended pre-departure training while 81 Chinese students not.

On the construct of "Acculturation level", the mean of "Yes" is 3.77 (SD, .35) and "No" is 3.61 (SD, .37). The test result is significant(t=2.77，p=.006＜0.05), which indicates that, the acculturation level of Chinese students who have attended pre-departure training is significantly higher than those who have not. H3 is accepted.

Table 4.26: Mean difference on the scale of "pre-departure training"

	Pre-Departure Training	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	S.E. Difference	t	Df	Sig.
AL	Yes	91	3.77	.35	-.15	.06	2.77	170.00	.006
	No	81	3.61	.37					

4.6 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The ANOVA test is used to examine whether three or more categories (groups) are significantly different by comparing their means (Saunders et al., 2016). Pairwise comparisons are introduced when the ANOVA test is significant which is represented by the *F* value (ratio). This study adopts the Scheffe method for post-hoc ANOVA test in terms of the multiple comparisons, because the Scheffe method is universally used and provides strong statistical power in the testing results (Hilton & Armstrong, 2006).

4.6.1 Hypotheses tested by ANOVA

Depending on the studying status that Chinese students are involved in this research investigation, there are three students groups whose acculturation level could be compared: Group 1, Chinese students who are aiming to study in the UK very soon; Group 2, currently studying in the UK (having arrived within the last three months); Group 3, currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation). Table 4.27 below indicates the hypotheses 1 that is used to test the different acculturation level of the three student groups by ANOVA.

Table 4.27: The hypotheses tested by ANOVA

Hypotheses	Themes related	Analysis tool	Test result
H1：The acculturation level (AL) of three student groups is significantly different, who are going to study in the UK (Group 1), who have been studying in the UK within three months (Group 2), and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months (Group 3).Group 2's acculturation level is the lowest.	Acculturation level	SPSS ANOVA	Accepted

4.6.2 ANOVA test on the acculturation level of the three student groups

Table 4.28 details the outcomes of ANOVA test about the difference of the acculturation level from the different student groups.

There are 55 respondents in Group 1 aiming to study in the UK very soon, with the mean of 4.16 (SD, .71)；45 respondents currently studying in the UK (having arrived in the UK within three months) in Group 2, with the mean of 3.78 (SD, .82)；And, there are 72 respondents in Group 3 currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation), with the mean of 3.89 (SD, .72). The ANOVA test result is of significant difference ($F=3.68$，$p=.027<0.05$), which indicates that the acculturation level of the three student groups is significantly different. The acculturation level of the student group, who have started their UK life and studies within three months (Group 2), is the lowest (M=3.78, SD=.82). H1 is accepted.

Table 4.28: Analysis of Variance on the acculturation level of different student groups

Construct	Student groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	P value.	Scheffe
AL	1.Aiming to study in the UK very soon	55	4.16	0.71	3.68	0.027	Significantly different
	2.Currently studying in the UK (having arrived in the UK within three months)	45	3.78	0.82			
	3.Currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation)	72	3.89	0.72			
	Total	172	3.95	0.76			

The post-hoc test by the Scheffe method reveals that, the acculturation level of student group 1 (aiming to study in the UK very soon) is significantly different ($p=.039<0.05$) from student group 2 (who have started their UK life and studies within three months). Although no significant difference is identified between the acculturation level of student group 2 and group 3 (students who are going to graduate within three months), the acculturation level is the lowest from the student group (Group 2), who have started their UK studies within three months (Table 4.29: Post hoc multiple comparisons between the different student groups' acculturation level).

Table 4.29: Post hoc multiple comparisons between the different student groups' acculturation level

Multiple Comparisons

Scheffe

Dependent Variable:
Acculturation Level

DV	Student group (I)	Student group (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
AL							
	1	2	.386*	0.15	0.039	0.01	0.76
		3	0.275	0.134	0.125	-0.06	0.61
	2	1	-.386*	0.15	0.039	-0.76	-0.01
		3	-0.111	0.142	0.737	-0.46	0.24
	3	1	-0.275	0.134	0.125	-0.60	0.06
		2	0.111	0.142	0.737	-0.24	0.46

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

4.7 Path effects testing

After the CFA check on the measurement model, this study performed the second step of structural equation modelling (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), to test the hypothesised relationships of the constructs, by using the maximum likelihood estimate method.

In the measurement model of this study, there are four constructs (factors) formulated from literature review (as shown in Figure 4.2). The test on path effects is to check if these constructs are significantly related.

Figure 4.2: The measurement model for the study
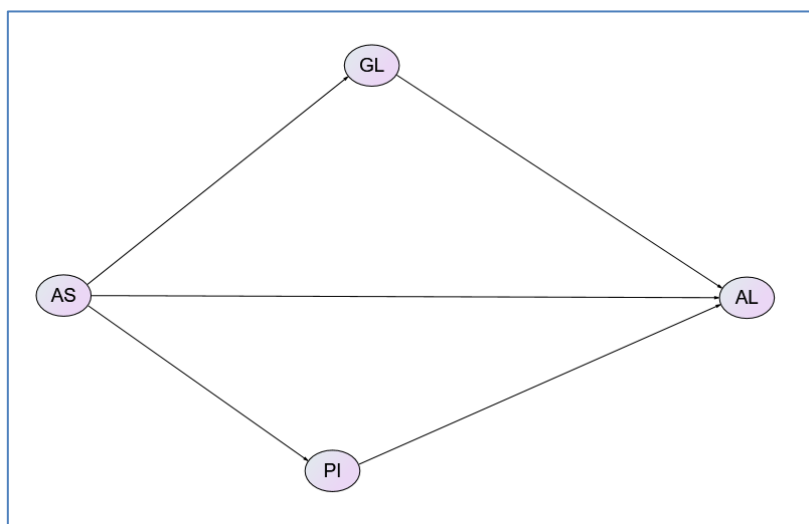
4.7.1 The hypotheses tested for path effects

This study postulated five hypotheses within the structural equation model, among of which three ones (H4-6) are to test if "AS" is significantly related to "GL", "PI", and "AL". The other two ones (H7-8) are to check if "GL" and "PI" are significantly related to "AL". Table 4.30 presents the hypotheses and related themes.

Table 4.30: Hypotheses on path effects

Hypotheses	Themes	Analysis tool	Test result
H4: * The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their general life adaptation.	Academic studies (AS), and General life (GL)	SEM Amos	Accepted
H5: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is negatively related to their adaptation experience on psychological issues.	Academic studies, and Psychological issues (PI)	SEM Amos	Rejected
H6: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their overall acculturation level.	Academic studies, and Acculturation level (AL)	SEM Amos	Accepted
H7: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life is positively related to their acculturation level.	General life , and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Accepted

Hypotheses	Themes	Analysis tool	Test result
H8: The Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues is negatively related to their overall acculturation level.	Psychological issues, Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Rejected

4.7.2 The results of path effects

Table 4.31 presents the testing results of the path effect in the structural model, based on the detailed analysis on each hypothesis.

H4 test result

The unstandardised regression coefficient of "AS" on "GL" is .396; it is of significance (Z value =2.417，p Value =.016<0.05), which indicates the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their general life adaptation. H4 is accepted.

H5 test result

The unstandardised regression coefficient of "AS" on "PI" is -.178; it is not of significance (Z value =-.710，p Value =.477>0.05), which indicates the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is not negatively related to their adaptation experience on psychological issues. H5 is rejected.

H6 test result

The unstandardised regression coefficient of "AS" on "AL" is 1.228; it is of significance (Z value =3.577，p Value =.000<0.05), which indicates the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their perceived acculturation level. H6 is accepted.

H7 test result

The unstandardised regression coefficient of "GL" on "AL" is 0.383; it is of significance (Z value =2.669，*p* Value =.008<0.05), which indicates the Chinese students' adaptation in their general life is positively related to their perceived acculturation level. H7 is accepted.

H8 test result

The unstandardised regression coefficient of "PI" on "AL" is -0.083; it is not of significance (Z value =-1.416，*p* Value =.157>0.05), which indicates the Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues is negatively related to their overall acculturation level. H8 is rejected.

Table 4.31: The result of path effect in the structural model

DV	IV	Unstd	S.E.	Z=Unstd./S.E.	*p*-Value	Std.
GL	AS	0.396	0.164	2.417	0.016	0.307
PI	AS	-0.178	0.251	-0.710	0.477	-0.068
AL	AS	1.228	0.343	3.577	0.000	0.655
	GL	0.383	0.144	2.669	0.008	0.264
	PI	-0.083	0.058	-1.416	0.157	-0.116

4.8 Analysis of mediation effects

If the antecedent (independent) variable X exerts its effect on the consequent (dependent) variable Y through an intervening variable M, M is called the mediator in a research model (Hayes, 2018). Accordingly, the mediation effect refers to the effect that the intervening mediator plays in the middle, when the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

4.8.1 Mediation and its testing methods

The most basic mediation model presented in Figure 4.3 indicates there are two pathways by which variable X can influence variable Y (Hayes, 2018). The pathway

(c') that leads from X to Y is the direct effect of X on Y. The other pathway from X to Y passing through variable M is called the indirect effect of X on Y. Through M, the indirect effect represents how Y is influenced by X through a causal sequence in which X influences M (a), which in turn influences Y (b). In a simple mediation model, the total effect of X on Y (c, =c'+a*b) refers to the sum of the direct effect of X on Y and indirect effect of X on Y through M (Hayes, 2018).

Figure 4.3: A conceptual diagram of a simple mediation model
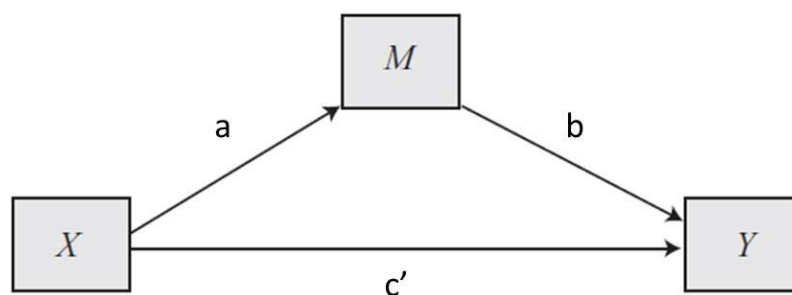
Source: Hayes (2018, p.79)

There are several methods to examine the indirect effect of a mediator in a structural model, including the causal steps approach (B-K method) by Baron and Kenny (1986), the product of coefficients by Sobel (1986), and bootstrapping mediation analysis. As a historical approach to test indirect effects, the causal steps approach focuses on testing significance of regression analyses for each path in the causal system, however, a growing recognition indicates this approach is "not ideal both statistically and philosophically" (Hayes, 2018, p.115). The product of coefficients approach, also known as Sobel's Z test, estimates the standard error of indirect effect from path a and path b (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The ratio (Z value) of indirect effect a*b to its standard error is calculated to test if the indirect effect exists. The prescribed assumption of Sobel's Z test is that the indirect effect has a normal sampling distribution, however, the sampling distribution of indirect effect always tends to be asymmetric (Bollen & Stine, 1992). Under such condition, the indirect effect might not be significant at 95% confidence level, even if the value of $Z > 1.96$.

According to Hayes (2009), the bootstrapping approach, which relies on random sampling with replacement, is being adopted to increase the frequency of resampling from a population that is not normally distributed. When bootstrapping, the product coefficients of a*b are estimated for each sampling with replacement. The distribution of the product of a*b derives standard errors and bootstrap confidence intervals (CI). Hayes (2009) recommended adopting a resampling process of five thousand times when bootstrapping, typically one thousand times. He also suggested that the results from both methods could be reported when doing mediating effect analysis, if the inferences are based on the bootstrapping results.

Bootstrapping mediation analysis provides bootstrap confidence intervals to examine the indirect effects. If zero value is not between the lower and upper bound of the CI, conclusion can be drawn that the indirect effect is not zero, and the existence of mediation effects is supported (Hayes, 2009). The bias-corrected bootstrapping, one of the prevailing bootstrapping mediation analysis methods, was adopted for this research because it has "the least biased confidence intervals, greatest power to detect non-zero effects and contrasts" (Williams & MacKinnon, 2008, p. 23).

4.8.2 The hypotheses on mediation effects

This study is designed to test whether the two variables, the Chinese students' adaptation in their general life (GL) and their adaptation experience of psychological issues (PI), are exerting mediation effects between the independent variable of the adjustment in their academics studies (AS) and the dependent variable of their acculturation level (AL). Two hypotheses, H9 and H10 tested in the research, are formulated and presented in Table 4.32: Hypotheses on testing mediation effects.

Table 4.32: Hypotheses on testing mediation effects

Hypotheses	Themes	Analysis tool	Test result
H9: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life mediates positively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	General life (GL), Academic studies (AS), and Acculturation level (AL)	SEM Amos	Mediation effect supported
H10: the Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues mediates negatively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	Psychological issues (PI), Academic studies, and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Mediation effect not supported

4.8.3 Analysis on mediation effects

The methods of product of coefficients and bias-corrected bootstrapping are introduced to the study on the mediation effects analysis. The approach of one thousand times resampling is adopted. Table 4.33 below reports the testing results of the direct and indirect effects from the mediation effect analysis.

Table 4.33: The analysis of indirect effects

Effect	Point Estimate	product of coefficients			Bootstrap 1000 times	
					Bias-corrected 95%	
		S.E.	z-Value	p-Value	Lower bound	Upper bound
Total effect						
AS→AL	1.394	1.142	1.220	0.222	0.720	4.313
Total indirect effect						
AS→AL	0.166	0.528	0.316	0.752	0.011	0.740
Specific indirect effects						
AS→GL→AL	0.152	0.521	0.291	0.771	0.005	0.687
AS→PI→AL	0.015	0.039	0.378	0.706	-0.019	0.164
Direct effect						
AS→AL	1.228	1.397	0.879	0.379	0.605	3.543

Indicated in Table 4.33, as per the total effect of AS on AL, the bias-corrected CI does not include 0 (the total effect CI of AS on AL: [0.720, 4.313]), the existence of total effect is supported; as per the direct effect of AS on AL, the bias-corrected CI does not include 0 (the direct effect CI of AS on AL: [0.605, 3.543]), the existence of the direct effect is supported.

However, the results of two specific indirect effects are different. As per AS on AL through GL, the bias-corrected CI falls into the range of [0.005, 0.687] with 0 excluded, which means the Hypothesis 9 of indirect mediating effect leading from AS to AL through GL is supported; As per AS on AL through PI, the bias-corrected CI falls into the range of [-0.019, 0.164] which does include 0, the Hypothesis 10 of indirect mediating effect leading from AS to AL through PI is not supported.

Based on the testing results of the path effect and mediation effect, a structural model for this study, by now, could be presented visually (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: The structural model for this study
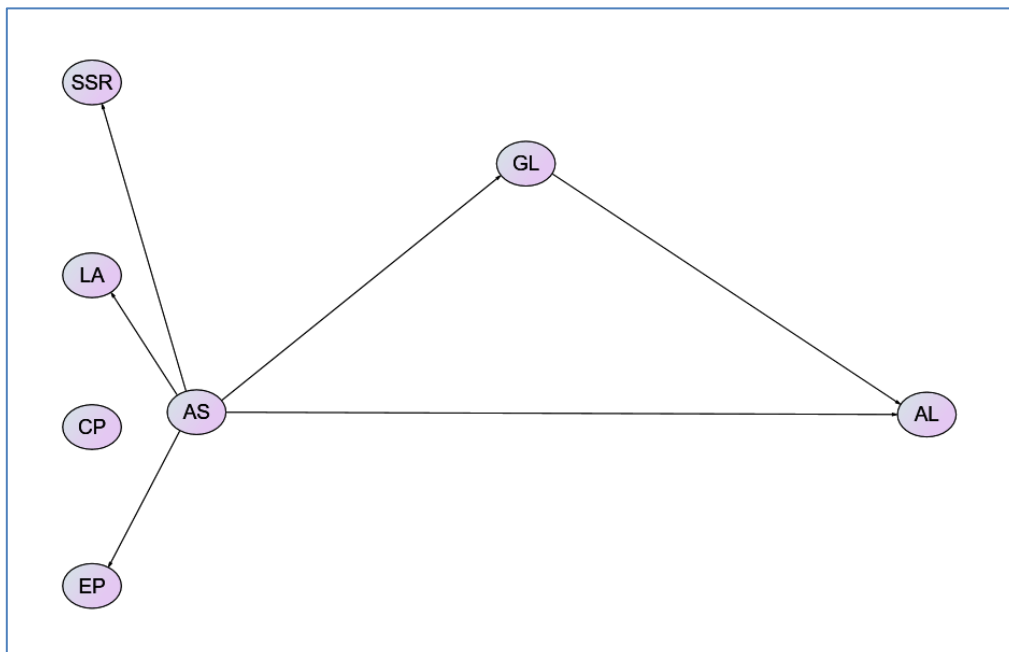
4.9 Summary on survey findings from hypotheses testing

This chapter provides findings from the survey investigation among Chinese students and the testing results of the hypotheses formulated for this study. The results of hypotheses test (shown in Table 4.34) offers the following insights, in relation to the Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK.

There are significant differences among the three Chinese student groups in terms of their (expected) acculturation level in the UK: the students who are going to study in the UK, being at the start of their life and studies (their first three months), and being within three months before their graduation.

In terms of the influence that previous organisational culture may reflect upon the Chinese students' acculturation, the student enrolment channels make no significant difference, between the students enrolled from the Sino-UK joint programme and those applying directly for the university entry by themselves or through agencies. However, if the Chinese students have received pre-departure training prior to their studies in the UK, their acculturation level is significantly higher than those who do not.

The Chinese students' adjustment in academic studies is significantly related to their general life adaptation and their overall acculturation level, the two of which are significantly related too. Chinese students' adaptation into their general life also plays a mediating role between their adjustment in academic studies and their overall acculturation. On the contrary, the Chinese students' psychological experience relates to neither their academic adjustment nor the acculturation level significantly.

These survey findings would be compared to and integrated with the findings from interview investigation with academics and Chinese students in the next chapter, for further analysis and discussion.

Table 4.34: Hypotheses testing results

Hypotheses	Themes	Analysis tool	Test result
H1：The acculturation level (AL) of three student groups is significantly different, who are going to study in the UK (Group 1), who have been studying in the UK within three months (Group 2), and who are going to graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months (Group 3).Group 2's acculturation level is the lowest.	Acculturation level	SPSS ANOVA	Accepted
H2：The acculturation level of Chinese students coming to the UK in groups from Sino-UK collaborative programmes is significantly higher than those coming individually.	Culture difference, Acculturation level	SPSS T-test	Rejected
H3: The acculturation level of Chinese students who have received pre-departure training is significantly higher than those who have not.	Culture difference, Acculturation level	SPSS T-test	Accepted
H4: * The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their general life adaptation.	Academic studies (AS), and General life (GL)	SEM Amos	Accepted
H5: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is negatively related to their adaptation experience on psychological issues.	Academic studies, and Psychological issues (PI)	SEM Amos	Rejected
H6: The Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their overall acculturation level.	Academic studies, and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Accepted
H7: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life is positively related to their acculturation level.	General life , and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Accepted
H8: The Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues is negatively related to their overall acculturation level.	Psychological issues, Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Rejected
H9: The Chinese students' adaptation in their general life mediates positively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	General life, Academic studies, and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Accepted
H10: The Chinese students' adaptation experience of psychological issues mediates negatively between the adjustment in their academic studies and acculturation level.	Psychological issues, Academic studies, and Acculturation level	SEM Amos	Rejected

* Academic studies (AS), as a second order factor, is composed of four first order themes: learning and assessment, staff student relationships, English proficiency, and classroom participation.

5. Findings from the interview with academics and students

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the interviews with academics from either British universities or Sino-UK joint programmes based in Chinese institutions, and with three groups of Chinese students at the time point of being prior to their studies in the UK (Group 1), within three months after commencing their studies in the UK (Group 2), and within three months before their graduation (Group 3).

Following the data analysis procedures justified in Section 3.9.3, a coding template is developed after interviews with the first three academics, by applying NVivo software and manual approaches. Around the eight research themes identified from the literature, the qualitative findings from interviews with academics and students are presented. Table 5.1 below summarises these findings theme by theme.

It is noted that, although the student interviews are conducted using three different student groups, the findings from these groups are not demarcated. Firstly, the main purpose of introducing the three student groups' data collection and analysis is to find the difference in their acculturation level (Students in group 1, who have not experienced their life and studies in the UK, report their expected acculturation level), not to differentiate their motivation, behaviour, and perceptions under the other seven research themes. Secondly, the qualitative findings from students either in group 2 or group 3, who have experienced the acculturation in the UK for different time lengths, could be jointly presented under different themes. Thirdly, due to the immaturity and young age of the student interviewees, the amount of findings from interviews with them offers much less details than the ones from academics interviewees, which are not sufficient to enable differentiation.

Table 5.1: Summarised findings from interview with academics and Chinese students

Themes	Findings from Interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Theme 1: Culture difference:		
National level	Power distance (respects given to academics, questions seldom asked in classrooms, difficulty in calling academics by their first names); Collectivism (being afraid of "losing face" in front of others in the classroom; attending classes collectively and behaving in the same way; close links with their family); Long term orientation (working hard in academic development; concerns about future jobs and career development) Uncertainty avoidance (classroom reticence to avoid uncertainties)	Power distance (respecting academics essentially; not challenging the authorities) Long term orientation (worries about their future careers to reward back to their families) Uncertainty avoidance (keeping quiet in the classroom to avoid the uncertainties of being asked more questions)
Organisational level	Importance of the training about knowledge of life and studies in the UK; Pre-departure support that covers the British pedagogical issues and approaches to interacting with academics; Pre-departure training provider: the British universities, Chinese universities, the British universities' branch office in China, or a combination of the three.	Training in relation to academic studies in the UK required; Information about learning in the UK within pre-departure training is perceived inadequate.
Personal level	Culture affinity (approaching academics who are ethnically Chinese; comfortable with the environment with Chinese "flavour"; nurtured by introducing Chinese business cases into teaching, asking Chinese students bring Chinese examples into classroom discussion, and employing ethnically Chinese academics in place); Culture awareness (academics: The cultural awareness for adopting the first move to approach Chinese students to offer	Ethnical group (easily formed due to the large amount of Chinese students nearby; The perception of group adaptation; not helpful for their English language improvements and experiences of mixing with other students.)

Themes	Findings from Interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
	support; understanding the reason why Chinese students have particular problems and tackling their problems in a timely manner); Ethnical group (being always in their ethnical group either in their daily life or academic studies. benefit: a sense of comfort and group attribution. weakness: few opportunities to practice English, to mix with students from other countries, and to immerse into the local culture.)	
Theme 2: General life		
Culture change	Food, money, transportation, the freedom that they suddenly have, and the different approaches to interact with academics; the needs of coping with the challenges in their daily life by themselves; visa status, issues under mitigation circumstance, and plagiarism matters;	The communication issues, different lifestyle, e.g. foods, and networking with other ethnical students
Preparations and measures	Reading the student handbook prevents disobedience with regard to academic regulations from happening.	Preparations: English studies, pre-departure training, and lifestyle, e.g. cooking practice; Measures: Self-catering, attention to the information available for life convenience, and more communication with other ethnics.
Relationship to their academics studies	Daily life impacts upon the Chinese students' academic performance; A work life balance between their academic studies and daily life..	Daily life affairs and their socialising requirements impact upon their academic studies; Following a well-balanced plan between daily life and studies helps.
Fewer challenges for acculturation	Simpler daily life, due to the emerging Chinese services nearby; Struggling in transition and adaptation is beneficial to Chinese students' personal development and their academic studies	

Themes	Findings from Interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Theme 3: Psychological issues		
Confidence	Continuously improving English, having more interactions with academics, and developing cultural knowledge.	Engaging in more communication with academics and other students both inside and outside of classrooms.
Frustration reasons	The experience of culture difference, new and uncommon freedom, perceived pressure, and high expectations from families	Homesickness and academic pressure
Measures to handle frustration	Awareness of the psychological needs of the Chinese students; resorting to interaction with their ethnical groups and universities, instead of internalising their psychological issues.	Communication with family and friends, a proactive attitude to problem solving and self-adjustment, and engagement in sports.
Theme 4: Learning and assessment		
Academic challenges:		
Essay writing	Asking university libraries for essay samples; learning from literature; delivering writing practice to develop an argument; paraphrasing and referencing in British ways; concerns about the assignment comments from academics.	Reading more papers; using writing practice for academic purpose; giving concern to the academics' feedback; attending the in-sessional English training.
Critical thinking	The pedagogical and cultural differences leading to the Chinese students' weakness in critical thinking; more academic reading; developing criticising abilities of a proposition from two sides.	
Independent learning	Managing a daily schedule to form a habit of learning, reading, and researching independently; developing independent capabilities in daily life.	Developing the abilities of being self-disciplined, gaining time management skills, and keeping a work-life balance.
Group work	Developing the ability to adopt critical thinking; being familiar with the topics discussed for group work; developing confidence in English language when socialising.	More communication with groupmates; more practice being undertaken in presenting group work results.

Themes	Findings from Interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Technology and social media in use	Being competent in using social media and technology; help with English learning and acculturation; a balance of communication between using technology and physical interaction.	Being skilful and proficient in use; benefiting students' studies; relying heavily on IT in their life and studies; hindering students and academics from communicating physically.
Theme 5: Staff student relationships		
Benefits from SSR	Benefits to Chinese students' academic learning and development; a reference provided; timely identification of problems and early solutions provided.	Students' examination preparation and academic development; references provided.
Building approaches	Positive interactions with academics under many occasions; the initiating role of academics in interacting with students; awareness of academic expectations from either sides; a common sense in the workplace to interact with academics professionally; proper etiquette adoption in communication with academics.	Email correspondence, on-line interaction, face to face meetings, ahead-of-class chats, classroom interaction with academics, and engagements in the academic events and group work activities.
Barriers to SSR building	Academics' heavy workloads and accessibility; the presence of a lack of cultural awareness from either academics or students.	A pure and professional SSR wanted by academics; the perceived sense of disrespect and a tendency towards racism
Theme 6: English proficiency		
English and Acculturation	Key factor to acculturation either in their daily life or academic development; no criticism to be levied upon the Chinese students' English capabilities.	The pre-sessional English course is practical and useful for acculturation.
English and IELTS test score	IELTS scores inequivalent to the actual English proficiency level.	English capabilities lowering below what the IELTS score supposedly indicates.
Low English proficiency influence	English learning environment worsened; negative impacts on both academic performance and life transition.	Negative influences on acculturation; psychological frustration and shortage of confidence as a result.

Themes	Findings from Interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
English learning improvement	Full immersion into English environment; reading more English books or papers; talking to English speakers, imitating orally from video materials, and engaging into social activities; impetus to make use of the university support and resources to improve their English level.	More practice on all the elements of English learning; having more academic reading and attending in-sessional English programme; preview and review of the course contents; increased engagement with other students.
Theme 7: Classroom participation		
Attendance	A controversial topic between academics; requirements of legal residence and academic performance	Generally good attendance; Expectation on good academic achievements, requirement of legal residence, and a reward for the investment into studies
Classroom engagement	Quietness in classrooms, seldom raising questions and interacting with others; more engagement encouraged by academics; lack of confidence and English incompetence leading to classroom quietness; concentration may give rise to their reticence.	Preference to ask questions at the end of classes; prediction of the level of classroom engagements from sitting position; Chinese students' mindset development when coming up with an enquiry; interacting with academics positively in classrooms once being aware of the British way of learning.
Theme 8: Acculturation level	Studying overseas for Chinese students means a process of adaptation and acculturation in a different country; studying overseas is also a life experience for Chinese students; achievements either in their academic studies or personal development as the acculturation outcomes.	Becoming more proactive, open minded, independent, and confident either in their general life or studies.

5.2 Demographic descriptions

There are in total eighteen academics (coded as STA plus numbers, for example, STA01 refers to the first of the interviewed academics) interviewed for this research project, of which sixteen are UK academics, working across the subject fields in international business, business management, project management, accounting and finance, business IT, and (to avoid disciplinary bias) building environment and language studies. Another two interviews are conducted with academics from two China-based universities, where are delivering Sino-UK joint programmes. Most of them are British or Chinese, however, a subset of them are ethnically German, Mexican, or Indian, with at least three years of teaching experience to Chinese students. Appendix 5 indicates more details of the academics' demographic information.

Nineteen Chinese students in total (coded as STU plus numbers) are interviewed individually from different student groups: six students in Group 1 (students who are going to study in the UK), another seven in Group 2 (students who have started their UK studies within three months), and the remaining six students in Group 3 (students who will graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months). The size of gender categories is roughly the same: nine female students and ten male ones. Fourteen students are from Sino-UK joint programmes before their UK studies (ten from HND[2] programmes in China, four from NCUK[3] China based centres); another five students report they applied for the university entry in the UK on their own or through agencies.

In terms of the British universities where the student interviewees tend to study or have been studying, four students are studying in the Russell Group member

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[2] HND is the abbreviation of Higher National Diploma, which is developed by Scottish Qualifications Authority. Chinese students take one year foundation programme and two years HND programme in Chinese universities which are working partners with SQA, before they progress into year three for a bachelor degree programme within British universities.

[3] NCUK stands for Northern Consortium, UK, which is a consortium of leading UK universities dedicated to giving international students guaranteed access to universities worldwide (cited from its website: www.ncuk.ac.uk). NCUK provides programmes such as International Foundation Year, International Diploma, and Pre Master Programme in China.

universities, seven in the new universities, and the remaining eight students are from other old universities in the UK. It is noted three students: STU07, STU08, and STU12 who are interviewed in Group 1, also attend the Group 2 interviews and are labelled as STU17, STU19, and STU18 separately. Appendix 6 indicates more details of the student interviewees' demographic information.

5.3 Overall findings theme by theme

In the process of qualitative data analysis, cluster analyses help in visualising the overall coding results and the relationship among a multitude of codes or sources as they are applied to raw data (Guest & Mclellan, 2003). The clustering function through NVivo software provides a thematic framework, indicating the coding density and assessing the similarity of either sources or nodes, based on the texts similarity and coding results in those nodes and sources. Qualitative data clustering is generally used in an exploratory rather than explanatory manner to provoke ideas, check the coding effects, and dig further connections between the nodes or sources (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Figure 5.1: Coding nodes clustered by word similarity using NVivo
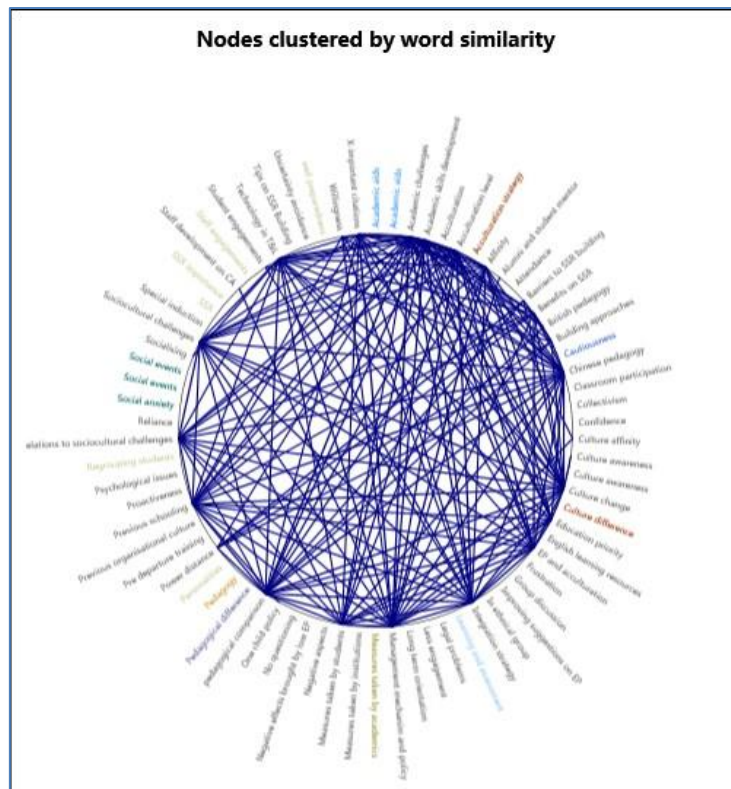
Figure 5.2: Sources clustered by word similarity using NVivo
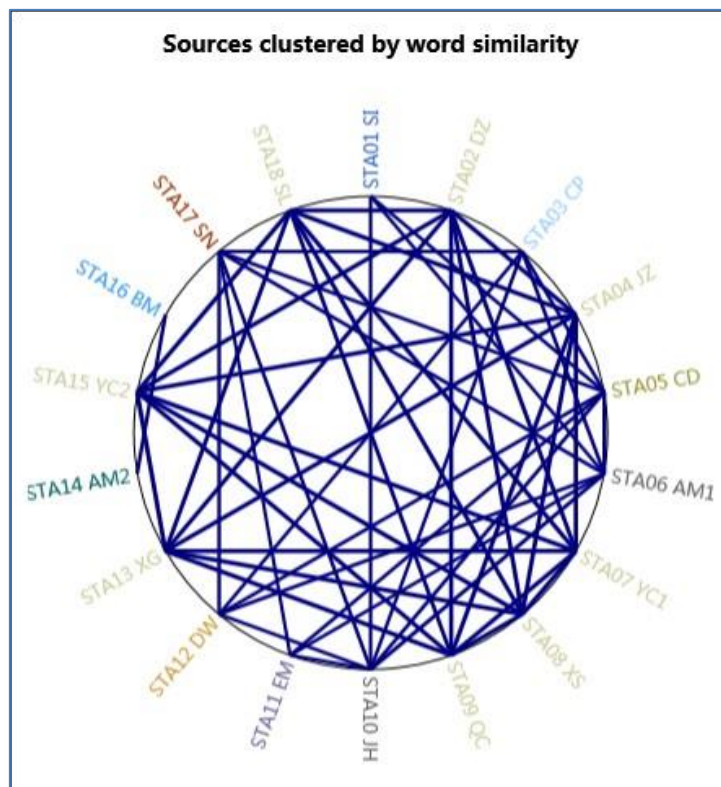
Applying the NVivo 11 Professional software package for the qualitative strand of this study, Figure 5.1 and 5.2 above demonstrate separately the result of nodes clustering and source clustering from the interviews with academics.

Based on the eight themes identified from literature review and following the 7-step template analysis procedures from King and Brooks (2017), a coding template for the qualitative strand of the research has been developed by applying the NVivo software package to code the first three transcripts from interviews with academics. The coding template is then interactively applied to and modified with further data in other transcripts from interviews with academics and Chinese students. At later stages of further transcript coding and data analysis, the software and manual approaches are combined to be used for coding, in order to achieve the most appropriate results and findings. Eventually, a framework of the eight research themes with their sub-themes is formulated, which enables the works of qualitative data analysis from interviews with academics and Chinese students to be presented theme by theme.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Culture difference

Under this research theme, findings from interviews with academics and Chinese students are illustrated from the cultural difference at the national, organisational, and personal level, corresponding to the findings about culture difference from the literature review. It is noted that student interviewees might have not been aware of the culture difference in theory during their acculturation and adaptation. But during the interviews, their perceptions on the culture difference at national, organisational, and their personal levels, are reflected upon unconsciously. Table 5.2 presents a summary of the outcomes from interviews with academics and Chinese students around the theme 1: the culture difference at different levels.

Table 5.2: Emerging outcomes from Theme 1: Culture difference

Culture difference	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
National level:		
Power distance	With respect for academics, questions seldom being asked in classrooms; well behaved when interacting with academics; difficulty in calling their academics' first names.	Respecting academics essentially; not challenging the authorities.
Collectivism	Being afraid of "losing face" in front of others in the classroom; attending classes collectively and behaving in the same way in the classroom as group obligations; close links with their family.	
Long term orientation	Working hard in academic development for their future; concerns about future jobs and career development taken very seriously; seriously developing a long-run relationship when socialising.	Worries about their future careers in consideration of rewards to their families.
Uncertainty avoidance	Using classroom reticence to avoid uncertainties.	Keeping quiet in the classroom to avoid the uncertainties of being asked more questions and thereby "losing face" in front of others.
Organisational level	Importance of the training about knowledge of life and studies in the UK for the Chinese students' acculturation; Pre-departure support: expectations from the British universities, psychological preparations, stuffs relating to the Chinese students' daily life in the UK, critical thinking and independent learning, issues that most of Chinese students generally struggle with, and also interaction approaches with their British academics Pre-departure training provider: the British universities, Chinese universities, the British universities' branch office in China, or a combination of the three.	Training in relation to academic studies in the UK benefits Chinese students' acculturation; the pre-departure training mainly covers luggage preparation, visa renewal information, and general life in the UK; Information about learning in the UK perceived inadequate.
Personal level:		
Culture affinity	Approaching academics that are ethnically Chinese; comfortable within the environment with Chinese "flavour"; nurtured by introducing Chinese business cases into teaching, asking	

Culture difference	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
	Chinese students to bring Chinese examples into the classroom discussion, and employing ethnically Chinese academics in place.	
Culture awareness	Having the cultural awareness of needing to make the first move to approach Chinese students to offer support or help; understanding the reason why Chinese students have particular issues or problems that they might have, identifying their problems in a timely manner, and so keeping the problems from getting more serious; learning cultural taboos, the approach of interacting with people and resolving problems, and the appropriate behaviours in the context of the British culture.	
Ethnical group	Being always in their ethnical group either in their daily life or academic studies Benefit: a sense of comfort and group attribution Weakness: few opportunities to practice English, to mix with students from other countries, and to immerse themselves into the local culture.	Easily formed due to the large amount of Chinese students nearby; the perception of group adaptation; not helpful for English improvements and experience of mixing with other students.

5.3.1.1 Culture difference at national level

Power distance

When an interaction occurs between one of academics and Chinese students, the "power distance" between them has an impact. For example, while STA11 found that the Chinese students do struggle, when she was trying to encourage Chinese students to share their views on an academic topic. "Even a student asked me cautiously, 'you mean you give me permission to tell you what I think?' It is interesting that he needs my permission to speak about learning".

Chinese students show great respect to their academics. They are more willing to follow instructions from academics than other international students and their British counterparts. "They believe they are fulfilling their learning tasks if they can complete

what academics require them" (STA13); "Chinese students seldom make complaints to academics, especially in relation to their marks, perhaps due to the culture difference" (STA15). Also, Chinese students usually give their academics a tiny gift, like Chinese ties or green tea, to show their respects and gratefulness if they are offered help from academics. "I received small gifts from Chinese students over the years, when I helped them sort out an academic problem, or provided written references for their further studies" (STA05).

STA02, who originally comes from China, believed Chinese students seldom ask questions in the classroom, due to the inclination that they culturally respect academics and authorities. STA05 agreed, "They might have lots of questions, but they are not going to ask academics in the classes, though some of students may approach academics at the end of lectures." STA10 explained, in terms of her ten years' experience of teaching Chinese students, "they probably feel it is rude to ask academics questions during the course of lectures. They think academics might get annoyed". STA16 thought it is perhaps a culture issue that could relate back to their previous schooling, "Chinese students regard academics as gurus that cannot be challenged by asking questions."

Similar to STA16's comment, Chinese students believe it is essential to respect academics, "wherever the academics are, in China or in the UK, they hope their students respect them" (STU12); "listening carefully to academics in classrooms shows basic respect for them" (STU05). STU13, who has just started her studies in the UK, believed "classroom interruption is challenging the academics' authority". STU04 followed, "I would focus on listening to academics, rather than arguing with them by raising questions from time to time".

Most of the staff interviewed reported that Chinese students behave well in classrooms, "They are generally the best behaved students compared to others. They do take notes. They tend not to talk to each other in class, nor to play on mobile phones" (STA06); "They are always very polite to academics" (STA08); "They are

much more disciplined" (STA12); "In spite of a few exceptions, the Chinese students' attendance is generally very good" (STA11). It is fundamental for Chinese students to behave well and show respect when interacting with academics.

Another interesting topic, "names calling", emerged from the interviews with academics. STA09, who is an ethnically Chinese academic, found that "Chinese students do not know how to call their academics by names. They can never use the first name of academics", "Even a Chinese student, who has been staying in the UK for a few years and may easily call their academics by their first names, will call me Teacher XXX". This Chinese student goes back to Chinese culture. STA03 talked of this as a culture difference also, "Chinese students find it very difficult to call XXX by my first name, as they think I should be on much higher status as one of their academics and I should be at a different level to them. It is rude if they speak my name directly". STA02 emphasised that, "In the British culture, students can call academics directly by using their first names. Invisibly, it is a sign of equality and that means they are at the same level, which might easily lead to the development of an equal and professional relationship between them."

Collectivism

Chinese students always stay in their own ethnical group collectively, which impacts upon their individual behaviours and performance. Some academics complain that Chinese students are quiet and reluctant to raise any questions in classrooms, "Chinese students never ask random questions. I do not know if they have understood my lecture content. I think cultural issues are responsible for this- they might be afraid of 'losing face' to the students in the classroom, especially the ones within their Chinese student group" (STA07); "besides lacking confidence, they worry about speaking in front of a group of students, as they might think it is intimidating to put their hands up to ask questions in front of all of their classmates" (STA10).

STA09, an ethnically Chinese staff member, might be more familiar with the collective phenomena from Chinese students. He explained, "A typical Chinese student group may unconsciously require its members to take group obligations, which has an influence on the individual student's behaviours. For example, if a student does not attend class, other members in the group might not come also". He continued, "If the key opinion leader (KOL) within a Chinese students' group, however, performs actively in classrooms, other members might be actively involved in classroom learning too." Another issue might be related to group behaviour also. "Chinese students have not realised that being late for about ten minutes for the class is generally acceptable by academics. All of the Chinese group would not attend if they are a few minutes late for the class, as they might feel ashamed or suffering from a 'loss of face' in front of others" (STA15). Keeping "face" among the group which they belong to is very important for Chinese students.

Another important factor impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation is related to their family. "They need their family psychologically and might have video talk everyday with their parents via social media, as they may feel homesick and struggling from the start." (STA11); "Another thing is that they might be troubled about handling the freedom that they suddenly and quickly have gained. Thus, from their family, they might get knowledge and advice on how to handle their life" (STA10). On the other hand, the closeness within family may lead to a high expectation and also puts pressure on Chinese students. "I was always told by Chinese students that, their parents urge them to continue their master studies, for the sake of acquiring a good job position in the future. And a higher degree gives their parents 'face' (status) also" (STA11).

Long term orientation

Some behaviour from Chinese students during their daily life and studies reflect upon the concerns they have for their future plans in the long run. For instance, they are working hard, aiming for academic development; they may seriously talk of future

jobs and career development with their peer students and academics; even when socialising and dating, they are serious in developing a relationship for the future.

Hard working- when being asked for the general impression of Chinese students during the interviews for this study, almost all of the eighteen academics expressed that Chinese students are hard working. "Compared with British or other international students, the Chinese students are more diligent in their academic studies" (STA08 and STA11); "they are self-motivated in undertaking academic work" (STA02); "the Chinese students' performance is generally quite good, lots of them are working hard" (STA06).

Future plan- some of the academics interviewed have explored the reasons for this future-focused phenomenon. "Lots of expectations are placed on Chinese students by their families" (STA11). Besides this, "they are very determined, in terms of what they should achieve" (STA12). STA11 found that, "I always have students, even in year one, who asked me what they need to do during their undergraduate studies for the sake of applying for a master programme in the future. The reason of undertaking a master programme is for them to go back China and get a good job, rather than purely having an interest in the subject to further develop their knowledge".

Some student interviewees are considering their future plans also, reflecting that they are culturally long-term oriented. STU06, who has accepted an offer for her postgraduate studies after her first degree, said, "I think I am under great pressure from my future career. I need to reward my family in the future, who have paid plenty of money for my current studies in the UK".

Networking- as a personal tutor, STA11 had private links with some Chinese female students. "The girls are supposed to work even harder; they think the harder they work, the better they would be, and the more likely they could have a good marriage in the future". STA11 further illustrated what the Chinese female students think about relationship and marriage, "In developing relationship with boys, they have different

expectations from the girls with European background. They are very serious when dating boys, expecting relationships will lead to marriage". They are systematically planning long term targets of their own, either for their future career development or for their own personal life.

Uncertainty avoidance

Chinese students may have a different attitude when they are under risky or uncertain conditions. STA10 noticed that Chinese students "do not ask questions during classes, instead, they always wait to ask questions privately by the end of the class". STA16 presumed, "this might be a cultural thing. They feel more comfortable in that way." As an ethnically Chinese, STA07 added, "Chinese students might be confident on a private or one-to-one occasion to ask questions to academics". He further explained, "Chinese students are quiet and seldom ask random questions in front of their student peers. They just worry about losing face to their classmates, especially their co-nationals who might laugh at them, if they ask the silly or basic questions". Other than personal characteristics, being reticent in the classroom might result from the Chinese students' perception on uncertainty within the environment around them.

Chinese students, who are involved in the research, reported the same to avoid perceived uncertainties when interacting with academics. "I seldom speak out my views in relation to a concept or theory, in case academics might ask me for more details" (STU04); "I do not ask academics questions even if I am perplexed with the content of learning in classrooms. I worry about 'losing face' and being laughed by academics and other classmates, if the questions are seen as simple or stupid" (STU19).

5.3.1.2 Cultural difference at organisational level

Some of the academics interviewed for this study wondered if the organisational culture, in the Chinese colleges or universities where Chinese students studied, encourage them to receive some training about living and studying in the UK. "I do

not believe they are well prepared enough for what to expect in the English context before they come to the UK" (STA05); "This is the knowledge Chinese students should have and also knowledge of how their British academics teach. This kind of experience could be useful and helpful before Chinese students come to the UK" (STA01). Under such conditions, Chinese students would be in a better position from the outset during their British university life.

STA06 suggested a successful pre-departure training should cover "what the expectations from British universities are, their psychological preparations for possible challenges that they may meet, and other "stuff" relating to the Chinese students' daily life in the UK". More importantly, a comprehensive pre-departure training should include "the British pedagogy and the approaches to interaction with academics", STA07 illustrated. STA06 agreed, "Chinese students would benefit from training on critical thinking and independence, even before their arrival in the UK", which means not only "listening to what academics say and writing it down", but "thinking independently and critically about what they have been taught".

Student interviewees who attended pre-departure training in China before their UK studies enumerated the content of such training. "Luggage preparation and visa renewal issues" (STU07), "the general life in the UK, like weather, food, travel, and student accommodation, and so forth" (STU08). However, STU07 complained, "the training I attended did not include much information on how teaching and learning are conducted in the UK".

Students, who have undertaken Sino-UK joint programmes in China prior to their UK studies, believed that their previous studying organisation should prepare them with knowledge of the British way of learning. "I realise, the NCUK foundation programme that I took before I come to the UK, is very helpful for my academic transition and adaptation. In the NCUK centre, I was equipped with the knowledge of slide making skills, essay format, and the usage of referencing and paraphrasing, all of which provide me with enormous supports in my academic studies in the UK"

(STU04). However, STU17 made a negative comment on his HND studies in China. "Neither the quality nor the teaching resources are ensured in my HND studies in China. Honestly, my studying experience of the HND programme does not benefit my acculturation in the UK that much".

From the perspective of academics, STA11 emphasised the management of expectations from Chinese students in the pre-departure training. "Rather than just saying what is wonderful about UK life, the universities' student recruiting team should make Chinese students aware of the issues that most of Chinese students will struggle with, and also calm them down by telling them that academics will help during their studies". STA06 added that it would be helpful for Chinese students to be told in the pre-departure training on "how people interact with each other within the British society" and other cultural issues. STA04 suggested, "The Chinese students should be trained with the knowledge about the common notion of professional communications in the workplaces, for example, using the university's email address to make an appointment with academics, and visiting them for academic discussion during the set 'drop-in hours', and so on".

STA05 made negative comments on the scope of the induction week before new students' registration, which generally is delivered by British universities. "I do not think the induction week allows enough time to address important issues for Chinese students. They could not digest the information from induction in such a short time". STA06 suggested, rather than the post-arrival induction, "the pre-departure training can prepare Chinese students with critical thinking, independent learning, and cultural awareness" within their previous colleges or universities in China, as a result, they will not necessarily "have a cultural shock" when they arrive in the UK.

In terms of who is responsible for Chinese students' pre-departure support, STA05 argued that the British universities should bear their responsibilities. STA11 believed "the Chinese partners that British universities and business schools are working with, can prepare Chinese students from the academic perspectives, before they come to the

UK". However, STA06 would rather leave this as an open topic, "who would actually manage that, the British universities, the Chinese universities, colleges, and schools where they are from, or the (British) universities' branch offices in China?"

5.3.1.3 Culture difference at personal level

Cultural affinity

STA11 noticed that, compared with Chinese students, the Indian students seem to adapt more quickly into the life and studies in the UK. "They do not struggle with writing, reading, and communication with academics. I suppose it is due to their background and the historical links between India and the UK". This is about cultural affinity, the close relationship and similarity (affinity) between the two cultures.

Some of ethnically Chinese academics highlighted that, in terms of their teaching experience, it is due to the cultural similarities that Chinese students tend to approach them more than other academics. "If academics are Chinese, Chinese students have more willingness to ask questions, though this might not happen in classrooms" (STA04); "Perhaps owing to the fact that they seldom come across Chinese academics, they always ask me questions at the end of class in Chinese" (STA13). One of the British academics, for example, STA06, whose office is decorated with some small Chinese gifts from previous Chinese students, found Chinese students prefer to visit him in his office. The reason might lie in that "there is a little flavour of China in my office. Some Chinese things make them feel more comfortable". Echoing these comments, STA09 summarised, "It is the psychic distance that keeps them away from communicating with British academics. They prefer to talk to Chinese ones".

In order to nurture the cultural affinity between Chinese students and their British academics, STA08 suggested, "When preparing slides for teaching, some business cases from China might be added to arouse the Chinese students' interests in the class". STA11 advised that "I would ask Chinese students to bring examples from their home country into classroom discussion around a topic. It is interesting to see

the culture difference". Using the techniques of adopting Chinese examples could help Chinese students become more engaged in the classroom. "Chinese students then feel very proud, and more confident and comfortable in talking. Also this makes them happy, because they can talk about something which no one knows the answer about" (STA06). Another proposal for business schools is to employ more ethnically Chinese academics. "Only Chinese academics can fully understand what Chinese students require under the British higher education settings. When there is a certain proportion of Chinese students studying in a business school, the similar proportion of Chinese academics should be employed, which benefits everyone" (STA13).

Cultural awareness

Because of the high volume of Chinese students coming through, the British academics are becoming more and more aware of their students' different cultural needs. "They may not be exactly aware of the Chinese culture, but they may give more concerns to how to involve Chinese students at the beginning" (STA01). However, STA05 is not sure whether all the academics are fully culturally aware of approaching Chinese students initially and ask if they need support or help. "But for me, due to my experience of looking after Chinese students, I know the culture issues involved- they would not naturally approach me first, so that I would always make the first move to approach them".

Cultural awareness enables academics within the British higher education setting to appreciate the cultural perspectives of Chinese students, so that they can understand the reason "why Chinese students have a particular issue or problem" that they might come across (STA06), "and also the academics could identify these problems in a timely fashion, and keep them from getting more serious" (STA05). In terms of the content of cultural awareness, STA06 suggested universities should do more to develop the "academics' awareness of typical issues" and challenges that Chinese students face, when they come to the UK, for example, assessment, writing essays, and so on; "We need to be clear about the difference of educational systems, therefore,

we know what their expectations exactly are from Chinese students" (STA10). Based on cultural awareness, academics could do their best that they can to help Chinese students, even with limited resources.

Chinese students need to develop their cultural awareness also. "If Chinese students choose to be international students, they have to embed themselves therein, and they should become open-minded, less resistant, and ready to engage with or participate in" (STA05). Developing cultural awareness includes learning things such as culture taboos, the approach of interacting with people and resolving problems, and "the behaviours in a way that is appropriate in the context of the British culture" (STA06). Chinese students' acculturation into their UK life and studies will benefit from their cultural awareness if they are prepared ahead of their departure for their UK studies.

In-ethnical group

Although Chinese students may come from different areas of China, as it is such a big country, both Chinese students and academics found that Chinese students easily set up and stay within their Chinese ethnical groups, due to the similar culture norms and the same language that they speak. STA03 found that most of Chinese students tend to "socialise together, eat together, and live together". Beyond this, "lots of Chinese students prefer to stay together in classes or tutorials" (STA06), and "there is always a Chinese group made up of them" (STA01). Chinese students shared the same opinion with their academics, "Chinese groups are easily formed up" (STU04). "In year one, my classmates and I get to know each other, being nice to others; but in year two and year three, we have our own groups where we always stay with our Chinese friends" (STU01).

The fact that many Chinese students are studying in business schools in the UK might lead to the emergence of Chinese students' own ethnical groups. "You are surrounded with many Chinese students, if you study business management disciplines" (STU14); "The majority of my classmates are Chinese, because we are taking a specialised

progression route into the final year from HND programmes in China" (STU11); "academics feel desperate sometimes, because we talk in Chinese in our group work, since the group members are all Chinese" (STU17). More importantly, STU04 emphasised another reason, "It is comparatively easy for us, the Chinese students as a group, to adapt into the local life and our studies".

However, STA03 did not mean to criticise the presence of Chinese in-ethnical groups within university campuses. "It is natural for Chinese students to stick to each other. It is the same thing for other international students from other nationalities also." STA16 agreed, "It is an instinctive reaction when you feel happy to talk to the people around you who are from the same country, particularly if you are in a country that looks strange to you". STA09, a Chinese academic, shared the same opinion, "there is no reason to change the co-national groups, which grow up in an organic manner and spontaneously. Being in a group of Chinese students brings them a sense of comfort and a feeling of being attribution". Chinese students believed that the naturally founded Chinese ethnical group has its advantages for their acculturation. "We help each other, shopping together, cooking together, and sharing a house or flat for our accommodation" (STU01). STU04 added, "We do our group work together. It is easier for us to organise a group discussion, compared with a group which has British or other international students".

Figure 5.3: Negative effects of the "dead circulation" within ethnical groups
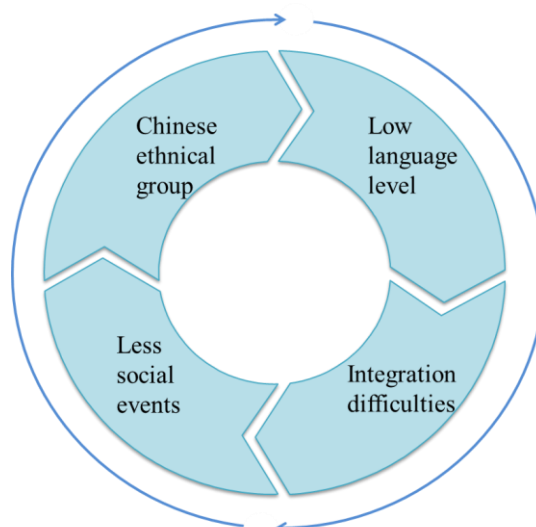
However, some academics and Chinese students worry about the negative effects caused by the ethnical group. "I am concerned that Chinese students tend to speak Chinese to each other within their own group" (STA10). STA02 agreed, "Always sticking together might not create a good English language learning environment for Chinese students". Besides the language learning, "They may lose the opportunity of mixing with students from other countries" (STA15) and "immersing into the culture of the host country" (STA16). On the other side of students, STU11, who has just started his studies in the UK, said, "I think the English learning environment here is definitely wonderful for me, but after class, I go back to the Chinese community where everything is in Chinese". STU04 agreed, "The members in each Chinese student group are unwilling to communicate with outsiders, neither other international students nor even other Chinese ones". It seems that a "dead circulation" emerges (Figure 5.3 above), which means sticking to a Chinese ethnical group may cause Chinese students a lack of impetus to improve their English language, the difficulties mixing with other students, and the reluctance to attend social events; as a result, they are more willing to stay in their ethnical groups.

5.3.2 Acculturation strategy

In terms of the acculturation strategy that Chinese students should adopt in their

undergraduate studies, they may be proactively engaging within or negatively separating themselves from the environment around them. STA05 introduced a vivid proverb to describe these two options, "when in Rome do as the Romans do, or, when in Rome do as at home". Although it is down to individual students as to how much they tend to integrate with the British culture, STA05 believed an integration strategy should be adopted by Chinese students during their studies in the UK, "all of Chinese students should learn how to 'play the game', which is about manipulating and understanding a system that is different from their own, and they need to quickly adapt into".

Although Chinese students interviewed in Group 2 have had their life and studies in the UK for only a few months, they identified the cultural differences and the difficulties of acculturation. "It is strange that some international students have different points of view from ours around a topic for discussion. On these occasions, I do not know how to deal with" (STU15). Unconsciously some of them adopted an acculturation strategy of separation, "Being aware of my puzzlements at how to complete an assignment, one of academics asked me to have a one to one tutorial with him in his office. He is nice but I refused his offer, because I do not know where and how I could clearly talk to him about my problems" (STU13). However, most of the student interviewees realised they have to adapt into their daily life and studies. For example, STU10 said "since now I have been in the UK for my studies, I have to integrate gradually into the local life and British way of learning, although it might be difficult for me to change my learning habits that have been formed in China".

Some academics perceived that Chinese students always keep themselves in their own group. "In the classroom environment, Chinese students tend to stay together, which is not necessarily the best way for them to learn and adapt into their life and studies" (STA01); "Spending most of the day with other Chinese students, may not provide an immersion into the British culture in terms of their adaptation" (STA16). Some academics worried about Chinese students' willingness and attitude to integrate.

"Generally, Chinese students are not interested in extracurricular activities" (STA13); "they seldom communicate with other non-Chinese students, unless they are forced to" (STA04); "few Chinese students undertake the role as a student representative to communicate with academics" (STA13). STA07 summarised that, "they are easily independent of the British settings, holding their own Chinese habits, and staying within their own Chinese groups".

Despite this, academics encouraged Chinese students to engage more for integration into the British context, considering the resulting benefits. STA04 explained, "Participating in student society activities, voluntary works, and social events, tends to mitigate their loneliness, enables them to practice their English, and enriches their experience"; "Interaction with academics and other non-Chinese students is the appropriate way to learn the university mechanism and systems" (STA07). Psychologically, adopting an integration strategy to attend activities "may bring greater confidence and comforts to Chinese students also, which will make them feel being part of the university where they are" (STA04). STA03 believed one of the reasons that Chinese students are coming to study in the UK, is to experience the culture difference. "The more Chinese students integrate with others, the richer their experience would be". STA01 further explained, "For Chinese students, studying in the UK is an entire experience of the culture, language, friendships, knowledge, and of all sorts of things. Their experience is more than a degree qualification that they may reach".

Student interviewees proposed how to develop the integration strategy for their life and studies adaptation. STU06 suggested never trying to evade problems either in daily life or academic studies, "The first reaction of yours should be positively looking for the solution to resolve a problem before it gets worse". STU14 suggested taking actions right away, "If you do not understand a concept or theory during lectures, read more reference books, or ask academics or your classmates; if you do not know how to structure an essay, go to library and find a similar sample one to

learn what others do". STU18 agreed, "I prefer to ask academic questions to academics. Their tolerance and patience in answering my simple questions make me psychologically comfortable; as a result, I integrate into my studies very quickly". For students themselves, "they should be aware of the different culture and different way of learning in the UK ahead of their arrival. If they are prepared for the possible differences that they will experience, at least they would pay attention to the way of how to handle things, instead of knowing nothing and just being frustrated" (STU16).

A summary of outcomes around discussion on Chinese students' acculturation strategy is shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Emerging outcomes from acculturation strategy that Chinese students should adopt

Acculturation strategy	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Which strategy?	Integration strategy prioritised for Chinese students to adapt into British cultural context.	Separation strategy might be adopted from "scratch". However, integration into the local life and studies is gradually "flagged up".
Barriers to acculutration	Chinese students can easily be independent of the British settings, holding their own Chinese habits, and staying within their own Chinese groups	
Benefits of integration	Bringing confidence and comforts, mitigating their loneliness, enabling them to practice their English, learn the university system proactively, and enrich their experience	
Measures to develop integration strategy	More engagement	Never evading challenges, being prepared ahead of arrival, and seeking help from the environment nearby.

5.3.3 Theme 2: General life

Sociocultural challenges, from the aspects of culture changes and different regulations that Chinese students may confront, are discussed in this section. It also reports the

influence from their general life upon the Chinese students' academic studies. The outcomes indicate that the effect of sociocultural challenges is becoming mitigated upon Chinese students who are undertaking business studies in the UK. Table 5.4 below indicates the outcomes from interviews with Chinese students and their academics around the theme of Chinese students' general life in the UK.

Table 5.4: Emerging outcomes from Theme 2: General life

General life	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Culture changes	Food, money, transportation, the freedom that they suddenly have, and the different approaches that people interact with, particularly with academics; managing their lack of independent living abilities, the needs of coping with the challenges in their daily life by themselves.	The reservation booking, different foods, and networking with other ethnical students.
Rules and regulations	Visa status, attendance records, issues under mitigation circumstance, and plagiarism matters; reading the student handbook helps prevent disobedience to academic regulations from happening.	
Preparations and measures		Preparations: English studies, pre-departure training, and cooking practice; Measures: Self-catering, attention to the information available for life convenience, and more communication with other ethnics
Relationship with their academics studies	Daily life impacts the Chinese students' academic performance; A work life balance between their academic studies and daily life affairs.	Daily life affairs and their socialising requirements impact their academic studies; Designing a well-balanced plan between daily life and studies, and then following it strictly.
Fewer challenges for acculturation	Simpler daily life, due to the emerging services in Chinese nearby; Struggling in transition and adaptation is beneficial to the Chinese students' personal development and academic studies.	

5.3.3.1 Culture changes

Being in the UK is the first time for most of Chinese students to experience their lives in another country. It is entirely different from their normal life in China. "Food, money, transportation, the different way that people interact, and the freedom that they suddenly have, and so on", STA17 made a list of cultural difference and continued, "as the undergraduate students, they are quite young and far away from their parents. Suddenly experiencing the different culture might be stressful and challenging".

Another notable change that Chinese students may experience is the acceptable means of interacting with academics. STA13, who is an ethnically Chinese, said, "Chinese students might get used to the way of contacting academics by instant social media in China. But in the UK, there are few opportunities for Chinese students to set up personal links with academics". He continued, "An appointment for a face to face meeting between Chinese students and academics is usually made ahead of time. Once it is fixed, both of them are going to abide by". STA17 agreed, "At the start, Chinese students might not understand this kind of professional relationship between students and academics in the UK".

The student interviewees also listed the culture changes that they may feel or perceive within their daily life and academic studies in British business schools. "Everything needs reservation, for instance, police registration, opening up a bank account, and meeting with academics. It is entirely different from the way in China. I do need time to adapt into" (STU03); "It is too complex for me to know the process from GP registration to receiving a prescription. Although I can check on-line or try other means, I prefer to be guided by an experienced Chinese student who can help me go through the whole process" (STU06). Many students made complaints about the food. "After a few weeks having sandwiches for my lunch, I felt sick" (STU04); "I need to cook Chinese foods, but when I go shopping, I cannot understand the food labels in the supermarket" (STU09); "The foods in restaurants or canteens are expensive, but if

I do self-catering, it takes so much time. I need to find a balance" (STU16).

Some student interviewees found it difficult to get along with students from other countries and make friends with them. "There might be some barriers to make friends with non-Chinese for me; my English is not that good and the culture difference exist" (STU10); "I live with five international students in the university accommodation. They do not wash dishes after cooking and always put all the unwashed dishes in the sink. They do not care about others" (STU05); "In my accommodation, I cannot get a good sleep. My roommates are always holding parties, putting music on loudly and deep into the nights" (STU13); "I initially intended to make friends with international and local English students, but it is not easy due to the culture difference. My friends are all Chinese currently" (STU03).

Unlike Chinese universities, the British ones have no similar mechanism to provide support in Chinese students' daily life, for instance, their personal security, accommodation, relocation, and catering. "Chinese students are forced to attain helpful information by themselves, and proactively cope with the problems and challenges they meet in their general life" (STA07). However, Chinese students lack experience of being independent of their family from their childhood. STA15, one of the ethnically Chinese academics, explained with empathy, "Their parents look after them and guide them in what they should do at all stages of their grow-up". STA11 agreed, "A sudden change without sufficient and careful 'babysitting' makes them struggle with so much culture shock and difference".

5.3.3.2 Rules and regulations

Other sociocultural challenges for Chinese students may come from the university academic regulations and some legal issues. "Classroom attendance relating to their visa status, the accommodation contract, registration procedures, and academic regulations are all new to Chinese students" (STA03). STA05 talked of a Chinese student who was deported. "He ignored the emails and letters from the university

requesting him to increase his attendance". In particular, Chinese students should be aware of the university academic regulations and make every effort to follow. STA13 flagged his concerns on the plagiarism problems that Chinese students may easily commit. "When writing an assignment or essay, it is acceptable in Chinese universities, if a student adopts a copy-and-paste strategy without paraphrasing. However, in terms of the academic regulations under the British higher education context, it is plagiarism. Chinese students do not understand how serious it is to commit such mistakes". Another example is deadline management, "If a Chinese student could not complete his assignments before the required deadline, he or she has to submit a mitigating circumstances application, provide evidence for the reasons, and report to the administrative staff for approval" (STA07).

STA13 strongly suggested Chinese students read the student handbook carefully to learn the academic regulations, when a new semester starts up. "As a matter of fact, the student handbook provides a wealth of information, including the deadlines for tasks, referencing guidance, and other academics related requirements. A good mastery of the information in the student handbook can prevent disobedience to the academic regulations from happening".

5.3.3.3 Preparation and life adaptation

Some students believed they need to prepare their adaptation before they come to the UK. "I have learned English the whole summer before my UK studies, because I think the better my English is, the quicker I can integrate with and adapt into my life and studies here" (STU17); "We need to search on-line for the information about the life in the UK; and we need to turn to students who have been in the UK for their advice and suggestions" (STU01); "Prior to my flight to the UK, I think it is useful to attend some training sessions about life and academic studies in the UK" (STU07). STU17 prioritised the psychological preparation, "after all, living and studying in a different country should not be an easy situation. If you accept this psychologically ahead of time, you may have a positive attitude and look for solutions proactively, when you

come across problems either in daily life or studies".

Regarding the food issues, some interviewees would "go to the local Chinese restaurants or Chinese supermarket to buy cooking materials for self-catering" (STU03); "Nearly every city or even in small towns in Britain, we may find Chinese restaurants and supermarkets" (STU08); "If you can afford it, I would suggest you order Chinese food delivery" (STU05). STU10 suggested that "Chinese students should learn cooking before they come to the UK". STU11 said, "There are many services in Chinese available around us. Besides looking for Chinese restaurants and supermarkets, we use mobile phone applications to search and order Chinese food delivery, laundry delivery service, and dispatch service from the UK to China. Some agencies operated by Chinese can even help us with our postgraduate applications". Some Chinese students go back to China "a few times a year in term breaks, when they feel homesick, plan to see a dentist, or even when they miss the Chinese food of their hometown. They are rich enough" (STU14). In terms of the difficulties in making friends with other ethnical students and possible conflicts with them, STU05 advised, "more engagement with them is positive. It is not only a good way to learn English, but you may have also learned the culture difference. Although my close friends are Chinese, sometimes I hang out with British students for a drink or go to watch a live football match".

5.3.3.4 Relationship with their academics studies

When discussing the influence of Chinese students' daily life onto their academic studies, STA12 believed that Chinese students' daily life management is "the elementary basis of their degree studies". STA03 noticed the gradual improvement in their academic achievements, "because from the outset, everything is new and the changes need to be dealt with either in their daily life or academia", which highlights that daily life impacts upon how well they are doing in academic studies. STA08 argued that the good personalities, for example, independence, which is developed during their daily life, could also "be transferred to the students' academic studies".

On the other side, STA13 believed that "the well performing students in their studies would arrange their life in an orderly way. Generally, they are good at time management, either for academic studies or for their general life arrangements".

For Chinese students, time management means keeping their work and life in balance, a balance between academic studies and their cooking, socialising, and other daily life affairs. Generally, Chinese students spend plenty of time on self-catering, because "food means a lot for the Chinese particularly" (STA08). STA07 suggested, "If they have had some training on cooking before their arrival in the UK, they can free up time to focus on their studies". STA13 agreed and highlighted that Chinese students should try to follow the British ways to have a simple lunch for the purpose of their studies in the afternoon. "It is not very helpful for Chinese students to have Chinese food for each meal, which is complicated to cook and time consuming". Socialising might need to be balanced with their studies also, because "Chinese students typically would not work part time. Socialising and studies are two main aspects during their stay in the UK" (STA01). STA17 agreed, "When Chinese students hang out or cook lots of food for a home party with their friends, obviously, they have lost time to undertake academic studies".

Chinese student interviewees tended to compare their life and studies in the UK with those in China, when talking about the relationship between their daily life and academic studies. STU05 said, "Daily life seriously influences my studies in the UK. Compared with my university life in China, here I have to spend more time on managing my daily life, for example, shopping, cooking, laundry, and room cleaning. And so on". STU04 who likes making friends agreed, "Socialising with my friends needs time and has a negative influence on my studies". STU19 added, "Friendship and my studies are both important for me. Sometimes I need to balance my time between the two".

STU03 explained why daily life management impacts upon their academic studies. "A stable life and a good body health condition calm me down and so I can concentrate

on my academic studies". STU11 echoed, "Issues that take place in my daily life, to some extent, might impact upon my psychological status, and then influence my academic studies". STU13 raised another possible reason, "I think the culture difference with my roommates and groupmates, more or less, brings psychological pressure upon me, which lead to less work efficiency in my academic studies". STU09 believed the relationship between life and studies is a balance. "For better adaptation into the university life in the UK, Chinese students are required to design a well-balanced plan between their daily life and studies, and then follow it strictly".

5.3.3.5 Fewer challenges for students' acculturation

As a student counselling manager in a Sino-UK joint programme based in China, STA18 is keeping in touch with a wide range of students, even those who graduated from the programme years ago. He strongly affirmed that the daily life of Chinese students' in the UK is getting simpler. "Many British universities have set up their branches in China, which can provide Chinese students with supports and counselling services. After their arrival in the UK, some agencies help Chinese students with their postgraduate applications. More and more Chinese restaurants, laundry services, and traveling agencies appear in their life context. Compared with the past, Chinese students do not need a long time period of transition any more to adapt into their local life".

However, STA18 did not say if this trend is good or not for Chinese students. "Actually, the process of struggling in transition and adaptation is beneficial to their personal development, which also would be beneficial for their academic studies". STA07 echoed, "Chinese students need a transition time period to develop their independent living abilities without their family's company, though it might be miserable for them for a short time".

5.3.4 Theme 3: Psychological issues

"It is tough for us, the young undergraduate students, to live and study alone in a

different country". STU14 believed psychological status is an important factor impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK, "If your parents and your friends nearby understand you well, listen to you and the problems that you have met, and provide you with guidance and suggestions, psychologically, you become comfortable and confident, and your adaptation might not be as hard as you expected".

Indicated from interviews with academics and Chinese students, confidence and frustration are two psychological issues that Chinese students mainly confront, during their acculturation and adaptation. Table 5.5 below gives a summary of the outcomes, in relation to Chinese students' psychological issues that they may confront, and the measures on how to handle these issues.

Table 5.5: Emerging outcomes from Theme 3: Psychological issues

Psychological issues	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Measures to develop confidence	Continuously improving their English, having more interactions with academics, and developing their cultural knowledge about the UK.	Engaging more in communication with academics and other students both inside and outside of classrooms
Reasons of frustration	Their experience of culture difference, new and uncommon freedom, perceived pressure, and high expectations from their family.	Homesickness and academic pressure management.
Measures to handle frustration	Awareness of the psychological needs of the Chinese students; resorting to their ethnical groups and universities, instead of internalising their psychological issues and keeping these to themselves only.	Communication with family and friends, a proactive attitude to problem solving and self-adjustment, and engagement in sports.

5.3.4.1 Confidence

The academics interviewed for this study mentioned frequently the issue of confidence, when talking about psychological issues that Chinese students may confront during their acculturation. "Confidence is a very precious commodity and

Chinese students may suffer from a lack of confidence" (STA03); "Confidence impacts upon their daily life in abundance" (STA05); "Less confidence leads to less participation in the classroom" (STA02). In group work, having a lack of confidence may hold Chinese students back from more engagement. "They might think they do not know who the team members are with other cultural backgrounds, what to say during the discussion, and how the topic of discussion might work. It is about confidence with the language and the social situation" (STA03).

Chinese students need to develop confidence, for the benefit of making their life easier and helping with their acculturation into the UK. STA05 believed that "the more confident Chinese students are, the fewer barriers they have". He encouraged Chinese students to engage more in their daily life and studies, "as they do have a certain level of English proficiency, since they all have taken IELTS tests and met the universities' entry requirements"; "Improving continuously their English may bring additional comfort and confidence to Chinese students" (STA04). Proactively asking academics in the classroom about issues that they do not understand helps builds up confidence for their integration and acculturation also, "though obviously it needs time" (STA07). STA07 also suggested Chinese students should "attend interest groups and try to speak in public to develop confidence". Chinese students need do some research by themselves on the cultural knowledge relating to their daily life. "If Chinese students know more about the UK, they then become more confident in how to deal with challenges that they may confront within their general life" (STA08).

On the other side, it was frequently mentioned by the Chinese student interviewees that a lack of confidence is believed to present the biggest psychological issue during their studies in the UK. It is not only related to knowledge learning, but also "to the English language level that we have" (STU04). STU08 said, "I am very nervous and anxious, when delivering a presentation in front of all my classmates. They may laugh at my pronunciation and my mistakes that I commit"; STU19 followed, "I always sit in the back of classrooms, just in case that I am asked to answer a question. I think

lack of confidence prevents me from classroom engagement".

STU06, however, encouraged Chinese students to "develop their confidence by engaging more and talking to academics and classmates in classrooms". STU11 echoed, "The feeling of success from increased communication with others stimulates you to engage more. The more your oral English improves, the more confident you become". STU12, who purposefully chose a British university with less Chinese students for her advanced entry, followed, "choosing a university with less Chinese students, enables me to have more opportunities to develop my confidence, by making friends with British and other international students".

5.3.4.2 Frustration

The findings from interviews with academics indicate another psychological issue that Chinese students may come across, frustration, which results from their experience of culture difference, new and uncommon freedom, perceived pressure, and high expectations from their family. "Chinese students may be homesick and struggling in a different culture" (STA10); "They feel lonely especially at the very start, having nobody to rely on and holding a strong sense of distancing from others" (STA09); "They easily become frustrated when they cannot understand the content of what they are taught" (STA18); "Compared with the Chinese higher education setting, there are too many changes, in particular, their immediate freedom, for the young Chinese students to tackle during their undergraduate studies here. They are troubled about how to handle this" (STA10); "There could be psychological grief caused by family pressure for Chinese students. They also imagine there is peer pressure on their studies from other well-performing students" (STA11).

Frustration may result in serious problems for Chinese students. "The downside of being frustrated caused by their academic studies is that, students get further and further behind, if they do not change, learn from others, and integrate with the learning environment nearby" (STA05). More seriously, "when feeling frustrated,

Chinese students would easily start to think of the probability of giving up their studies" (STA18). When talking about how to overcome the psychological challenges that Chinese students come across, STA18 advised, "During their stay in the UK, especially from their start, it is very important for academics and the students' families to be aware of the students' psychological needs. Chinese students need to be encouraged all the time". "The network of international students, particularly their Chinese co-nationals group, could help them" (STA12). STA09 also suggested Chinese students should "go to the universities' students counselling service for help", instead of internalising their psychological issues and keeping things to themselves alone.

Chinese students believed that homesickness and study pressure might make Chinese students feel frustrated. "It is the first time for me to stay thousands of miles away from my family. Being lonely and homesick influences me seriously during the first a few weeks in the UK" (STU01). STU02 added, "Although I have never become homesick, I did feel frustrated from time to time in my year one. I always worry about my academic achievements, because from the start, I have made up my mind to apply for further studies after my undergraduate programme. I definitely need to do well". More seriously, frustration impacts the Chinese students who have just started their acculturation in the UK. "A few times when I was awake at midnight, I even did not know where I was. I worried about how to handle my academic studies, how to improve my English, and how to manage the work-life balance. I started sobbing, thinking of the possibility of ceasing my studies and going back China" (STU13).

Chinese students would rather approach their parents or friends for help than the university's counselling service when dealing with their psychological issues. "I know I need to do something, instead of keeping things to myself, when I come across these types of problems. I turn to my parents by social media or talk to my Chinese friends" (STU01). STU06 suggested, "Chinese students should proactively deal with their academic problems promptly, otherwise new and additional problems may arise.

Simultaneously, we should adjust psychologically". STU16 recommended, "Taking part in some sports, for example, jogging or body fitness, could help Chinese students temper their psychological issues".

5.3.5 Theme 4: Learning and assessment

This section presents findings around two issues within the theme of learning and assessment, based on the qualitative data collected from the interviews with academics and Chinese students: the academic challenges that Chinese students may confront during their undergraduate studies, and the technology and social media use in their learning activities. Corresponding to the research aim and objectives of this study, the purpose of exploring issues within this theme is to identify the factors impacting upon the Chinese students' academic transition and acculturation. Table 5.6 below presents a summary of the qualitative findings, in relation to the research theme of learning and assessment.

Table 5.6: Emerging outcomes from Theme 4: Learning and assessment

Learning and assessment	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Academic challenges:	Essay writing, critical thinking, independent learning, and group work.	Essay writing, independent learning, and group work.
Essay writing	Asking the university library for essay samples; Learning from literature, delivering writing practice to develop an argument; Paraphrasing and referencing in the British way; Giving concern to the comments upon their assignments from academics.	Reading more papers; Writing practices for academic purposes; Giving concern to the academics' feedback; Attending the in-sessional English training.
Critical thinking	The pedagogical and cultural differences between China and the UK often leading to the Chinese students' weakness in critical thinking; More academic reading; Development of criticising abilities of a proposition in two sides.	

Learning and assessment	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Independent learning	Managing their daily schedule; Developing a habit of learning, reading and researching independently; Cultivating independent capabilities in daily life.	Developing abilities of being self-disciplined, good time management, and keeping a work-life balance during academic studies.
Group work	Develop their ability of critical thinking Being familiar with the topics that are discussing for group work; Developing confidence in English language when socialising.	More communication with groupmates; More practice on presenting the results of group work.
Technology use in teaching and learning	Competent in use of social media and technology; Helps with English learning and integration into their life and studies; Acquiring a balance in communication between using technology and physical interaction.	Being skilful and proficient in use; Benefiting students' studies; Relying heavily on technology in their life and studies; Hindering students and academics from communicating face to face.

5.3.5.1 Academic challenges

From the interviews with academics and Chinese students, four academic factors were identified, which may pose considerable challenges to Chinese students during their studies. These factors are essay writing, critical thinking, independent learning, and group work.

Essay writing

The Chinese students, especially majoring in the qualitatively oriented discipline, struggle dramatically with essay writing, which is commonly used for module assessment. They probably embark on writing an essay from the wrong angle, in that essentially they do not understand the essay topic. "Other reasons are that, they might not be clear about how to structure an essay, how to set its aims and objectives, how to review literature, and how to collect data" (STA01). Apart from these issues, "they need to learn how to develop and support an argument, so as to reach a valid

conclusion" (STA11). Particularly, for Chinese students with advanced entry into year two or the final year of their undergraduate studies, they lack any fundamental training on essay writing. "They jump immediately into the higher levels of analysis and synthesis within Bloom's taxonomy, which is quite challenging for them" (STA01). Even for some Chinese students who are excellent in these work areas, "they find it difficult to write clearly and sufficiently in an academic manner, to obtain the grade that they deserve" (STA10).

Another negative issue that Chinese students generally might come across, during their essay writing, is plagiarism. "In Chinese educational settings, students are encouraged just to copy what the masters say, as the things that they should learn and document, when they write" (STA12), which, however, easily leads to plagiarism under the British higher education environment. STA13 asked Chinese students to envisage this issue, "In most cases that arise as a Chinese students' plagiarism issue is due to the universities' hearing procedures, as they are not aware of the British academic regulations, and do not know how serious the impact of plagiarism is". From the start, Chinese students ought to learn or to be trained on how to paraphrase and adopt referencing in the British way.

Some academic interviewees provided advice on how to develop their academic writing skills. "They could ask their university library for samples of previous students' work to see the writing style that is expected from academics" (STA01); "Learning from literature and delivering writing practice to develop an argument, gradually help Chinese students improve their academic writing skills" (STA02). STA15 suggested that Chinese students should give concern to the comments made upon their assignments from academics, "the feedback from academics covers issues where students have illustrated their drawbacks in writing, such as inaccurate referencing, a shortage of logic, and the scarcity of theoretical discussion. Students are then aware of these problems and so improve themselves correspondingly. Not only for improved academic writing, is this but also an approach to developing their

independent learning capabilities".

The student interviewees also highlighted the challenges of essay writing. STU03, who was going to graduate with his first degree in marketing, recalled in the interview, "I was under great pressure when I wrote my first essay in the UK". Echoing this comment, some student interviewees, who have just entered into their degree studies in the UK, illustrated their difficulties in essay writing. "I did not know where to start writing for my first essay, even though one of academics demonstrated in a seminar how to set up an essay structure" (STU13); "Having now been made aware of the requirements for rigidity and coherency in essay writing, I started to worry about whether I could graduate smoothly, considering the difficulties in essay writing" (STU17); "Grammar might not be a big issue for us, but what we write in essays, more or less, is not in accordance with the British style of writing" (STU14).

As a student after three years' undergraduate studies in the UK, STU04 realised, "Chinese students need to spend lots of time on learning how to reference, paraphrase, and read efficiently. Only in this way, could we write a high quality essay and receive a good grade". STU06 suggested "reading papers and practicing more writing for academic purpose, are two approaches which could increase your essay writing abilities". STU01 shared her experience, "I learned a lot from the academics' feedback on the essays that I wrote, which I believe is very helpful to improve my essay writing capabilities". In terms of the requirements for essay writing, such as coherency and consistency, STU14 strongly recommended Chinese students to attend the in-sessional English training parallel to their academic studies, because "these programmes teach the rules of academic writing and provide many practice opportunities".

Independent learning

STA06 was surprised at what his Chinese students told him. "We are really puzzled that we do not have lectures from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. Why do we

take lectures only about six or seven hours a week? The resulting problem for us is what we should do with the other time when not being lectured". It is an entirely different situation in the British higher education setting for Chinese students, compared with the one in their home universities, colleges, or schools. There are more emphases put on independent learning in the British educational system. From the outset of their studies in the UK, Chinese students may find it difficult to adapt to independent learning quickly.

Echoing STA06, STA10 believed "Chinese students might have too much freedom too quickly; as a result, they might get into trouble on how to handle this, especially for undergraduate students at the start of their programmes". STA15 found the similar problem, "some Chinese students are not good at managing a longitudinal project. They may struggle with their daily schedule, the deadline management for submitting their coursework, the engagements to meet their academics and group mates, and even their daily life arrangements".

In relation to the "free time" or "freedom" that Chinese students are worrying about, STA06 explained, "It is not free time, but the time for Chinese students to do their own learning, reading, and their research independently". STA08 encouraged Chinese students to develop independence during their general life, which can "be transferred to their academic studies".

Some student interviewees, who have not experienced their studies in the UK, started to worry about their learning in the UK. "From my teachers in China and previous classmates who have got studying experience in the UK, I heard the British way of learning places emphasis upon independent learning. Students need to do their work independently. However, in China, my parents and teachers supervise my learning and push me forward" (STU10). STU04, who was going to graduate when being interviewed, confirmed, "Students may find the teaching hours are much less for lectures and tutorials in the UK. Students need to administrate their home study by themselves". STU02 agreed, "Independent learning, for a student in British higher

education setting, is closely connected with his capabilities of self-discipline, time management, and keeping a good work-life balance".

STU14 illustrated and reified the concept of independent learning, based on her own study experience. "You might not fully understand the lecture, you thus need to review the slides or handouts from class as your homework by yourself; If you do not read papers after class recommended by academics, you might find it difficult to get involved in the tutorial discussion afterwards; Deadlines are applied universally to assignments or essays for submission, you need to follow your own timetable to fulfil your tasks on time". She summarised, "Under the British higher education system, nobody would keep you posted as to what and when you should do this or that. You ought to manage it, independently".

STU18 highlighted the importance of cultivating independent learning abilities, particularly for the newly arrived Chinese students, "no matter how good your English is, you may face a certain time period of acculturation and academic adaptation. Independent learning abilities help a lot to cope with academic issues". He further illustrated, "academics would not allow you some time to adapt gradually, because teaching continues following strictly the university calendar. At this critical time point, your independent learning abilities matter a lot to you". Following his comments, STU18 set up an example, "if you do not fully understand what you have learnt, reading the handout or slides related to the lecture would help, which could be seen as independent learning".

Independent learning, however, does not mean being opposed to interaction with others. STU05, who graduate from undergraduate studies very soon, realised, "although independent learning is a necessity for studies, Chinese students should interact and communicate with their student peers and academics. When they come across problems, interaction with others may provide a way to receive new knowledge and to look for solutions".

Critical thinking

Critical thinking involves the notion of arguing around a piece of work or assignment to give two sides of a "story", so as to produce a balanced discussion, which may be challenging Chinese students. They "often struggle with understanding what critical thinking is. It is not just repeating and accepting what academics say" (STA06); "Chinese students are generally weak in the critical and exploratory analysis of a theory; they just explain theories in details, presenting the theoretical points in examinations" (STA05).

Some academics attributed reasons for this to the pedagogical differences, why Chinese students appear to show a lack of critical thinking in arguments. "In the Chinese teaching and learning context, where students are required to have fixed answers, Chinese students do not necessarily argue and make critiques. Gradually, they show their weakness about critical thinking in arguments" (STA08). Conversely, "the British pedagogy advocates that there is no one correct answer for an argument, and students are required to take a proposition from multiple aspects through evidence-based approaches" (STA09). STA05 agreed with STA08 and STA09's opinions, "those are completely different approaches from the pedagogical perspective: one is more descriptive, and another is more critical". Another reason might be the cultural difference, "Chinese students respect academics and their knowledge very much, especially the words in prints. As a result, they are not used to questioning knowledge in models and theories, even these might not fit in a different situation" (STA01).

Some practical measures are suggested by academic interviewees to develop Chinese students' critical thinking capabilities. "Chinese students need to read papers and books recommended by their academics, and analyse accordingly around what the authors think" (STA11). Thus, they may clarify "what kind of information that is supporting or objecting to the authors' opinions" (STA02), not "just explain a theory by presenting the theoretical points within it" (STA05). They are expected to

"criticise propositions, theories, and models, so as to address the issues that they think can be queried" (STA01), as a result, "they gradually have their own considered ideas and form up their resultant opinions around a topic" (STA11). Once critical thinking abilities are developed, Chinese students are able to "do a better job of the critical analysis of a theory and to explore where its limitations lie, what its good aspects are, and under which situations it could be applied" (STA05). By these means, their academic studies can benefit from the development of critical thinking capabilities, and their academic works could gradually improve.

Group work

Chinese students find it difficult to discuss about a real business issue and present their findings, when they are grouped with other classmates. "They are shy and do not want to take the lead" (STA03); "They do not get involved in group discussion around the topic given by academics; they keep quiet, which has an impact on the other non-Chinese students in terms of their learning and engagement" (STA11); "Even when Chinese students manage to complete their part of a piece of group work, it is difficult for them to communicate with other students and present their results" (STA16). Chinese students, especially the newly enrolled ones, may find it a problem to present their works orally, "It is difficult for them to clearly talk about their ideas in an oral manner" (STA07). Furthermore, "Chinese student might be weak in debating with others in their group work" (STA08).

Regarding what Chinese students should do to improve their performance in their group work, STA11 suggested, "first of all, Chinese students should develop their abilities to think critically about the materials that they have been given". STA07 shared his opinion further, "They need to be familiar with the jargon and descriptive words around the topic that they are discussing for group work". STA03 added, "It is all about confidence. I would suggest for them to develop their confidence with improved English language and experiencing activities under socialising situations".

Chinese students interviewed for this research mainly discussed two issues in relation to their group work that may be challenging: communication with their group mates and the presentations that are often applied in order to report the results of group work. STU04 would rather cooperate with Chinese students for group work than other students. "In my first group work, I carried many other international students who were difficult to find and to sit down with me to work together. I felt unhappy because they were free riders. After that, I prefer to work with Chinese students in group work. At least I know where they usually study, and it is easy for us to communicate also". STU05 agreed, "I work with my Chinese classmates for group work, because there are no language and culture barriers".

However, STU14 did not care about her groupmates' cultural background, because "we can learn from each other from different cultural backgrounds", though "for cultural reasons, the work efficiency of group members' is different, which determines the whole group's efficiency". STU16 agreed, "I did my part of group work quickly, but some groupmates did not complete theirs until the last minute". STU06 raised another problem, "some groupmates tend not to do their jobs well, although I would like to work hard to get a high grade from the group work".

To resolve these problems that are associated with group work, STU06 suggested, "I undertook a lot of communication with my groupmates in the process of a piece of group work, persuading them to complete their jobs on time, though it is not easy, due to the different cultural backgrounds and values. And on some occasions, I had to resort to academics for their help to hasten other team members"; STU14 shared her experience, "when I was nominated as the team leader of a piece of group work, generally, I completed my part of the work as early as I can, while I paid an eye on the other members' work progress. If a member's work fell behind the overall schedule, I helped him or her to identify the reasons and if needed, I even shared his or her part of workload for the timely accomplishment of the whole group work. It is an opportunity for me to know other cultures and develop my team spirit, which I think will benefit

my future career".

Another issue that Chinese student interviewees may think challenging, was to physically present the results of group work. STU08 depicted, "I easily get nervous, when speaking in front of my classmates, who might make critiques of my presentation. My pronunciation might be wrong, and my performance might be laughed at by my classmates and academics". STU06 suggested, as a student who was going to graduate from undergraduate studies, "it is not necessary to worry about the presentation too much. Your groupmates, classmates, and academics will, instead, encourage you on site. But for sure, Chinese students should prepare the slides carefully and do simulations ahead of the formal presentation".

5.3.5.2 Technology use in teaching and learning

Similar to other ethnical students of their age, STA11 found, "Chinese students are technologically knowledgeable" in using the university email address, social media applications, and the study management systems, like Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, and so forth. "They are quite competent in these skills" (STA10). They email their academics to ask for academic supports and book appointments for face to face meetings. They use "Blackboard to download learning materials for looking back or reading forward" (STA16); "They ask questions anonymously by using on-line discussion boards, if they are embarrassed to ask a question face-to-face" (STA11).

The student interviewees believed also Chinese students are frequent users of social media and the university's IT facilities. STU11 said, "Chinese students are skilfully using social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and the Chinese one, WeChat". "Which social media we choose depends on what my friends and classmates are using. For Chinese students specifically, we use WeChat more" (STU01). STU18 agreed, "I keep in touch with my Chinese friends by WeChat, while I use WhatsApp and Facebook messenger to contact other international students".

In terms of universities' IT facilities, STU03 praised, "it is very convenient and easily

learnt by practicing one or two times". STU17 particularly talked of the on-line Blackboard, the study management system of his university, "this system is very helpful to my studies, which I can log onto and download learning materials at anytime from anywhere". STU11, who was taking pre-sessional English when being interviewed for this study, said, "During my English studies here, I started to learn how to use the on-line system, and tried to set up a habit of making appointments with academics by emails. One week later, I found myself skilful and proficient in using these technologies".

Socialising with others is an essential function of social media. Social media would help Chinese students integrate with others, which is beneficial to their transition and acculturation. "The most popular social media among Chinese students is WeChat, which was originally developed from a China based company. Through WeChat, they can talk to their Chinese friends, parents, student mentors, and their classmates, in order to improve their lives and academic experiences in the UK" (STA04). Besides WeChat application, there is a whole range of options in social media that they can choose, "Chinese students are encouraged to integrate with British students and other international ones by joining a WhatsApp or Facebook messenger group. They can post and exchange information that happens around them. It is a good way of gaining integration into the student communities for Chinese students" (STA15).

Some students, especially the newly arrived ones, also emphasised that the university's IT facilities and the social media platforms benefit their studies. "Either the library system, mailbox settings, or the on-line learning resource platform, benefits my studies" (STU16); "My works and essays are easily submitted on line; when I have an enquiry, I generally write an email to ask academics through the university's email box" (STU14); "It is probably because we are just enrolled that I cannot understand what my groupmates say to me and why they do not understand me either. The WhatsApp group helps us with communications" (STU15); "It is a good way for me to contact other international students via WhatsApp or Facebook

messenger for our group work. By using these social media applications, our English language improves also" (STU19). Social media could also help Chinese students to improve their English, because they need to "read what others say and give a response in English" (STA15).

However, the negative aspect is that, social media hinders personal contact between Chinese students and others. "They can text or email others instead of meeting them in person. To some extent, social media reduces social interaction and harms their cultural integration, especially for Chinese students and other international ones" (STA03). Some students noticed the same problem, "The technology development hinders students and their academics from communicating in person with each other" (STU14). But STU14 admitted that students should "be forced to rely in part on technology. If you did not sign into the university's Blackboard for a day, you would have missed some important information that you should be aware of". For the sake of their transition and acculturation, Chinese students should work out a balance around types of communication, between using technology and physical activities with others.

5.3.6 Theme 5: Staff student relationships

Figure 5.4 below is generated by NVivo software from summarising the responses from interview with academics around the theme of staff student relationships. The results from interviews with academics and students highlight the importance and benefits of setting up relationships and links between Chinese students and their academics, within the Chinese students' academic adaptation process. The relationship building approaches and the potential barriers to building relationships are discussed. Suggestion and tips are raised with regard to the formulation, development, and maintenance of the staff student relationships (SSR).

Figure 5.4: Interviewed academics' responses to Staff-student relationships (by NVivo)
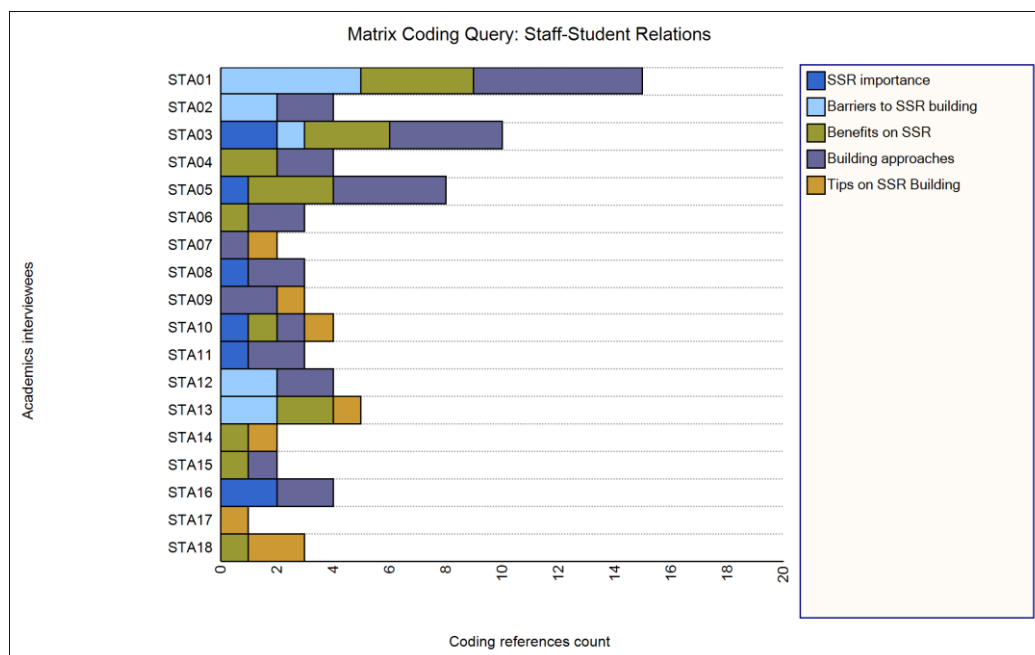
5.3.6.1 SSR importance

There is a general consensus among the academic interviewees that relationships or links with academics are important for any international students throughout their acculturation and adaptation, whatever the students' nationalities and backgrounds. Through interactions between academics and students, students "share their thoughts with academics if they are doing things right or not, academics get a chance to make sure students do the right thing over lectures, assignments, or examinations" (STA01).

Some academics argued the importance of staff-student links depends on the level of studies. "The higher the level of study is, the more important the relationship would be" (STA03). Relationships with academics are helpful but not essential for first year and second year undergraduate students, however, "if students are doing their dissertation in third year, communication between Chinese students and academics is absolutely essential" (STA16). STA11 agreed, "I can easily spend one hour with a Chinese student, going through their essay line by line. The process is also a way of developing the interpersonal relationship with Chinese students".

STA08 did not give a direct response to the question as to whether the relationship between academics and students is important, but he emphasised, "I think the relationship is quite simple in the UK Higher Education context. However, In British way of teaching, the knowledge provided in classrooms is very limited. Puzzlements and enquiry might arise in the course of the students' independent learning. Chinese students are therefore encouraged to ask their academics either academic or personal questions in the furtherance of relationships with them".

The Chinese students involved in the interviews held a realistic attitude towards developing relationship with their academics. "A bad relationship with one of academics might lead to low dedication to a specific course" (STU10). Conversely, "appreciation of the good relationship with academics encourages me to work harder" (STU12). After having experienced the British higher education for a few weeks, STU16 shared his view, "if your course module includes many pieces of essay and group work, which perhaps need frequent communication with your academics, a good relationship with them is crucial".

5.3.6.2 Benefits from SSR

Both academics and students agreed that the Chinese students' academic learning benefits from a positive interaction and communication with academics. STA01 suggested, "Chinese students need to make contact with their academics, asking questions when they do not understand, making it clear about the concepts that might confuse them. Trying to keep the relationship going as every academics is happy to talk to students and make sure they progress well and get a good grade". Other than the direct academic aids, communication with academics might provide extra benefits in Chinese students' academic development, for instance, "views from academics that you may have never thought of, and directions that help with your essay writing, and so on" (STA13).

Chinese student interviewees also believed that positive contacts and good

relationship with academics are helpful with their academic developments. "If students visit their academics at drop-in hours to discuss the academic issues that they come across, a more valuable response could be received by students than in classrooms, because academics would explain carefully with more patience. The new misunderstanding that probably arise during the visit, could also get directly resolved on site" (STU14).

Under the existing condition that a reference is required for further studies or career development, Chinese students also benefit from having a relationship with some of their academics. "If academics know a student fairly well by close contact and interaction, a positive reference is able to be issued for the student" (STA13). The students interviewed for this study, for example, STU01, STU02, and STU14 all mentioned that academics are generally willing to provide a reference for the students' further studies. However, "only if you communicate with academics actively, could you impress them, and thereby a positive reference might be offered" (STU14). In addition, a close relationship and active interaction with academics or other university staff may help Chinese students apply for work placement opportunities within the university campus, for example, "student ambassadorship, new student mentor, or working as an assistant in the international office, and so on" (STA18).

Another marked benefit from a positive relationship with academics for the Chinese students to have is, the problems that Chinese students might confront can be identified earlier and solutions could be provided in a timely manner. "If Chinese students do not talk, academics would never know what their problems are. The earlier they do, the better the situation would be, as academics could help provide solutions and guide them in the right direction" (STA05).

More realistically for Chinese students, smooth communication with academics helps with their examinations. "I generally book an appointment to meet academics within their office hours before examinations. Not only it is the final chance to tackle the academic puzzles that perplex me, but also I may gain some ideas on the scope to be

tested for the examinations" (STU04).

5.3.6.3 SSR building approaches

The academics interviewed for this study believed that the initiator for relationship building should be their priority over the students. As an academic who has been working with Chinese students for about 29 years, STA01 has got extensive knowledge of the Chinese culture, "based on my experience, it is academics who make the first move to initiate the relationship with Chinese students". STA06 echoed that, once a relationship with Chinese students is developed, they are happy and comfortable to visit the academics' office. STA01 elaborated further, "It is a lot easier to have a quick word with them at the end of a class, to make sure they are happy and understand what is going on in classrooms". STA01 visited China multiple times for student recruitment tour as his school representative, "I could ask Chinese students where they are from. What I recalled about their cities made them instantly comfortable. They started to laugh and asked me more about my memory".

However, STA01 emphasised that Chinese students should also make their effort to grow their relationship development with academics, "they need to be willing to visit and talk to academics proactively about their academic troubles". A great deal of academics upheld the same point of view, "Chinese students need to know from the start if they have a problem in learning, they ought to speak individually to academics" (STA03); "Any trouble with academic studies, Chinese students need to visit their academics to find a solution. For issues related to their life in the UK, they need to approach their personal tutors for help" (STA02). STA07 and STA08 are ethnically Chinese. Based on their experience as being international students previously and current academics in the UK, they alleged that, "because in British higher education context, academics seldom approach students, but require students to form up their own learning habits as the independent learners" (STA08), thus, "the Chinese students' personal intention plays an important role in forming up and developing links with academics. They should ask questions to set up links with academics, and then

gradually develop that relationship" (STA07).

STA07 enumerated approaches for Chinese students to develop relationships with their academics. "When they come across an enquiry, asking academics in classrooms immediately is commonly accepted in British higher education context. Other approaches include keeping in touch with academics by emails or through other on-line instruments and taking use of the academics' drop-in hours to visit them personally for academic enquiries".

For their own part, STA03 encouraged academics to participate in the student social events organised by universities, where students are provided with a chance to approach their academics in a different situation. "Rather than a group situation, Chinese students are more confident to talk to academics personally in a private occasion" (STA03). STA12 highlighted the importance of making Chinese students aware of the expectations from academics in the course of building up a staff-student relationship, "Students and I generally have a short face to face session at the start of each semester, where I make clear what my expectations are, in relation to the schedule of their assignments and milestones for their papers. I then remind them of my expectations and help them resolve troubles that they may come across. Actually, a good relationship has been developed between us when the teaching and learning activities continue".

The student interviewees would adopt different approaches that they believe are efficient in setting up and developing links and relationships with academics. "I would generally email academics my enquiries when doing assignments or before the examinations. The email correspondence could be recorded for future review as well." (STU06). STU01 preferred to post questions onto the "question link" channel on the university's website, "I use my real name to upload these questions and receive answers from academics, which I think thereby they get impressed".

Instead of using technology to develop links with academic, some students would like

to meet academic in person. "I made appointments to see academics, in which I was always welcomed" (STU03). STU05 agreed, "by the end of each term, I generally visit academics in their office if I thought I do not understand something well". STU19, who was just enrolled into his advanced entry into year three undergraduate studies, shared his experience of visiting one of academics, "I cannot understand an ethnically Italian academic's accent, which has depressed me for some time. The advice I received was simple but fairly useful. I was asked to listen more to the Italian academic and pay attention to the rule and the rhythms of his pronunciation. Face to face meetings with my academics prove to be very efficient".

Classroom interaction proves to be more effective, when developing and maintaining relationships with academics. "I always sit at front rows in classrooms to make myself physically close to academics, as a result, I can get many chances to have a short chat with academics before, during, and after class" (STU15). STU05 suggested, "in a small scale tutorial session, students and academics might have more opportunities for interaction, which benefits students in developing relationships with academics. I gave active response to academics' questions and I raised enquiries for their explanation". STU16 began to consider his research career, though he has just started his year-three undergraduate studies for a few months in the UK, "I positively engage with the academic events held in my university campus, and I also volunteer to be the group leader to do group work, by which I think I can impress my academics and develop good relationships with them".

5.3.6.4 Barriers to SSR Building

There are some barriers preventing the relationship between academics and students from being established. STA01 highlighted the heavy workload undertaken by academics, "as an academic, I am expected to manage my class, programme, teaching materials, and assessment independently. Moreover, the workload is increasing larger". He further explained, "If I am teaching at a lecture theatre with one hundred students, I do not distinguish the difference between different international student

groups, I just focus on my lecture", however, "when I go down to a small seminar, it is an opportunity for me to approach the different cultural groups and look after their well-being".

Another barrier is the staff's accessibility, "the problem for Chinese students to develop a close link with academics is, students would probably see their academics once a week or even a month, which makes it quite difficult to build up a relationship" (STA12). STA13 echoed, "Academics have few opportunities to interact directly with students, apart from lecturing and their drop-in hours". "Many academics need to leave classrooms right way after lecturing due to other engagements, which means after class, they do not expect much communication with students. They prefer to interact with students during lecturing".

A remarkable barrier comes from the Chinese students' cultural awareness of approaching their academics to set up a relationship. Previous schooling teaches Chinese students to respect academics and authorities. STA02 depicted it as an "invisible wall", keeping them away from their academics. On the other hand, some academics lack of cultural awareness "might not be willing to get to know the students and the culture difference. They just carry on their teaching engagements in the British way" (STA01). Under such circumstance, universities might be responsible for providing their academics with the training on cultural awareness and cultural diversity.

STU02, who was going to graduate with her first class degree from a Russell Group member university, talked about the staff student relationship massively. She found that "unlike in China, where teachers offer students help whenever needed, there are few channels to set up a close relationship with British academics, beyond the boundary of a pure staff-student relationship. Academics would rather develop a professional link with students". She complained, "I understand gradually that academics leave classroom quickly after lecturing, due to the other engagements that they might have. However, when I write to academics for enquires before an

examination, some of them responded later after it has occurred. I only could see my supervisor for my dissertation once a month, which obviously difficult for me to develop a good relationship with her". She realised that she needed to adapt to the learning environment, "For the benefits of studies and relationship development with academics, I suggest Chinese students follow the British way to ask academics questions immediately in the classroom, either in a big lecture or a small-scale tutorial, which has been proved most effective for my studies".

STU04 raised a serious issue when keeping in touch with academics, "I feel I am being treated with unfairness and disrespect sometimes. Some academics prefer to communicate with the students who have the same ethnical background as theirs. Some academics even give me a different response from others, though it is the same question". STU14 disagreed with STU04's statement, "the majority of academics are friendly and supportive to international students", although she admitted some academics "may have a tendency of racism to different ethnical groups, which can be perceived by students".

5.3.6.5 Tips on SSR building

Suggestion or tips on building and developing relationships with academics were provided to Chinese students by the academics interviewed within this research. A strategy of conducting professional rather than personal communications between students and academics should be adopted. STA05 emphasised, "either students or academics are required to use their university email address to deal with academic issues, not only for safety reasons but for email correspondence tracking". STA04 suggested, "Chinese students should develop their common sense in the work place, for example, paying academics visits within their drop-in hours, and booking appointments with academics for face to face meeting". And, Chinese students should be aware that any social media or personal email address are privacies, either for Chinese students or academics, which should not be used for academic purpose without permission.

Academic improvement should be the only purpose of building up relationships with academics for Chinese students. "Chinese students should get to know the etiquettes that their academics believe acceptable" (STA18); "it is necessary to be polite and have the right attitude when communicating with academics" (STA07). STA05 noticed, "Chinese students are appreciative when I help them. I get small gifts from Chinese students, like Chinese ties, which I use to decorate my office so as to encourage more Chinese students to visit me". Although the relationship with academics aims to develop their academic achievements for Chinese students, a small and culturally related gift to show gratitude to academics is acceptable.

Chinese students are advised to adopt different approaches under different circumstance when keeping in contact with academics. Asking well-reflected questions are always welcomed either on blackboard, through emails, or visits to academics in their office hours. However, "sometimes for students, it is not necessary to ask many questions which require three pages of answer over emails, it ought to be easier to go and ask academics in person" (STA14). Although it is always welcomed for Chinese students to ask normal questions, "if a student did this all the time, he would be negatively impressed, and it is harmful either to the development of a good relationship with academics" (STA10).

After the interpretation and syntheses of the outcomes around the theme of staff student relationship, the emergent findings from interviews with academics and Chinese students become apparent and are presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Emerging outcomes from Theme 5: Staff student relationships

Staff student relationship	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Benefits from SSR	Benefits to Chinese students' academic learning and academic development; A reference provided for the students' further studies and career development; Timely identification of problems and early solutions provided.	Students' examination preparation and academic development; References provided for the Chinese students' further studies or careers.
Building approaches	Positive interactions in the classroom, emails contacts, and meet up within the staff's office hours; The initiating role of academics and students' in relationship building; Awareness of the academic expectations from students.	Email correspondence, on-line interaction, face to face meetings, ahead-of-class chats, classroom interaction with academics, and engagements in the academic events and group work.
Barriers to SSR building	Academics' heavy workloads and accessibility; Being lack of cultural awareness from either academics or students.	A pure and professional SSR wanted by academics; The perceived disrespects or a tendency of racism.
Tips on SSR building	Development of common sense in the workplace to interact with academics in a professional way; Proper etiquette when communicating with academics.	

5.3.7 Theme 6: English proficiency

Findings from interviews with academics and students indicate that, the Chinese students' English proficiency level impacts fundamentally their transition and acculturation into their daily life and academic studies. As two students involved in the interviews stated, "the better your English level is prior to your arrival, the quicker and smoother that you can adapt into the daily life and academic studies in the UK" (STU17); "Good English makes you more confident in various situations and encourages you to focus on the academic studies" (STU03).

This section illustrates the relationship between English proficiency and students' acculturation, enumerates problems and challenges that low English proficiency may

raise, suggests how to help Chinese students improve their English language level, and identifies the resources and support provided by British universities for Chinese students to improve their English proficiency. Based on the interview transcripts with academics, Figure 5.5 below shows the coding results in relation to the theme of English proficiency.

Figure 5.5: Interviewed academics' responses to English Proficiency (by NVivo)
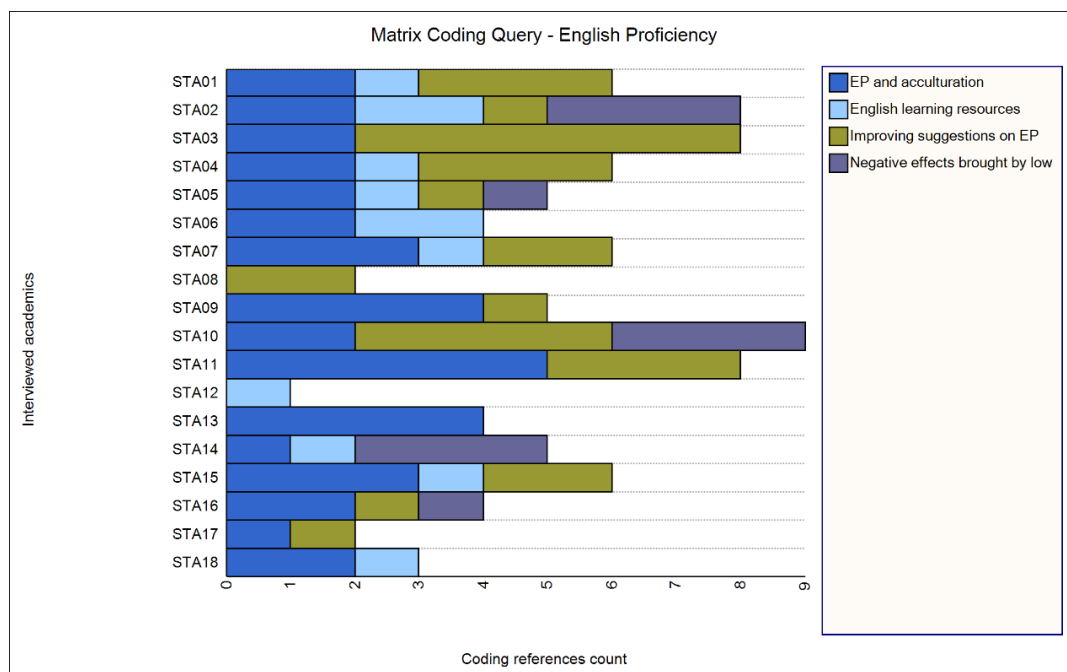
5.3.7.1 English Proficiency, IELTS test, and acculturation

English language is the instrument for communication during Chinese students' life and studies in the UK. STA15, who is ethnically Chinese, stressed that, most of the challenges and problems that Chinese students come across during their acculturation may be fundamentally derived from their English language level. "If their English is good, all of the challenges in their UK life can be dealt with smoothly, their academic studies also benefit." She continued, "However, if their English language level does not sufficiently support their communication with other students and academics, it is hard for them to integrate into British culture. It easily separates them from participating in the social events and makes them group with other Chinese students".

STA04 believed that the high level of English language stirs up confidence and encourages Chinese students to engage more with others, "they then can improve their academic studies to reach a higher level of academic transition, through good English and the self-developed confidence".

There might be a cognitive mismatch on English language improvement between Chinese students and academics. Chinese students might be unsure if their academics understand completely that "Chinese students are not fully confident to talk to people from another culture using another language" (STA01). They are fearful of critiques from academics and losing face to classmates because of their English capabilities. However, "A student's oral English has never been criticised by academics, though they may suggest you to make improvements. On the contrary, academics take responsibilities to listen to what students ask and provide answers to the best of their ability" (STA09). Whatever their level of oral English is, they should interact with academics positively to make their opinions known. "Initially, they may not be totally competent, but the more they try, the more their English proficiency improves" (STA11).

Both academics and student interviewees talked of the IELTS test scores that Chinese students are required to obtain before their enrolment into a British university. During their academic studies, Chinese students "do not perform to the level of English language that their IELTS score shows" (STA16); "Chinese students' English level only just supports their studies" (STA03). STA05 added, although they have met the universities' language entry requirements, "I do not think their English level gives them much confidence". STA09 explained, "In China, the purpose of English language learning is for examinations. It is a learning subject throughout Chinese secondary and higher education, which means it needs examination to find well performing candidates for further studies" STA18 added, "Chinese students take some specific training to tackle their IELTS test in China, but not to focus on developing their practical English language learning. Their actual English proficiency might be

lower than the level that their IELTS scores suggest."

The language difficulties perplexed some student interviewees either, because they think their English level has been proved to meet the university's entry requirements by the IELTS test that they have taken. Typically, STU13 expressed her confusion, "I received a score of IELTS 6.0 before my UK studies, which indicates I have met the English criteria required by my university, but, I do not know why I still cannot understand what academics say in classrooms".

STU05, who were going to graduate from her undergraduate studies, explained, "in terms of my experience, the English language that we have learnt, either from textbooks or preparations for the IELTS test, is not sufficient for living and studying in the UK"; "Actually, our real English application level is much lower than what the IELTS score shows" (STU02). STU16 echoed, "I think the IELTS test is only a test of how you have prepared for it. It is not equivalent to your actual oral communication capabilities, your academic writing, and how much you can understand in classrooms". STU08, who was studying the pre-sessional English course in his university, agreed, "Compared with the IELTS training that I had in China, what I am learning is more practical and useful in many aspects, for example, British culture and traditions, pronunciation correction, paragraph structuring, and paraphrasing in academic writing, and so on".

5.3.7.2 Low English Proficiency influence

Academics noticed that weak English more easily pushes Chinese students stick together, so as to form up their own co-national group. STA02 said, "Within their own groups, Chinese students are apt to talk in Chinese to each other, but not in English. The bad situation is that they do not have a good English learning environment for their language improvement, even in an English-speaking country".

Another issue that Chinese students find it difficult is to present their works clearly, either in oral or in written English, which results in negative impacts upon their

academic performance. "Chinese students should be well prepared with the knowledge of jargon and the descriptive words in their academic discipline. Otherwise, it is difficult for them, especially from the start, to understand what they are being taught and to interact orally with their academics and student peers" (STA07). STA10 linked the English proficiency level with the Chinese students' academic achievements, "I always feel Chinese students have not got the marks that they could obtain, if their English improves". STA10 continued, "If you read a piece of work full of mistakes, either in grammar or spelling, you would not get impressed, despite its good opinions. Good grades are always given to the papers with good logic and few language errors".

The Chinese students interviewed for this study reported that English proficiency may impact upon their first-hand life experience. STU09, who was studying pre-sessional English courses when being involved in this study, mentioned her problems related to her English level. "The biggest challenge for me is English. I cannot understand what the local people talk to me. I do not even know what the food labels mean when I go shopping in a supermarket".

Low English proficiency results in negative influences seriously in their academic studies and interaction with academics and other students, particularly for students who have just started their studies in the UK. "I cannot keep up with my learning schedule due to my weak English. For the same reason, it is difficult for me to finish all the reading tasks on time" (STU13). STU17 agreed, "It is quite daunting, when I read journal papers slowly. I cannot fully understand and I am not impressed by my reading at all". STU15 worried about his listening, "I cannot understand what my groupmates are talking about. I only understand half of the lecture content, even when I have previewed". STU18 added, "I cannot understand one of my academics at all, due to his strong accent. I wonder if it is necessary for me to attend his next lecture". She further complained, "No academics in my university seem care of our Chinese students' English level, which really becomes a challenge to our academic studies".

Some students believed their low English efficiency gave rise to some psychological problems too. STU04 said seriously, "Low English proficiency may lead to a lack of confidence. Gradually you may lose your intrinsic impetus for academic studies". STU13 was depressed in the interview, "English problems together with other issues upset me a lot. Sometimes I doubt if my decision to study overseas is right. I consider from time to time if I continue my study in the UK".

5.3.7.3 Improvement on English learning

Several academics highlighted "immersion", for the sake of improving the Chinese students' English language level. "From my experience of learning a foreign language, a full immersion is very important for Chinese students to accelerate their English learning" (STA10); "immersion would ensure you are engaging with the English environment all the time" (STA03); "Chinese students should strive for full immersion into English context, and keep them away from the Chinese-speaking environment" (STA16).

In order to improve the Chinese students' academic writing in English, STA03 emphasised that "they are encouraged to read more English textbooks and papers to improve written English". STA11 believed they should "not only read textbooks, but novels, newspapers, on-line news, and editorials. The more they read, the quicker their English reading improves". STA04 suggested "when reading, Chinese students ought to write down phrases that are useful to their academic writing. Gradually, they would find this habit benefits them very much".

Regarding their spoken English, "students should find opportunities to spend more time talking to English speakers, whether they are British or other international students" (STA03); "Watching films, television series, and other videos in their spare time and trying to imitate orally are all good measures" (STA11); "to keep themselves away from their co-nationals, attend the university's student social events, and do some volunteering jobs. Oral English needs to be practiced continuously" (STA15).

STA05 agreed, "if possible, go outing and mix with other students. Every time they do, they are enhancing their cultural experience and improving their language."

The student interviewees also believed more practice in English proficiency improvement is necessary. STU17 warned, "It is absolutely wrong if you think your English level improves automatically during your acculturation in the UK. The improvement of English language level requires students to make great efforts in constant practice". STU10 agreed, "English learning relates to reading, writing, speaking, and listening to the language. Only by more practice on each element, could your English proficiency improve".

STU02, STU04, and STU14 believed that developing reading and writing abilities are connected. "Taking more reading, especially papers and textbooks recommended by academics, enables you to learn how the authors are writing" (STU02); "Even now I think my English is not sufficient for my studies, I do reading everyday" (STU04); "When reading, I learn from authors how to apply language in writing, how to develop ideas, and how to organise the structure, all of which I think benefit my writing" (STU14). STU01 suggested, "Since we are international students, all of us should attend the in-sessional English courses for academic purpose, whatever our IELTS test scores are". STU09 added, "I value very much the feedback from language academics, which keep me from committing the same mistakes, and benefit me a lot in improving my academic writing".

Akin to reading and writing, more practice in speaking and listening should be introduced to English learning too, "The more oral and listening works you practice, the more English sense you have" (STU06). Having participated in his academic studies for a few weeks, STU19 advised, "Preview of the slides provided by academics and review audios if you can record from classrooms, not only help with understanding of the course content, but benefit your future English listening". Some students highlighted the increased engagement with others as measures for oral English improvement. "More interaction with academics and other non-Chinese

students is helpful to improve your speaking and listening" (STU01); "It is useless to complain about your group mates' accent and pronunciation, instead, only by talking and listening more to them, can you become more familiar with their accent" (STU04). STU03 and STU12 suggested, "Watching films and drama series helps develop your interests in English learning. Moreover, participating in the social events held by universities is another option to improve English listening and speaking".

5.3.7.4 English learning resources

Chinese students need to make full use of the learning resources provided by their universities. STA04 suggested, "Go to the career centre at universities and look for part time jobs opportunities, if your time permits. When you are working, you are forced to interact with others in English, speaking, writing, or reading, whatever. Gradually you will have an English sense and form a habit of English learning".

However, academics preferred Chinese students to consider the direct university supports and resources to improve their English learning. "Library workshops for academic writing" (STA02), "pre-sessional and in-sessional English learning courses" (STA01), "on-line learning resources, for example, the academic phrase bank," (STA07), and "the programmes of English for academic purpose" (STA05), all of these resources are easily retrieved from universities' website or the students' Blackboard (a virtual learning management system for students). In order to combine English language learning with the discipline that Chinese students are undertaking, STA06 proposed, "Perhaps the language centre of the University could specifically design and develop English for business purpose and for other subjects. Thus, academics and students are not just talking about languages, but instead, they talk about English which is specific for the subjects that students are studying".

Despite the available support and resources for English improvement from British universities, STA18 highlighted his worries, "English proficiency is the key for the Chinese students' adaptation and transition. But, from the feedback of the Chinese

students that I keep in touch with, I wonder if they make full use of these resources to improve their English. They prefer to stay within their ethnical group, and ask well-performing Chinese students for academic help".

After the above illustration, the findings around the theme of English proficiency from interviews with academics and Chinese students are summarised in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Emerging outcomes from Theme 6: English proficiency

English proficiency	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
Acculturation and IELTS test score	Key factor to acculturation either in their daily life or academic development; Awareness of no criticising their English capabilities; IELTS scores not equivalent to the actual English proficiency.	The pre-sessional English course is practical and useful for acculturation; English capabilities are lower than what the IELTS score indicates.
Low English proficiency influence	English learning environment is worsened; Negative impacts upon both academic performance and life transition.	Negative influences on Chinese students' acculturation; Psychological frustration and shortage of confidence.
English learning improvement	Full immersion into English environment; Reading more English books or papers; Talking to English speakers, imitating orally from video materials, and engaging in social activities.	More practice on all the elements of English learning; Having more academic reading and attending the in-sessional English programme; Preview and review of the course contents, increased engagement with other students, and watching films and television series.
English learning resources	Impetus to make use of the university support and resources to improve their English levels.	

5.3.8 Theme 7: Classroom participation

How Chinese students behave in classrooms under British higher education setting reflects upon the cultural and pedagogical difference from other students. Table 5.9 summarises the findings from interviews with academics and Chinese students around

the theme of classroom participation, with the topics of the Chinese students' after-class enquiry, attendance, and their classroom engagements.

Table 5.9: Emerging outcomes from Theme 7: Classroom participation

Classroom participation	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
After class enquiry		Students: asking questions at the end of classes. Staff: the in-class enquiry preferable or through other means.
Attendance	A controversial topic between academics; Requirement of legal residence and academic performance.	Generally good attendance; Expectations on good academic achievements, requirements of legal residence, and financial investment into their studies.
Classroom engagement	Quietness in classrooms, seldom raising questions and interacting with others; More engagement encouraged by academics; Lack of confidence and English incompetence leading to classroom quietness; Concentration giving rise to reticence.	Sitting position in classrooms predicts the level of classroom engagements; Chinese students' mindset development preventing them from asking questions directly in classrooms; Interacting with academics positively once being aware of the British way of learning; Note-taking strategy and material management in classrooms.

5.3.8.1 After-class enquiries

The student interviewees, especially those who have just started their UK studies, preferred to ask questions at the end of the class. "Generally I would not ask questions in classes, but intentionally do this after class before the academics' leave" (STU14). STU19 echoed, "I prefer to approach academics at the end of classes if an enquiry comes up to my mind in classes". However, STU13 found that, "When I ask questions at the end of classes, I am puzzled at why academics always look impatient. They always give me only a few words to answer my questions and then leave." STU01, who has been studying in the UK for nearly three years, explained "academics are generally unwilling to communicate with students just after class completion. They

have other arrangements to attend immediately. They may prefer to be asked in classes instead".

5.3.8.2 Attendance

In terms of the Chinese students' classroom attendance, it is a controversial topic from academics. "Though there are one or two exceptions, generally, the Chinese student attendances are very good" (STA06). On the contrary, STA05 said, "attendance is an issue that Chinese students need to improve. I do not think their attendance was usually that high. Frequently, Chinese students asked if they could pick up a lecture handout for their friends who are not present". STA15, an ethnically Chinese academic, might partly explain the reason for this, "Chinese students are seldom late for class, but under the condition of being late (to say, about ten minutes) they might not go to attend. They feel ashamed to go into the classroom late, in the front of academics and all of the classmates."

Academics encouraged Chinese students to attend lectures and tutorials. It is because, "Chinese students have reduced capabilities of independent learning. They need help and guidance from academics in classrooms" (STA04). Struggling with a course should not be one of the reasons for a Chinese student's class absence, "at the end of the programme, less attendance will hurt you even more, because you understand even less" (STA05). Another requirement for Chinese students' attendance is the legal regulation of their visa status as an international student. "If low attendance, they might receive a warning on their visa status from the universities' compliance team or even from the government" (STA05). STA18 summarised that "Chinese students should be aware how serious their attendance is. It is connected to their visa status that provides their legal residence in the UK, their final academic performance, and the acquisition of required degree level to apply for their further studies if they want to."

On the other side, Chinese students believed their classroom attendance is generally

good. "Though attendance recording is not very strict in big lectures, I seldom miss a class" (STU01); "High attendance is essential for studies" (STU10). The student interviewees enumerated different reasons for their high attendance records. "Being present in the classroom and listening carefully to academics, lead to good performance in the assessment" (STU05); "I have been aware that attendance is important for a student's visa status and legal residence in the UK" (STU07); Another practical reason, "my family paid lots of money for my studies in the UK. I think there is no reason for me to miss any class to waste this investment" (STU17).

5.3.8.3 Classroom engagement

Most of academics responded that Chinese students are less engaged in the classroom. "It is very unusual if a Chinese student raised a question in front of others within a lecture or seminar. When I ask a question, they do not respond even if they know answers, unless they are forced to" (STA03); "Within classrooms they tend to be fairly quiet, and not to ask questions" (STA06); "In classroom discussion, they do not give academics feedback, even though they understand what they are being taught" (STA09).

On the contrary, academics are expecting Chinese students to ask questions and participate in classroom activities, because "if a student is actively involved in lectures, seminars, and other academic events, generally their final performance is good" (STA04). As a result, "we encourage their participation in lectures or tutorials. If they do not understand, I prefer them to ask, because there would be lots of other students in the classroom who do not understand too" (STA10).

Some academics believed the reason of Chinese students' lesser engagement lies in their lack of confidence. "Chinese students are afraid of making mistakes and worry about 'losing face' if they ask simple or silly questions in front of their classmates. Their confidence is scarce" (STA02); "Lacking confidence stops them from asking questions and interacting with their classmates and academics" (STA03). Another

reason may be their English competence. "If a Chinese student's oral English is not that good, he or she might need some time to work out what they would ask, but the teaching schedule does not wait for them. They become more and more reluctant to interact with academics" (STA15). However, STA04 offered another opinion. She believed although classroom engagements are encouraged, the Chinese students' reticence in classrooms is not necessarily to be over criticised, "They might be quiet in the classroom and unwilling to interact with others, however, it does not mean their final achievement is not good. They might be concentrating on the content of what they are being taught".

When being asked about the classroom engagement of theirs, some students talked of a phenomenon: where they sit in classrooms. "I always sit in the front to impress academics that can easily approach me for interaction" (STU15). STU16 did the same, "I need to be focused and it is easy to chat with academics too". But most of students would like to stay with other Chinese students at the rear of classrooms. "When I cannot understand what academics are saying, I can easily ask other Chinese students without disturbing academics" (STU04).

Generally, Chinese students are quiet in classrooms without interacting with academics. STU03 said, "I would not ask academics questions; and I am also afraid of being asked by academics. If I cannot respond well, I feel ashamed and others in the classroom may sneer at me"; "I have few interactions with academics in classrooms. Asking questions might make academics think I am challenging them" (STU04). STU12 explained, "When I cannot understand in classroom, I tend to resolve it first by myself instead of asking academics". Interestingly, STU14 depicted a process of her mindset development when she came up with an enquiry in classrooms. "I would not interrupt academics and ask them immediately. Instead, by means of the ongoing class, the same question that other classmates may ask, and my self-study after class, I might gradually find the answers. Even if I am still puzzled, I can visit the academics after class or within his office hours to ask my question". Figure 5.6 below depicts

this mindset development when Chinese students run into an academic enquiry.

Figure 5.6: Chinese students' mindset development for enquiry management
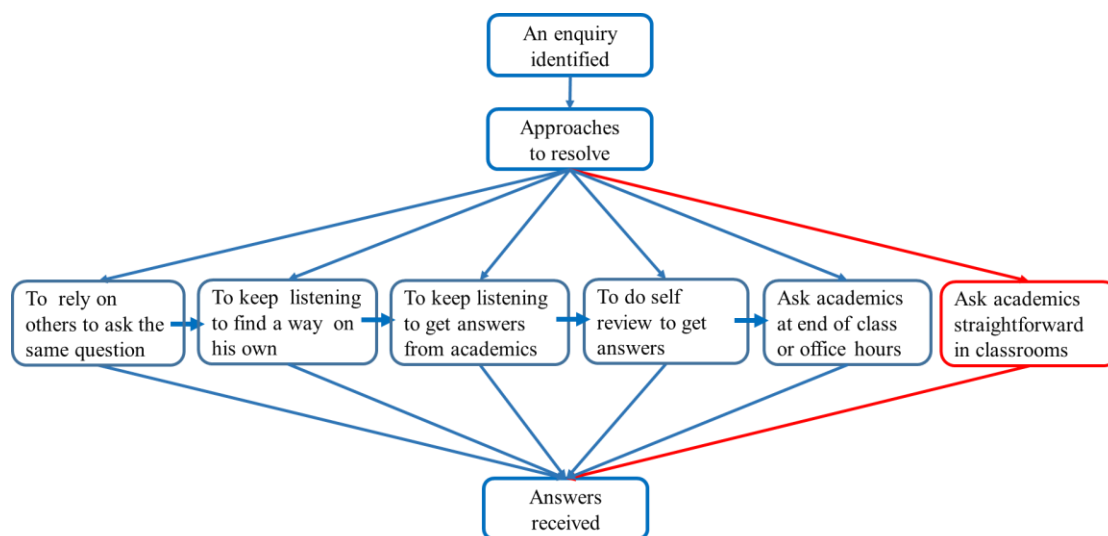
On the contrary, some student interviewees, who have been aware of the British way of learning, engaged themselves actively in classrooms. "Interaction with academics is an active way of learning in the UK" (STU05); "I always raise my hand right away, when a question comes to my mind" (STU06); "In a lecture with many classmates, I would not ask academics questions, but in a small scale seminar, I tend to interact with academics positively" (STU18). STU19 explained, "Due to the large amount of students in a big lecture, academics would not interact with a specific student only. It is difficult for them to meet every student's needs, but they focus on the questions that some students raise on site as the total students' reflection. Hence that, I ask academics my questions immediately, for the benefits of everyone's learning".

Apart from active interaction with academics and other students, Chinese students shared their study strategy adopted in classrooms. "I take notes by using pens in different colour on what academics highlight in slides, the concepts that academics have flagged, and the mistakes that I have made" (STU05); "I take my laptop with me, making notes on what academics emphasise and the parts that I cannot understand for future review" (STU06); "I print out the slides that academics are going to teach. I also prepare different notebooks for studies in different discipline" (STU19).

5.3.9 Theme 8: Acculturation level

Studying overseas for Chinese students means a process of adaptation and acculturation into their daily life and academic studies in a different country. "Chinese students improve themselves, gradually developing their capabilities of living and learning. Gradually, they are the same as any other student, and they can perform well at the end" (STA05), "despite the barriers that they are confronted from the outset, such as English language, culture difference, psychological matters, and a different living and learning environment" (STA08); "They would finally get there. What they need on the way are stepping stones, time, and patience" (STA11).

Studying overseas for Chinese students is also a life experience "far beyond learning itself" (STA03), "rather than striving only for that piece of paper *(degree certificate)*" (STA17). STA18 provided a metaphor of their acculturation experience, "it is like driving on highway, only going forward without U-turn", which means the passengers have to carry on their journey, enjoying or suffering from the scenes alongside their trip. For the Chinese students' benefits, "academics ought to identify and report the issues that Chinese students may confront on every occasions, such as this piece of doctoral research, the national students survey" (STA13), and "through student representatives, to have their voices heard" (STA10). British universities and their staff "bear responsibilities to help Chinese students deal with these issues and enable them to experience smoothly, as a result, Chinese students can make achievement either in their academic studies or personal development" (STA13).

STA11 unconsciously enumerated the acculturation outcomes from Chinese students after years of undergraduate studies and life in the UK. First, gradual academic transition, "they are intellectually equipped, they know how to organise their learning independently so as to draft an essay very quickly, they can do a lot better on analytical thinking and critical analysis"; Second, enhanced English proficiency, "with more practice in their English language use, they are proficient in reading, writing, and speaking"; Third, tempered expectation, "they are fully aware of the

requirements from academics and expectations from their families, they know what they are doing and going to do for their future"; Fourth, balanced work and life, "Chinese students become determined to have their plan for their studies and daily life arrangements, they stick to these and carry on"; Fifth, improved communication capabilities, "their communication skills improve dramatically, they can talk to me in a way like friends about their social life, their family, and academic studies"; sixth, boosted personal development, "they have built up their resilience and become more confident, and they have developed both intellectually and personally". These acculturation outcomes, either in their academic studies or personal development, are depicted visibly in Figure 5.7 below.

Figure 5.7: Acculturation outcomes of Chinese students
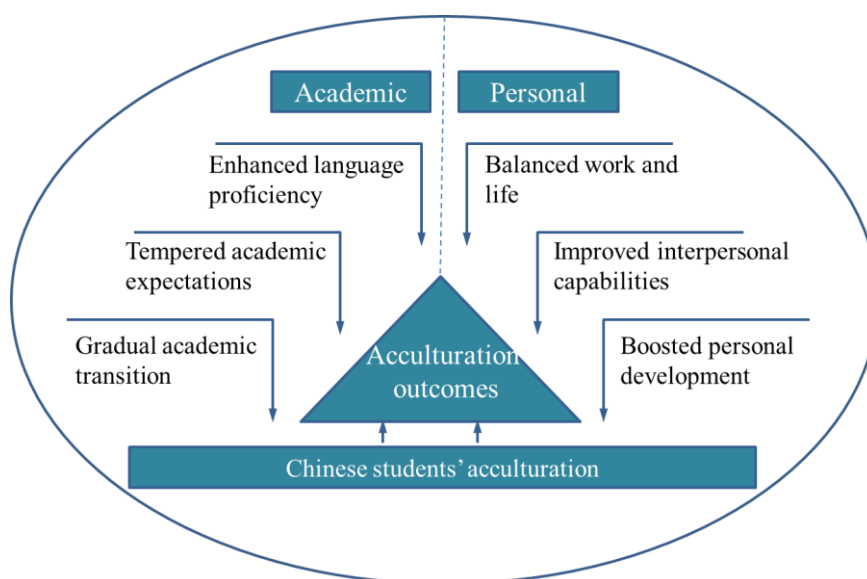
The Chinese students in Group 2 and Group 3, who have been studying in the UK for years or even a few months, summarised their acculturation outcomes in another way. The outcomes are that, Chinese students become more proactive, open-minded, independent, and confident, either in their general life or studies in the UK.

Chinese students are getting more proactive, "My life attitude and style have greatly changed. Before taking class in the morning, I get up early to have breakfast which in China I seldom did; I preview handouts and slides that I am learning on the same day;

I have become never late for classes" (STU17); They are getting more open-minded, "after three years undergraduate studies in the UK, the biggest benefit for me is that I have become more open-minded, willing to accept new ideas and different thoughts from my classmates, who come from different cultural backgrounds"(STU01); They are getting more independent, "I can take good care of myself, doing self-catering, exercising for body fitness alone, and planning my academic studies on my own" (STU03), "acculturation is a process in which I have become independent gradually" (STU14); They are getting more confident, "living and studying experience in a different country cultivate my confidence, which is beneficial to my future studies, works, and daily life" (STU04).

In summary, Table 5.10 presents the findings from interview with academics and students around the theme of Acculturation level.

Table 5.10: Emerging outcomes from Theme 8: Acculturation level

Acculturation level	Findings from interview with academics	Findings from interview with Chinese students
	Studying overseas for Chinese students means a process of adaptation and acculturation into their daily life and academic studies in a different country; Studying overseas is also a life experience for Chinese students; Chinese students can make achievements either in their academic studies or personal development as their acculturation outcomes.	Chinese students become more proactive, open minded, independent, and confident either in their general life or studies.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented findings and data analysis from the interviews with Chinese students and academics around eight research themes, based on the coding template initially developed by analysing data from interviews with a few academics. Unlike academics participating in interviews that are willing to explore what Chinese students have experienced and the reasons behind, Chinese students tend to depict in a descriptive way on what they feel and perceive about their acculturation experience.

After presentation of the findings from interviews with both Chinese students and academics, the qualitative strand of this study has been completed. Combining the outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study together, the next chapter will integrate and relate these outcomes to the literature reviewed for further discussion.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

After presentation of the findings and outcomes from the survey investigation among Chinese students (Chapter 4) and the interviews with academics and Chinese students (Chapter 5), this chapter aims at providing an opportunity for the findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands of this research to be compared with and related to the existing literature for further discussion. Thereby, the conclusion for this study can be drawn, the research questions of this investigation can be answered, and the aim and objectives of this research can be reached.

The nature of the findings from student interviews is descriptive, because Chinese students tend to report upon what they feel and perceive in terms of the issues that they confront in their general life and academic studies. In contrast, the nature of the findings from interviews with academics is more exploratory and explanatory, since academics are more willing to explore and explain the causes behind. Around the eight themes identified from the literature review (Chapter 2) and the findings in relation to these themes drawn from the two strands of this research investigation (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5), further discussion and interpretations are delivered and reported upon within this chapter.

6.2 Discussion around research themes

The literature suggests that the following themes should be further investigated in order to answer the research questions, and to realise this study's aim and objectives. Combined with the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative strands of this research, further discussion around the eight themes are outlined theme by theme.

6.2.1 Theme 1: Culture difference

In accordance with the three levels of cultural difference identified from the literature,

the discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings includes three elements-the national cultural dimensions, the organisational culture, and the psychic distance at personal level, to test if the cultural difference may impact upon the Chinese students' acculturation during their undergraduate studies in the UK.

6.2.1.1 National culture dimensions

Identified from interviews with Chinese students and academics, power distance, collectivism, long term orientation (LTO), and uncertainty avoidance are the four cultural dimensions at national level, which impact their acculturation during their life and studies in the UK.

As indicated by Hofstede (1986), in large scale power distance societies, such as China, teachers merit respect from their students in educational settings. Correspondingly, one Chinese student interviewed for this research believed academics hope to be respected by students, wherever in China or in the UK. Carefully listening to academics and taking notes, without interruptions in classrooms by raising questions to academics, are the pragmatic measures whereby Chinese students show respects to their academics. The academics interviewees perceived the same phenomena that Chinese students seldom ask questions in classrooms. One of the reasons comes from the expectations of the Chinese students that, academics, which are authoritative and superordinate, should initiate any communications. This finding is consistent with the recommendations from Hofstede (1986).

Another interesting topic around "calling teachers by their first names", that several academics flagged in interviews, represents the existence of the notion of power distance too. Chinese students do not call academics by their first names, while British students, however, are spontaneous in doing so in the British cultural context. Calling-by-name poses difficulties onto Chinese students, which provides evidence of the inequality and hierarchies between Chinese students and academics, and justifies the cultural dimension of power distance at the national level (Hofstede, 2010).

Although some academics argued that Chinese students are becoming individualistic with a priority on their own interests over others (Hofstede, 1991), there are still some characteristics of collectivism that can be reflected in the Chinese students' daily behaviours. For example, the qualitative outcomes indicate that, a Chinese student group may require its members to take group obligations, such as attending classes collectively, and behaving in classrooms in the same fashion. This is consistent with the culture dimension of collectivism II (House et al., 2001), which call the group members for the high degree of commitment to the organisation to which they belong.

Beyond this, being reticent in classrooms without asking their academics questions from Chinese students are reported by academics and Chinese students. This is inconsistent with the findings from Heffernan et al. (2010) and Huang (2012) that Chinese students find it difficult to express their opinions in public, due to the collectivist nature of their culture which may lead to Chinese students being always taught in large groups (Xiao & Dyson, 1999).

Chinese students also keep closely in touch with their family during their life and studies in the UK, which not only provides them with financial and psychological support, but poses on them high expectations regarding their academic achievements. Commitment to the Chinese ethnical group and close links with family, prove that collectivism, one of the culture dimensions at national level, advocated either by Hofstede (2010) or House et al. (2001), impacts upon the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation in the UK.

The long-term orientation dimension, labelled originally as Confucian dynamism (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), is derived from Hofstede's (2003) restructuring work on the cultural dimensions, so as to cover cultural studies in the Chinese culture context and to avoid deliberately the Western bias. It is more realistic to investigate if Chinese students hold a long-term orientation during their acculturation into their life and studies in the UK. Confucianism and its cultural values encourage hard work and perseverance in the Chinese educational system (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Wan, 2001).

Findings from interviews with both academics and Chinese students corroborate this proposition. They all believed that Chinese students are diligent and hard working in their academic studies. Actually, persistence is one of the characters of LTO oriented towards future rewards (Hofstede, 2003).

Besides Chinese students persistence with their academic studies, findings from the interviews with academics indicate that, the Chinese students' expectations, such as further studies for future career development rather than the intrinsic interests in learning (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006), thoughts of rewarding back to their family after studies in Britain, and even their only willingness of developing serious relationship which should lead to marriage, are all manifestations of the long term orientations held by Chinese students, from their cultural perspectives.

Qualitative findings from the interviews with academics indicate that Chinese students feel more confident and comfortable to ask their academics questions in a private or one to one environment, such as, at the end of class or within the academics' drop-in office hours. Chinese student interviewees explained that, they adopt these strategies to avoid "losing face" in front of their classmates, in case they ask simple or "silly" questions in classrooms. These strategies corroborate the culture dimension of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1997), which defines how people react in the unpredictable and unstructured situations.

6.2.1.2 Organisational culture

Outcomes from interviews with both academics and Chinese students demonstrate that, training about the knowledge of life and studies in the UK within the institutions where Chinese students pre-studied, makes Chinese students better equipped on the threshold of their acculturation. The training relates to routines and rituals within their previous organisations, one of the elements of organisational culture (Johnson et al., 2011). Particularly, both academics and Chinese students who were involved in this research investigation, recommended pre-departure training to be co-delivered by

their previous institutions and British universities, which could benefit the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK.

The quantitative data analysis indicates there are no significant differences in the acculturation level between the Chinese students from different enrolment channels. This is inconsistent with Zhou et al.'s (2011) findings that Chinese students from the Sino-UK collaborative programmes adapt more smoothly into the British higher education context. The reason might be that, all of the Chinese students have the same starting point within the real learning and living environment in the UK. In addition, the students who apply for university entry on their own are more willing to take pre-sessional English courses, and they may give more concern to their preparation work about learning and living in the UK.

However, the acculturation level of the students who have received pre-departure training is significantly higher than the students' who have not. This finding conforms to the necessity of delivering pre-departure training that academic interviewees have strongly suggested, to help Chinese students with their acculturation. Moreover, since the construct of acculturation level includes underlying items in relation to academic studies, the content of training about learning and teaching in the UK, should be covered into pre-departure training, before the Chinese students continue their undergraduate studies in the UK. This finding is consistent with the argument from Quan et al. (2016) that Chinese students should familiarise themselves with a knowledge of British pedagogy prior to their departure, which would be beneficial to their academic transition and acculturation.

Both Chinese students and academics interviewed for this study believed the content of prevailing pre-departure training events is inadequate, which has been recognised as a "customer focus" (Denison & Mishra, 1995). The decision on the delivery of pre-departure training to prepare Chinese students for their adaptation and acculturation rests with the management team of British universities and their Chinese partners. This is consistent with what Smith and Khawaja (2011) have flagged, it is

important for the British universities to intervene into the international students' acculturation and adaptation under such circumstances. Their willingness and intention to provide Chinese students with pre-departure training benefit their organisational culture development by embracing organisational adaptations, so as to cater for the creating changes and meet the Chinese students' (customers) focus and demand (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Beyond the scope of information about luggage preparation, visa renewal, and culture issues in the UK, it is suggested that the content of a pre-departure training for Chinese students should also cover the information on the approaches for interaction with their British academics, expectations management, critical thinking, independent learning, and other aspects that may be related to their academic studies. These cultural learning activities reflects the intervention measures within Ward et al. (2001)'s ABC acculturation model, created to enhance the Chinese students' behavioural adaptation (Zhou et al., 2008). With the involvement from other stakeholders, such as Chinese universities, agencies, and Chinese students, British universities are urged to specifically design a well-developed pre-departure training event, which encompasses academic guidance and cultural issues for Chinese students, and organise a suitable venue and timing to co-deliver the training with their partners in China. As a result, Chinese students could be well prepared from the outset for their adaptation and acculturation in the UK.

6.2.1.3 Culture difference at a personal level

One of academics perceived that an office with Chinese small gifts on display attracts Chinese students' visits to ask questions, as they feel comfortable in an environment with a little flavour of China. In addition, some other academics discovered that Chinese students tend to approach academics more often who are ethnically Chinese. These phenomena are related to the perceptions from Chinese students around cultural affinity (Widedershein-Paul, 1984). And, this is also consistent with the statements from Lillyman and Bennett (2014), who called for diversification of ethnicity in

academics group within British universities, to provide sympathetic explanations of a new educational system, enhance cultural affinity, and shorten the psychic distance for Chinese students, so as to encourage the Chinese students' engagement and have a smooth transition into their academic studies in the UK.

Developing Chinese students and their academics' cultural awareness is an important measure to help nurture cultural affinity between them, otherwise, international students risk being alienated in the university campuses (Hammer, 2018). Illustrated by Hofstede (1986), Chinese students who come from a large power distance nation would expect teachers to initiate communication. As an evidence of cultural awareness development, findings from interviews with academics support Hofstede's (1986) proposition, that academics should approach Chinese students initially and ask if they need support and help.

Findings from interviews with academics also demonstrated that, cultural awareness enables academics to understand the reasons why Chinese students have particular issues or problems, and to identify the problems in a timely manner so as to prevent them from becoming more serious. In the meantime, Chinese students need to develop their cultural awareness too, often better if it occurs prior to their arrival in the UK, equipping themselves with the knowledge on how to interact with people, problem resolving, and how to behave in a way that is appropriate under the context of the British culture. These cultural learning measures with the purpose of enhancing organisational adaptation (Denison, et al., 2004), enable academics to increase the initiatives of approaching students (Li et al., 2017), provide perceived and proactive support (Bai, 2016), make Chinese students aware of the available services (Yan & Berliner, 2011), and develop the social connectedness between academics and students (Zhang & Goodson, 2011).

Cultural awareness and cultural affinity could be developed by asking Chinese students to bring Chinese examples into the classroom discussion, introducing business cases in China into teaching, and employing ethnically-oriented Chinese

academics within business schools. Inserting Chinese cases into classroom discussion within the UK higher education setting corresponds to the cultural responsive pedagogy discussed in the literature, for example, Phuntsog (1999) identified that the academic achievement of students from diverse cultural backgrounds improves, if schools and academics attempt to conduct their teaching responsively to the students' original culture. In accordance with Cole et al.'s (2016) findings, it is one of the requirements for a mature culturally responsive educator to tap into the students' expertise, by asking Chinese students to bring Chinese examples into a topic of classroom discussion. Gradually, a 50-to-50 road of cultural awareness between Chinese students and their academics make all the two parties' experience enjoyable.

Another manifestation of cultural affinity is the prevailing ethnical groups of Chinese students within university campuses, which impact Chinese students' acculturation under British culture context. Chinese students are always in their ethnical group, either in their daily life or academic studies. From interviews with Chinese students and academics, the reasons lie in the cultural affinity among the students and the fact that there are a number of Chinese students residing within UK business schools. Most importantly, staying in their ethnical groups provides Chinese students with psychological comfort and a feeling of group attribution. Moreover, Chinese students can resort to the group for support, and smoothly adapt, as a group, into their life and studies in the UK.

Always staying in the Chinese ethnical groups may, however, have a double-edged effect. Chinese students may lose the opportunities for practicing their English, and mixing with other students. In order to mitigate the negative effects of ethnical groupings which are spontaneously formed during their acculturation, the ideal option for a Chinese student would be looking for comfort and a feeling of attribution within their own ethnical group, while with the universities' intervention (Ward et al., 2001), they are encouraged to go outside of the group and interact with othr non-Chinese students.

6.2.2 Theme 2: General life

Both the ethnically Chinese academics and the British ones who have visited China, believed that Chinese students may experience acculturative stress (Berry, 2006) throughout the aspects of their daily life, when they embark on their studies in the UK. The sociocultural challenges in their general life are being deprived of unfamiliar foods, money matters, transportation, the newly acquired freedom that they suddenly have, networking with their classmates, and the different way of interacting with other people, particularly with their academics. Other notable challenges may come from legal affairs and university academic regulations, such as visa issues, attendance records, issues under mitigation circumstances, and plagiarism matters.

Despite these sociocultural challenges in their general life, Chinese students should endeavour to integrate themselves into their local life in the UK. An integration strategy is the most acculturative strategy (Berry, 2017), which enables them to commit to their own and British identifications, with minimal sociocultural and psychological problems (Berry et al., 2006). Beyond this, from the quantitative strand of this study, a mediation effect from the Chinese students' sociocultural adjustment in their general life is identified, between their academic adjustment and acculturation. This indicates that the students' sociocultural adjustments in their general life play an indirect role in the course of their academic adjustment for their acculturation purpose. The resulting benefits of integration strategy adopted in students' general life include mitigating their loneliness, bringing confidence and comfort, enabling them to improve their English language capabilities, learning the university systems proactively, and thereby to enrich their life and study experience.

In order for Chinese students to reach a "consensual" status (Bourhis et al., 1997) with the host community (university), the qualitative findings of this study indicate that the sociocultural adjustments in their general life are prerequisite for their wider acculturation. Supporting this viewpoint, the quantitative findings show that the Chinese students' sociocultural adjustment in their general life significantly impacts

their acculturation. These findings are consistent with Ward and Geeraert's (2016) proposition that sociocultural adaptation is one of the two acculturation outcomes.

For the sociocultural adaptation purpose, adjustments in the Chinese students' behavioural patterns (Ward et al., 2001) are suggested by the interviewed academics and Chinese students. Prior to the Chinese students' arrival in the UK, preparations such as further English studies, a training course in relation to academic and pedagogical differences, and even training on self-catering are valuable practice for Chinese students. After their arrival, Chinese students are encouraged to pay attention to information readily available for their life convenience, to be aware of the university regulations in the student handbook, which covers the intention and purpose of their teaching activities (Han et al., 2014), and to have frequent communication with their academics, friends, other classmates, and families, in order to handle the sociocultural challenges in their general life.

However, there is a trend that the sociocultural challenges in their general life are becoming less influential, during Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation in the UK. This is inconsistent with the theoretical grounding of adaptation outcomes from Ward et al. (2001). The emerging services in Chinese language easily available to Chinese students in the UK may explain this inconsistency. Many British universities have set up a presence or office in China, which can provide Chinese students with support and counselling services, not only for the purpose of student recruitment, but also for student well-being. Paid-services in the Chinese language within British universities campus, such as counselling services upon their further study applications, Chinese restaurants and supermarkets, travel agencies, and food and laundry delivery services, are becoming easily accessible for Chinese students in their daily life in the UK.

Despite this, struggling within sociocultural challenges in their daily life is also viewed as being beneficial to the Chinese students' personal development and their academic studies. Independence, work-life balance, time management skills, and

other good personal qualities which could be cultivated in their general life, are transferable capabilities for application into their academic studies. The qualitative findings indicate that, the Chinese students' daily life arrangements and their socialising requirements impact upon their academic performance. In support of these findings, the relationship between the Chinese students' general life and academic studies is evidenced from the quantitative strand of this research also.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Psychological issues

From the qualitative outcomes of this study, a lack of confidence and frustration are identified as two prevailing psychological issues experienced by Chinese students during their acculturation in the UK. It is understandable that the young Chinese students taking undergraduate studies easily lose their confidence, when staying alone in a different country, and speaking a different language under unfamiliar social and cultural situations. However, a lack of confidence may lead to the Chinese students' inactive classroom engagement and poor academic performance, which would not help with their acculturation and adaptation into the UK. Psychological frustration may result from the new and uncommon freedom that they suddenly have, perceived pressure from peer students, the high expectations from their families, or even when Chinese students are suffering from their experience of cultural difference (Marshall & Mathias, 2016).

In order to make the Chinese students' general life easier so as to help with their acculturation, it is suggested that the family of Chinese students and their academics should be aware of their psychological needs, and encourage them to get through these psychological difficulties. Chinese students should resort to their families, ethnical groups, and universities for help, instead of internalising their psychological issues only to themselves. Moreover, Chinese students should nurture their cultural awareness, continuously improve their English language competence, and actively interact with academics and other students, as a result, to mitigate their psychological frustrations and develop their confidence, either in their general life or academic

studies. These measures corroborates Berry's (2017) proposition that an integration strategy, which is the most adaptive acculturation strategy, has the least associated psychological problems.

Although the psychological issues are impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation, the effects are becoming mitigated. The path effect investigation in quantitative analysis do not support that, the Chinese students' adaptation experience on psychological issues significantly influence either the adjustment in their academic studies or their overall acculturation. The qualitative findings also indicate the influence of psychological issues upon Chinese students' acculturation have been tempered and mitigated. This is clearly inconsistent with the proposition from Ward and Geeraert (2016) that the psychological adjustment is another main acculturation outcomes, besides the sociocultural adjustment.

The reasons for this inconsistency may lie in several ways. Firstly, Chinese students have been aware that, it is not an easy situation for them to live and study in a different country. Psychological preparation may lead to a positive attitude towards dealing with their psychological challenges in their general life and studies. Secondly, Chinese students are skilful in using university IT facilities and, in particular, the rapidly developed social media, which could diminish their psychological frustration and stress (Wu, 2015). Using social media enables Chinese students to communicate with their parents and Chinese friends easily and frequently, as a result, the psychological challenges that confront them become manageable. Thirdly, majority of Chinese students are fully sponsored by their family to live and study in the UK. When they become homesick or feel frustrated, it is possible and affordable for them to return to China a few times per annum, during their term breaks and holidays.

6.2.4 Theme 4: Learning and assessment

From interviews with academics and Chinese students, the academic challenges within students' learning and assessment are related closely to pedagogical and

cultural differences. Discussion around this theme lies mainly in the qualitative strand of the study, which aims to identify and interpret the academic challenges that Chinese students may be confronted and the technology use within their studies during their acculturation.

6.2.4.1 Academic challenges

The Chinese students interviewed within this research project highlighted essay writing, independent learning, and group work, as the three major academic challenges, during their acculturation and academic adaptation. However, apart from these aforementioned challenges, the academic interviewees believed critical thinking should be flagged also as a noteworthy aspect impacting on their academic studies.

Essay writing

A consensus between academics and Chinese students indicates that, essay writing, the approaches on how to structure an essay, to develop the arguments within it, and to conduct paraphrasing and referencing, may challenge Chinese students. A student interviewee recalled that he was in "deep depression", worrying about the potential failure of graduation when he became aware of the difficulties of essay writing. One of the causes giving rise to the difficulties is that, Chinese undergraduate students lack sufficient training during their previous schooling, to develop their cognitive capabilities in the areas of analysis and synthesis required for essay writing. This echoes the proposition from the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) that analysis and synthesis occupy higher levels of people's cognition abilities.

One notable issue from a pedagogical stance that challenges Chinese students during essay writing is the potential for plagiarism. In Chinese educational settings, students are encouraged to copy literally what the master says as the authoritative sources of knowledge that they should learn from (Pratt et al., 1999). These thoughts are rooted in the conception of power distance (Hofstede, 1986), one of the national culture dimensions, when being applied to the teaching and learning domain. As a result, the

copy and paste strategy is universally accepted, when Chinese students are writing their essays and other assignments under the Chinese educational system. However, in the UK definition of plagiarism, this is morally wrong within an essay without paraphrasing and referencing (Edwards & Ran, 2006), which may easily lead to unanticipated plagiarism issues in the British higher education context.

Training sessions about plagiarism should be developed to provide Chinese students with the knowledge of referencing and paraphrasing. This supports Edwards and Ran's (2006) proposition that explicit instructions on referencing and paraphrasing would benefit Chinese students for acculturation into the intercultural learning environment. Another effective measure, the British universities could employ more ethnically Chinese academics and get them involved in Chinese students' teaching and supervising. The diversification of ethnicity in academics group (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014) may effectively help Chinese students become aware of the serious results that plagiarism may have, and identify clearly the pedagogical difference under different higher education settings, as a result, to prevent plagiarism and other academic issues from happening from the outset.

It is suggested that Chinese students ought to read academic papers and undertake more writing practice to improve their academic writing. In particular, Chinese students should pay particular attention to the feedback on their written works received from academics. Academics may provide helpful advice for various improvements, such as how to avoid inaccurate referencing, logical mistakes, scarcity of critical thinking, and the need for more theoretical discussion, and so forth. Students should follow these instructions and apply them into their subsequent essays writing works, so as to improve their capabilities of academic writing gradually.

Critical thinking

It is difficult for Chinese students to perceive critical thinking as one of their academic challenges. However, academics' feedback indicates that Chinese students

are struggling with understanding what critical thinking is, and how to deliver and apply it within their academic studies. These are consistent with the report from Bell (2016) that the perceived lack of critical thinking may have a negative influence on the Chinese students' academic transition in the UK

In particular, feedback from the ethnically Chinese academics indicates that, the lack of critical thinking capabilities in arguments from Chinese students derives from the pedagogical and cultural differences that exist between China and the UK. Pedagogically, fixed answers are required in examinations and assessments under the Chinese educational system. Chinese students are not necessarily developing their critical thinking skills, because they perceive critical thinking as being unnecessary and insensitive (Durkin, 2011). From a cultural perspective, they respect academics and the existing theories, critical thinking and argument are perceived as potentially challenging the existing authorities (Hofstede, 2003). This finding upholds that, respect for authorities and published knowledge predominates over enquiry and doubts (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006).

For the sake of developing their critical thinking capabilities, Chinese students are encouraged to read academic papers and books, analyse what the authors think, address issues that can be queried and doubted, and most important of all, to develop their own arguments and opinions. Gradually, their critical thinking capabilities develop and their academic work will improve.

Independent learning

Both academics and Chinese students believed that independent learning is about self-discipline, time management, and keeping a work-life balance within the British higher education context. This corroborates with the cultural dimensions framework when being applied to educational fields. Under a culture with low power distance, academics respect the independence of students (Hofstede, 1986). Chinese students, who originate from a high power distance culture, may find it difficult to adapt to the

approach for independent learning, particularly on the threshold of their studies in the UK. This is consistent with Marshall and Mathias's (2016) findings that time management is one of most challenging academic issues to Chinese students at the start, who need some time to appreciate this independent learning approach within their British learning environment.

Actually, independent learning is a key factor or feature of the British higher education settings (Hockings et al., 2018; Xu & Roddy, 2019). Following a schedule designed for work-life balance, managing required deadlines for coursework submission, and thinking independently of the lecture content, academics' feedback, and the authors' opinions while reading, are all practical measures from which Chinese students develop their independent learning abilities. Chinese students should also aim to develop independence during their general life, which can be transmitted to their academic studies, which is consistent with the suggestion from Li et al. (2017), that Chinese students may benefit from some training on living independently.

Group work

It is often difficult for Chinese students to discuss real business issues and present their findings in group work. Chinese student interviewees highlighted that working in a group with classmates, who are from different cultural backgrounds, is challenging. Under such conditions, they believe academics could involve them more at initial stages to introduce the other group members and set clear rules for group discussion. Similarly, Mittelmeier et al. (2018) suggested that the academics' intervention, such as in-depth introduction or icebreaker activities, may dissipate social tensions and benefit less active students in the cross-cultural group work. Xu and Roddy (2019) agreed that the academics' intervention ensures Chinese students know other group members at the start and it also makes Chinese students aware of the expectation from academics around the group work. Beyond this, it is also an opportunity for Chinese students to develop cultural synergy with their groupmates, by learning from each other (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016).

Another challenge for Chinese students is to present the outcomes of their group work. They are often reluctant to speak in front of classmates, worrying about their pronunciation, the possible critiques on their presentation contents, and imperfect performance when presenting. This supports Hofstede's (1991) collectivism dimension, which suggests that Chinese students, from a collective culture, are reluctant to stand out from their coherent group. They believe keeping a harmonious atmosphere within their group is important (Tafarodi, et al., 2004).

For the sake of performance improvement when presenting the results of group work, Chinese students should cultivate their critical thinking capabilities, proactively equip themselves with knowledge around the topic for group work, and develop confidence in their language and socialising situations. Attending group work per se is an important approach to the development of these skills and capabilities.

6.2.4.2 Technology usage in higher education sector

Chinese students are competent in using social media and IT facilities during their life and studies in the UK. They are "digital natives" (Black, 2010), heavily relying on technology to attain information, and communicate with others for socialising purpose. University IT facilities and social media benefit their studies, and particularly, help Chinese students adapt into their academic and daily life. Chinese students prefer to communicate with academics on-line, rather than through face to face meetings, which could support the phenomenon of power distance (Hofstede, 1997), one of the cultural dimensions at national level, which impacts upon their acculturation. This also justifies the findings from Wu (2015) that social media and other on-line learning tools, adopted by British universities, could significantly relieve Chinese students' frustration, especially from the outset of their transition into the British higher education context.

However, negative issues may arise from the use of technology and social media. Applying technology into the teaching and learning environment, may reduce the

chance of personal interaction for Chinese students with academics and their classmates. Moreover, students may be forced to rely on the usage of technology and social media too heavily. These negative issues verify the critiques from Worley (2011) who believed that the emerging technology, introduced to educational context, may eliminate hands-on practice between educators and students.

Suggested by the academics interviewed for this study, Chinese students should work out a balance of communication means, between using technology and physical interaction with others, for the sake of their smooth transition and acculturation. After all, the emerging technology and edutainment facilities are only additional mediums for knowledge and learning transference in an innovative way (Makarius, 2017).

6.2.5 Theme 5: Staff student relationships

Evidence, from interviews with both academics and Chinese students, suggests that positive interaction and a good relationship with academics benefit Chinese students' studies and future academic development. Through a good staff student relationship, academic problems that confront Chinese students may be identified in a timely manner and prevented from getting worse. More realistically, a good relationship with academics helps Chinese students with their examination preparation, and if needed, the provision of reference letters for their further studies and career development.

However, perceptions of the nature of staff student relationships between Chinese students and academics are different from the two parties. Aspland (1999) believed academics in British higher education would like to keep a professional independence with students. Chinese students, in contrast, expect a hierarchical distance from but professional closeness with their academics (Edwards & Ran, 2006). The difference is echoed by one of the Chinese students interviewed for this study, who believed few channels are available for them to set up a close relationship with academics, beyond the boundary of pure staff-student relations, instead, academics would rather develop a professional relationship with students. The mismatch might be a barrier to the

development of staff student relationships for Chinese students.

Another barrier to staff student relationship development is the lack of cultural awareness from either the academics or Chinese students. Some of British academics might be unwilling to get to know Chinese students and their culture, and just carry on their teaching in the British way. On the other side, tending to respect academics and authorities (Hofstede, 1986), which gives rise to "an invisible wall", keeps Chinese students away from their academics. These cultural unawareness or mismatch issues may lead to misperception and misunderstanding, for example, some students may feel they are being disrespected and racially discriminated against, when they feel being treated unfairly on some occasions.

Thirdly, the heavy workload for academics, which may reduce their accessibility to students, does not allow time and space for them to have much interaction with students outside the classroom, although Jones et al. (2016) found students expect more contact with their academics, either formally or informally. Han et al. (2014) explained that, keeping in touch with students to develop good relationships is not preserved in the current curricular structure and staff workload. Chinese students should be aware of this point at the outset of their academic studies.

In order to build and develop a good relationship between Chinese students and academics so as to create a harmonious teaching and learning environment, Jin and Cortazzi (2016) suggested that academics and the supportive staff in HEIs need to develop their intercultural awareness. Xu and Roddy (2019) believed universities should accept the responsibility to nurture cultural awareness and develop the cultural affinity between their academics and Chinese students. This is because cultural affinity may shorten the psychic distance between students and academics, provide students with necessary academic support, and resolve troubles that Chinese students may be confronted with before these become more problematic.

It is suggested that the academics ought to be initiators of the staff-student

relationship, while Chinese students make effort to pander to the relationship development. Chinese students who are from a country with a large power distance culture (Hofstede, 1986) tend to be placed in a teacher-centred educational context. They expect academics to rule strictly over the teaching and learning activities (Guo, 2015), and initiate interaction and relationship development (Edwards & Ran, 2006). For the students' part, they are willing to adopt an integration strategy (Berry, 2017), following academics' positive gestures to develop links and relationships.

It is suggested that Chinese students should follow the British way of behaving by asking academics questions immediately in classrooms, either a big lecture or a small-scale tutorial, for the benefits of their studies and relationship development with academics. For the academics' part, Edwards and Ran (2006) suggested small group teaching engages academics and students more, which may lead to more opportunities for staff student relationship development. Seminars or tutorials usually provide academics with chances to approach the different cultural student groups and look after their well-being.

Active interaction with academics in classrooms, email or other on-line instrument contact, face to face meetings, before-class chats with academics, and engagements in academic events, are all practical measures for Chinese students to adopt to build and develop relationships with academics. Chinese students should develop their common sense in the workplace to interact with academics in a professional manner, such as making appointments with academics for a face-to-face meeting, and writing emails through their university email address. Another suggestion to Chinese students is that, academic improvement should be the only purpose of developing relationships with their academics, not for bribery or a "personal" relationship development. Since Chinese students cherish the links and empathy with their academics (Nield, 2004), a small Chinese culturally characterised thanks gift for the academics' help is acceptable, which may enhance the academics' cultural awareness and encourage their cultural appreciation, as a result, to develop relationships with Chinese students.

6.2.6 Theme 6: English proficiency

The Chinese students' English proficiency impacts upon their transition and acculturation into their daily life and academic studies. One of academics emphasised, most of challenges and problems that Chinese students come across during their acculturation, may be fundamentally derived from their English language incompetence. The better English language proficiency that Chinese students have, the quicker and smoother they adapt from the outset. These uphold Quan et al.'s (2013) report that Chinese students' English proficiency impacts their adaptation into British education at early stages.

Consistent with Yen and Kuzmas' (2009) finding that Chinese student may experience English proficiency as one of the key obstacles in their learning activities, Chinese students always underperform in their academic achievements, despite that they have shown their qualified IELTS results for the universities' entry. The reason may be that Chinese students' practical English capabilities are lower than what their IELTS results indicate. Chinese students generally undertake specific IELTS training in which they are taught the methods of how to prepare for the IELTS test, but not concentrating primarily on developing their actual English language competencies per se. As Fawcett and Brenner (2013) reported, the purpose of English teaching and learning in China is not for communication, but examinations for the universities' entry, which put emphasis on grammatical rules and vocabulary, but not on oral communication and written work.

A lack of English competency may influence all of the aspects of a Chinese student's daily life and academic studies. If their English language capabilities are weak, they cannot understand when interacting with local people, academics, and their study peers. Similar to Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) findings, they cannot keep up with their learning schedule, they read papers slowly, they do not know how to set up and develop the structure of an essay, and they find it difficult to present their study results either by oral or written means. They may be forced to group themselves with other

Chinese students and talk in Chinese, which worsens their English learning environment although they are in an English speaking country, reduces the possibilities of socialising with others in English, and pushes them back to their ethnical group.

Poyrazli et al. (2002) reported English incompetency may lead to a status of feeling lonely, because it hinders Chinese students from developing relationships with home and other international students. However, findings from this study do not support this statement, since Chinese students could stick to their ethnical groups to relieve their loneliness. Instead, psychological problems, such as frustration and a lack of confidence, are found to be connected to their weak English proficiency.

The findings from interviews with academics and students indicate that, more practice in all the elements of English learning improves Chinese students' English language proficiency. For English reading and academic writing improvement, reading more English books or papers either related to their academic studies or not, and attending in-sessional English training programmes provided by universities, benefit their English reading and writing proficiencies. Practical measures to improve English speaking and listening include talking to English speakers, imitating orally from video materials, preview and review of their course content, and increased engagement into social activities with local and other international students.

Three issues are highlighted when Chinese students strive to improve their English language competencies. First, the cognitive misunderstanding from Chinese students on oral interaction with academics. Chinese students may be worrying about critiques from academics due to their oral English incompetency, but conversely, academics would not criticise Chinese students' speaking English, instead, they encourage Chinese students to interact with them positively to make their opinions known, no matter what the level of their oral English are. One of the academics believed that they may not be totally competent initially, but the more they practice, the more their English proficiency improves.

Second, immersion into the English environment. English competency would not increase automatically during the Chinese students' acculturation into the UK. A full immersion into English context ensures Chinese students become addicted to English learning, so as to accelerate their academic adaptation and acculturation. This upholds Coleman's (2004, p. 582) report that language proficiency could be enhanced by "extended immersion into a society where the target language is used every day".

The third one is the usage of English learning resources. British universities provide students with various resources for their English improvement, either directly or indirectly. Although universities are trying to provide international students with a range of resources for English learning, few Chinese students proactively approach these resources, despite their weak English competency. Chinese students should make full use of these services and resources to increase their English competency, rather than relying on the university's focused allocation. These Chinese students are still unconsciously adopting their previous teacher-centred pedagogy (Vita & Bernard, 2011), under which they just wait passively for academics to allocate them these resources, instead of seeking these resources positively. Being aware of this pedagogical difference, British universities and their academics might actively guide Chinese students to approach these resources for their specific English learning needs.

In particular, Chinese students should attend the pre-sessional and in-sessional English training courses, not only for increasing their English competency, but their academic adaptation and acculturation. Compared with the IELTS training in China, the pre-sessional English course is more useful for Chinese students' preparation of adapting into their life and studies, because the programme includes British culture and traditions, paragraph structuring, and paraphrasing in academic writing, and so forth. Chinese students are strongly recommended to attend the in-sessional English training whatever their IELTS results are, because these programmes teach the rules of academic writing, offer opportunities for practicing, and provide them with valuable feedback from academics.

6.2.7 Theme 7: Classroom participation

A group of Chinese students, who are from a collectivist country (Hofstede, 1991), may require its members to take group obligations, such as attending classes collectively and behaving in the same way in classrooms. For example, if one student does not attend, especially the key opinion leader of the group, the whole Chinese student group might not attend the class either. However, their attendance records are generally good, though some academics reported Chinese students sometimes ask for handouts for their group members who are absent. Expectations of achieving high academic performance, and the requirements of legal residence for international students, encourage and require Chinese students to attend their lectures and tutorials. In addition, their family investment to sponsor their life and studies in the UK render it valuable for them to attend every lecture.

Chinese students are generally quiet in the classroom, seldom raising questions and interacting with academics and other students, generally sitting at the rear of classroom, and listening to lectures and taking notes, though some of them, who sit in the front of classroom, tend to interact more with academics in the classroom. Although less classroom participation from Chinese students may result from their weak English proficiency and a lack of confidence, Chinese students are encouraged to engage more in classrooms. This benefits their academic studies during their acculturation, because discursive communication with academics and other students may lead to their effective learning (Hofstede, 1986). In contrast, they would rather listen carefully and take notes than raise questions from time to time to interrupt academics. This is consistent with Jin and Cortazzi's (2016) findings with Chinese students' preferences of asking questions in classrooms. There might be a mismatch of expectations on classroom participation between Chinese students and their academics.

Apart from the cultural awareness of different perceptions on classroom participation, both Chinese students and their academics are suggested to pay attention to the

mindset development of Chinese students, when they have developed an enquiry in the classroom setting. This finding upholds the crucial roles that both students and academics play in affecting the students' intention for classroom participation (Girardelli et al., 2020). The mindset development indicates that, instead of asking academics directly, Chinese students rely on other students asking a similar enquiry, as a result, they can receive the answer required. If not, they would keep listening carefully to the lecture, hopefully finding the answer on their own or perhaps from the academics' further explanation. If the enquiry still remains, Chinese students turn to their own reflection or are forced to approach their academics after class for answers. Chinese students do not realise that, asking academics directly in the classroom, is the most effective way to get an answer to their enquiry.

Once academics are aware of this mindset development of Chinese students, they could explain to Chinese students that the complex mindset development may not necessarily happen, and encourage Chinese students to ask questions straightforward in the classroom. Once Chinese students realise that asking questions directly in the classroom is the most effective method, and is universally accepted within the British higher education setting, their classroom participation would be greatly enhanced.

The Chinese students' classroom reticence can be explained in another way. Concentrating on understanding the content of the lecture, which is a part of the process of deep learning, might lead to Chinese students' reticence. This supports Pratt et al.'s (1999) finding, which indicates that only after repetitive memorising, deep understanding, and knowledge applying, can Chinese students think critically and raise questions and queries. Chinese students' reticence is acceptable based on this interpretation, though their positive classroom engagement still needs to be encouraged.

Chinese students prefer to ask their academics questions at the end of class. Culturally, it is a private occasion to interact with their academics at the end of class. Asking questions at that time would not challenge authorities (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006), and

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psychologically, they feel more confident and comfortable also. Moreover, it is universally accepted within the Chinese educational settings that Chinese academics offer students help whenever needed (Edwards & Ran, 2006). However, British academics prefer to interact with students in the class, due to their other immediate engagements after class. Straightforward enquiries are always encouraged within the British classroom context. Once both Chinese students and academics are aware of these cultural differences, the after-class enquiries from Chinese students would be reduced, and the degree of their classroom participation could be enhanced.

6.2.8 Theme 8: Acculturation level

In order to test the five-stage acculturation model (Pedersen, 1995), this research project adopted an approach using a survey investigation to test the acculturation level among three student groups: who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK within three months, and who will graduate from undergraduate studies within three months. The ANOVA test and post hoc pairwise comparison results indicate that, the acculturation level of the three student groups is significantly different. The acculturation level of the students' group, who have started their UK life and studies within three months, is the lowest. From the comparison results of the three Chinese student groups, the Chinese students' acculturation level follows a V-turn curve among the three student groups, which is roughly similar to the U-curve acculturation process from Pedersen (1995).

Adjustment in academic studies may be administrated within the four aspects for Chinese students: learning and assessment, staff student relationships, English proficiency, and classroom participation. The quantitative analyses indicate that the Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies is positively related to their acculturation level. Moreover, indirectly with the mediating effect from Chinese students' adjustment in their general life, the Chinese students' adjustment in academic studies positively impact on their acculturation level. Besides general life and psychological issues which correspond to sociocultural and psychological

adjustments (Ward et al., 2001), academic adjustment for the immigration group of Chinese students, who pursue short term academic targets in the UK, proves to be another acculturation outcome of their acculturation and adaptation.

Studying in the UK for Chinese students means an experience of adaptation and acculturation into their daily life and studies. Chinese students improve themselves gradually and make the same achievement as any other student in the end, despite the barriers and challenges that they are confronted from the outset. This supports Morrison et al.'s (2005) judgement from the academic achievement aspect, that Chinese students do not perform differently from the UK domiciled students or other international students at undergraduate level. Moreover, Gu and Maley's (2008) empirical findings are also verified that, despite challenges in their life and studies, most Chinese students have managed to survive in their intercultural learning and to adapt and develop themselves in the UK.

6.3 Chapter summary

This chapter, theme by theme, brings together the findings from both the qualitative (interviews with Chinese students and academics) and quantitative (questionnaire survey among Chinese students) strands of this research, to test the existing theories and literature. The testing results are presented in Table 6.1.

Several important findings from this study are revealed after discussion. For the Chinese students, who pursue short term academic achievement in the UK, the effects from two acculturative outcomes, sociocultural and psychological adjustment (Ward et al., 2001), are becoming mitigated. More importantly, the adjustment in their academic studies should be one of the important acculturation outcomes during their acculturation and adaptation. Their adjustment in academic studies reflects on the pedagogical and learning environmental aspects. The pedagogical factors include critical thinking, independent learning, essay writing, and group work, while the learning environmental issues influencing the students' academic adjustment, include

staff student relationships, English proficiency enhancement, and classroom participation. In order to help with the Chinese students' smooth acculturation and adaptation in the UK, both Chinese students and academics should develop their cultural awareness and cultural affinity.

Based on the outcomes from discussion around the eight research themes and theory testing results, the next chapter, as the conclusion of this study, attempts to provide answers to the research questions, and to review whether the aim and objectives set for this research project have been met.

Table 6.1: The existing theories tested theme by theme

Themes	The existing theories tested	Testing results
Theme 1. Culture difference	Hofstede (1991) and House et al.'s (2001) national cultural dimensions	Power distance, collectivism, long term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance are four national culture dimensions which impact the Chinese students' acculturation in the UK.
	Johnson et al.'s (2011) cultural web of organisations	Pre-departure training among Chinese students is one of formats of routines and rituals in the organisational culture.
	Denison and Mishra's (1995) organisational culture Model	Covering culture issues and academic guidance into the content of pre-departure training among Chinese students reflects the organisational culture to adapt to the customer's demand and focus.
	Quan et al.'s (2016) argument that Chinese students should have the knowledge of British pedagogy prior to their departure.	The knowledge of learning and teaching in the UK, should be covered into pre-departure training.
	Widedershein-Paul's (1984) proposition of cultural affinity	Cultivating cultural affinity within the British higher education context encourages Chinese students to engage more and helps them transit into their life and academic studies in the UK.

Themes	The existing theories tested	Testing results
	Cole et al.'s (2016) cultural responsive pedagogy	Measures taken to develop cultural responsive pedagogy are essential to nurture cultural awareness and cultural affinity in the intercultural learning environment.
	The benefits of developing cultural awareness (Bai, 2016; Denison et al., 2004; li et al., 2017; Yan & Berliner, 2011; Zhang & Goodson, 2011).	Both academics and Chinese students are suggested to develop their cultural awareness.
Theme 2. General life	Berry's (2017) acculturation strategy	The integration strategy is suggested for Chinese students to tackle their sociocultural challenges in their general life.
	Ward and Geeraert's (2016) acculturation outcomes	The sociocultural challenges in their general life are becoming less influential, which is inconsistent with the grounding to the theory of acculturation outcomes.
	Ward et al.'s (2001) ABC's acculturation model	Chinese students' sociocultural adjustment in their general life significantly impacts their acculturation in the UK.
Theme 3. Psychological issues	Berry's (2017) acculturation strategy	The integration strategy is most adaptive for Chinese students to have least psychological issues.
	Ward and Geeraert's (2016) acculturation outcomes	The psychological frustration and a lack of confidence are impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation, but the effects are becoming mitigated.
Theme 4. Learning and assessment	Anderson and Krathwohls's (2001) revision on Bloom's taxonomy	Chinese students lack enough training for high levels of cognitive capabilities, such as analysis and synthesis for essay writing, during their previous schooling
	Pratt et al.'s (1999) notion about the authoritative sources of knowledge	Chinese students are encouraged to copy what the master says as authoritative sources of knowledge in China, which may result in the potential for plagiarism in essay writing within the British higher education context.
	Edward and Ran's (2006) proposition on avoiding plagiarism	Training sessions in relation to referencing and paraphrasing prevent Chinese students from committing plagiarism.

Themes	The existing theories tested	Testing results
	Lillyman and Bennett's (2014) claims for the diversification of ethnicity in academics group	Employing Chinese academics may effectively help Chinese students become aware of the serious results that plagiarism may have, and identify clearly the pedagogical difference within different higher education settings.
	Jin and Cortazzi's (2006) statement that respects to authorities predominates over enquiries and doubts	Critical thinking and argumentation are perceived by Chinese students as potentially challenging the authorities.
	Bell's (2016) report on international students' academic transition in the UK	A perceived lack of critical thinking makes a negative influence on the Chinese students' academic transition in the UK.
	Hockings et al.'s (2018) judgement on independent learning as one of the cornerstones of the British higher education	Within British higher education context, Chinese students are encouraged to independently preview their learning materials, digest what have learned on their own, and read recommended papers by themselves.
	Marshall and Mathias's (2016) findings that time management is one of most challenging academic issues to Chinese students, at the start of their British learning.	Chinese students may find it difficult to adapt to the approach of independent learning, particularly from the outset of their studies in the UK.
	Li et al.'s (2017) suggestion that Chinese students may benefit from some training on living independently.	Chinese students are suggested to develop independence during their general life, which can be transmitted to their academic studies.
	Mittelmeier et al.'s (2018) claims for the academics' intervention into group work	Chinese students believe academics should get involved in the group work at initial stages to introduce group members to each other and set clear rules for group discussion.
	Jin and Cortazzi's (2016) cultural synergy	Group work is an opportunity for Chinese students to develop cultural synergy with their groupmates by learning from each other.
	Wu's (2015) technology use in learning	Social media and technology use could help Chinese students diminish their psychological stress and frustration.

Themes	The existing theories tested	Testing results
	Worley's (2011) notion of the elimination of hands-on practice between students and academics by emerging technology	Chinese students are forced to rely on technologies heavily in their life and studies, and are losing chances of meeting others in person.
Theme 5. Staff student relationships	Jin and Cortazzi's (2016) proposal of developing intercultural awareness among academics	Cultural awareness and cultural affinity may shorten the psychological distance between academics and Chinese students, provide students with necessary academic support, and resolve troubles from becoming more problematic.
	Edward and Ran's (2006) suggestion on the initiation of a staff student relationship	Academics ought to be the initiator of a staff student relationship, while Chinese students should make effort to pander to the relationship development.
Theme 6. English proficiency	Quan et al.'s (2013) report that English competency impacts the Chinese students' adaptation into British education at early stages.	Most of challenges and problems that Chinese students come across from the outset of their acculturation may be fundamentally derived from their English language level.
	Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) findings about the negative effects caused by English incompetency	Chinese students cannot keep up with their learning schedule, they read papers slowly, and they do not know how to develop the structure of an essay. It is difficult for them to present study results either by oral or written means.
	Poyrazli et al.'s (2002) report about being lonely caused by English incompetency	The outcomes of the research do not support this report, because Chinese students could stick to their Chinese student group to relieve their loneliness.
	Coleman's (2004) suggestion on English learning by immersing into the English environment.	A full immersion into English context ensures Chinese students become addicted to English learning, so as to accelerate their academic adaptation and acculturation.
Theme 7. Classroom participation	Hofstede's (1991) collectivism cultural dimensions	A group of Chinese students from the collectivist culture may require its members to take group obligations, such as attending classes collectively and behaving in the same way in classrooms.
	Jin and Cortazzi's (2016) findings of the Chinese students' preferences to asking questions in classrooms	Chinese students would listen carefully and take notes in classrooms than raising questions from time to time to interrupt academics.

Themes	The existing theories tested	Testing results
	Pratt et al.'s (1999) learning approaches for Chinese students	Only after repetitive memorising, deep understanding, and knowledge application, can Chinese students think critically and raise their questions and queries.
	Girardelli et al.'s (2020) proposition that both students and academics play a crucial role in affecting the students' intention for classroom participation.	The awareness from both academics and students of the Chinese students' mindset development when forming up an enquiry in classrooms, are crucial to enhance Chinese students' classroom participation.
Theme 8. Acculturation level	Pedersen's (1995) five stage acculturation model	The Chinese students' acculturation level may follow a V-turn curve among the three student groups, who are going to study in the UK, who have just started their studies, and who are going to graduate.
	Quan et al.'s (2016) and Wu and Hammond's (2011) proposition on academic adjustment ; Zhou et al.'s (2011) educational adaptation is one of the intercultural adaptations	Adjustment in academic studies for the immigration group of Chinese students, who pursue short term academic targets in the UK, is one of the acculturative outcomes of their acculturation and adaptation in the UK.
	Morrison et al.'s (2005) judgement on the Chinese students' academic studies in the UK.	Chinese students improve themselves gradually and make the same achievement as other students, despite the challenges that they are confronted from the outset.
	Gu and Maley's (2008) empirical findings about Chinese students' acculturation	Despite challenges in intercultural learning, most Chinese students have managed to survive in the intercultural learning and develop themselves in the UK.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research project aims to extend the understanding around issues that may impact upon the acculturation of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students in the UK, undertaking business management or related programmes at undergraduate level, and to provide additional insights and implications for all the stakeholders, which include students, their academics, and business schools, towards developing a more satisfying outcome for students during their learning experience.

After the data collection gathered by survey questionnaire and interviews with Chinese students and their academics, the outcomes from both the quantitative and qualitative strands of this research were compared, related, merged, and interpreted, to further develop the discussion around the eight research themes elicited from the literature. Consequently, conclusions based on outcomes of data analysis can be drawn out from this research investigation, so as to respond to the research questions and meet the aims and objectives of this research.

The main knowledge contributions that this research investigation has developed are reviewed in this chapter. Limitations from this research are reflected upon, separately, from the methodological and empirical perspectives. Finally, the research project is scrutinised thoroughly, to identify potential areas for further research in the fields of acculturation and intercultural learning.

7.2 Overall theme conclusions

Underpinning the research questions, eight research themes were identified from literature and introduced into this research project. Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis were implemented around these eight research themes. After further discussion on the data findings, conclusions could be drawn and presented theme by theme.

7.2.1 Theme 1: Culture difference

Identified mainly from the qualitative strand of the research, the power distance between students and academics, Chinese students' collectivist behaviours, a long term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance are four major cultural dimensions at national level, which impact upon Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK.

Delivering high quality pre-departure training to Chinese students as one of routines within the organisational culture of their previous learning institutions, could well equip Chinese students with knowledge for their acculturation. It is suggested that British universities should design, specifically, a well-developed bridging course as a part of pre-departure training, which encompasses academic guidance and cultural issues for Chinese students. Together with their partners in China, it is suggested to the British universities that they should work out a suitable timeframe, and co-deliver the pre-departure training for Chinese students who intend to study in the UK.

Cultivating cultural affinity within the British higher education context would encourage Chinese students to engage, and thereby transit smoothly into their new life and academic studies. Developing cultural awareness through training courses, which should be conducted by British universities, is instrumental to develop cultural affinity between Chinese students and UK based academics. Other practical measures to enhance cultural affinity include asking Chinese students to bring Chinese examples into classroom discussion, introducing Chinese business cases into curriculum design and teaching activities, and employing ethnically Chinese academics within business schools.

A manifestation of cultural affinity is the ethnical group of Chinese students spontaneously formed within university campuses, which impacts upon the Chinese students' acculturation into the British culture context. In order to mitigate the negative effects of ethnical groupings on the students' acculturation, it is suggested

that British universities allow Chinese students to look for comfort and a feeling of attribution within their own ethnical groups, while concurrently encourage them to go outside of their ethnical groups to interact with other non-Chinese students.

7.2.2 Theme 2: General life

What happens within the Chinese students' general life appears to impact upon significantly their acculturation level in the UK, although these sociocultural challenges are becoming less influential than in previous times, due to the emerging services nearby many UK universities in the Chinese language. Moreover, the effect of their adaptation in their general life plays a mediating role between their academic adjustment and their acculturation in the UK.

In order for Chinese students to adapt into their general life in the UK, preparations prior to their arrival and from the outset of their acculturation in the UK are suggested. Prior to their arrival in the UK, further English studies related to their adjustments in daily life, a training course about academic and pedagogical difference, psychological preparations, and even training on self-catering, are valuable practices that can be adopted for the Chinese students' acculturation. After their arrival, Chinese students are encouraged to pay attention to information that is readily available to support convenience in their general life, to learn the university regulations in their student handbooks, and to have frequent communication with academics, friends, classmates, and their families, in order to handle the sociocultural challenges in their general life.

7.2.3 Theme 3: Psychological issues

Psychological issues, such as frustrations and a lack of confidence, may impact the Chinese students' acculturation, but these effects can be managed and mitigated.

In order to make the Chinese students' life easier and to help with their acculturation into the UK, their families and academics should be aware of their psychological needs and encourage them to handle any psychological hardships. Simultaneously,

Chinese students should develop their awareness of the British culture and pedagogy, continuously improve their English language capabilities, and interact more with academics and other students. These activities should help to mitigate their psychological frustrations and develop their confidence, within either their general life or academic studies.

7.2.4 Theme 4: Learning and assessment

Essay writing, critical thinking, independent learning, and group work, are major pedagogical aspects, impacting upon Chinese students' academic studies, during their acculturation and adaptation.

Reading academic papers, exercises in writing practice, and paying particular attention to academics' feedback upon their written work, benefit Chinese students' improvement with regard to their essay writing skills. Training sessions in relation to academic regulations should be developed, to provide Chinese students with sufficient knowledge about referencing and paraphrasing, and to make them aware that plagiarism is perceived as morally wrong in the UK. To develop cultural affinity between students and academics, British universities are encouraged to diversify the ethnicity in academics groups. The ethnically Chinese academics may effectively identify the academic regulations that Chinese students may potentially violate under the British higher education settings, and guide them to avoid these in their academic writing.

To develop critical thinking capabilities, Chinese students are encouraged to read academic papers and books, analyse what the authors think, address issues that can be queried and doubted, and most important of all, to create their own arguments and opinions. Gradually, their capabilities in critical thinking would develop and their academic work would improve.

Following a schedule designed to enhance the work-life balance, managing required deadlines for course work submission, and thinking independently about lecture

content and the authors' opinions when reading, are all pragmatic measures for Chinese students to take and thereby develop their independent learning abilities.

For the sake of performance improvement in group work, it is suggested that Chinese students should proactively equip themselves with the knowledge around the topics required for group work, develop confidence in their language competencies and in socialising situations, and cultivate their critical thinking capabilities. It is also suggested that academics might intervene in group work activities from the outset, so as to ensure that Chinese students know the other group members, and also to make Chinese students clearly aware the academics and groupmates' expectations within the group work context.

Chinese students, akin to all students at their ages, are competent in using social media and IT facilities. The university's IT facilities and social media benefit Chinese students' studies and help them integrate into their academic studies and daily life in the UK. For the sake of their smooth transition and acculturation, however, Chinese students should develop a balance between using social media and other emerging technologies, and employing physical interaction with academics and other students.

7.2.5 Theme 5: Staff student relationships

Positive interaction and good relationships with academics benefit Chinese students' study activities and future academic development, during their acculturation into the UK.

Ideally, it is suggested that academics should be the initiators of the staff-student relationship development with Chinese students. Following the initial academics' positive gestures, Chinese students are then encouraged to adopt an integration strategy, to build up links and develop a professional relationship with academics. Active interaction with academics in classrooms, email contacts or by other on-line instruments, face to face meetings, ahead-of-class chats with academics, and engagements in academic events, are all practical measures for Chinese students to

adopt, so as to build and develop the positive and professional relationships with academics.

7.2.6 Theme 6: English proficiency

The Chinese students' English proficiency levels impact upon their acculturation and transition into their daily life and academic studies. Challenges and problems that Chinese students confront during their acculturation, fundamentally, may be derived from their level of English language competency.

Basically, more practice on all the elements of English learning improves the Chinese students' English language competency. Cognitively, Chinese students should be aware that, academics would not criticise their speaking English level, instead, they would be encouraged to interact positively with academics and other students, in order to make their opinions known. Immersion into a fully English context requires Chinese students to engage with English language learning, so as to accelerate their academic adaptation and overall acculturation. It is suggested that both British universities and their academics guide Chinese students to positively approach the resources provided for the purpose of English learning, particularly the pre-sessional and in-sessional English training courses, not only to increase their English competency, but for the benefit of their academic adaptation and acculturation.

7.2.7 Theme 7: Classroom participation

Positive classroom participation leads to deep and effective learning, which also benefits the Chinese students' academic studies during their acculturation.

Apart from the cultural awareness of the different perceptions of classroom participation held by Chinese students and their British academics, it is suggested that both groups become openly aware of the Chinese students' mindset development for their enquiry management in classrooms. As a result, British academics could guide Chinese students to ask questions straightforwardly in classrooms, and encourage

Chinese students to proactively interact with them. From the Chinese students' perspectives, it is suggested that they follow the British way of asking question directly, and thereby, their classroom participation level would be greatly enhanced.

7.2.8 Theme 8: Acculturation level

The Chinese students' acculturation level may follow a V-turn curve among the three student groups, those who are going to study in the UK, who have been studying in the UK within a three months period, and those who will graduate from their undergraduate studies within the coming three months.

Chinese students' adjustment into their academic studies is significantly related to their acculturation level. With the mediating effects from their general life, Chinese students' adjustment into their academic studies indirectly impacts their acculturation level too. Therefore, academic adjustment for the migratory group of Chinese students, who pursue short term academic targets in the UK, is highlighted as a potentially important acculturative outcome of their acculturation.

7.3 Answers to the research questions and results that meet the research aims and objectives

Derived from the overall research aims and objectives, this study focuses on the following two research questions:

Question 1: What kind of issues may impact upon the Chinese students' acculturation within their undergraduate studies in the UK?
Question 2: How could Chinese students and other stakeholders in British higher education fields cope with these issues, in order to improve and develop the Chinese students' acculturation in Britain?

Based on the conclusion of the eight research themes, answers to the two research questions are currently clarified and drawn out from this research project (Table 7.1).

Conclusions from theme 1 to theme 7 give direct answers to *Question 1* and *Question 2* separately, while conclusions from theme 8 exploit further the relationships among the issues impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation levels.

Table 7.1: Answers to the research questions theme by theme

Themes	Question 1: *What* kind of issues may impact upon the Chinese students' acculturation within their undergraduate studies in the UK?	Question 2: *How* could Chinese students and other stakeholders in British higher education fields cope with these issues, in order to improve and develop the Chinese students' acculturation in Britain?
Theme 1: Culture difference	National cultural dimensions: power distance between students and academics, Chinese students' collectivist behaviours, their long term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance Organisational culture routines: pre-departure training Personal level: cultural affinity and its manifestation as ethnical groups	British universities are encouraged to, 1), deliver training courses on cultural awareness; 2), design specific pre-departure training which encompasses academic guidance; 3), employ ethnically linked Chinese academics; 4), accept the presence of Chinese ethnical groups in campuses; 5), encourage Chinese students to go out of the ethnical groups to mix with other students. It is suggested that university academics, 1), ask Chinese students to bring Chinese examples into the classroom discussions; 2), introduce business cases from China into teaching activities for the purpose of nurturing cultural affinity.
Theme 2: General life	What happens within Chinese students' general life significantly impacts upon their acculturation level	It is suggested that Chinese students, (prior to their arrival in the UK) take further English studies, training courses in relation to academic and pedagogical differences, and even some training in self-catering skills; (after arrival) pay attention to a wealth of information readily available for making their lives more convenient, be aware of the university regulations in their student handbooks, and have frequent communication with academics, friends, other classmates, and their families.

Theme 3: Psychological issues	Psychological issues, such as frustration and lack of confidence, though the effects are now becoming mitigated	Chinese students' families and academics are encouraged to, be aware of the students' psychological needs and encourage them to get through these psychological difficulties. It is suggested that Chinese students, 1), develop their awareness of the British culture and pedagogy; 2), continuously improve their English language capabilities; 3), interact more with academics and other students, as a result, to mitigate their psychological frustrations and develop their confidence, both in their general life and academic studies.
Theme 4: Learning and assessment	Essay writing, critical thinking, independent learning, and group work. The university's IT facilities and social media benefit Chinese students' studies and help them integrate into their academic studies and daily life.	British universities are encouraged to, 1), provide Chinese students with training on plagiarism, referencing, and paraphrasing; 2), diversify the ethnicity in academics groups by employing more empathetic Chinese academics to get involved into Chinese students' teaching and supervising. Academic staff are suggested to, intervene into group work at the start to ensure Chinese students know other group members and make them aware of their academics' expectations. Chinese students are suggested to, 1), undertake more writing exercises, and pay particular attention to the academics' feedback on their written work to improve their essay writing; 2), read academic papers to analyse what the authors think, address issues that can be queried, and form their own arguments and opinions, so as to nurture their critical thinking capabilities; 3), keep work-life balance, manage deadlines for course work submission, and think independently about lecture content and authors' opinions to develop independent learning abilities; 4), equip themselves with knowledge around the topics for group work, develop confidence in their language and socialising situations, and cultivate their critical thinking capabilities; 5), work out a balance between using social media and other emerging technology, and physical interactions with academics and other students.

Theme 5: Staff student relationships	Positive interaction and good relationships with academics	Academics are suggested to take the first move to initiate links and relationships with Chinese students.
		Chinese students are encouraged to 1), follow the academics' positive gestures to build up links and develop a professional relationship with academics; 2), take measures to develop relationships with academics, by active engagement in classrooms, through email or other on-line instruments, face to face meetings, before-class chats with academics, and participation in the academic events.
Theme 6: English proficiency	Chinese students' English proficiency impacts their transition and acculturation into their daily life and academic studies.	Chinese students are encouraged to, 1), undertake more practice in all the elements of English learning to improve English language competency; 2), interact positively with academics and other students to make their views known; 3), immerse fully into the English context.
		British universities and their academics are encouraged to, 1), make Chinese students aware of the non-critical environment with regard to their English proficiency level; 2), guide Chinese students towards university resources for English learning, particularly the pre-sessional and in-sessional English training and courses.
Theme 7: Classroom participation	Positive classroom participation which leads to effective learning.	It is suggested that both Chinese students and their academics, 1), have cultural awareness of the different perceptions around the approaches to classroom participation; 2), be aware of the Chinese students' mindset development for enquiry management in classrooms.
Theme 8: Acculturation level	1), Chinese students' academic adjustment is significantly related to their acculturation level in the UK. With the mediating effect from their general life, their academic adjustment indirectly impacts upon their acculturation too; 2), Adjustment in academic studies for Chinese students is highlighted as an important acculturative outcome.	

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, this research aims to identify the impacting factors upon the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students' acculturation during their business studies education at undergraduate level in the UK, so as to provide the potential implications for all stakeholders, the students, their academics, and business schools, towards developing a more satisfying outcome for students. The following research objectives have been identified for the sake of achieving the aim of the study:

1. To clarify issues that impact upon the acculturation of Chinese students studying at undergraduate level in British business schools.

2. To offer current and prospective Chinese students guidance and suggestions in order to support their studies and life in the UK.

3. To provide recommendations for the management authorities and academics in British business schools, so as to help with and support the Chinese students' adaptation and acculturation.

From answers to *Question 1* which are drawn out from research theme 1 to theme 7, Objective 1 has been met because the issues impacting upon Chinese students' acculturation have been clarified, which include the culture difference at national, organisational and personal levels, their affairs in their general life, their psychological frustration and confidence levels, and the aspects related to their academic studies, such as learning and assessment, staff student relationships, English proficiency, and classroom participation.

Outcomes from theme 1 to theme 7 also provide answers to research *Question 2* which is related to Objectives 2 and 3. Recommendations and suggestions to Chinese students, British business schools, and academics, are made separately, to help with Chinese students' acculturation during their life and studies in the UK.

Since the three objectives are disassembled from the research aims of this research investigation, the overall research aims are met. Overall, following the structure of

research development, which is demonstrated in Section 1.6, the overall research aims and objectives have been reached, after the factors impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation are identified and suggestions and recommendations to all stakeholders are made.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

Theoretically and practically, this research project has made contributions to knowledge within the fields of acculturation studies and intercultural learning for one group of international students in the British higher education context.

7.4.1 Theoretical contributions

The formulation of a theoretical framework with eight research themes guiding this research on student acculturation (Figure 2.5) is a contribution to academia. There are few pieces of literature that thoroughly reviewed and combined together the factors of cultural differences, acculturation and adaptation outcomes, and pedagogical differences, to study either Chinese or the other international student groups' acculturation within an intercultural learning environment. The framework makes an attempt to fill in this theoretical gap.

The theoretical framework and associated research themes provide a greater understanding of the cultural difference at national, organisational, and personal levels experienced by Chinese students within an intercultural learning context in the UK. It also includes knowledge around the acculturation strategy that Chinese students may adopt, and the potential acculturative outcomes from both sociocultural and psychological aspects. Within the framework, the Chinese and British pedagogies are reviewed and contrasted, and the pedagogical and environmental factors that influence Chinese students' academic studies during their intercultural learning are elicited and developed. Moreover, the theme of acculturation level is introduced in order to test its relationship with other themes within the framework.

The development of theories around acculturation strategy (Berry, 2017) and relevant acculturative outcomes (adaptation) is revealed, as significant theoretical contribution of this research. Parallel to sociocultural and psychological adaptations (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), this research categorises the academic adjustments as another one of the acculturative outcomes for Chinese student immigrants, who pursue short term academic targets during their overseas life and studies. As an inter-disciplinary study, this research fills in a gap that, neither the acculturation and adaptation research nor studies on intercultural learning, relate to the academic adjustment as one of acculturation and adaptation outcomes for a specific group of international students within the British higher education context.

Generally, the psychological and sociocultural adaptations are the two main acculturation outcomes for the immigrants during the intercultural contacts (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 2008; Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). However, outcomes from this research investigation challenge that, for the Chinese students who are short term immigrants pursuing academic targets in the UK, the trend of the effects on their acculturation during their studies, is becoming increasingly mitigated from the sociocultural and psychological perspectives. Although what happens within their general life and the psychological issues that Chinese students are confronted, still impact upon their transition and acculturation within the intercultural learning settings.

Moreover, this research investigation is the first to categorise two elements, the pedagogical and environmental ones, which may impact upon the Chinese students' academic adaptation and acculturation into the intercultural learning settings. The pedagogical element is related to their learning and assessment, which include the aspects of essay writing, critical thinking, independent learning, and group work. The learning environmental element covers the staff student relationships, English proficiency, and classroom participation. This could enrich the application scope of

the acculturation strategy (Berry, 2017) for the Chinese students group, who pursue short term academic targets under the intercultural learning environment.

As a contribution to research philosophy and methodology, this research project has clarified the conceptual differences and similarities among the notions of research philosophy, research paradigm, and worldview, which might have, in part, confused the early researchers. This research investigation also makes an empirical attempt to develop the research philosophy and the approaches to theory development. It adopts "mixed methods" to deductively verify the existing theories and test the formulated hypotheses. However, this research holds interpretivism as its philosophical stance, rather than pragmatism, which is generally adopted within mixed methods research (Creswell, 2014). This research places particular emphasis on the interpretation of the qualitative data from interviews with Chinese students and academics.

Another methodological contribution from this research investigation is the development of the convergent parallel mixed methods. Within this research investigation, there are two categories of research subjects, Chinese students and academics, but three sources of data, which include the quantitative data from students, qualitative data from students, and qualitative data from academics. At the stage of data analysis and discussion, the qualitative data from interviews with Chinese students and academics are compared and related first, afterwards, to contrast with and relate to the quantitative findings and analysis from student survey, so as to reach a holistic interpretation around each research theme. This research project proves that, within a piece of parallel mixed methods research, data from multiple sources can be related and compared first within the same research strand, whereby, to mix and compare the outcomes from the other strand for overall interpretations.

7.4.2 Practical implications

This main objectives of this research investigation lay particular emphasis on how Chinese students and other stakeholders, at the practical level, cope with the factors

impacting upon the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into the British higher education context.

A series of pre-departure briefing (PDB) events across China are delivered to the public every summer by British Council, China. In the summer of 2020, these events moved to an on-line format, together with an electronic brochure of the guide in traveling and living in the UK being launched as a supplementary service (British Council, 2020), due to the unprecedented spread of coronavirus worldwide. Some of the representative offices of the British universities based in China also adopt a routine for delivering PDB training to their prospective students. The content of the prevailing PDB events, held either by British Council or the representative offices, include information on visa application, luggage preparation, safety and health, life guide in the UK, and so forth.

However, according to this study, the information provided to the required Chinese students within the PDB events, either from British Council or the representative offices is potentially inadequate. The PDB events should also include information about pedagogical and learning environmental knowledge, which are related to academic adjustments that Chinese students may be confronted with, such as critical thinking, independent learning, classroom participation, and the approach of interacting with academics, and so on. As a result, Chinese students could be well prepared from the outset, for their acculturation and academic adaptation in the UK.

Another recommendation from this research is the need for an awareness from both students and academics of the Chinese students' mindset development, when they attempt to form up an enquiry in classrooms, which are crucial to influence the Chinese students' intention towards classroom participation (Girardelli et al., 2020). It is suggested that academics are aware of and give clarity to the mindset development of Chinese students, and proactively guide them towards active classroom engagements. The identification of their mindset development regarding enquiries should lead to more encouragement among the current and prospective Chinese

students towards asking questions directly in classrooms, since it is the most effective and universally accepted approach in the British educational setting. As a result, the Chinese students' classroom participation would be greatly enhanced.

Thirdly, this research has identified the mediating role of the sociocultural adjustment in general life between Chinese students' adjustment in their academic studies and their overall acculturation level. British universities have a well-developed mechanism for providing personal tutors to ensure students supports, either in their general life or studies; however, due to the lack of cultural affinity and cultural awareness, the personal tutors might not be aware of and act in a timely way to precisely address the problems, that Chinese students come across within their general life. Student mentorship, another parallel mechanism to personal tutors, is recommended, to be introduced into the students' service system within British universities. The student mentors, who have become experienced in living and studying in the UK, may keep in close contact with the newly enrolled Chinese students and help them with tackling the problems or difficulties, which may confront them in their daily life. Consequently, the sociocultural adjustment of the new students may run effectively and in a timely way, which will be beneficial to their academic adjustment and overall acculturation.

7.5 Limitations

It is noted that this research investigation of the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation may suffer from a number of limitations, due to its specific aim and objectives, the limited resources available, and the constraints associated with finance and time limits, etcetera.

The research investigation confines its study to Chinese students who major in business management and related programmes in the UK, not subjects in other disciplines. However, Gummesson (2000) argued that, rather than using statistical generalisation from a sample to its population, interpretivists may be able to

generalise their findings from one setting to another similar setting. The outcomes of this study, despite its limited generalisability, may provide implications for the acculturation of Chinese students studying other disciplines at undergraduate level.

Due to the time frame of a PhD study, it is not feasible for this research project to trace down the acculturation process of a specific Chinese student's or the same cohort of students', from their enrolment onto an undergraduate programme in a British business school, to their graduation three years later. This research project therefore is a cross-sectional study, not a longitudinal one, although findings from a longitudinal study on the student acculturation might offer additional consistency and evidence.

Another limitation is connected with the methodology adopted in the quantitative strand of this research, such as the narrow sampling pool available, the convenience sampling strategy adopted, and the comparatively small sample size. The Chinese students who were involved in the survey questionnaire are mainly from the universities based in the Northwest of England. Although a convenience sampling strategy saves time and resources, the sample of students is not drawn randomly within this research investigation, which may come at the expense of achieving high levels of data validity and reliability (Creswell, 2013) and doubtfulness of their representativeness. A possibility of potentially skewed research outcomes may arise, due to the comparatively sample size introduced to this study, for example, this research project could not identify the significant differences in the acculturation level between the two categories of Chinese students, who come from either the Sino-UK joint programmes or individually.

In its quantitative strand, this research investigation has not verified thoroughly the five-stage acculturation process model (Pedersen, 1995), due to the time constraints of this PhD research and limited access to the Chinese student samples. Instead, three student groups are selected for the purpose of student sampling and data analysis. Based on the comparison of the outcomes of the three student groups, a conclusion on

Chinese students' acculturation process has been reached. It is not necessarily following exactly the similar five-stage acculturation process of the standard group of immigrants'. However, the study will enable additional, comparable studies to be undertaken in the future and thereby add depth to the potential outcomes.

7.6 Future research

As a standard full-time PhD study practice, this research project studying the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation has been delivered over four years, from its infancy as a research proposal, to the writing-up of this report. Based on the reflections on the research process and research outcomes, future research could continue with this perspective from several different aspects.

Cultural synergy is an idealistic status to be reached under intercultural learning settings. This research investigation has explored practical measures that could be taken to help with building up the status of students' cultural synergy. However, the theoretical supports, about how to reach a status of cultural synergy, have not been fully clarified and investigated. Based on the findings of cultural awareness and cultural affinity that this study advocates for students and academics, future research emphasis could be placed theoretically, on the identification of the relationships developed within cultural awareness, cultural affinity, and cultural synergy.

Outcomes from interviews with Chinese students indicate that, nearly half of them attend the summer pre-sessional English programmes held within British university campuses, before they progress onto their degree studies. It is of interest to explore the difference of acculturation between Chinese students who attend pre-sessional English programmes and who do not, from the aspects of their sociocultural, psychological, and academic adjustments within the British higher education context. The parallel convergent mixed methods design, adopted within this research project, can be applied to the future studies too.

The respondents and participants of this research investigation are Chinese

Mandarin-speaking students and their British academics, which indicate the impracticability of the research findings of the Chinese students' acculturation being transferred to other international students. However, based on the theoretical framework formulated and the mixed methods adopted within this research project, further research could be implemented on the acculturation of other ethnical student groups, Chinese visiting scholars, and even professionals under an intercultural business environment.

7.7 Closing comments

Finally, this research into the Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation into their life and studies in the UK is almost completed. The researcher would like to close this research investigation, by citing the 2018 Christmas Message with its topic of "goodwill", conveyed by Elizabeth II, the British Queen, which potentially, is sound advice for the globally interconnected and intercultural world,

> "…Even with the most deeply held differences, treating the other person with respect and as a fellow human being is always a good first step towards greater understanding…"

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)
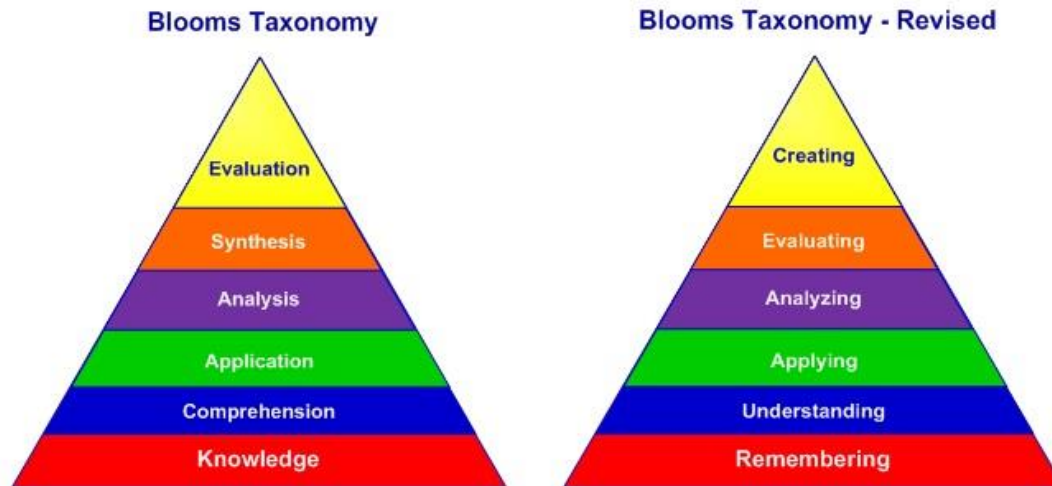
Note: "The graphic is a representation of the NEW verbiage associated with the long familiar Bloom's Taxonomy. Note the change from Nouns to Verbs e.g., Application to Applying to describe the different levels of the taxonomy. The top two levels are essentially exchanged from the Old to the New version." "Evaluation moved from the top to Evaluating in the second from the top, Synthesis moved from second on top to the top as Creating" (Schultz, 2005, cited in Forehand, 2012, p. 207).

The simplest level "Knowledge" represents previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.

The "Comprehension" level demonstrates understanding of facts and ideas by organising, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.

"Application" is about solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.

"Analysis" exhibits the acts of examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support

generalisations.

"Synthesis" aims at compiling information in different ways by combining elements in new patterns or proposing alternative solutions.

"Evaluation" is talking about presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.

The last three levels are considered to represent higher-level cognitive activities that require and develop mental faculties of creativity, critical thinking and innovative problem solving.

Appendix 2: List of suggested embedding technologies aligned with the key concepts of curriculum design

Biggs (2003) Four concepts of constructive alignment	Digital technologies
1. Define the programme's intended learning outcomes	Dialogue with stakeholders through: Email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, WhatsApp, Snapchat, YikYak, Survey tools such as Socrative and Google Forms.
2. Choose teaching/learning activities that best support achievement of the intended learning outcomes	1). Content creation and delivery through: Slide decks using PowerPoint, PowerPoint alternatives such as Prezi, Office Sway, Adobe Spark Page, Podcasts, Screencasts, Publicly available video content, Webinars and video conferencing, Quiz and survey tools, Simulation (low to high, including augmented/virtual reality and immersive technology), Quiz and survey tools such as Kahoot, Socrative, Blackboard quizzes, Google Forms. 2). Curating existing resources through: Open educational resources for example MOOCs, Pinterest, Wakelet, YouTube channels. 3). Social learning between students, stakeholders and future employers through: Email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, YikYak.
3. Assess students attainment against the intended learning outcomes	1). On-line assessments through: Eportfolios, Blogs, Turnitin submissions 2). Face-to-face assessments through: Simulation (low to high, including augmented/virtual reality and immersive technology) OSCEs, Presentations, Digital content creation
4. Arrive at a final grade	Consistency and quality assurance through: On-line rubrics, OSCE examination applications, Audio and video feedback, Development of simulation scenarios

Source: Leigh et al. (2016)

Appendix 3: Reasons for using a mixed methods design

Reason	Explanation
Initiation	Initial use of qualitative or quantitative methodology may be used to define the nature and scope of sequential quantitative or qualitative research. May also be used to provide contextual background and to better understand the research problem. May also help in the formulation or redrafting of research questions, interview questions and questionnaire items and the selection of samples, cases and participants.
Facilitation	During the course of the search, one method may lead to the discovery of new insights which inform and are followed up through the use of the other method.
Complementarity	Use of mixed methods may allow meanings and findings to be elaborated, enhanced, clarified, confirmed, illustrated or linked.
Interpretation	One method may be used to help to explain relationships between variables merging from the other.
Generalisability	Use of mixed methods may help to establish the generalisability of a study or its relative importance. In a similar way the use of mixed methods may help to establish the credibility of a study or to produce more complete knowledge.
Diversity	Use of mixed methods may allow for a greater diversity of views to inform and be reflected in the study.
Problem solving	Use of an alternative method may help when the initial method reveals unexplainable results or insufficient data.
Focus	One method may be used to focus on one attribute, while the other methods may be used to focus on another attribute.
Triangulation	Mixed methods may be used in order to combine data to ascertain if the findings from one method mutually corroborate the findings from the other method.
Confidence	Findings may be affected by the method used. Use of a single method will make it impossible to ascertain the nature of that effect. To see to cancel out this 'method effect', it is advisable to use mixed methods. This should lead to greater confidence in your conclusions.

Source: Saunders et al. (2016, p.173)

Appendix 4: University codes

Codes	Name of the University	From which the academics were interviewed	From which the students were surveyed and interviewed
U1	The University of Salford	*	*
U2	The University of Manchester	*	*
U3	Manchester Metropolitan University	*	*
U4	The University of Liverpool	*	*
U5	The University of Bradford	*	*
U6	The University of Huddersfield	*	*
U7	Sheffield Hallam University	*	*
U8	University of Chester	*	*
U9	Robert Kennedy College	*	
U10	University of Wolverhampton	*	
U11	University of Birmingham	*	
U12	The University of Lancaster	*	*
U13	Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University	*	
U14	Sichuan University	*	

Appendix 5: The demographic information of the academics interviewed for this study

Academics	Ethnical origin	Gender	Codes	Subject field	Years of teaching Chinese students	the university from
STA01	British	M	SI	Tourism management	29	the University of Salford
STA02	Chinese	M	DZ	Econometrics	3	the University of Salford
STA03	British	M	CP	Project Management	20	the University of Salford
STA04	Chinese	F	JZ	Accounting and Finance	3	the University of Salford
STA05	British	M	CD	Human resource management	8	the University of Salford
STA06	British	M	AM1	International business	8	the University of Salford
STA07	Chinese	M	YC1	Business analytics	7	the University of Manchester
STA08	Chinese	M	XS	Applied statistics	11	Manchester Metropolitan University
STA09	Chinese	M	QC	Econometrics	4	Manchester Metropolitan University
STA10	German	F	JH	Quantitative methods	7	the University of Manchester
STA11	Mexican	F	EM	Project Management	11	the University of Manchester
STA12	British	M	DW	Business with IT	18	Robert Kennedy College
STA13	Chinese	M	XG	Economics	4	the University of Chester
STA14	Indian	M	AM2	Construction Management	12	the University of Wolverhampton
STA15	Chinese	F	YC2	Digital business	5	the University of Salford
STA16	British	M	BM	Business management	25	the University of Birmingham
STA17	British	M	SN	Language studies	3	Liverpool University, Suzhou
STA18	Chinese	M	SL	Business management	13	Sichuan University, China

Appendix 6: The student interviewees' demographic information.

Students	Gender	Group	Level	Programme	University	University category	Enrolment channel
STU 01 JH	F	3	Level 6	Marketing management	The University of Manchester	Russell Group	Agencies
STU 02 TQ	F	3	Level 6	Management	The University of Manchester	Russell Group	DIY
STU 03 KQ	M	3	Level 6	Marketing	The University of Salford	Other old university	NCUK
STU 04 SJ	M	3	Level 6	Accounting and Finance	The University of Bradford	Other old university	NCUK
STU 05 YY	M	3	Level 6	International trade and investment	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 06 SQ	F	3	Level 6	Business management	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 07 ZX1	M	1	Level 6	Accounting and Finance	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 08 XZ1	M	1	Level 6	Business administration	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 09 YCL	F	1	Level 6	Marketing	The University of Salford	Other old university	Agencies
STU 10 YL	F	1	Level 4	Business management	The University of Manchester	Russell Group	NCUK
STU 11 ZYFX	M	1	Level 6	Global marketing	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 12 KJ1	F	1	Level 6	Business and Financial Management	The University of Salford	Other old university	HND
STU 13 YZ	F	2	Level 4	Law management	The University of Salford	Other old university	Agencies
STU 14 SC	F	2	Level 4	Marketing	The University of Lancaster	Russell Group	Agencies
STU 15 HX	M	2	Level 4	Business management	The University of Salford	Other old university	NCUK
STU 16 HZ	M	2	Level 6	Accounting and Finance	The University of Salford	Other old university	HND
STU 17 ZX2	M	2	Level 6	Accounting and Finance	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND
STU 18 KJ2	F	2	Level 6	Business and Financial Management	The University of Salford	Other old university	HND
STU 19 XZ2	M	2	Level 6	Business administration	The University of Huddersfield	New university	HND

Appendix 7: Initial coding template from interviews with academics for further data analysis (displayed in linear style and ordered alphabetically)

1. Acculturation strategy
  1.1 Integration strategy
2. Challenges and problems
  2.1 Academic challenges
  2.2 Culture change
  2.3 Legal problems
3. Classroom participation
  3.1 No questioning
4. Culture affinity
  4.1 Culture awareness
  4.2 In homogeneous group
5. Culture difference
  5.1 Power distance
6. English proficiency
  6.1 Extensive reading
  6.2 Oral practice
  6.3 Resources
  6.4 well preparedness
7. Measures taken by academics
  7.1 Assessment
  7.2 Engagement
  7.3 Social events
8. Measures taken by institutions
  8.1 Regrouping students
  8.2 Social events
9. Pedagogical difference
  9.1 British pedagogy
  9.2 Chinese pedagogy
    9.2.1 Previous schooling
  9.3 Group discussion
10. Previous organisational culture
  10.1 Pre-departure training
11. Psychological issues
  11.1 Cautiousness
  11.2 Confidence
  11.3 Frustration
  11.4 Personalities
  11.5 Social anxiety
12. Staff-student relations
  12.1 Building approaches

12.2 Benefits on SSR

12.3 Reasons

12.4 Barriers to SSR building

13. Technology in T&L

13.1 Negative aspects

13.2 Reliance

13.3 Socialising

Appendix 8: A sample coding records from NVivo 11 package

Descriptions: the image was screen printed from NVivo 11 package to showcase how NVivo software helps with coding an interview transcript. Four columns are identified from the image. From left to right, the first column is the menu for NVivo functions management; the second column shows a list of transcripts from interviews with eighteen academics for this research; the third column demonstrates the texts and striped code records from one of the transcripts; the fourth one indicate the codes corresponding to the coded texts in the transcript.

Appendix 9: Consent Form

Research Project:
To identify issues that impact upon the acculturation of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students taking undergraduate studies in UK business schools

Researcher:
Dongsheng Xu, Year 2 PhD student, Salford Business School, the University of Salford

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the study.	☐	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this interview at any time without giving a reason.	☐	☐
3. I understand that any given information may be used in future publications.	☐	☐
4. I agree to take part in the interview.	☐	☐
5. I agree that my name will be anonymised in publications yielded by the study.	☐	☐
6. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	☐	☐

Name of participant: Signature
Date

Researcher: Dongsheng Xu   Signature
Date

Project contact details for further information:
Name: Dongsheng Xu
Mobile: 079 555 25235
Email address: d.xu1@edu.salford.ac.uk

Appendix 10: Participation Information Sheet

What about the nature of the research?

This research is derived from the researcher's working experience during which he found the phenomena that the Chinese undergraduate students confront cultural and academic problems when they put on their roles of studying in the UK from scratch, but most of them achieve good academic performance before their graduation. This research project focuses on identifying the issues that may impact upon the Chinese students' acculturation who undertaking business studies at undergraduate level, with the aim to provide implications for all stakeholders, for instance, the students, academics, and business schools, towards developing a more satisfying outcome for students during the period of their learning experience.

The Chinese Mandarin-speaking students in the UK majoring in business and related programmes at undergraduate level, and the academics, who have teaching experience to Chinese students, are the research subjects for this project. Every six interviews with Chinese students will be conducted before their arrival in the UK for studies, within three months after their enrolments, and before three months of their graduation, consequently, there are eighteen student interviews in total in the research investigation. Among these three student groups, the six interview participants are not necessarily the same.

Till now, existing literature review is being reviewed, from which research hypothesis have been elicited. Research methodology is determined. The questionnaire survey and interviews with students and academics are adopted as the mixed methods to conduct data collection and data analysis for this research investigation.

How will you be involved?

You are invited to participate in a one-hour face to face interview with the researcher in April or May 2018. The interview is designed to collect information on your views and comments in light of your studying expectations in the UK, real life and study experience, and how you handle the issues that you met during your life and studies, and so forth. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Subsequently, the data collected from interview will be analysed, and the outcomes will be applied to form up the researcher's PhD dissertation. The interview will be arranged at a mutually agreed time and location within a university campus.

What about the implications and rights of your participation?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You own the right to decline a question or withdraw from the study at any time without any reason. During the course of the audio-recorded interview, you have control over the right to record your response to interview questions.

What about the use of data collected and report dissemination?

Measures are taken to ensure that data files are securely stored and archived. All the data collected from participant will be saved on a password-protected computer in a secure bag. The data collected are only accessed by the researcher and his supervisor where necessary. All participants' demographic information will be anonymised by either random numbers or pseudonyms as part of any form of publications or disseminations yielded from this research project. Individual participant is ensured not to be tracked and recognised in anyway.

All of the data collected will be deleted permanently after two years of the final submission of the researcher's PhD thesis.

Contact information if you raise any concerns or questions in terms of this research project

If you raise any concerns and questions about the research, please contact the researcher, Mr. Dongsheng Xu, who is a PhD student at Salford Business School, University of Salford, by,

Email: d.xu1@edu.salford.ac.uk
Mobile: 079 555 25235
Location: 208 Maxwell Building, the University of Salford, the Crescent, Salford, M5 4WT

Appendix 11: Interview questions with university academics

Date: _____ Dongsheng Xu

British University: _____

Course of teaching: _____

Teaching staff: Yes. No.

Supportive staff: Yes. No

For researcher's use:

The general rule of the interview with staff is that, the searcher starts with general and easy-to-answer questions, then probe to specific topics around their perceptions on Chinese students' acculturation and adaptation, and their suggestion on how to improve the teaching and learning activities, so as to help with the Chinese students' acculturation, from the perspectives of academics, students, and business schools.

● General questions

1. How many years have you been teaching or in contact with Chinese undergraduate students in the UK?

2. What is your general impression regarding the group of Chinese students?

3. In which aspects do you think the Chinese students need to improve, for the sake of adaptation into their British life and academic studies?

● About the students' life

1. In your opinion, what challenges and problems did the Chinese students come across during their lives in the UK, particularly from the very start? What is the most troubling difficulty for them after their arrival?

2. Are there any suggestions from you on how they cope with these challenges?

3. Do you think that their lives in the UK affect the Chinese students' academic studies? If yes, in what aspects? Can you please set up an example to explain further?

● About the students' academic studies

1. Do you think the relationship between the UK academics and Chinese students is important? Generally, are there any suggestions for Chinese students to build up a professional relationship with their UK academics?

2. Do you think the Chinese students' English proficiency supports their academic studies? Are there any suggestions for them to improve their English capabilities, although you are not an English teacher?

3. Generally, what kind of performance Chinese students have in your class? What do you think is the most unsatisfying issue with them? If possible, please give me some examples.

4. Do you think the technology and social media applied into teaching and learning is important? Why? In terms of your experience, could the Chinese students use these technology tools efficiently and skilfully, like blackboard, Facebook, WhatsApp, and the university on-line resources?

5. What kind of challenges and problems do you think the Chinese students come across while studying in the UK? Are there any suggestions from you on what Dos and Don'ts are for Chinese students in their academic studies?

6. From your point of view, what kinds of measures are that the teaching and supportive staff should take, in order to help with the Chinese students' academic studies?

7. From your point of view, what kinds of measures are that your business school should take, to accommodate Chinese students' life and academic studies in campus?

● Ending questions

1. By now, I have asked all of the questions that I have in mind. Do you have any questions or comments for the interview?

2 Do you mind if I send you the transcript from the interview for your further comments?

Many thanks for your participation!

Appendix 12: Interview questions with student participants who will graduate from their undergraduate studies within three months

Date: _____ Dongsheng Xu

British University: _____

Course of study: _____

For research use:

The general rule of the interview is that, the researcher starts with asking general and easy-to-answer questions, and then probe to specific topics about their expectations and perceptions in relation to their studies and daily life in the UK, their acculturation issues during their studies, and how they cope with these issues, and so forth.

● General questions

1. How many years have you been in your undergraduate studies in the UK?

2. Did you go to the UK for studies individually or from a Sino-British joint programme? If you were from a joint programme, what is that?

● About life expectations

1. What the main reasons are that you chose the UK as your study destination?

2. What do you think are the differences in your general life between your expectations before you arrived and your experience in the UK?

● About challenges during your daily life in the UK

1. What challenges and problems did you come across while living in the UK, particularly from the very start?

2. How did you cope with these challenges? For the future Chinese undergraduate students, what will you suggest them to live in the UK?

3. Do you think what kind of influences was brought to your studies by your daily experience in the UK?

● About your academic studies

1. What do you like mostly when studying in the UK? And why is that?

2. Do you think the study strategy or method you formed up in China can still help you to achieve high academic performance? Why is that?

3. Generally, what kind of relationship you have set up with your UK academics is? Can you give me an example to explain how the relationship was built?

4. Do you have difficulties in your academic studies due to your English level? If yes, how did you do to improve your English during your studies?

5. How did you participate in your classroom learning? And how your classmates did? Which way do you think is more effective and beneficial for your learning in the classroom in the UK?

6. How much you know about the use of social media and other emerging technologies which are introduced to your studies in the UK? In which aspects these could influence your studies?

7. Can you please give me a list of academic challenges you have met? And can you explain further on how you dealt with these academic challenges?

8. For the future Chinese undergraduate students, what will you suggest in terms of their academic studies in the UK?

● Ending questions:

1. By now, I have asked all of the questions that I have in mind. Do you have any other questions or comments on the interview?

2 Do you mind if I send you the transcript of the interview for your further comments?

Many thanks for your participation!

Appendix 13: On-line survey among Chinese students

Dear student,

I am a PhD student at Salford Business School, the University of Salford. I am carrying out a research on identifying the issues that impact upon the acculturation of the Chinese Mandarin-speaking students, who are undertaking undergraduate studies in UK Business Schools. This research project aims to extend the understanding around issues that may impact upon the acculturation of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students, during their business education at undergraduate level in the UK, so as to provide implications for all stakeholders, the students, academics, and business schools, towards developing a more satisfying outcome for students during the period of their learning experience.

I appreciate you providing time to complete the following survey individually. It is designed not to test but to gather your views and opinions, and so nothing is wrong or right. Please tick the option which best matches your situation. This survey includes thirty six questions and will take about fifteen minutes to complete. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any query on the questions.

Thank you very much for your help.

Dongsheng Xu
Email: d.xu1@edu.salford.ac.uk
WeChat: tigerxu3171
Mobile: +44 79 555 25235
         +86 186 1010 5927

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Are you studying a business related programme?

O Yes O No

2. Are you studying an undergraduate programme?

O Yes O No

3. Which type of student are you of?

O Aiming to study in the UK very soon

O Currently studying in the UK (having arrived within the last three months)

O Currently studying in the UK (within three months of graduation)

4. Your gender is

O Male O Female

5. In which year did you start your undergraduate programme in the UK? (Not the year you are currently learning)

O 1st year O 2nd year O 3rd year

6. Which city in China are you from? _____

7. How have you been enrolled into your British university?

O By myself O By agents O NCUK (IFY or SBC programme in China)

O HND O If other joint programme, please specify_____

Section 2: Perceptions on your UK life

8. How important are the reasons below for you to choose the UK as your life and study destination?

	Very Important	Important	Neither	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
High quality of UK higher education (GL1)					
The University has a strong brand (GL2)					
Free thinking education (GL3)					
English language learning (GL4)					
Making friends from different countries (GL5)					

Traveling overseas (GL6)					
Self-development (GL7)					
Personal choice (GL8)					

9. I think I can handle the balance of my life and my studies in the UK, in terms of time and energy required. (AL1)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

10. On a scale of 1-5, how serious do you think the issues below make you worried about? (1 = most worrying, 5 = least worrying)

(PI1) Different foods	1	2	3	4	5
(PI2) Language problems	1	2	3	4	5
(PI3) Local accents	1	2	3	4	5
(PI4) Financial problems	1	2	3	4	5
(PI5) Different learning styles	1	2	3	4	5
(PI6) Poor learning achievements	1	2	3	4	5
(PI7) Finding friends	1	2	3	4	5
(PI8) Going shopping for daily life	1	2	3	4	5

11. I think I can manage the negative experiences associated with the daily life in the UK. (AL2)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

12. Did you attend the pre-departure training about the British culture and the British way of learning?

O Yes O No

13. If you attended, how valuable was the pre-departure training?

O Very valuable O Valuable O Neither valuable nor valueless O Valueless O Very valueless

Section 3: Expectations and perceptions on your UK studies

14. The UK academics expect Chinese students in the UK higher education to utilise independent learning more than in China. (SSR1)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

15. The relationship between students and academics in the UK universities is equal, hence, students can challenge the academics' opinion and this can be looked upon as constructive and supportive. (SSR2)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

16. I expect that the UK academics can give me more guidance in learning and teaching supports and that I can approach them for help. (SSR 3)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

17. My English level has met the requirement from the University, which provides evidence that I can cope with the language demands within a UK degree studies. (EP1)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

18. My IELTS results did give an indication of my capability to use English for my academic studies, either in oral communication or in writing. (EP2)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

19. Within a specific course module, the UK academic will not recommend a textbook and indicate the most important chapters. On the contrary, a list of reference books and papers is provided to help with my study. (LA1)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

20. I can manage and complete the assignments outside of the classroom, for instance, homework, small essays, and handouts issued by academics. (LA2)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

21. The comments from academics and their feedback upon my assignments are valuable. (LA3)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

22. I think the examination is the best way to assess what I have learned. (LA 4)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

23. I think homework and small essays are the components of the assessment too. (LA 5)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

24. I think that, Information technology (including social media) introduced to my studies in the UK, can help my communication with other students and academics, and increase my study efficiency and innovation. (LA 6)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

25. I think a lecture for students in China means listening and taking notes in the classroom. (CP1)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

26. I think the classroom discussion and debates, group work, and the students-academics oral interaction, are much encouraged in the UK higher education. (CP2)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

27. Personally, I am happy to raise any question immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in China. (CP3)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

28. Personally, I am happy to raise any question immediately, when I do not understand what academics are saying in the classrooms in the UK. (CP4)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

29. I believe I would adapt or have adapted to the academic studies in the UK. (AL3)

O Strongly agree O Agree O Neither agree nor disagree O Disagree O Strongly disagree

30. If a face to face interview is arranged by the researcher, I am very glad to attend to discuss in depth what I have experienced during my life and studies in the UK.

O Yes (if you tick this option, it means you are happy to be contacted by the researcher for the interview. Please leave your preferred contact details such as email address, WeChat account, or a UK mobile phone Number. All of the interviewees will be granted a thanks gift from the researcher)

O No

Thank you for completing the survey.

Responses from completed questionnaires will be collected for further analysis. Your personal data and your response will be stored within a locked memory stick. Please note that, there will be no sharing of your data and your response with any other person, or for any other purpose that could name or identify you in any way. All of the data collected will be deleted permanently after two years of the final submission of my PhD thesis. If you have any concerns regarding the survey, please contact me by d.xu1@edu.salford.ac.uk, or my supervisor, Ms. Eileen Roddy, e.m.roddy@salford.ac.uk, in the first instance.

Thanks again.

If you are happy to, please leave your email address for the chance of a prize drawing to win £25 Amazon voucher. Your email address is: _____

Appendix 14: Sample transcripts from the interview with staff No. 06

Time: 2:45-3:550pm, 27 April 2018

Venue: At the staff's office, University of Salford.

RES: Researcher

STA06: Staff No. 06

RES: Thanks for your time. I know you are very experienced in teaching Chinese students. Are they mainly at undergraduate or postgraduate level?

STA06: Mainly final year undergraduate.

RES: Final year undergraduates. They are my research objects. How many years have you been teaching or keeping in contact with Chinese undergraduate students?

STA06: About 8 or 9 years.

RES: That is a long time. Basically, what are your general impressions about Chinese students?

STA06: Hard working. Lots of Chinese students prefer to stay together in classes or tutorials, but there are some Chinese students at final year undergraduate level who are much more independent, individual and want to meet other students from other nationalities that won't be part of Chinese students group. Generally, the majority of Chinese students, even after a year, tend to stay together. There are some exceptions but generally they tend to stay together, in my experience.

RES: So what were their performances after one year study?

STA06: Their performance is on average between high 50's to low 60's. It is generally quite good, because lots of Chinese students are hard working. I think there are lots of challenges that Chinese students face though. The first is their written English which can be a challenge when they are doing an assignment, as it is difficult to understand what is written, and difficult to be given a high mark. I think the other challenge is that lots of Chinese students are typically quite shy.

RES: Do you mean their personalities?

STA06: Yes. Within the classroom they tend to be fairly quiet and not to ask questions. In my experience, there are not many of them who come during the academics' drop-in hours to discuss any questions or concerns that they have, or their idea for assignments.

RES: Let's suppose if they have difficulties in understanding your assignment, how can they deal with because they wouldn't ask questions directly?

STA06: Well, we make them aware of our availability and the guidance provided to explain to them quite comprehensively what they need to do. Within teaching when giving them a lecture, depending on the size of group, it is quite difficult to engage them. But certainly in things like a tutorial, it is much easier for an academic to become involved in the discussion with the students. What I used to do in lectures was I would give examples from Chinese contexts, which made Chinese students feel more relaxed. And then they were happy to become involved when I asked a question. I would ask them, "Can you give your experience in your own country about this subject?" They would!

RES: A very good way and an interesting point. Because you travelled to China and got abundant experience there, and you fancy Chinese language, you have got some ideas on what is happening in China. As a result, you can set up examples for the Chinese students you are teaching. It is a very good guidance to get them involved.

My next enquiry is, in what aspects the Chinese students need to improve for the sake of adaptation into their UK daily life and academic studies in the UK?

STA06: I think one thing that Chinese students would benefit from is some training on critical thinking and independence, even before their arrival in the UK. It means not only listening to what academics say and writing it down, but thinking independently of what academics say, because the education system in the UK is quite different from the Chinese one. And students often struggle with understanding what critical thinking is. It is not just repeating and accepting.

RES: To be honest, I had a training session several days ago on critical thinking and writing. It is impressive and very useful. The session combined PhD studies with the way of critical thinking. Every part of the PhD thesis should be critically planned and delivered. So you suggested critical thinking and independence training before their arrival. Are there any other issues after their arrival?

STA06: I think another aspect is taking advantages of the opportunity they have on their international education experience. Going out and meeting people from other nationalities, going outside of the university, not only to visit London, but old Trafford for example. By this way, they are experiencing what the UK is offering to people; as a result, they can take back home the cultural experience with them. That kind of experience of meeting people from a different culture is very useful in terms of broadening their mindset individually which I think is very important. That does not matter which country you come from. Developing your cultural awareness and taking advantage of opportunities available when studying overseas, I think, is very important. The same as me, I spent a year abroad in France when I was doing my undergraduate studies.

RES: Oh cool. Can you speak French?

STA06: Yeah, I speak French fluently. And it is a very valuable experience inside the different culture.

RES: In your opinion, what challenges and problems they come across while they are living in the UK, particularly from their very start?

STA06: As it is probably the first time for them away from home or at least away from China, I think part of the challenge in settling into the UK and UK universities is that it can be a big shock for them. It can take them some time to get over that shock. Even from their arrival at Manchester airport, if there are no services available to take them to the university straightway, there is a big shock-what should I do and where should I go, for example. When they arrive at the University, things like accommodation can be a big challenge, because their expectations may not mirror reality. For example, I had two Chinese students come to see me three months ago, who have done their first semester. They came in, both complaining about their accommodation, and saying the toilet in their accommodation was not working, there was a bad smell, and the location of their accommodation was not on campus. Although it is really not my job to do this, I spoke to the student accommodation company, they sent staff to check, the toilet was working and the reason why the place smelt bad was because the residents had not emptied the bins for two weeks (laugh). So challenges are like that. And also, when they have friends in another university in the UK, quite often they may talk with their friends and may change their mind about studying here and move to the university where their friends are, which can be a challenge as well. If they feel their friends who are studying at another university seem to be doing well, settling in quickly and making lots of friends, they tend to go and be with their friends. I met several similar student cases like that.

RES: If you are not happy here, even you go there, you are not happy.

STA06: Definitely. I think that is the aspect of the peer influence factor on how the student feels about being settled in happily, using his friends' experience as a reference. Maybe they do not know how to deal with in British contexts, the way to deal with things like a broken toilet. In the UK context, you usually do not complain at the beginning, you go to ask someone if they can fix it if it is broken. Only after it does not get fixed for a while do you start to complain and get some action taken. But, to start complaining straightway is not how we do in the UK. That is the difference.

RES: When they meet problems, the first reaction should be handling with it by themselves. That is independence issue.

You gave me a list of challenges and shocks they may come across. Do you have any suggestions on how to cope with such kind of issues?

STA06: I think in terms of providing supports to Chinese students, it could be pre-departure briefing (PDB) which is very important for Chinese students before they leave China. They are basically briefed on what studying in the UK is like and what living in the UK is like. I think some centres/Chinese universities in China probably don't do enough of that. I think also from the university's side here, it would be helpful to have the similar kind of support when students arrive, to explain all of the different aspects of the university's life and how things work. I think the problem is that you cannot just do this for Chinese students but for all international students.

RES: Is it called induction?

STA06: Yes. But rather than a general introduction for all students, there should be an induction which is specifically for international students. I think one way could be very helpful, specifically for Chinese students, is to allocate a mentor who is a Chinese student for the new coming Chinese students. He can be a guide to show what it means to be here in the UK, studying and living. The new Chinese students can always ask the mentor for advice. I think it is quite often better to have a Chinese student acting in that role as a mentor, rather than an academic member staff or personal tutor who is an academic, because the academic may not understand the contexts from which the students come from. Whether the academic is a module tutor, programme leader, or personal tutor, they may know nothing about the Chinese contexts. Fortunately I do, but many of my colleagues do not. Even colleagues, for example, who have taught many Chinese students, may have never been in China. So that is why a Chinese student acting in that support role, I think, would be helpful.

RES: It is a very good opinion, but who look for that Chinese student acting as a mentor?

STA06: I think it needs to be a combination of the university's international office team where the staffs have responsibilities for Chinese student recruitment, working with other schools where the Chinese students are based, and the Chinese student society. I guess get members of the Chinese student society to take part in the supporting scheme and then provide rewards or thanks to the members of the Chinese student society who acted as the mentor for the new Chinese students. Maybe they can be given a university good citizen award to thank them. Because in my opinion, the academic staff or international staff, or even the ones providing 'AskUS' supports to all new students, may not necessarily be the best people to provide what the Chinese students really need.

RES: You are right. What the Chinese mentor talks and shares with the new arrivals, for example, his real experience in the UK, may be more convincible and attractive to the new Chinese students. And they can talk in Chinese for easy communication, especially from the start.

Another enquiry, do you think their daily life in the UK affects their academic studies?

If so, in which aspects are?

STA06: It can do. I mean some Chinese students said to me, "We are really puzzled that we do not have lectures from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. Why do we have only about six to seven hours lecture a week? The resulting problem for us is what we should do with the other time when not being lectured."

I think part of the reason is around the student expectations which have not being met. (It is) such a different situation here compared to their home universities, colleges, or schools, because there is much more emphasis on independent studies in the educational system in the UK. Chinese students can find it quite difficult to adapt to that.

RES: So from their daily life, they can learn independence and use it in their academic studies. I mean in this way, their daily life give influence on their academic studies?

STA06: Yeah. And also the study depends on how independent they are as a person. So for some students, when they come over, it could be their first time that they have ever been away from their parents. Lots of students find their daily life very free because their parents, siblings, and grandparents are not with them. So all this time without having lectures and freedom away from their families, for some students, it is quite a big temptation, you know, perhaps not to study, but to do other things instead. That is another challenge for Chinese students in their daily life. I mean, how mature they are, and how independent they are as a person as an independent thinker.

RES: Such kind of issues should be covered into the pre-departure training as well. You don't have your family nearby you, so as what you said, it is a kind of temptation, how you manage yourself, you can wake up at 11am, and all night hanging out in pubs, etc. it is self-management actually.

STA06: Exactly. I think another thing as well around daily life that links to academic life is cultural awareness. Perhaps pre-departure support around cultural awareness may be helpful. An example I have here is, some Chinese students said to me, "we want to speak with British students. We just think they will come up and introduce them and talk to us". My response was that you need to introduce yourself to them. They understood what I meant, because they thought that when they come here, it is very easy to meet people because they are from China and people would want to talk to them. You need to be proactive to meet people. Actually some Chinese students are very good at doing this, but particularly for some younger undergraduate Chinese students, they find cultural awareness is a big challenge. There would be very stereotypical information about the UK, for example, this is London, this is Tower Bridge, and this is where the queen lives, rather than how people interact with each other within the British society. Just like a British businessman goes to China, being told how to offer his business card, guanxi (*relationship*), ganbei (*a toast in a banquet*) and mianzi (*face*), those kinds of things. That would be useful for Chinese students

before they come to the UK, being told that kind of cultural relationship and awareness. But I have to say, I found some Chinese students, particularly those who probably have done their undergraduate degree in the UK, they have already been familiar with the daily life in the UK, with how it works within British universities. And they are much more ongoing with people. They normally do not stay in a group of Chinese students. They may do, but they also integrate themselves very quickly with students from other nationalities as well.

RES: it is kind of very clear comparison to the new comers of Chinese students.

STA06: Exactly.

RES: Thanks. Do you think the relationship between Chinese students and their UK academics is important? How can the two parties build up a good relationship?

STA06: I think one thing for any student is that they need to be proactive. So if they have any questions about the lecture, assignments, and examinations, take the opportunities to ask questions both in class and outside of the class. I think it is useful for students to make an appointment with academics. It is really only then or within something like tutorials which is much smaller than a lecture, to get the academics really know the students as an individual, rather than a big group in a big lecture. So students should be proactive to making themselves known to academics.

RES: from the perspective of academics, what they should do to have a good relationship with Chinese students?

STA06: I think firstly academics need to have cultural awareness as well, which is very important. They need to have an understanding of the contexts from which the students have joined, in terms of the learning style in Chinese education, in terms of the social dynamics on how the Chinese students view their academics at home and give respect to them. So academics need to have such cultural awareness. In my experience, specifically for Chinese students, it is always easier to really engage them, and to get to know them when you are in a smaller group. If you have a lecture of 70 students, you can't be with them in the lecture. It's got to be a tutorial. As a part of it, for example, when you design your assessments, how can we do it in a way that embraces all the students that we have, including Chinese students? I think a group based assessment is useful. Particularly, where you are the academic organising the groups, you can get different nationalities working together in one group, keeping them away from their co-nationals. Some Chinese students really do not like that way, they are too shy. But, lots of students began to see and appreciate the benefits of having this kind of approach.

Using techniques, like what I mentioned, to get the Chinese students more involved. The example was, to ask the Chinese students provide an example from China about whatever the topic or subject is in class. When we are to see a student, we really want

to learn about how this thing works in China. Chinese students then feel very proud, and more confident and comfortable in talking. Also this makes them happy, because they can talk about something which no one knows the answer about.

So, I used it in my tutorial groups for the final year undergraduates. There was a girl from Nanjing, for the first a few tutorials, who was quite shy and never missed the tutorial, always there sitting in the front. She did get more involved and then, by the end of term, she was the student that always put her hand up, offering answers first. She really developed as a person, and her self-confidence developed a lot as well. It is much easier to do it in a kind of small setting. We would have twelve students in a room for a tutorial, so it is easier to manage the students on a more individual basis in those kinds of small group settings.

She even said to me one day, "All the other Chinese students asked me if you are half-blooded?" I realised what she meant, mix blooded or mix raced. I said, "Why do all the Chinese think in that way?" She said, "Because you are always saying Chinese things in classes". I said, "oh, really? I am very honoured, so you can tell all of them I am very honoured that all of you think I am half-blood. The truth is I am not, but I am very honoured that you think I am one". She was very happy. You can see the growth of her self-confidence which really is a lovely thing.

RES: I think this is probably due to the psychic distance between you and the girl being shortened. That is why she asked the question on behalf of all the Chinese students.

My another enquiry is, do you think the Chinese students' English proficiency is good enough to support their academic studies?

STA06: I mean it is very variable. They have to meet the University's language requirements. It is variable because some of the Chinese students' written English or oral English is actually at quite a lower level. Other students have a very good grasp or command of speaking and listening. So, not everyone has the same competence, even if everyone has met the university's language requirements. We see that not just with the undergraduates, but with the postgraduate students as well.

RES: So any ideas on how to help them improve their English, even you are not an English teacher?

STA06: Well, the university offers courses like Learning English for Academic Purposes (LEAP). Another way, I mean, beyond that, maybe more support from their pre-departure again. I think they should be supported while they are on campus, like the LEAP programme. But academics in a business school cannot really help them with English language. Because your expectation is, if a student studies here, his English has to be at a certain level of quality. The academic in business is not an English language tutor, neither is an engineering professor. So that kind of support

really needs to be from the University level. Those may not be general English, for example, when I did my master degree, we had an option to do business French as a module which is not only learning French, but for business language use. So perhaps the language centre of the University could specifically design and develop English for business purpose and for other subjects. Thus, the academics and students are not just talking about languages, but instead, they talk about English which is specific for the subjects that students are studying.

RES: So, what kind of performance the Chinese students had when you were teaching them in the classroom? I mean how they behaved in your classroom.

STA06: They are, generally, the most well behaved students within a group. They tend not to talk to each other within class, not to play mobile phones. They do take notes. They do lots of things that many other nationalities and even British students do not do. In my opinion, they are generally the most well behaved students within a class.

RES: Were their attendances good?

STA06: Yes, though there are one or two exceptions, generally, the Chinese student attendances are very good.

RES: If you organise a group work, probably you have said previously. In a group, initially they might be very shy, they wouldn't talk too much, and they wouldn't be a group leader. But gradually, after they realise that they can get benefits from the group work, they are involved actively. As an academic, do you have any suggestions on how to shorten this time period for Chinese students?

STA06: I think it is important for academics to get involved in the process. They can interact with the group, to make sure the group members get to know each other. The group needs to understand what the academics' expectations for the group are. Quite often the groups work OK.

RES: Another thing that I would like to have your comments is, do Chinese students use the information technology and social media efficiently? I mean, the university's IT facilities, for example, blackboard and on line library, even social media for academic studies, etc.

STA06: I can't really say I have noticed that much. I mean they need to use blackboard because that is where the key learning materials are. They need to use the internet as well to search for information to support their learning and their assessments.

RES: Did they email you quite often to ask you questions?

STA06: Very rarely. In my experience, the Chinese students prefer to meet face to face

with me, rather than using emails. But I am not sure that is the same for other staff, maybe because there is a little flavour of China in my office. Some Chinese things make them feel more comfortable.

RES: So you mean sometimes the Chinese students visit you in person at your office.

STA06: Yes.

RES: In my PhD studies, some academics use Facebook group to share information with the students, for example, by uploading the information of PhD events. And some of my PhD peers set up a WhatsApp group and offer some up to date news via this. Do you know if your Chinese students use these social media quite often?

STA06: I think generally when students from many nationalities working in a group for an assignment, they will create and use a social media group to keep in touch, WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, etc. There is a whole range of choices there. Generally with most students, they could use such kind of social media while working in a group or something. That is a very useful thing for them to have and to maintain communication working in a group. I would be happy to encourage it, but I would not use my personal Facebook account to create a Facebook group for them.

RES: Here comes a similar question to the Chinese students' daily life in the UK. In terms of your experience, what challenges in their academic studies the Chinese undergraduate students might come across? Perhaps you have talked of something around this topic.

STA06: I think it comes back to the idea of being able to think critically, to do independent learning as well. Because when they arrive in the UK, lots of Chinese students certainly expect classes to be delivered from 9 to 5 every day. When they got here, they realised actually there is a lot of "free time". It is not free time, but the time for Chinese students to do their own learning, reading, and their research independently. I think those two things, that is to say, critical thinking and independent learning, are probably two challenges specifically for Chinese students, because they tend not to come from a background where those things are very important.

RES: I agree with you entirely. Probably those are difference between different education systems. But can you please suggest how to develop the students' critical thinking abilities?

STA06: I think the best way to do it, is to explain what we mean by critical thinking. And then we use a number of different examples to show what we mean, so as to compare things like, for example, the descriptive versus critically evaluative within academia. From clear examples, they can really see the differences. And also the other aspect to it, is to provide examples of the typical Chinese classroom, we say "learning

by rote", by memorising from what academics say, to engage them in asking questions to academics. There was a TV programme a year ago on the BBC, which recorded the exchange of teachers at college level between China and the UK. the Chinese teachers went to a British school, and the British teachers went to a Chinese one. There were very clear differences between the students and teachers from the two countries. That would be a perfect example to show Chinese students, "Ok, we understand and we are aware of how teaching and learning works in China. This is how we work in the UK. And tell me what the difference that you can see is". Also we can get the students reflecting on that as well. So that would be a great example to use.

RES: Thanks for the advice. How to develop the students' abilities of independent learning?

STA06: Check the students' timetable. Let's see how many free hours a week they have, and help students develop a plan as to how they are going to use their time outside of their classes. You help them develop their time management skills. You get them really think about how they are going to use the time for independent learning. But what does independent learning mean? Again you can give them examples. First thing, they should read recommended textbooks and journals.

RES: Probably these are two main skills that Chinese students lack during their previous schooling in China. They have to develop these skills if they would like to adapt to British education system promptly.

STA06: I think it would be much helpful for the students if they had these supports and training prior to their departure for the UK. Because when Chinese students come to the UK to start their studies here, they have one week's induction which is strange to academics. There is not really lots of time to cover this stuff though it is obviously very important. So the best timing I think would be pre-departure because they are also managing student expectations correctly. So when they arrive in the UK, they do not have a big shock. They are prepared for critical thinking, independent studying and learning, and cultural awareness. In my opinion, the best time to do that is pre-departure, rather than post arrival.

RES: I realise you give lots of concern to the pre-departure training, as I noticed there has been four times you mentioned of this.

STA06: Quite often, in China recruitment trips, you have someone from the University who will be speaking about student life in the UK, like shopping, sports, and night life, etc.in a tiny city where the university is based. You also have academic staff giving a demo class. That is not a preparation for pre-departure but just giving an example of a lecture, because it is not preparing students in terms of these areas of cultural awareness, critical thinking, and independent learning. So from my experience of being in China for student recruitment tours, those things that are done

are interesting, but they are quite superficial. Cultural awareness should include things on how to interact with people in the UK, what to do in a situation where, for example, a toilet breaks or when meeting someone else, how to manage that in a way that is appropriate in the context of the British culture. Equally, all of this around culture awareness will apply to any of British person going to China. They need to be prepared pre-departure as well.

RES: the next two questions are the measures that should be taken. So the first one, what kind of measures for the business schools and the Universities should take to help Chinese students adapt into their daily life and academic studies?

STA06: I think lots of thing needs to be done pre-departure. But the question is that, who would actually manage that, the students or the universities, colleges, and schools where they are from, or the universities' branch offices in China? So the question is around responsibilities for the students' pre-departure supports.

Post arrival. We have already moved towards providing additional support specifically for Chinese students. That comes around my new role as the China link tutor, the member of staff that is responsible basically for looking after Chinese students when they are studying here. It is a personal tutor but also it is someone who understands the different routes in which Chinese students join the university. The person has background knowledge of different recruitment routes. He has the cultural awareness to be able to appreciate the perspectives of the students, (and understand the reason) why they have a particular issue or problem they might have. So that role has been in place since September 2017. The role is there, as a new supporting mechanism for the Chinese students. A number of other British universities don't have that kind of role. I think it is quite novel.

I also think the international office has a role to play in the post arrival as well. It is not just recruitment, but about providing support to students after they arrive.

I think strengthening links with the Chinese student society is also important, especially the business school which always has the biggest number of Chinese students.

I think at a wider level, the University and business school should strengthen the links with the local Chinese community, because we have a big Chinese community in Manchester. The university's emphasis is to engage with the local community. Chinese community is part of that obviously. To my understanding, the university and business school don't engage with them that much. If we can find out what the Chinese community needs, we can help them with teaching, consultancy, research or holding a joint event, etc. It is also required for business school to engage with the British Chinese business community. I think the more that the university and business school are involved in that wider Chinese community, the more opportunity that we can give to our Chinese students, for example, student internship, or part time jobs

within a local British Chinese firm. So this is a wide range of ways that we can support Chinese students.

RES: what kind of measures that the academic staff should take to help with the Chinese students' acculturation into academic studies?

STA06: I think probably they try as best as they can, given that they have limited resources. We also need to be very careful that we are not seen to be prioritising one group of students over another, simply because of their nationalities. But I think all academic staffs have a moral obligation to provide supports to any students. I also think we can do more to develop the academics' awareness of typical issues and challenges that Chinese students face when they come to the UK, for example, assessment, writing essays, etc., and of their own educational background, just like how it differs from the education system in the UK. So academics do the best they can with their limited resources. But the institutions can help their academics be more prepared, knowledgeable, and appreciative of Chinese students. Even, there may be little things like, showing the staff how or what is the best way of trying to pronounce the Chinese students' name without causing any offense. Even things like that, they think it might be very little, but it can go a long way. If you can pronounce a student's name correctly and remember that student's name, it can reassure the student that they are being trusted and appreciated.

RES: Thanks very much. Here comes the closing question. Are there any comments in terms of the interview that we just had to make me improve for the future interviews?

STA06: I think some of the questions are difficult for me to answer, for example, the social media one, because I don't know how to engage Chinese student into the social media from the University and business school. Perhaps you need to look it up onto the website because there is a student portal.

In general, I think your questions are good, very open, and well structured, allowing me to share my experience with you.

RES: Thanks a lot. Do you mind if I send you the transcript from the interview for your further comments?

STA06: Yes of course. Good luck with your research.