

**Chinese Immigrant Parents' Educational Expectations and School
Participation Experience**

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A thesis submitted to the Office of Graduate and Post Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

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Montreal, Quebec
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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-24892-8
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-24892-8

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Abstract

Recent years have witnessed the large number of Chinese immigrants in Canada. With the coming of those immigrants is the large number of school age children. Hence, immigrant families' educational expectations and parental participation in their children's schools become major educational concerns. This study focuses on recent Chinese immigrants' expectations of and concerns about their children's schooling.

Drawing from Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and Ogbu's social mobility theory, in this study, I used a qualitative interview methodology to explore the educational expectations and school involvement of five Chinese parents who had recently immigrated to Canada. The educational expectations for their children and school participation of these Chinese immigrants are deeply rooted in Chinese tradition and heritage and are also greatly shaped by their personal experiences in Canada. Their cultural values and beliefs and immigration experiences as visible minorities have had a great impact on their educational expectations. Language barriers and different cultural values between dominant mainstream and Chinese traditions are the two main factors that hinder immigrant parents' participation in school activities and hence in their children's schooling.

Résumé

Les récentes années ont été témoin de l'immigration d'un grand nombre de Chinois au Canada. Avec cette venue d'immigrants, un grand nombre d'enfants d'âge scolaire. Ainsi les attentes et la participation des parents à l'école de leurs enfants deviennent une inquiétude majeure de l'éducation pour ces familles d'immigrants.

Cette étude s'attarde sur les attentes aussi bien qu'aux inquiétudes par rapport aux écoles de leurs enfants. A partir de la théorie sur la capitalisation culturelle de Bourdieu et la théorie de la mobilité sociale d'Ogbu, j'ai utilisé la méthodologie qualitative pour explorer les attentes de l'éducation et leur rôle dans l'école de leurs enfants de cinq familles Chinoises qui ont récemment immigrées au Canada. Les attentes éducationnelles de leurs enfants et le rôle dans l'éducation de ces immigrants Chinois sont ancrés dans les traditions et l'héritage Chinois et prend forme de leurs expériences au Canada. Leurs valeurs culturelles et croyances et leurs expériences en tant que minorité visible ont eu un grand impact sur leurs attentes éducationnelles. Les barrières linguistiques et leurs valeurs culturelles différentes entre milieu dominant et traditions Chinoises sont deux des facteurs importants qui empêchent la participation active dans les activités scolaires des parents immigrants et par le fait même dans l'éducation de leurs enfants.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of my beloved father Hongtu and my dearest baby daughter Zipei.

My heart-felt appreciation and thanks to my supervisor, Professor Mary Maguire, for her passionate devotion, generous encouragement and valuable guidance. She will forever be the role model that I always look up to.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mother, Xiuying, for her unreserved love and never faltering confidence in me.

I would also like to express my deepest love to my dearest baby son, Ian. It is his birth into this world that has brought meaning and hope back to my life.

Last, but not least, I thank my husband, Hongtao, for his unconditional love, encouragement and support. Without him, I could never have gone so far in my academic study.

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Chapter 1

Chinese Perspectives of Education

Introduction

The increase in immigration has given rise to a record number of children who are raised in immigrant families in Canada. The increased presence of children from immigrant families in Canadian schools has recently become a subject of great public concern. Since 1967, the Canadian government adopted an immigration policy to admit immigrants based on their educational qualifications and profession, this policy brought new waves of Chinese immigrants from the 1990s. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2001, Mainland China has been one of the top three sources of Canadian immigrants since 1999. Even though the new immigration law came into effect on June 28, 2002, which raises the immigration selection bar, China showed no sign of giving up its place as the leading source country, contributing 9,373 new permanent residents in the first quarter of 2004.

Among the large influx of Chinese immigrants, most of them are middle age and possess either a university degree or higher degree in accordance with the requirement of the Canadian immigration law. These immigrants all received their education in China. Therefore, as the product of thousands years of Chinese educational heritage, accompanied by their spouses and children, they came to Canada. These differences may cause the educational discrepancies in educational

goals among these immigrants due to different educational systems. Because they came to Canada with different expectations and values, influenced by their own cultural values and beliefs, they may judge Canadian education methods, testing and other issues related to their children's education by their own standards and criteria. For instance, they may perceive that Canadian schools lack a well-defined instructional framework, guided by a systematic teaching model that co-ordinated with learning and that linked new knowledge to that previously learned (Dyson, 2001). Their life experiences and their immigration encounters as a visible minority may also alter their educational expectations. In addition, their school involvement may be hindered by their language proficiency, social economic status and minority status along with their perceptions of the Canadian educational structure.

Although some research has been conducted on the factors that affect immigrant children's academic performance, one factor that seems generally to be accepted as having a bearing on academic achievement is socioeconomic status. It has long been established that parents' socioeconomic status has strong and positive effects on children's achievement (Sewell & Hauser, 1975). However, socioeconomic status is only one of many aspects of human diversity that contribute toward educational achievement. It is likely that the high socioeconomic status of some immigrant families plays a role in the academic performance of their children. However, the success of other families who face

economic hardships suggests that socioeconomic factors alone can not explain why many children from immigrant families adjust successfully to American schools (Fuligni, 1997) and to Canadian schools. For an example, Cummins' research on language learning of minority students found that SES may have some influence on student achievement. However, it is evident that socioeconomic status has much less influence when grade-level academic work is provided in both students' primary language and English. In terms of language learning, the interaction between the language of instruction and the type of competence the child has developed in his native language prior to school may play a key role in his academic outcome.

An index of SES based on parental occupation provides inadequate protection against bias. Also matching only on overall stage of cognitive development is insufficient since there can be extremely large individual differences on cognitive variable within stage. (Cummins, 1979, p.229)

Despite the vast differences in academic achievement among immigrant children, there remains a popular belief that immigrant parents have higher educational expectations for their children than do mainstream parents and that these expectations translate into children's greater educational achievement (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998). Researchers have suggested that, of many family variables that contribute to children's school achievement, parental expectations are the most salient (Hoge, Smit, & Crist, 1997; Patrikakou, 1997; Pen & Wright, 1994; Seiginer, 1983).

Most studies have been done in schools in the United States and little researches have been done with Asian Canadians. In this ongoing research, I aim to explore the educational expectations of a selected sample of recent Chinese immigrants and their school participation within a Canadian context. My goals are: to uncover how Chinese immigrant parents perceive education while living in a dominant white culture and to describe how they do things from their perspectives, beliefs and desires. I focus on their expectations, striving for goals and meeting obstacles. In addition, I also aim to find out whether language barriers and different cultural values are the main factors that prevent Chinese immigrant parents' school participation.

Thus, the specific research targets and questions are as follows:

1. What expectations do Chinese immigrant parents hold for their children in Canada?
2. What are the factors that shape their expectations?
3. What are the factors that hinder parents' school involvement?

The thesis is divided into five chapters. As my study is about Chinese immigrant parents' perceptions of two educational systems and Chinese cultural heritage's influence on their educational perceptions, some basic knowledge of the Chinese educational system is warranted. In chapter one, I introduce the Chinese educational system and its educational goals, teacher selection, educational reform, relationship of family and school, curriculum, and educational

resources. In the next chapter, in order to understand the complex relationship between cultural values and beliefs and their influence on parents' educational anticipations and school participation, I draw on Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and Ogbu's social mobility theory as a theoretical framework to analyze parents' perceptions of their children's academic success. In the third chapter, I describe the qualitative research methods that I used in data collection. In chapter four, I describe the five parents who participated in my study, their views on cultural influence, career expectations, parenting styles, school satisfaction and school participation. In the last chapter, I present my conclusions and recommendation for further study.

As a new immigrant myself, I hope the study of parental expectations on their children's education will shed light on the crucial influence that parents can have on the academic success of their children's education. I aim to provide some useful information for schools, educators and policymakers to be proactive and take action to better understand one of the largest immigrant populations in Canada. I hope this information will meet their needs and encourage immigrant parents' school participation as well as contribute to the understanding of immigrant children's school performance.

Chinese Perspectives of Education

Purposes and goals of education

In Western liberal tradition, education is inextricably bound to ideas of self-knowledge and identity, as well as to empowerment, which means “becoming more than we are” (Young & Levin, 2002). The purpose and goals of Canadian public school systems are based on a broader child developmental model that emphasizes and encourages the development of children’s cognitive skills, analytical abilities, and creative and critical thinking (Sokoloff, 2004). Therefore, Canadian schools are expected to be places of learning and development for students where their needs are served.

In China, Confucius’ ideology about education has far reaching influence on Chinese people who deem education as the only means to move along the social class. Chinese people see education as paramount for being successful and competing in society. In traditional Chinese society, education is the only way that the children of poor and illiterate families can move out from their low social economic status, obtain a “proper” career and lead an average life in society.

The goals and policies of education in China have changed and improved with time and are entangled with Chinese history. Confucius’ educational theories and principles have had a historical importance and prevalent influence for over a thousand years of Chinese education, especially in the Chinese scholastic system. School became the means by which individuals from even the humblest

backgrounds could rise to great heights. Another Chinese philosopher, Mencius also believes: 劳心者治人 ,劳力者治于人(*Those who work with their heads will rule, while those who work with their hands will serve*). Their beliefs encourage students and parents to pursue education as a mechanism for a better life and high social status.

The concrete goals of educational development at all levels include: course reform with the aim of making basic education in China follow the development of the times so as to promote quality education in an all-round way with stress on the cultivation of students' creativity and practicality; improving the standard and quality of the universalization of Nine-Year compulsory education in the outlying poverty of the western region; by the end of 2007, the coverage of Nine-year compulsory education in the western region should reach 85%, and the gross enrolment rate of elementary secondary school should be above 90%; the illiteracy rate among the middle-aged and young should drop to below 5%; a financial system relevant to the public financial system should be established for education to ensure the sustained and stable increase of educational funds, and governments at central, provincial and local should build up the ability to guarantee the educational funds (Educational Development in China, 2004).

After the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, especially during the post-Mao Zedong era, the Chinese communist-party viewed education

as the foundation of the four Modernizations. The four Modernizations are the government's stated goals for rapid modernization in agriculture, industry, defence, and science and technology. The realization of the four modernizations chiefly depends on the education and academic quality and capability to train many scientists and engineers. In the early 1980s, science and technology education became an important focus of education policy. By 1986, training skilled personnel and expanding scientific and technical knowledge had been assigned the highest priority. China's schooling in the 1990s is a product of the post-Cultural Revolution generation of educational policy. The Chinese Compulsory Education Law went into effect on July 1, 1986; it stipulates that each child have nine years of formal education. To meet this requirement, a child will attend either five years of elementary education, followed by three years of junior middle school, or six years of elementary education, followed by three years of junior middle School.

Since the promulgation of the "Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China" in 1986, the 9-year compulsory education has been implemented by governments at various levels. The law called for a step-by-step implementation of nine year compulsory education, beginning with the urban areas by 1990, most rural area by 1995, and all "backward" areas by the end of this century (Yun & Bannister, 1995). The law has made significant progress that resulted in the increase of educational opportunities for children and the reduction

of the illiteracy rate among the population across the nation (Educational Development in China, 2004).

Although the law made education available and affordable for every child, there are still very high dropout and illiteracy rates in China's underdeveloped regions. With the rapid economic development, educational policies have to change in order to meet the economic needs of providing large number of skilled candidates to compete in the world market. As a consequence, there will be more changes and improvement in educational policies in China in the future.

Structure of schooling

The structure of China's basic education is a 6-3-3 pattern, consisting of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of middle school, and 3 years of high school. The regular academic school year is divided into two semesters of 38 - 40 weeks per year, with 12 weeks set aside for vacations in summer from July to August, and winter from New Year to February. Typically, parents pay certain fees per term for books and other study materials. Charges may vary from school to school and also depend on the region.

Generally speaking, curriculum planning and development in China is highly centralized and is governed by the Ministry of Education. As a result, schools across the nation use the same textbooks, syllabi, and curriculum. Although local level textbooks, materials, and syllabi have been encouraged more

since 1986, the centralized educational framework still dominates and the general curriculum tends to be uniform nationally (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China).

The Chinese educational system can be divided into 4 main levels: primary education including pre-school education and elementary education; secondary education divided into regular secondary education and vocational and technical secondary education; higher education and adult education. Primary and secondary education takes 12 years to complete.

The task of educating the Chinese population falls mainly on its primary schools, which are run by local government agencies. At present, basic education is provided by the governments at the county, township and administrative village's levels with the administrative power assumed by county and township governments and with major decision made by the county governments. A two-level education provision system has taken shape in which the central and local government will take different responsibilities to provide education with the former responsible for the overall planning and management so that the overlapping of education was overcome. At the same time, the government streamlines their administration, expanding their autonomy of providing education for the society according to the laws.

Unlike the highly centralized Chinese educational system, school systems in Canada are publicly funded and provincially controlled, which means

there are significant differences between the education systems of different provinces. Each provincial system, while similar to the others, reflects its specific regional concerns, and historical and cultural heritage. For example, in Quebec, school children must attend a French school up until the end of high school unless one of their parents previously attended an English-language school somewhere in Canada. This restriction of access to English schools is an effort to preserve French language and heritage. The length of study in Quebec is also slightly different from other provinces. While in Quebec, the typical high school term ends after Secondary 5, the equivalent to Grade 11 (age 17). Following this, students are encouraged to attend CEGEP (a college) as means of preparing for studies at the university level (Education in Canada on line).

Since the introduction of compulsory attendance legislation in Quebec in 1943, young people have been required to go to school everywhere in Canada (Young & Levin, 2002). Most provinces have created some form of local educational body-school boards or school districts at the discretion of each provincial government. They act according to provincial legislation and regulations. The final authority over most educational issues and decision-making remain at the provincial level with a Minister of Education. The role that each Minister of Education played at any particular period of time depends greatly on the overall priorities of the premier and the government, and on the abilities and capabilities that the minister can influence and implement these priorities.

In recent years, educational reform is ongoing in many Canadian provinces. One important element of the present educational reform in Quebec is a set of major changes in the elementary and secondary school curriculum. The curriculum reforms in Quebec share the same general orientation as reforms currently taking place in Canada. For instance, the reforms in elementary school curriculum include:

The elementary level will be broken down into three two-year cycles in order to better distribute learning content and prevent students from repeating grades. In the first cycle, there will be greater emphasis on the language of instruction (particularly reading and writing) and mathematics. French as a second language will continue to be taught as of Grade 1. English schools will be encouraged to continue using the immersion approach several of them have already adopted. In French schools, students will start taking English as a second language in Grade 3-earlier than in the past. New emphasis will be placed on the teaching of history from Grade 3 onward. History will include citizenship education to prepare students for their role as members of society. Arts education will continue to be compulsory starting in Grade 1 and will focus mainly on music and the visual arts (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport).

Resources of education

In the past, Chinese basic education followed a management model of school run by the state and rights centralized by the government. Investment in schooling is solely provided by the central government, which is consistent with Chinese highly centralized political and economic system. Since the 1980s, following the reform of the financial and economic system, the management system of Chinese basic education has been changing successively. The old

system in which the funding of higher education mainly depended on the central government has been changed and a new funding system is taking shape. It is gradually capable of pooling resources from diverse channels, such as school-generated funds, school fees, gifts and donations, and overseas and international aid and assistance.

In 1985, the central government made a “Decision on the Reform of Education System” intending to grant the responsibility of popularization of compulsory education and development of basic education to the local governments in order to produce “more able people” (Yang, 2002). Generally, the schooling system has been transformed into one that the nation level government, the township level government, and the village are responsible for financing senior secondary education, junior secondary education, and the primary education, respectively. The Chinese government resorted to general taxes and fee charges to expand financing capacities for basic education (Wang & Bergquist, 2003).

Thus, compulsory education now follows the principle of free tuition. However, it is not totally free tuition as there are some individual expenses such as fees for books. Although the scope and the standard of tuition and incidental expenses vary from region to region, the money from taxes and fee charged will work as an important financial source for urban and rural basic education.

Different from the Chinese education funding system, there is no national

system of education in Canada. The funding of Canadian education has changed dramatically since Canadian schools were first established. During the twentieth century, provincial governments took on a steadily increasing role in governing and financing public education. Tuition fees were eliminated and a growing share of costs was absorbed by provincial rather than local sources. In the past two decades, most provincial governments have eliminated local taxation by school boards in favour of providing most of the funding from provincial revenues.

Nowadays, still paid for with taxpayer money, the funding for the Canadian education system is controlled by provincial governments, which distribute money for books, supplies and teachers' salaries equally to all schools within their province. For instance, the Quebec provincial government funds all public schools. In 2005, Quebec government made a controversial decision to fully subsidize private Jewish schools by injecting 10-million more into the private Jewish school system and offer similar funding to other private schools. This decision has enraged the defenders of Quebec's nondenominational public school system. They thought that government should not spend more on private schools when the public system needs funds. Quebec already has one of the country's most generous public funding programs for the 100,000 students in private schools. Some fear that this latest initiative will undermine the quality of education for the one million public-school students (Seguin & Alphonso, 2005).

Teacher selection

Despite the long and rich heritage of education in China, the formal education of teachers is a relatively modern development that emerged only at the beginning of the 20th century. In old China, formal education was for the elite class, and teaching was seen to be simply a matter of transferring knowledge. In the new era, teacher education has been characterized by remarkable progress that has resulted in preparing a large number of qualified teachers and passing legislation to improve teacher education. In addition to improved qualifications, achievements were also evident in China's policies toward teachers (Guo, 2005). Especially in recent years, teaching has become an admirable profession in China. The central government has raised the salary for teachers several times, and teachers were granted a special allowance for housing and preferential treatment for medical care and pension.

Teacher education is an important part of the Chinese education system. The teaching force in China primarily comes from professional teaching schools, teachers colleges and universities (Ni et al., 2005). China has established a whole teacher education system that fits the Chinese specific situation and meets the needs of basic education at different levels.

Table 1

Basic Statistics of Specialized Teacher Training Schools in 1998

	Schools	Enrolments	Freshmen	Graduates	Teachers
Normal universities and colleges	229	693600	251100	196800	76600
Secondary teacher training schools	875	921100	319300	3058000	6340
Educational institutes	190	212000	82200	66200	18700
In-service teacher training schools	2087	371000	121600	168200	46300

Note: Data developed from China Educational and Research Network

There are two main levels of teacher education. One focuses on general higher teacher education, and the other focuses on regular secondary teacher education. General higher teacher education is mainly for the training of secondary school teachers. Teacher-training institutes and teacher training colleges enrol graduates from senior secondary schools. Four-year programs are offered for training senior secondary school teachers, two or three-year programs are offered to train junior secondary school teachers.

Regular secondary teacher education aims mainly to prepare teachers for primary schools, kindergartens and special education. In addition, regular secondary teacher education also offers optional courses of special education so as to prepare their graduates to help handicapped children learn (China Education

Research Network).

Admission to school for regular secondary teacher education is not very demanding and strict. Usually students with average grades can get admitted. The admission requirement of teacher training colleges and institutes is comparatively high. In order to get admitted to the normal institute students must take a national entrance exam. However, meeting the requirements doesn't guarantee admission due to the large number of applicants. Recently, there is a trend that the requirement of the normal institute is becoming higher due to the large number of high school graduates and the rather promising assured placements in teaching positions. In China, with more college/university graduates, the job market becomes very competitive and the job placement is very attractive for most students.

Compared with the large Chinese population, the number of teachers cannot meet the demands of realizing a compulsory 9-year education system. In order to cope with the shortage of qualified teachers, in 1985 the State Education Commission decreed that senior-middle-school teachers should be graduates with two years' training in professional institutes and that primary-school teachers should be graduates of secondary schools (China, Education and Culture on line). In 1995, the state council passed and implemented regulations on teachers' qualification in which the standards for selecting teachers are strictly regulated. It requires that teachers must have a certificate before taking teaching positions.

In order to attract more students to become teachers, the Chinese government made efforts to improve the teacher's situation of relatively low social status and salary levels. The central government even designated September 10 as "teachers' day" to make teaching a desirable and respected profession. It is estimated with the anticipated decrease in primary-school enrolments, the demand for teachers will drop to some extent.

Curriculum

In China, traditionally the unified national curriculum is applied in every school. It played and continues to play a very crucial role in developing teaching materials, improving the quality of both teaching and teacher training.

The current curriculum of senior secondary schools consists of two parts: subjects courses and activities. Subjects taught in senior secondary schools are divided into obligatory ones and optional ones. Activities include out of class activities and practice activities. Although there are two parts of the curriculum in education, almost all schools pay great attention to courses that will be tested on the exam, such as math and science. Courses such as arts and physical education that are not tested, are usually ignored or have no place in a school's curriculum. Schools at all levels aim to prepare their students for competition with students from other schools. This outdated curriculum system hinders the development and the innovation of teaching methods and the design of new teaching materials. The traditional course-marks oriented education system, and the outdated teaching

materials and classroom-based spoon-feeding teaching methods are a major hindrance to cultivating students' creativity (Ning, 1997).

In 1999, the Chinese Ministry of Education began to reform its test-focused curriculum and aimed to design a new one for the 21st century. According to the new curriculum, children at the age of six should enter the primary school. In areas where junior secondary education has been basically universalized, all primary school graduates may enter nearby junior secondary schools without taking an entrance examination. However, those graduates from junior secondary schools seeking to continue their education in senior secondary schools have to sit for and pass locally organized entrance examinations before admission.

According to the Ministry of Education's (2001) Guidelines on Curriculum Reform of Basic Education, the emphases in the curriculum reform will be placed on moral education, scientific and technological education (including information technology), art education, environmental education, and comprehensive practical activities (Huang, 2004). The reform tends to set curriculum that aims at character building and the production of physically and emotionally healthy citizens. Therefore, the curriculum should be comprehensive, balanced, and selective. The reform also aims to construct and develop textbooks that appear unrelated to the students' lives and that fail to meet the specific needs of schools and students in different areas. It tries to change the tendency to

overemphasize knowledge/memory in curriculum assessment, receptive learning, mechanical memory and passive imitation in the teaching process.

As a result of the efforts of improving the current curriculum, the national entrance exam also made many changes to encourage the reform of the curriculum. Unlike before, the test is not used by all provinces. Some provinces even received the authority to have their own test designed and they are setting their own admission requirements. The centralized system of curriculum management is being replaced gradually by national, local and school level curriculum to ensure the overall quality of basic education and improve its adaptability.

Teaching methods

In China, Confucius played a very critical role in the way that children are educated. According to Confucius teaching theories and principles, the role of the teacher is to preach, lecture and answer questions. A Chinese educator, Han Yu also believed: 师者传道授业解惑也 (*A teacher is to propagate the doctrines of the ancient sages, give academic instructions, and remove doubts in life*). However, the last role of the teacher answering questions has been neglected by most teachers due to the traditional Chinese assumptions that the young should never doubt the old, and the elderly have all the wisdom to make a decision.

Teaching methods are also greatly influenced and decided by curriculum

structure. Due to the far-reaching influence of a unified national curriculum, the teacher-centered classroom based spoon-feeding method is the technique that most teachers and schools use. The traditional belief is that repetition is a route to understanding that results in a tendency to mould the learner's response into a required form prior to analytical understanding (Hess & Azuma, 1991). This custom of learning traditional knowledge and skills through repetition is a powerful socializing technique, designed to transmit adult norms that are unchanged and used in societies that are relatively closed and resistant to change. For instance, the imperial exam system which had been the major means to select candidates in old China, offered a path of upward mobility to anyone who could survive the rigors of study and examinations. It only tests the candidate on his knowledge of the Classics (the Book of Changes, the Classic of Poetry, the Classic of History, the Classic of Rites, the Spring and Autumn Annals, the Great Learning, the Analects of Confucius, the Works of Mencius and the Doctrine of the Mean), and the ability to compose poetry on given subjects using set poetic forms and calligraphy. Repetition and memorization of the Classics were highly emphasized and critical thinking and the ability to analyze were not required.

The teacher-centered classroom based spoon-feeding method is also termed as a Chinese Virtuoso Model of teaching. This term was first created by Paine who argues that in the Virtuoso Model, the teacher resembles a musician.

She or he performs for the whole class and the students become the audience. The focus in teaching is on performance, and the goal is to produce an outstanding and Virtuoso performance (Paine, 1990). In this teacher-centered method, the text book is the source of knowledge and the teacher as the presenter of that knowledge stands center stage in transmitting the knowledge. This teaching method not only treats both teachers and students passively, but also restricts the opportunities for students to develop their creative thinking and pursuit of individual interests.

As products of the Chinese educational system, children in China seldom work independently or in small groups. On one hand, it is because most Chinese classrooms have so many students. An average class size in China is approximately 40-50 students. The classroom is usually occupied with limited space for students to walk and to play. Therefore, western collaborative learning methods are difficult to employ. Most teachers do not make lesson plans or use many visual aids for their classes due to the limited teaching resources. Instead, the emphasis is upon teacher-centered and total group instruction. Text books are determined by the nation or the province. Schools and teachers have little freedom to teach what they want, and they usually come to class and read directly from textbooks, occasionally writing on the blackboard. This teacher directed/centered teaching method is not only used in kindergarten but also applied at all levels of education, even in higher education.

All children and students are expected to do the same thing at the same time, and all students are expected to develop at the same pace. The strong focus in Chinese education emphasizes teaching information that can be tested and memorized. That explains why Chinese students have very strong memorization skills, excellent math and science backgrounds, a large foreign language vocabulary, and very good English grammar. However, students lack creativity. This can be seen from overseas Chinese students and the challenges they face in western learning contexts. They can work well independently but lack the skills for group work and cooperation. Most students have a very good knowledge of English grammar but they do not have the practical ability to communicate with foreigners. As a consequence, complaints can be heard that once Chinese students are asked about their ideas, they are reluctant to express them due to their own traditional teaching methods.

Evaluation, grading and testing

An examination is the primary assessment tool in China. Before the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act, elementary school students had to pass the tests which are usually held at the end of sixth grade in order to graduate and move into middle school. Due to the implementation of the Act, the exam for admission to middle school was obsolete. Today, students are assigned to the school district according to their home location. However, the examination is still a principal process to determine whether a student can gain entrance to a

better high school and for high school students to enter a higher ranked college or university.

In primary schools, the Chinese language and mathematics are the required examination subjects for graduation. In secondary schools, the graduate examination subjects are determined within the scope of the general subjects taught in the graduating class set by the state.

The grading system in Chinese education is a numerical percentage grading system. Chinese believe that a percentage system can show the distinction between different levels of students. The use of numerical grading system not only emphasizes the difference among students but it also makes the grading more complicated and confusing when students want to apply for overseas schools. It is no wonder that some wise educators argue that the percentage system, which does more harm to students than the letter system, should be replaced by the letter system. Great changes have been made. Because of the many advantages of the letter system, more and more schools are trying to switch their percentage grading system to the letter grading system. Twenty percent of China's colleges were using the letter system in 1996, but there were no schools using the letter system ten years ago (Zhang, 1997).

Chinese education emphasizes competition more than dissemination. For Chinese students, scores are their fates and mean everything to them. In a survey done by Chinese Communist Youth League Central Committee and the Chinese

Association for Science and Technology, nearly 75% of school children think the goal of studying is just to enter a higher learning institution (Ning, 1997). For some students of low social-economic backgrounds, if their score in the national entrance exam was below the minimum admission requirement, they do not have a second chance to get into college.

Great changes have been made. The State Education Commission called on schools across the country to turn the long-standing examination dominated teaching system into an educational system which is aimed at helping students develop in an all-round way-morally, physically and intellectually (Ning, 1997).

Parents, family and school

For generations, the Chinese traditionally attach importance to family education. They believe that parents are the first teachers of their children. Therefore, the action of parents has a great influence on their children. Because of this belief, in China teachers and parents communicate a lot and this eliminates a lot of problems. Some communication between parents and school takes place informally when parents walk young children to school or pick them up. However, there are also some formal modes of communication. At the beginning and the end of each semester, there is a meeting organized by schools for parents to become informed about the academic progress and the development of their children. A visit from teachers to the homes of the students used to be done once a school year. Nowadays, this mode of communication seems to be out of date and

unrealistic. The exchange between school and home in China, apparently so much more fluid and continuous than that in Canada, may be the result of the more stable and tighter organization of Chinese neighbourhoods. Contemporary China can still be regarded as the perfect example of a collective culture. Confucianism promoting the collective welfare and harmony as the ultimate goal of society has been dominant over thousands of years of Chinese history and tradition. Harmony, equality, social commitment and peace are the ultimate goals of society. The whole society is just like a big family in which every one has some connection to others. Schools generally seem to be less isolated from homes in China than they are in the West. For instance, in western society, school is considered the main venue where knowledge and skills are transmitted. While in China, school is more like the extension of family; students spend more time at school with teachers and other students than at home. Parents can go to school anytime to express their concerns about their children without appointment or other restrictions.

Chinese parents also believe that teachers have the authority to punish children if it is in the best interests of their children. Parents, teachers and school work together to closely monitor the children's development and progress. Teachers usually make phone calls to parents to inform parents of problems and difficulties that may have arisen at school. Small notebooks are passed back and forth between parents and schools to communicate what had happened at home and school.

Educational reform

With its economic development and more contact with the world, the Chinese central government is trying to reform its outdated educational system to meet the needs of economic development in order to survive and compete internationally. They are trying to change from an examination-oriented education to a quality-oriented education system with the intention of developing students in an all-round way and focusing on cultivating and developing students' creativity, critical thinking and practical skills.

Because of the implementation of the nine year compulsory education law, the goal to eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people has been realized. China has shifted its focus towards experimenting with new methods to improve the quality of compulsory education by relieving students of the examination burden and stressing quality-oriented education which includes the development and trial of new curriculum with information technology and social practice courses such as field research. Another important step in China's basic education reform is the large input of mammoth state financing. In addition to increasing teachers' incomes, the central government also appropriated 3 billion Yuan to renovate run-down school buildings in rural areas in the next two or three years. China has set 2010 as the time to achieve its basic educational goals, which is to catch up with the educational standard of the world's relatively developed countries (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China).

In the future, the educational work in China will follow the principle of consolidating existing achievements, deepening reform, improving quality and pursuing sustainable development to promote the overall, healthy, rapid and sustainable development of education of various forms and at all levels (China Education and Research Network). In addition to the basic educational system reform, the Chinese government also attaches great importance to the reform of higher education. One aspect of the reform is the increase of international cooperation and exchanges of students and teachers. The Chinese government adopted the policy of “supporting students to study overseas”. However, it encourages them to come back after finishing their studies and guarantees freedom for students to come and go (Ministry of Education of The People’s Republic of China). By this policy, large numbers of students come back and serve the country in various fields after completing their overseas studies.

Summary

This decade has witnessed a large increase of immigration to Canada. This immigration stimulates Canada’s growth, economic prosperity and cultural diversity. The increased presence of children from immigrant families in Canadian schools has recently become a subject of great public concern. Since 1999, China has become the leading source country in providing immigrants to Canada. These immigrants may have different perceptions of Canadian school systems due to

their own unique oriental cultural values and beliefs, therefore, my study focuses on Chinese immigrant parents' perceptions on their children's education and their school involvement in Canadian context.

In order to understand Chinese immigrants' educational perceptions, it is essential to have a general understanding of the Chinese educational system. Therefore, in this chapter I briefly introduced several features of the Chinese educational system, its educational goals, Chinese schooling structure, educational resources, teacher's selection, curriculum, Chinese teaching methods, the relations between family and school and Chinese testing system.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Role of Schooling as Cultural and Social Reproduction

In recent years, much research has been done on the factors that affect immigrant children's school performances. Those factors include parental social economic status, peer relationships and language proficiency. In this chapter, I focus on Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and Ogbu's social mobility theory to explain why as a visible minority, students of Chinese immigrants, can achieve excellent academic attainment.

Researchers such as Lee and Burkam (2002) have pointed out that parents' social economic status is relevant to educational success. However, financial resources are not the only kind of parental resources that offer an explanation of the relationship between parental social background and children's' educational outcomes. The economic capital assumption argues that well-to-do parents are able to offer their children access to more privileged, better schools and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, it is likely that youngsters from high income families can afford the opportunity costs that are involved in extended educational careers and tend to invest more time and effort in schooling (Boudon, 1974). But it takes more than financial resources to do well in school. A theory of cultural capital theory formulated by Bourdieu suggests that the greater quantity of cultural resources of privileged parents will definitely have great effect on

educational attainment by helping their children master the curriculum that is pervasive in school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Capital, as Bourdieu (1984) defines, it is “the set of actually useable resources and powers” which exist in many types-as economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital” (p.114). Bourdieu also distinguished three forms of cultural capital: objectified capital, institutionalized cultural capital and embodied cultural capital:

Cultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties which are defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality. The Institutionalized State. The objectification of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications is one way of neutralizing some of the properties it derives from the fact that, being embodied, it has the same biological limits as its bearer. The Embodied State. Most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e. , in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, Bildung, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labour of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor. (Bourdieu, 1983, p.243-244)

In this research, I mainly focus on the second form of cultural capital - institutionalized cultural capital, which develops as a result of one’s having embodied cultural capital and successfully converted it via the educational system. Bourdieu argued that school draws unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of the society. For example, schools utilize particular linguistic structures, authority patterns, types of curricula and value certain cultures;

children from higher social locations enter schools already familiar with these social arrangements (Bourdieu, 1977).

One of Bourdieu's major insights into educational inequality is that students with more valuable social and cultural capital do far better in school than do their otherwise-comparable peers with less valuable social and cultural capital:

By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture. (Bourdieu, 1973, p.80)

Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and cultural capital posits that the culture of the dominant class is transmitted and rewarded by the educational system. Cultural capital is comprised of "linguistic and cultural competence" and a broad knowledge of culture that belongs to members of the upper classes and is found much less frequently among the lower classes. Differences in cultural capital are reinforced by an educational system that prefers these styles, leaving most members of the lower classes with little hope of achieving social mobility. Cultural capital serves as power resources, or a way for groups to remain dominant or gain status (Dumais, 2002).

Some other theories also claimed that existing social inequalities tend to be reproduced independent of intelligence or capacity. The educational system is assumed to occupy a key position in this process (Driessen, 2001). This

perspective points to the structure of schooling and to family life and the dispositions of individuals to understand different levels of parental participation in schooling. The standards of schools are not neutral; their requests for parental involvement may be laden with the social and cultural experiences of intellectual and economic elites (Lareau, 1987).

Of all Bourdieu's concepts and theories, cultural capital has become the most popular and thoroughly examined by sociologists of education. It is believed that "academic success is directly dependent upon cultural capital and on the inclination to invest in the academic market" (Bourdieu, 1973, p.96). Within the dominant classes, teachers seem to have the most cultural capital, value it, and tend to reward students who possess it (Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio and Useem, 1978). Bourdieu (1973) contends that the school system rewards students who have cultural capital; the ultimate reward is in the form of educational credentials (institutionalized cultural capital). However, along the way, students with higher cultural capital receive better grades and more attention and feedback. Children who have more cultural capital feel more comfortable in school, communicate easily with teachers and are therefore more likely to do well in school (De Graaf et al., 2000). Students from the lower class are perceived to have less cultural capital than those from higher class and are unlikely to succeed educationally (Bourdieu, 1973).

Bourdieu also argued that schools reflect and are responsive to the

cultural orientations of the dominant class. As a result, the elite children, strongly socialized at home to their class culture, come to school with dispositions that distinctly “fit” the cultural biases of this institution and are rewarded in school for their particular cultural orientations. The socially privileged receive better grades in school, perform better on standardized tests, and earn higher degrees. Because education is the predominant pathway to economic success, it is hard to overestimate the significance of the connection between social privilege and academic success (Kingston, 2001).

Central to Bourdieu’s theory is the cultural transmission of social inequality. He argues that cultural capital can not be acquired at school and the school can not diminish differences in the amount of capital across groups of students.

For immigrant children, who are raised in a non-dominant mainstream social background, their parents’ cultural values and beliefs have great influence on their perspectives of the society. Research has well documented that students’ cultural lifestyles are strongly transmitted from one generation to the next (DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Kraaykamp and Nieuwbeerta, 2000). Therefore, when children come to school and compete with children of the dominant class, the lack of prevailing cultural capital may discourage their participation and accomplishment in education, and their values may be ignored and misunderstood. All of these may ultimately lead to their academic failure.

Although there has been a large amount of focus on cultural capital, no real consensus has been reached among educational researchers regarding an operationalization of cultural capital. Even Bourdieu, who coined the term, was not entirely clear about its meaning (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). According to Lamont and Lareau (1998), cultural capital can be seen as institutionalized; it consists of widely shared high-status cultural signals (such as behaviours, tastes, and attitudes) that are used for social and cultural exclusion. Therefore, the dominant status groups and social classes use their power to maintain and create structural conditions to protect their interests. Accordingly, schools are fashioned to guarantee the success of students from these privileged groups. Mohr and DiMaggio defined cultural capital as “prestigious tastes, objects, or styles validated by centers of cultural authority, which maintain and disseminated societal standards of values and serve collectively to clarify and periodically revise the cultural currency” (Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995, p.168).

Cultural capital has a lot to do with educational outcomes. Some researchers have found strong support for a cultural capital effect on education attainment (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr 1985; Farkas et al., 1990; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996). For example, in their research Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) claimed that students with more endowments of cultural capital from families with the skills and preferences of the dominant culture are better able to decode the implicit rules of the game, and are able to adapt and further develop

the cultural skills and preferences rewarded in schools, and hence are better able to negotiate their way through the highest educational levels. Immigrant children may bring to school a style of learning that is quite different from the one emphasized by the public school. Therefore, their styles of learning, interacting and funds of knowledge may not be rewarded and valued by school. Even though, as Gonzalez & Moll et al.'s study (1993) illustrates, teachers were informed about the children's cultures and values at home, they still could not feel connected to them, not to mention appreciating and understanding their values and beliefs. It became apparent that, although worthwhile information about the forms and functions of the households was being transmitted to the teachers through the study groups, true ownership of the data was not taking place. Teachers were disconnected from the actual context of the households.

Several researchers have found positive effects of parental cultural capital on children's educational attainment (Crook, 1997; De Graaf, 1986; Ganzeboom et al., 1990; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp 1996; Niehof 1997; Teachman 1987). Families endowed with strong capital can ensure this advantage for their offspring. Advantages deriving from cultural capital acquired in childhood cannot be caught up with later-not even in school. Teachers can communicate more freely with students who participate in elite status cultures, give them more attention and assistance and perceive them as more intelligent and gifted than students lack of cultural capital (DiMaggio, 1982). These findings further confirm Bourdieu's

cultural capital principle that parental cultural capital works especially for children from high socio-economic backgrounds.

However, Bourdieu's cultural capital framework doesn't satisfactorily explain the academic success of most Asian Americans. Although they may seem to lack the cultural capital that students of high socioeconomic origins possess, Asian American students outperform their counterparts from more privileged backgrounds (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Researchers have to explain the Asian phenomenon as an exception shaped by unique Asian values. Cultural values, in particular the Asian value of education, high expectations of Asian parents, respect for authority, emphasis on learning and their belief in hard work and effort, have been invoked to explain Asian American academic success (Schneider & Lee, 1990). Meanwhile, Ogbu's social mobility theory is another theoretical term that can be used to elucidate the academic performance Asian Americans have achieved as visible minorities.

Hodgkinson (1962) sees social mobility concerns as the movements of individuals or groups from one rank to another. Ogbu (1995) outlines two minority types with distinctive cultural frames of reference that interact in contrasting ways with upward social mobility. Involuntary minority groups, like African American, arrive through enslavement or colonization and perceive their cultural distinctiveness from white Americans as stigmatizing. They develop a new sense of social or collective identity that is in opposition to the social identity of the

dominant group after they have become subordinated. Involuntary minority groups do so in response to their treatment by White Americans in economic, political, social, psychological, cultural, and language domains. Therefore, many youth from these involuntary groups question whether education can serve as a channel of mobility. They are afraid if they study hard or get good grades at school or behave like white, they will lose their own identity.

Unlike involuntary immigrants, voluntary minorities are people who have moved into a host society more or less voluntarily. They seem to bring to the United States a sense of who they are from their homeland and seem to retain this different but non-oppositional social identity, at least during the first generation. They also tend to have instrumental attitudes toward their host society and its institutions. Such attitudes enable them to accept and even anticipate prejudice and discrimination as the price of achieving their ultimate objectives (Ogbu, 1978). Voluntary minorities do not perceive learning the attitudes and behaviours of dominant groups required for school success as threatening to their own culture, language and identities (Ogbu, 1992). They even respond in ways that do not discourage them from doing well in school. They rationalize the prejudice and discrimination against them by saying that as guests in a foreign land, they have no choice but to tolerate prejudice and discrimination (Ogbu, 1987).

Some cultural ecologists argue that “voluntary minorities” like Asian Americans succeed because they see the acquisition of school knowledge and

competence in the dominant culture as additional skills to be drawn upon rather than a replacement for their primary culture (Ogbu, 1987; Gibson 1988). Their instrumental attitudes lead them to view school as a means for acquiring the skills necessary for good jobs (Ogbu, 1978). Since their cultural frame of reference is their home country, where they face harsher environments, they are optimistic that their offspring will experience upward mobility. Asian immigrant parents hold positive attitudes toward public education and this can be seen in students' instrumental and symbolic adaptive responses (Ogbu, 1987).

It is due to Asian Americans' success in United States, in the 1960s, Asian Americans were labelled as a model minority. Asian immigrants in the United States are even sometimes painted as the latest, truest embodiments of American values, which "native" Americans (Whites) have unfortunately abandoned. Asians and Asian Americans both are characterized as hardworking, disciplined, academically inclined; Confucian family values and respect for education are frequently cited as causes of their success (McKay & Wong, 1996).

Ogbu's social mobility theory contends that being a member of a racial minority group does not predict school performance. Rather, it is the terms of the group's incorporation into the mainstream society and the group's social position in that society that predicts and explains school performance. Ogbu (1995) characterizes Chinese Americans as a voluntary minority group who have found it possible to maintain a "positive dual frame of status mobility" since their life in

United States will likely surpass the status they had in their country of origin. Chinese middle class parents, however, did not rely solely on school, It was equally important to them that the learning process extend well beyond what could be gained in a school setting (Louie, 2001). Thus, Chinese parents monitored their children's free time, assigned supplementary homework, and offered help in math and science, regardless of their economic conditions. Chinese parents in Montreal want their children to have more knowledge than their peers, and their involvement in their children's schooling include insisting on extra curriculum and assistance with homework (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003). They also enrolled their children in music programs, summer programs and language school. Their involvement extended will beyond the early years of schooling into college. Chinese immigrant parents not only take their children on summer tours of various colleges, but they also engaged enthusiastically in the process of college application and express their opinions about choosing schools. In Chinese families, denying their children the educational opportunity was rarely considered.

Clark (1983) and Havighurst and Neugarten (1971) have argued that a family's overall cultural style, not the parents' marital status, educational level, income, or social class, greatly determines whether children are prepared to perform well in school. Immigrants who restart their life in a host country as parents have to face two life cycles, their own and their children's. Drawn from

my own immigration experience and as a new parent, I deeply perceive that a family's cultural life style plays a pivotal role in their children's school performance.

Studies on School Performance Of Immigrants' Children

According to Statistics Canada, nearly one school-age children in five in Toronto and Vancouver are new arrivals. Of the 1.8 million immigrants who arrived during the 1990s, 309,700, or 17%, were school children aged between five and sixteen. The large number of immigrant children in the educational system constitutes an important issue for educators and schools; in addition, it also presents challenges to local school boards, as many newcomers come from diverse cultural backgrounds (Statistics Canada).

Table 2

*Proportion of 1990s immigrant children in school-age population
municipalities of Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver census metropolitan areas*

Municipalities	Total school-aged population	1990s' immigrant children as percentage of total school-age population
MONTREAL CMA	512,450	6.9
Urban Community	231,965	12.4
Saint-Laurent	10,550	25.2
Montréal	119,820	14.0
TORONTO CMA	752,575	17.0
Toronto	347,380	23.2
Markham	35,775	19.9
Richmond Hill	23,215	19.4
Mississauga	109,010	19.0
VANCOUVER CMA	292,605	17.3
Richmond	24,815	32.5
Burnaby	25,730	28.6
Vancouver	59,215	23.6
Coquitlam	19,045	22.1

Note: Data developed from Statistics Canada, 2001

In Table 2, we can see the cities of Toronto, Markham, Richmond Hill and Mississauga had proportionally higher numbers of new immigrants (one in

four) in their school-age populations. The city of Richmond had the highest proportion of newcomers (32 per cent) in its school-age population. Nearly three in 10 children in Burnaby in this age group were newcomers, as were 24 per cent in Vancouver, 22 per cent in Coquitlam and 11 per cent in Surrey. Twelve per cent of school-age children were immigrants who came in the 1990s. But within the Montreal Urban communities, Saint-Laurent had the highest proportion of newcomers (25 per cent) in their school-age population (Statistics Canada).

The visibility and importance of this young population is heightened because of its concentration in a few major metropolitan areas. This influx of immigrant children into the Canadian public school system has generated a great deal of concern about their school success and adaptation. This concern about divergent patterns of immigrant children's educational progress and achievement has led to large scale research of how well immigrant children do at school. Among the large number of immigrants in Canada, the Chinese still remain in leading position. The Chinese have become one of the largest groups of immigrants in Canada. Between 1980 and 2000 nearly 800,000 Chinese immigrants landed in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). They now account for 20% of Canada's total immigration in-take. After English and French, Chinese has become the third most-spoken language in Canada (Wang & Lo, 2004).

Studies have shown that students from homes in which their parents

presumably had limited experience with American schools and where English was spoken less frequently received significantly higher grades than their peers from mainstream families in both their mathematics and English courses (Fuligni, 1997). Research also shows that educational achievement predicts continuation in school and future educational attainment (Dugan, 1976). A great deal of research in the sociology of education has focused on the extent to which the effects of family SES on educational attainment are mediated, enhanced, or neutralized by the school contexts in which children find themselves (Griffin & Alexander 1978; Ianni, 1989; Raudenbush & Bryk 1989). Sue and Okazaki (1990) contend that there are two general hypotheses to explain Asian-American academic achievement. One invokes the idea that Asians are better equipped for schooling or more skilled than their white counterparts. While the second argues that there is something distinctive in the value system or the behaviour of Asians that promotes successful outcomes in school. In my study, I focus on the latter explanation to explore the influences of the Chinese value system and in particular the unique Asian culture's emphasis on education on their children's academic success.

The Relationship of Parents' Educational Expectations and School Performance

Among a whole set of factors that enhance academic success, including economic resources, family background, peer support, parenting style, parental

values and norms, and the student's own attitudes and behaviours are all possible sources that may have great impact on the academic success of children from immigrant families. As Yanagisako puts it, immigrants may construct their own versions of tradition as they reconceptualize the past to make sense of current experiences and to speak to current dilemmas and issues. These "invented traditions can have a life of their own in that immigrants may interpret and act upon the present in light of their models of the past" (Yanagisako, 1985, p.158).

The last decade has seen a remarkable increase in Asian immigration to Canada. Since 1990s, large groups of Chinese immigrants came to Canada under the category of skilled workers. Generally there are three broad categories of immigrants to Canada: (1) economic immigrants (2) immigrants accepted for family reunion, and (3) those admitted on humanitarian grounds. In the first category, skilled workers/professionals are admitted to Canada based on their skills, education, language ability and occupational experience. They must score a minimum mark required by the Canadian immigration system. As a result of the immigration system, most Chinese immigrants, especially those arriving in the 1990s, were well educated. Relatively speaking, the immigrants from Mainland China exhibited higher educational qualifications than those from other origins, primarily because of the education requirement in the immigration points system (Wang & Lo, 2004).

Almost all Chinese immigrants under the skilled worker category are

well educated and received their degrees back in China. Therefore, as products of the Chinese educational system, like their parents and ancestors they may ground their expectations for their children in Chinese traditions and cultural heritage. They may hold very high educational expectations for their children even though they have been greatly assimilated and integrated into Canadian society. Immigrants do not exactly reproduce their old cultural patterns when they move to a new land; but these patterns continue to have a powerful influence in shaping family values and norms as well as actual patterns of behaviour that develop in the new setting (Foner,1997).

Chinese immigrant parents have high expectations for their children, reflecting both immigrant optimism and pessimism about their children's outcomes (Louie, 2001). These high levels of immigration have been accompanied by high levels of educational attainment. Asian Americans have a higher likelihood than Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks of entering and staying in school (Louie, 2001). Asian American students tend to score consistently higher on standardized tests of mathematics ability, have higher grade point averages, and attend four-year colleges at higher rates than do students of other races (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991; Hsia 1988; Zhou & Bankston 1994). They outrank all other groups in GPA and math SAT scores, surpass the national average in college graduation rates, and are more likely to pursue further education (Esiritu, 1997; Hsia 1988; Sue & Okazaki, 1990) in the United States.

In Canada, according to one of Statistics Canada's study which assessed the academic performance of Canadian-born children of immigrant parents from 1994 to 1998, while these children are more likely to start school with less-developed reading, writing and mathematics skills than their classmates with Canadian-born parents, the gap between the two groups disappears before the end of elementary school (Statistic Canada).

The conclusion of some research that many Asian American ethnic groups share educational aspirations that are higher than those of Whites (Goyette & Xie, 1999), may seem quite generalized and may be context specific. However, Asian Americans do view education as the best means to overcome discrimination and other barriers to achieving high social status (Xie & Goyette 1998). Asian American parents and their children also differ from other racial and ethnic groups in their strongly expressed views of academic achievement as an avenue of social mobility and, quite possibly, as the only available avenue (Hsia & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989; Steinberg, Dornbursch & Brown, 1992). It is well-documented that Asian American children are more likely than children of other racial and ethnic groups to equate good grades with parental satisfaction and to share their parents' expectations (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Asian American parents are more likely than white parents to use their resources to enhance their children's education by such means as supervising their activities outside of school, assigning additional homework task,

providing a place to study in the home, and investing in private lessons (Kao, 1995, Schneider & Lee, 1990). Their parents, in general, are more supportive of learning and provide them with greater learning opportunities, assistance and pressure of learning (Schneider & Lee, 1990).

However, our knowledge of the factors responsible for the great academic achievement of Asian American is incomplete. The educational success of children of Asian immigrants has been a puzzle to sociologists largely because it defies conventional socioeconomic predictors of academic achievement. Asian immigrant students constantly outperform ethnic groups from the same or higher socioeconomic status. Numerous comparative studies have reported that, regardless of social class and family economic background, Asian students have higher SAT scores, higher grade-point averages, more years of schooling completed, and a lower dropout rate than European Americans and other ethnic groups (Kim & Chun, 1994). It is plausible that the high educational expectations of Asian American positively affect their test scores (Chan et al., 1997). In a series of studies done by Stevenson and Stigler (1992), they argued that Asian parents generally have much higher academic expectations than do Caucasian parents. They contended that cultural beliefs about the connection between effort and educational success are manifested in Asian American and it can best explain the academic success of most Asian Americans in the United States.

Goyette and Xie (1999) reason and conclude that the culture in Asian

countries believe that educational goals are achievable through effort therefore, parents usually push their children to attain as much education as possible. Curdt-Christiansen's study (2003) on Chinese parents in Quebec also confirmed that they hold strong expectations and aspirations for their children's success in education. China is an ancient civilization, and its attitudes and values towards education are strongly influenced by Confucian philosophy, which placed the scholar in a position of prominence and prestige for over 2000 years. In this cultural environment, intellectuals were highly respected. This tradition of exalting academic accomplishments persists today and only during two periods in Chinese history the culture of emphasizing education was disrupted: one was during the ruling of Qingshihuang, the first emperor who unified China, who ordered that all ancient books should be burned as a means to fool people with his ruling; the other is during the cultural revolution from 1966-1976 in which knowledge was perceived as useless and intellectuals were persecuted. Given the cohesion among many Chinese families, these values were preserved. Recent studies (Hess, Chang, & McDevitt, 1987; Siu, 1992) have shown that even American born Chinese parents retain some traditional Chinese parenting values and practices.

Although numerous studies have consistently reported a positive relationship in Asian cultures between high parental expectations and children's school achievement (Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Kao, 1995; Kim & Chun, 1994;

Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990), these scholars have not been able to reveal through quantitative data how parental expectations work in particular cultural and family contexts. Furthermore, previous research on immigrant Chinese families has been mainly carried out in the United States; few such studies have been conducted in Canada with the exception of Curdt-Christiansen's study on the trilliteracy practices of Chinese immigrant children in Québec.

Among the factors that contribute to the successful academic performance of Asian students, however, parental educational expectations and school involvement are significant factors in their children's academic success. It is well accepted that parents' expectations have a major effect on children's academic performance (Boocock, 1972; Vollmer, 1986). Researchers have suggested that, of many family variables that contribute to children's school achievement, parental expectations appear to be the most salient (Hoge, Smit, & Crist, 1997; Patrikakou, 1997; Peng & Wright, 1994; Seiginer, 1983). Adults in Asian countries such as in Japan and China are eager to prepare their children to be diligent and to cooperate with teachers. Diligence, obedience, hard work have been the traditional oriental cultural values. Parents also orient children toward their roles as students by instilling in them beliefs about the causes of failure and success in school and the degree to which the child is responsible for performance (Hess and Azuma, 1991).

Parenting styles in Asian countries also contribute to their children's

school performance. Hess and Azuma's study (1991) of American mothers found they assigned blame more often to sources outside the child or over which the child had little control. It is their parents' values and beliefs that in turn shape their children's acceptance of cultural norms as for example, to imitate, accept and internalize their values and beliefs. The study showed that Asian American parents invest in their children's education to give them a head start in what they perceive as an unequal society. These parents are thought to stress technical fields such as math and science for their children since these fields are seen as offering more secure opportunities for employment with less discrimination (Hsia, 1988; Lee, 1996; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Their hope was that education would blunt the edge of discrimination for the next generation (Sue, Okazaki, 1990; Tuan, 1998). Asians Americans were more likely to believe that success in life depended on the things studied in school (Sue and Okazaki, 1990).

The Impact of School Participation/Involvement on Academic Achievement

Many studies suggest that parental behavior can be a crucial determinant of educational performance (Epstein, 1984). In addition, increasing parental participation in education has become a priority for educators, who believe it promotes educational achievement (Berger 1983; Seeley 1984; Tralease, 1982).

Families and schools are dynamic institutions, and family-school interactions have shifted over time. There has been a steady increase in the level

of parental involvement in schooling. Improving parental involvement in education can be beneficial and empowering to all players in educational practice (Seeley, 1989). It can benefit students with high level of social and academic achievement. Successful parental involvement also enhances parents' role in education in that "parents can be seen, valued, respected, and held as responsible as school staff for the educational success of all children" (Williams & Chavkin, 1989, p.20).

Baker and Stevenson (1986) argue that to be effective managers of their children's educational careers, parent must know the demands of the school, their children's performance, and when to use their managerial skills. Higher levels of parental involvement, measured by knowledge of the child's activities in school and frequent contact with the school, appear to have more positive effects on children's academic achievement (Baker and Stevenson, 1986, Fehrman et al., 1987; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1997; Sue and Okazaki, 1990). Parental involvement, both at home and school, is moderately but significantly related to children's academic achievement (Christenson et al., 1992; Fehrmann et al., 1987; Keith et al. 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). In general, students whose parents are actively involved in their education tend to have better grades, test scores and long-term academic achievement. Students also attend school more regularly, complete more homework and demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviours than those with less involved parents.

The definition of parental involvement can vary. It can refer to parent's communication with their children regarding school issues (Keith et al., 1986); number of hours parents volunteer in their children's schools (Okpala et al., 2001); parental involvement in school activities, such as conferences (Bobbett et al., 1995; Stevenson & Baker, 1987), attendance at parental meetings organized by the school (Shaver & Walls, 1989); parental involvement in school-related activities (Shumow & Miller, 2001; Singh et al., 1995; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996); and parental expectations regarding their children's educational attainment (Keith et al., 1998).

Parents approach the family-school relationship with different sets of social resources and funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992). A school may ask for very specific types of behavior from all parents, such as preparing Christmas food and gifts regardless of their social class and cultural distinctions. Thus, not all cultural resources are equally valuable for complying with a school's request to participate in school activities (Laureau, 1987). Immigrant parents' school participation differs from that of nonimmigrant and their pattern of communication is also different from that of nonimmigrant parents. For Chinese immigrant parents, they would spend time supervising their children's home work instead of participating in activities such as sports event, and they'd like to communicate with teachers anytime they want instead of making appointments. The immigrant parents especially emphasized the academic progress of their children and were

concerned with the quality of teaching. Compared with American parents, Chinese parents spent more time working with their children, more frequently checked their children's homework, and bought more books or equipment relating to science for their children than did the American parents.

The connection between home and school is integral to a cohesive and effective learning environment. Central to this connection is the communication between home and school. Scholars such as Epstein (1990) and Healey (1994) have stated that communication with parents increases many forms of parental involvement in school or at home; others (Norris, 1999; Watkins, 1997) have linked children's academic achievement and motivation to home-school communication. Watkins (1997) confirmed that the amount of teacher-initiated communication that parents perceive predicts parent involvement.

Parental involvement in education is particularly important for elementary school children whose first and mother tongue is not English (Constantino et al., 1995; Swap, 1990). Unfamiliar with the foreign language, these children need additional educational support, which in turn requires the involvement of the home. Yet, cultural and linguistic differences may prevent effective home-school communication, and hence hinder parental involvement in school activities. Parents who have grown up in a culture outside North America may hold different views of schools and children than those of their children's teachers (Theilheimer, 2001). A study of Latin American families in Canada

found that, despite parents' high aspirations for their children and despite the great value they attached to education, their children's teachers showed little awareness of their concerns (Bernhard & Freire, 1999). A language barrier may also deter immigrant parents' communication with and involvement in the school (Bhattacharya, 2000; Gougeon, 1993). Intimidated by the linguistic barriers they face in an English-speaking school environment, such parents may be especially unable to participate actively in their children's education (Commins, 1992). For Chinese immigrants in Quebec, they may also face language barriers such as French and have to deal with their language proficiency in this language.

Yet, immigrant minority parents' lack of involvement is often misinterpreted by school personnel as a lack of interest in their children's academic work (Commins, 1992). Immigrant families' communication with their children's schools becomes a major educational concern that constitutes the focus of my ongoing work with recent Chinese immigrants in Quebec.

Chinese immigrants who recently arrived in Canada or the United States may especially face barriers to effective communication with schools. Table 3 presents the top five non-official home languages for 1990s' immigrants in Canada. Sixty one percent of the immigrants who came in the 1990s used a non-official language such as Chinese, Punjabi and Arabic as their primary home language. Of the 1990s immigrants who spoke a non-official language, about one-third reported Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) as the most common

language spoken at home in 2001. In terms of the major source countries of the 1990s immigrants, those born in the People's Republic of China, 88% reported speaking a non-official language at home and 29% reported unable to conduct a conversation in an official language(Statistics Canada).

Table 3

Top 5 non-official home languages for 1990s' immigrants

	Number	%
Canada		
Total 1990s' immigrants	1,830,680	
Total speakers of non-official languages	1,118,520	100.0
Chinese	346,385	31.0
Punjabi	81,640	7.3
Arabic	57,080	5.1
Spanish	52,405	4.7
Tagalog (Pilipino)	50,485	4.5

Note : Data from Statistic Canada 2001 Census

Both parents and teachers in the study of Constantino et al. (1995) confirmed that language barriers caused Chinese parents' lack of communication with their children's school. Because of their long work schedules or discomfort with speaking English, foreign-born parents are less likely to become involved in their children's school lives through more formal and informal mechanism such as volunteering at school (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Hence, the schools should make

it easy for them to do so. Therefore, this is the reason I conducted this inquiry.

Recent Chinese immigrants in Canada or the United States encountered another barrier: the gap between their heritage culture and that of mainstream North America. In general, Asians tend to value the collective needs of the group and emphasize duty and obligation (Hui & Triandis, 1986). For instance, obeying authorities and keeping their parents' sacrifices in mind are considered 'proper' behaviours among Chinese. Moreover, Chinese culture emphasizes education (Ho, 1981). Grounded in a cultural belief in human malleability and effort (Chen & Uttal, 1988) and in education as a means for social advancement and the procurement of wealth (Ho, 1981; Stevenson, Lee, & Chen, 1994), Chinese parents value academic achievement (Lin & Fu, 1990) and set high expectations for their children (Ran, 2001). Children of immigrant parents understood their migration in terms of a struggle with language and a new culture more and consequently, thought of education as a way to avoid these obstacles and as a more certain way to achieve socioeconomic stability (Louie, 2001). Chinese mothers also believed in direct intervention in their children's learning (Chao, 1996). Stevenson (1992) showed that Asian parents believe more strongly than American parents in effort, rather than fixed differences in ability, and that this factor is the most important factor in accounting for learning outcomes. Such an educational emphasis conflicts with the child-centred approach generally practised in Canada (Holmes, 1998) and hence might confound Chinese parents'

communication with their children's schools.

Summary

Bourdieu's cultural capital theory argues that schools reflect and are responsive to the cultural orientation of the dominant class. Therefore, children from the dominant class can draw great advantage from their status and are rewarded in school for their particular cultural orientations. Bourdieu's theory emphasizes the critical role that culture can play in children's academic outcomes. In addition, Ogbu's social mobility theory also explains the academic success of Asian Americans. It states that Asian Americans especially Chinese immigrants as voluntary immigrants whose positive and instrumental attitudes towards public education, lead them to view school as a means for acquiring the skills necessary for academic, cultural and economic success. Drawn from Bourdieu and Ogbu's theoretical principles, I attempt to expound the factors moulding and influencing Chinese immigrant parents' educational perceptions and their school participation.

The visibilities of immigrants and their children's school performance in North American schools have become educational concerns. Recent studies on immigrant children have focused on the exploration of SES factors on school performance. However, it takes more than financial resources to do well in school.

Among all the variables that influence children's school achievement,

parental expectations have been confirmed by studies to have great impact on the academic success of children of minorities. As visible minorities, Chinese immigrant parents have high expectations for their children. Deeply rooted in their own Confucian philosophy and ideology, they view academic achievement as an avenue of social mobility and the best means to overcome discrimination and other barriers to achieving high social status. Even though these parents have been greatly assimilated and integrated into mainstream society, their traditional cultural heritage and beliefs continue to have a powerful influence in shaping families values and norms on their children. As a consequence, children of immigrant families may understand their parents' perceptions and work hard for high achievement.

Besides parents' educational perceptions of education, parental involvement is another leading factor that contributes to children's educational performance. A remarkable benefit is students' higher level of social and academic achievement promised by a collaborative relationship between family and school. Such a relationship can also empower parents and enhance parents' role in education and participation in their children's schooling. Due to the different cultures and values, immigrant parents' school involvement may be dissimilar from parents of the dominant class, which may be misinterpreted by school teachers as a lack of interest in their children's academic outcome. To

understand the pattern of immigrants' school involvement requires schools and teachers have a better understanding of their communication styles and cultures.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I provide a description of the hardships earlier Chinese immigrants to Canada experienced and the context of Chinese communities in Montreal. I focus on the development of Chinese communities and the increasing number of Chinese immigrants to Montréal. I also describe how my role as a researcher was entangled with my various experiences as an educator, a student, a Chinese immigrant and a new parent. I explain the process of how I recruited the five participants for this inquiry, and I present the qualitative methods I used for the study.

Chinese Communities in Montreal

At the outset of the 21st Century, Canada has become increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Immigration to Canada over the past 100 years has shaped Canada, with each new wave of immigrants. Half a century ago, most immigrants came from Europe. Now many newcomers are from Asia.

As a result, the number of visible minorities in Canada is growing. According to the Statistics Canada 2001 Census, Chinese was the largest visible minority group, surpassing one million for the first time. A total of 1,029,400 individuals identified themselves as Chinese, up from 860,100 in 1996. They

accounted for 3.5% of the total national population and 26% of the visible minority population (Statistics Canada).

The history of Chinese immigration to Canada has witnessed the change of Canadian immigration law. The first major wave of Chinese immigration to Canada occurred during the late 1800s when Chinese laborers arrived in western Canada to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. They risked their lives to help build Canada's railroad in the 1880s. But as soon as the work was done, the Canadian government just wanted them gone. An increasingly oppressive head tax was levied on Chinese as a means to discourage the growth of local Chinese labor. Initially the tax, passed in 1885, was \$50 per Chinese immigrant. In 1901, it was increased to \$100 and later \$500. The \$500 was equivalent to two years wages of a Chinese labour at the time. In 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act abolished the Head tax, replacing it with even more restrictive measures to ban all new Chinese immigrants. The head tax was a serious financial burden to Chinese immigrants; the Head tax along with the Exclusion Act effectively stopped any family reunion and resulted in long periods of separation of families.

Until the 1960s, restrictions on immigration kept the Chinese population in Canada fairly small. Since then, however, waves of Chinese immigrants, largely from Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China, have made Chinese one of Canada's fastest growing visible minority populations.

The Chinese have been in Montreal for centuries. They came to Montreal before the 1880s and settled around the harbour and the railway station. These places gradually developed into the present Chinatown centred at de la Gauchetiere and St-Laurent. Montréal's Chinatown is the major symbol of the Chinese community's roots in Montréal and Quebec society, and the historic centre of Chinese settlement within Quebec. Chinatown is thus the heart of commercial and cultural exchanges within the community itself. Today, French, English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese are commonly heard in stores in Chinatown as well as Chinese provincial dialects like Fu-chian and Chao-chun.

According to the Montreal Star (Cited in Hoe, 1979), the earlier "Chinese colony" was said to have only 30 inhabitants. The Canadian Census records the numbers of Chinese in Montreal to be 10,655 in 1971. However, according to an estimate by the Chinese themselves, the number of Chinese in Montreal in 1976-77 was said to be around 25,000 with more than 3,000 families (Hoe, 1979).

The earlier Chinese settlement in Montreal was a close-knit community. Associations were formed, based on the traditional criteria of kinship, clanship, shared dialect and common geographical origin. The earlier community institutions were functional in and significant to the lives of the early immigrants. Today, there are at least twenty Chinese organizations in Montréal

including L'association Chinoise de Montréal Inc., Service a la famille chinoise du Grand Montreal, Service a la famille chinoise du Sud, the center of Catholic Chinese in Montreal (Curd-Christian, 2003). These associations usually provide settlement information and services for new immigrants and organize various cultural activities, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year, the dragon boat festival and the Moon Festival, to preserve Chinese cultural traditions.

Canadian census statistics for the year 2001 reveals that there are 56,830 Chinese living in the region of Montreal (Statistics Canada). The countries of origin of Montreal's immigrants differed substantially from those of immigrants in Toronto or Vancouver, reflecting higher levels of immigration to Quebec from francophone nations such as Haiti. Individuals from Asia and the Middle East accounted for four of every 10 recent immigrants to Montreal. Although Montreal has one of the largest immigrant populations in Canada, it only received a very small fraction of Chinese immigrants compared with Toronto and Vancouver (Statistics Canada). There may be some factors that lead to the phenomena, but language is definitely the primary reason that hinders most Chinese immigrants' coming. Bill 101, a language law of Quebec as an effort to preserve the future of French language in the province, have eliminated the freedom of choice of parents to send their children to English schools and to restrict access to such schools to

the children whose mother tongue was not English. Some of the requirements of the law may upset certain Chinese immigrants. For instance, the bill required that all advertising on billboards be done in French and that all commercial signs in business establishments be highlighted in French. All public administrations and businesses are expected to address their employees in French. For new immigrants, these restrictions may add more difficulties to their new life in Canada.

The Bill is not only unpopular among some immigrants, but also received different reactions from both Anglophone and Francophone communities in Quebec. Anglophone Quebecers were unwilling to accept it. Bill 101 received widespread support from the Francophone community. It views the bill as an essential protection against the increasingly pervasive spread of the dominance of the English language.

The increasing number of immigrants from mainland China has changed the demographics of the Chinese population in Montreal, which results in the demands for heritage language schools. Chinese immigrants can send their children to these language schools for language education and the preservation of their ethnic identity. There are eight major heritage language schools in Montreal: the Zhonguo School, Montreal Chinese Language School, Montreal Chinese Mandarin School, Brossard Chinese Language School, Chinese Catholic Church

Chinese School, Cambodian and Vietnam Chinese School, Universal Gate Language School and Overseas Chinese Association Language Centre (Curd-Christiansen, 2003).

Although in 1996, Chinese immigrants only constitute a very small proportion of Quebec immigrants, between 1991 and 1996, there was a rapid increase of Chinese immigrants to Quebec. This rise might be due to Quebec's unique immigration policy and settlement services for immigrants. For example, immigrants in Quebec can receive certain amount of bursary if they attend French courses. By taking this measure, the Quebec government aims to facilitate the integration of new immigrants into Canadian society.

Role of Researcher

Qualitative researchers often study from within an insider's place in order to better understand the individual within the context. Therefore, the researcher's role has a direct effect on the findings of the research. The reality that the researcher may be looking for is shaped by the researcher's role in the research process. Graue and Walsh (1998) assert:

The choice of role should be a theoretically driven decision, at least in part, because it is related to the kinds of understandings the researcher hopes to generate. The role negotiated by a researcher makes some things more prominent in data generation than others, thereby constituting reality in quite specific ways. (p. 75)

The qualitative researcher's role can exist anywhere from a distant observer to a full participant in the setting in which the research is taking place. At one end of the continuum, the researcher is simply collecting data; at the other end is data generation (Graue & Walsh, 1998). At the latter end, research is understood as "nested contexts" (Maguire & Beer, 1994) that include the researcher's lived experiences, role, and relationships with the subjects over the course of the research (p. 73). Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) argue that contemporary research has increasingly moved toward the researcher developing a "membership" role situated within the context of the research. The researcher's lived experiences significantly influence the role(s) and relationships with the subjects being studied. For example, my own personal experience as a recent immigrant and my education experience have great influence on my research.

Education experience

I was born and brought up in a family in which both of my parents are university teachers. I recalled my childhood growing up on the campus of a Chinese university. I must say that since I was a child I have had so many encounters with the Chinese education system. My family situation was improved and benefited from the reform of Chinese education.

After graduation from high school, I went to study in a local Normal university in Shenyang, and prepared to become a teacher just as both of my

parents. Four years study provided me with the knowledge about teaching and gave me more opportunities to understand the teaching profession and Chinese education. Having graduated from university, I, as all my family expected, became a teacher and from then on, I started my teaching career. Unlike most of my classmates from university, I obtained a teaching position in a local university. My education experience both as a student and as a teacher in China helped me comprehend how the Chinese education system functions and its advantages and disadvantages. This background enables me to share and understand my participants' perspectives on Chinese education.

Immigration experience

The motive of my immigration to Canada like most Chinese immigrants is to have the chance to see the world, but unlike other Chinese immigrants, I also want to have the opportunity to receive a western education.

After three years waiting and expecting, I finally landed at the Pearson Airport, Toronto in 2002 and started my Canadian immigration experience. The beginning of my immigration life is similar to that of most new immigrants. I also faced cultural shock and experienced cultural conflicts, and had the feeling of being "lost and confused" in the host country.

I have been in Canada for three and half years. During this time I have attempted to find my identity between my Chinese cultural upbringing and my

host country, between two languages and two political systems. My work at Newcomers Information Center, YMCA Toronto provided me with the opportunity to communicate and share with other new immigrants from Mainland China about their concerns and confusion. My conversations with these newcomers usually focused on two themes: their children's education in Canada and their employment. Most Chinese parents explain that the primary motive for immigrating Canada is to provide better educational opportunities for their children. However, in their conversations, they occasionally complain about the Canadian educational system and worry that their children are not well prepared for their future in terms of science and math. The second theme refers to their job hunting experience in Canada, their dissatisfaction with Canadian labour market and their frustration with language barriers that influence their employment opportunities.

My own experience both as a recent Chinese immigrant, a new parent and an educator encouraged me to conduct this inquiry and explore Chinese immigrant parents' educational expectations and their school involvement in their children's schooling and schools. My insider status as a member of the Chinese community and as a native speaker of Mandarin has given me knowledge and easy access to recent Chinese immigrants. I, as a new parent, now realize and share many Chinese immigrant parents' concerns about their children's' education

and the influence of Chinese cultural heritage on their children's education. Thus, my status and multiple roles in the Chinese communities and affiliations have provided me great advantages in conducting this qualitative research.

Participants

I selected participants for this study who met certain criteria. They are: parents of Chinese origins who had immigrated to Canada in recent year and have resided in Montreal at least 6 months prior to the collection of the data. As for most immigrants, it usually takes at least 6 months to get settled and have some knowledge of the host country. Although the age of the children was not primary concern, I did try to select parents who had school age children.

I recruited five Chinese parents, three mothers and two fathers. All of them are recent Chinese mainland immigrants who came to Canada under the immigration category of skilled workers between 2004 and 2005. Their children's age varies from seven to fourteen years. The children of the five participants had previously received some primary education in China and are now studying in a Canadian public school in Montreal. As a consequence of China's one-child policy, all families have only one child. The one child policy was adopted in China in 1979 as one of a series of measures that China attempts to control its increasing population. As a result of the policy, China has had 338 million fewer

births in the past 30 years. However, the evidence of slowing population growth and the increasing number of elderly people suggest that a relaxation of the one-child policy would be desirable in the near future (Hesketh et al., 2005).

Table 4

The profile of participants and their children

Participant	Years of Residence in Canada (months)	Children Sex/age	Language spoken	Education	Profession in China	Language proficiency English/French
Mr. Ma	6	Boy/9	Mandarin	B. A	lawyer	reading/non
Mr. Deng	8	Boy/9	Mandarin	B.A	teacher	reading/non
Ms. Mu	12	Girl/10	Mandarin	B.A	teacher	reading/non
Ms. Liang	7	Girl/12	Mandarin	B.A	accountant	reading/non
Ms. Sun	9	Girl/14	Mandarin /Cantonese	College degree	clerk	reading/basic

Mr. Ma

Mr. Ma is thirty eight years old and has been in Canada for six months. Although he has had a very successful career as a lawyer in China, he does not regret his choice of immigration to Canada. He said: “my living standard in China was much higher than here in Canada. For example, in China I can spend a lot of money on dining out and buying famous brand clothing. But I would not go back. I like the simple life I am leading now.” He told me very proudly that he graduated from Beijing University with a bachelor’s degree in Law and had been practicing law in China since his graduation from university in a local law firm. It

seems that he is very proud of his profession as a successful lawyer, and he continued that: “life in China was very comfortable but quite busy. Thus, my wife and I decided to send our son to a boarding school and I did not have a lot of time with my son. I really wished that I could spend more time with him and be on his side all the time.” Since he came to Canada, he tried for several months to find a job so that would provide him with opportunities to practice law. A month ago, he gave up trying and ended up in working in a clothing factory in Montreal. However, he is happy that this job allows him to spend ample time with his son. Indeed, the day I interviewed him, he told me that he was going to skate with his son.

Mr. Deng

Mr. Deng is in his forties and has been in Canada for eight months. He told me that he was a university teacher back in China, and paid great emphasis to his son’s education, so he sent his son to study in a private school. He said: “the main reason that I sent my son to a private school is for its teaching quality. I believed the qualities and knowledge of teachers in private schools should be higher than those of public schools.” He graduated from Huazhong Normal University. He and his wife are now attending classes of French full time in COFI (Centre d’Orientation et de Fondation des Immigrants) provided by Quebec government as a measure to help new immigrants integrate into mainstream

society. He told me that he was working on his resume and hoping to find a decent job. He said: "I could take this time to learn the language (French), at least I have something to learn. I hate being at home all day with nothing to do." His family lives in a small one bedroom apartment. The day when I had interview with him, he was busy packing to move to a bigger apartment in N.D.G. "I can only give you one hour, because I want to sublease my apartment, there are people coming to see the apartment."

Ms. Mu

Ms. Mu is a forty-two year Chinese immigrant and has resided in Canada for a year. She was also a university teacher before immigration to Canada. She told me she is still working in a university but didn't specify what kind of job she has. I asked how long it took for her to find her current job. She said: "it took me almost six months before I finally got the job. I encountered so many difficulties and hardship. I even attended some workshops for interview skills and resume writing. However, I am very proud of myself." She told me that she graduated from Qinghua University with a bachelor's degree and she is very satisfied with her life in Canada because the nice living environment and more opportunities for her daughter. She lives with her husband and their daughter in a very large apartment in a suburban area of Montreal. She said: "I am happy for the choice I made to come to Canada."

Ms. Liang

Ms. Liang is thirty-eight years old and has been in Canada for seven months. She used to work as an accountant in a bank in Beijing before coming to Canada. She told me that she has a bachelor's degree in Economic. "My husband is taking a full time French class in COFI. I am not in a very good health, thus, I hope that he could find a job after he grasped the language and support the family." She also told me that her daughter went to a local public school in China and she was the leader of her class because her excellent study performance and leadership. Ms. Liang said that she likes her life in Canada and the fresh air is very good for her health, even though she did not have a job, she occasionally worried about their future in Canada. Ms. Liang's family lives in an apartment in Montreal.

Ms. Sun

Ms. Sun is a thirty-nine year Chinese immigrant and has been in Canada for nine months. She told me that she used to work in a private company in Shenzhen, China and she graduated from a local college. She said: "I am attending a full time French language classes in COFI. Before immigration, I learned some French and I am very happy that I can use what I have learned to help my daughter with her French, and I want to improve my French." She also told me that her husband came to Montreal with them when they first came to

Canada, but later he decided to go back to China because he could not find a job. “We have no choice, my husband tried to find a job for several months, but he could not find a satisfactory one. He used to work in a local government with very good salary and benefits. Therefore, he would not do a labour job in Canada, so he went back. I am not sure about our future. For the time being, I will stay here with my daughter because she likes her new life in Canada and she has already made some friends. Perhaps, I will wait for a while until my daughter totally adjusted to her new life and by then I will go back to China.” She lives with her daughter in a small apartment in downtown Montreal.

Data Collection Process and Methods

In order to understand the educational expectations and school involvement of these Chinese immigrant parents, I used interviewing and an open-ended questionnaire as the primary data collection methods in order to provide rich and contextualized information about their experiences and perceptions.

I recruited participants from various sources including ads posted on the Internet. Community members or participants also suggested other possible participants. I conducted the data collection primarily in Montreal during the period of Spring and Summer of 2005.

Data collection sources

My participant selection criteria are Chinese immigrants who have school age child and have resided in Canada at least six months prior to the research. A Chinese version of recruitment letter (Appendix 3) was first distributed to potentially eligible Chinese families through different sources. As an effort to make my participants more representative, I attempt to select my participants randomly. On one Sunday, I went to a Chinese store in Montreal's Chinatown. Routinely, Chinatown is very busy and full of energy on the weekends, as many Chinese will go shopping and dining in Chinatown. I first obtained the permission from the store owner by introducing myself and then explaining to her about my research. With her permission, I was able to distribute the copies of my recruitment letter to shoppers. I distributed letters mainly to mainland Chinese based on my own observations of their talk, appearance and clothing. I left my phone number in the letter so that those who are interested in the research could directly contact me.

The second source I used to collect data was through the ads in the Internet. In Montreal, because of the increasing number of Chinese immigrants, there is a very popular Chinese website www.sinoquebec.com, where information such as education, employment, health services, and other topics related to Chinese community are posted and exchanged in Chinese for immigrants to share

with each other. The website is so popular among Chinese communities that sometimes people from other ethnicity would like to post ads on it because of its large visitors.

I worded the ad and put on the web this way: I am a graduate student at McGill University. As a part of my M.A. thesis “Chinese Immigrant Parents’ Educational Expectations and School Participation Experience”, I would like to meet with you to discuss the possibility of engaging in a collaborative research project with you. I would like to meet with you at a date convenient to you and I am most grateful for your interest (Appendix 2). I posted my ads on the website in the afternoon. By the evening that day, I received several phone calls inquiring about the research. In addition to the above mentioned recruiting methods, I also utilized informal networking by taking advantage of the recommendations of my other participants. For example, after I obtained her permission to participate in the ongoing research, Ms. Sun recommended the family of Ms. Liang, because their daughters went to the same school in Canada. Thus, I called Ms. Liang and I introduced both myself and the purpose of the study over the phone; she showed great interest in the research and was willing to take part in the research.

On the day after I distributed my recruitment letter in Chinatown, I received several phone calls. From these phone calls along with the calls responding to my ads on Internet, I selected my participants based on my

selection criteria.

Prior to the interview, all participants were contacted by telephone to ensure that they understand the nature of the research and obtain their oral agreement to participate in the research. I made a phone call to each of the potential participants and familiarized them with the research by explaining the purpose of my research and responded to their concerns. For example, Mr. Ma asked me why I wanted to do the research on this subject; I explained to him about my immigration experience and my backgrounds in China. After obtaining their oral agreement for their involvement in the research, I once again called each of them to set the time and place for the interview. Mr. Ma and Mr. Deng told me that they are familiar with the McGill campus, so I had the interviews with both of them in the Faculty of education building on the same day in April, but at different times. The interview with Ms. Sun was conducted in the public library not far away from her home. The interviews with Ms. Liang and Ms. Mu were conducted at their homes respectively.

Data collection methods

I designed an open-format questionnaire (Appendix 5) and participants were free to answer whatever they choose. This mode of inquiry provided me with detailed background data about my participants such as their education and family backgrounds, employment, economic status, language proficiency, and length of

residency in Canada. . For example, I could obtain the education data of my participants: the highest degree they have, the years of schooling, from which university they graduated. This information was a useful resource to help me understand these parents' perceptions.

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Therefore, I designed open-ended questions (Appendix 4) for the study. I used face-to-face verbal interchanges with individuals that provided me with the opportunity to pursue in-depth information around a topic. I used it as follow-up to the respondents to the questionnaires. My intention was to explore how Chinese cultural heritage, values and beliefs shape Chinese immigrant parents' educational perceptions, and how they view the two educational systems. Interviewing provided me with opportunities to gain insights into their school involvement; especially the factors that they perceive hinder their school participation. With the method of interview, I could ask participants to elaborate on their views and perspectives and I could also explain my questions. For example, Mr. Deng told me that he believed that he wants his son to study in a prestigious university in the future. I then asked him to explain to me why going to a university with great reputation is very important.

I conducted the interview after participants had filled out the questionnaire. To ensure parents' comfort and understanding, I interviewed my

participants in Mandarin, the language of their choice. Interview questions include topics regarding parents' educational expectations of their children, parenting styles, career expectations, home environment, school participation and the influence of Chinese values on their educational expectations. In part 1 of the interview, I focused on parental educational expectations and school satisfaction; the second part focused on parents' school participation and parenting styles. The interview process was audiotape-recorded and later transcribed. The interview lasted between 50 and no more than 90 minutes.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the history of the earlier Chinese settlement in Canada, and the rapid growth of the Chinese population in Montreal. I provided relevant background and described my roles in this research context. In particular, I discussed my educational and immigration experiences and how these experiences help shape my role in the research. I described the three ways in which I recruited my participants and their backgrounds. Finally, I presented how I collected my data and explained my qualitative approach to this study which explores the issues involved in a selected group of Chinese parents' involvement in their children's schooling.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I examine five Chinese immigrant parents' perceptions of education for their children and their school involvement. From the interviews with these parents, five themes emerged that connect to my research questions: cultural expectations, career aspirations, parenting styles, education satisfaction and school involvement.

Not surprisingly, these Immigrant parents believe education to be the most significant way for their children to improve their status in life. They report that they support their children to overcome the difficulties they may face in school by encouraging them to excel at school. They unanimously attributed their lack of school participation to the language barriers and cultural differences they experience. I discuss and present their perceptions of their children's education and their school involvement experiences.

Cultural Expectations

Hall (1980) argues that cultural studies “thinks forwards from the best elements in the structuralist and culturalist enterprises” (p.72). He then draws out two definitions of culture:

Culture is “the sum of the available descriptions through which societies

make sense of and reflect their common experiences” (p.59); culture “refers to social practices” and “the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life”. In other words, threaded through all social practices is culture which is the “sum of their inter-relationships”. (p.66)

These parents’ viewpoints on education confirmed the results of other studies such as Chinese parents’ emphases on children’s education and academic success (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003). However, they also presented new insights about these parents choice of university that did not surface in previous studies. All participants unanimously emphasized that their children must obtain a quality university education. They regarded education as their top priority and viewed academic achievement as a traditional value and belief of Chinese culture. For example, Mr. Ma said: “中国传统的孔夫子教导认为教育是获得较高的社会地位的唯一途径对我有很大的影响 (*Chinese traditional Confucian heritage that deems education is the only venue to higher social status has great influence on me*).” He also says:

我的父亲是个医生，我在国内是个律师。因此，我坚信要获得社会的认可，教育是很重要的。我会用中国的传统教育方法去教育和影响我的儿子，让他也认识到教育的重要性。我会不惜自己的金钱和能力来投资到他的教育。如果我的儿子不能上大学，我会很失望的。

My father is a doctor, and I was a lawyer in China. Therefore, I believe that education is very important to gain the recognition of the society. I will use Chinese traditional parenting style to educate and influence my son the importance of education. And I will invest money and energy in his education and development regardless of my family economic conditions. But if my son can not attend university, I will feel very disappointed. (Interview with Ma 10 April)

Mr. Deng also expressed his view on education; he comments:

我是一名教师，我的妻子和我认为教育对于我们的儿子是最重要的。我们送他在当地的最好的私立学校读书，它的教学质量要高于公立学校。当然，我们一直希望它能将来接受高等教育。这样他就能有个稳定的工作和一定的社会地位，也就能养活自己。

I was a teacher in China, both my wife and I played education as the priority for our son. Therefore, we sent him to a very good private school in locality, as its teaching quality is higher than that of public schools. Of course, we were hoping that he could receive higher education in the future, thus he could have a stable job and high social status to support his own life. (Interview with Deng 10 April, 2005)

Both Mr. Ma and Mr. Deng's views on education reflect Norton's concept of investment in second language learning. Norton draws her concept from Bourdieu's concept of investment, which replaces the instrumental nature of motivation to learn the target language. Norton (2000) argues: "investments (that) are intimately connected to the ongoing production of the learners' identities and their desires for the future" (p.120). In Norton's (2000) study of immigrants' language leaning, she argues that the learners expect to receive a return on the investment in a second language that will give them an access to previously unattainable resources: "If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 10). It is with the hope that their investment on education will finally in turn provide

them the opportunity to transform their social status, many Chinese immigrant parents are willing to invest in their children's education. For example, Mr. Ma says: “我会不惜自己的金钱和能力来投资到他的教育 (*I will invest money and energy in his education and development regardless of my family economic condition*).” Also Ms. Mu comments: “我作为教师的薪水不能同那些做生意的相比。但是我仍然送我的女儿学钢琴 (*My salary as a teacher can not be compared with those businessman, but I still sent my daughter to learn piano*).”

My study also confirmed the power of these parents' traditional values and beliefs and influence of Chinese culture on their perceptions of education. Immigrant Asian culture places a premium on education, ambition, and persistence that explains the high achievement of immigrant Asian children (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998). The encouragement and aspirations of immigrant parents may be the most important ways they can influence their children's education (Fuligni, 1997). The high value placed on education is sustained by unique elements of Asian cultures, such as collectivity, filial piety, and self-discipline (Hsu, 1971).

In accordance with Ogbu's social mobility theory, these Chinese immigrants belong to voluntary minority groups who chose to migrate to Canada in search of a better life and good economic prosperity. Ogbu (1991) theorized that voluntary minorities are often optimistic about the connection between hard work and success. Furthermore, immigrants may be a self selected group with

high motivations to achieve, as evidence by the fact that they chose to immigrate (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991). Families who migrate to improve their economic situation continue on course by making education the means to upward mobility (Caplan et al., 1992). For instance, one of the five parents reflected this view “我出国就是想有机会看看外面的世界。因此，我放弃了国内的生活移民加拿大。加拿大不同于中国，在中国一个人的成功不完全依靠个人的努力，但是在这里如果你努力，你就会成功并且得到社会的认可。我鼓励我的儿子努力学习，这样他就可以过上很体面的生活 (*I want to go abroad to have the opportunity to see the world. Therefore, I gave up my life in China and migrated to Canada. Canada is different from China, where success may not depend on one's own efforts, but in Canada, if you work hard, you will be successful and recognized by society. I encouraged my son to study hard so that he could lead a decent life*).”

Ogbu's work helps explain why an immigrant group such as these five Chinese immigrants perceives that they can attain academic attainment in their adopted country even though they face barriers in culture, language and post-school opportunities. As voluntary immigrants, they believe that migration leads to greater economic well-being, better overall opportunities and/or greater political freedom (Ogbu, 1987). All five parents in the study agreed that the living environment in Canada is much better than China. For example, Ms. Liang says: “这里有大量的森林和绿地，空气很是清新，这对我的健康很好 (*There are large traces of forests and grass, and the air is very fresh which is very good for*

my health).”

In terms of university choice, all parents believe that attending a distinguished university is very important for social recognition. For example, two participants commented on the importance of university choice:

如果我的儿子要读大学，我一定会鼓励他报考名牌大学例如 McGill，名牌大学为社会培养了大量的高素质 and 技能的毕业生，社会认可这些毕业生为社会做的贡献。名牌大学也具备高质量的教师队伍，同时能够吸引社会的大量投资。学生毕业时能够有机会通过关系网找到好的工作。

If my son has to make a university choice, I will definitely encourage him to apply for a well-known university, such as McGill, which has produced and educated so many graduates with high qualifications and skills and the society recognize the contribution these graduates have made. Meanwhile, a university with high reputation is also equipped with high qualified professors and it can attract large invest from the society. University graduates will have great opportunity to get a good job through broad networking. (Interview with Mu 12 May, 2005)

我当然希望我的女儿能够上名牌大学。现在，每个人都能读大学，但是名牌大学的文凭要比地方大学的值钱。尤其是现在找工作竞争很激烈，读名牌大学尤为重要。

Of course, I want my daughter to study in a university with very good reputation. Nowadays, everyone can go to university, but the degree from a university with prestige is more valuable than the one from local university. It is especially very important to study in a good university since the job market is very competitive. (Interview with Sun 14 May, 2005)

Both Ms. Mu and Ms. Sun’s perceptions of the choice of university further confirmed Bourdieu’s capital theory in particular, the Institutionalized State of cultural capital. These parents believe that a good university will

ultimately provide their children with recognized academic qualification, which will in turn offer their children the advantage to compete and compare with other candidates in the job market. And finally, the cultural capital can be converted to economic capital such as a well paid job. Bourdieu argues that:

With the academic qualification, a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture, social alchemy produces a form of cultural capital which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer and even vis-à-vis the cultural capital he effectively possesses at a given moment in time. By conferring institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any given agent, the academic qualification also makes it possible to compare qualification holders and even to exchange them (by substituting one for another in succession). Furthermore, it makes it possible to establish conversion rates between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital. (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 248)

The parents pointed out those children who grow up in a Chinese culture are generally motivated to pursue excellence. Children of immigrant parents understood their migration in terms of a struggle with the language and new cultural mores and consequently, think education is a way to avoid those kinds of obstacles and is a more certain way to achieve socioeconomic stability (Louie, 2001). For example, these parents believe by receiving higher education in a well-known university will definitely allow their children to have a promising future with a good job and eventually achieve certain social status and bring honour to the family. The Confucian concept of filial piety accounts for this attitude, as Ms. Liang explains:

中国的孩子从小就被告知他们要好好读书来荣耀家人和先辈。如果他们不能在学习上取得一定的成绩那么就会给家里带来耻辱。因此中国的孩子想成功来给家里带来荣耀。中国孩子的最终目标是通过学术上的成就来获得特权地位。孟子有一句话对中国价值观有着深远的影响：劳心者制人，劳力者制与人。我们的父母告诉我们努力学习，通过努力获得高的社会地位。所以，我们也会把这种价值观和信仰灌输给我们的孩子。

Chinese children were taught that they should honour their families and ancestors by achieving excellence in education. If they fail, they would bring shame to the families. Therefore, Chinese children want to succeed, to bring honour to their families. And the ultimate goal of Chinese children is to achieve privileged positions through academic excellence. The saying of Mencius has far reaching influence on Chinese values: Those who work with their heads will rule, while those who work with their hands will serve. And we were told by our parents to study hard and gain high social status by working hard. As a result, we will instil this values and beliefs on our children. (Interview with Liang 20 June, 2005)

Chinese immigrant parents' high education expectations and their support and investment in education further corroborate with Bourdieu's cultural capital theory. Cultural capital can be converted into economic capital, just as economic capital can be converted into cultural capital. In order to maintain the legitimacy of cultural capital, and to ensure both its convertibility and its ability to reproduce itself, the educational system creates a market in cultural capital with academic qualifications as the currency (Garnham & Williams, 1990). Thus, this can explain these Chinese immigrants' investment in education for their children.

In addition, these immigrants' emphasis on recognition of society echoed Taylor et al. (1994)'s view on recognition:

Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *misrecognition* of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (p. 25) Democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demand for the equal status of culture and of genders. (p. 27) With the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or majority identity. (p. 38)

For example, both Ms. Mu and Ms. Sun have expectations that their children should go to university just as other children do to gain an academic qualification. The qualification will lead to certain social status; thus, their identity will be recognized by the dominant society.

Career Aspirations

The parents held specific career aspirations for their children. They all agreed that minority immigrants must align their career aspirations to the demands of the Canadian labour market. In order to avoid competition with the dominant class, all families encouraged their children to excel in subjects such as science so that they could obtain professions in engineering and other technical fields. Generally, they said that they respect their children's career choice, but they also said that they will persuade and influence their career decisions. For

instance, Mr. Deng and Mr. Ma report their perceptions on their children's pursuit of a career:

我在国内是名教师。但是自从来这里，我不能够从事我以前的职业。从我自己的找工作经验，我已经学到了如果工作候选人在同一水平，当然雇主会顾用白人。为了解决这个问题，我经常告诉我的儿子，如果你要找到好的工作，你的水平一般是不够的，你必须优秀，这样雇主才会有可能考虑你。要想解决这一问题的另一个方法是在白人不太擅长的科目方面，你如果能够很优秀，那么你的机会就增加了。

I used to be a teacher in China, but since I came here, I was not able to practise my career in Canada. From my own job searching experience, I have learned that if all candidates are on the same level, of course, the employer will prefer the "Whites". In order to deal with this, I always tell my son, if you want to find a good job, being good is not enough, you must be better, then the employer may consider you for the position. And also another way to deal with this is to be good at subjects that "whites" are not good at, which may increase your opportunity. (Interview with Deng 10 April, 2005)

我在国内是个律师。但是由于语言障碍，在加拿大我不能从事律师这一行业。而且加拿大不承认我在中国的工作经验和学历。我要想做律师，就要回到学校从头读起。我已经太老了不能再去从头读书。但是我的儿子，他很年轻，他可以有可能会从事自己想做的职业。我会鼓励他学法律来实现我的夙愿。

I was a lawyer in China, but because of language barriers, I could not practice my profession in Canada. In addition, my foreign experience and credential are not recognized. If I want to practice law, I have to go back to school to study from scratch. I am too old to start again. However, my son is young and he has the opportunity to do what he wants to in the future. I will encourage him to study law and fulfill my dreams. (Interview with Ma 10 April, 2005)

Mr. Deng's perception of the social injustice further echoed Bourdieu's capital theories. Bourdieu (1977) believed that a main source for success is education. What is necessary for educational success is a set of cultural behaviours such as parental support and educational investment. Children of upper-class and middle-class families have learned these behaviours. Because their working class peers may not have, therefore, they can take advantage of and succeed in the educational system and reproduce their class positions. He also believes that habitus also plays a large role in students' success in school. Bourdieu (1973) argued that one's habitus develops in relation to how much cultural capital one has; a person from the lower class may be aware that people from that class tend to have little cultural capital and they are unlikely to succeed educationally with that capital. Therefore, lower-class students tend to give up their college dream on the basis of their views of what is possible and what is not. However, there are exceptional students from the lower-class who may see the process of accumulation of cultural capital as a way to overcome the obstacles that are typical for those in their class position. These Chinese immigrants may belong to the exceptional category and see education as the means to accrue cultural capital to overcome the difficulties they may encounter as visible minorities.

All families reported that in addition to their school courses, they would likely invest more money in developing their children's interests. Children of

these families all learned piano except the son of Mr. Deng who attended Kongfu-Chinese martial arts. They explained that the purpose of attending after class activities is to develop their interest in arts, so that they could grow up as a person full of passion, love and having the sense and appreciation for the arts. They all hope that they can somehow provide certain cultural capital for their children's future success and maintain Chinese cultural values, such as perseverance, hard work and diligence. As Ms. Sun comments:

在国内，我作为教师的薪水不能同那些做生意的相比。但是我仍然送我的女儿学钢琴。甚至在加拿大，家里的经济不是很好，我仍然想让她继续学习钢琴。我不是要培养她成为一名音乐家，我就是想让她学些东西来培养和塑造她的毅力，这样在以后，不管从事何种职业，她都会用心去做。而且，这种学习会培养她充满热情。所以不管我有多忙，我都会陪她去学琴。

In China, my salary as a teacher can not be compared with those businessman, but I still sent my daughter to learn piano. Even here in Canada, the family economic situation is not very good, but I still want my daughter to continue her piano lesson. I do not wish my daughter to be a musician; I just want her to learn something and to develop her perseverance character, so that in her future, no matter what kind of profession she is going to take up, she will devote to it with great passion. And the study will enable her to be sensitive and passionate. No matter how busy I am, I will accompany her to learn the piano. (Interview with Sun, 14 May, 2005)

Ms. Sun's comments on her investment in her daughter's piano learning reflected Bourdieu's view on the conversions of capitals:

Similarly, if the best measure of cultural capital is undoubtedly the amount of time devoted to acquiring it, this is because the transformation of economic capital into cultural capital presupposes an expenditure of

time that is made possible by possession of economic capital. More precisely, it is because the cultural capital that is effectively transmitted within the family itself depends not only on the quantity of cultural capital, itself accumulated by spending time, that the domestic group possess, but also on the usable time (particularly in the form of the mother's free time) available to it (by virtue of its economic capital, which enables it to purchase the time of others) to ensure the transmission of this capital and to delay entry into the labour market through prolonged schooling, a credit which pays off, if at all, only in the very long term. (Bourdieu, 1983, p254)

The immigration experience also changed Ms. Mu's career aspiration for her daughter. She explains: “当然了，作为少数民族，选择的专业对于将来的职业的是很关键的。而且我找工作的经验和我的生活经历改变了我的观念，我认为经商对于我的女儿来说是尤为好的选择。我女儿可以应用她在加拿大所学的知识以及她的流利的双语优势及对于两种文化的了解来经商。这在经济全球化的时代尤为重要 (*Of course, as a minority, your choice of specialization is very crucial to your future profession. In addition, my job searching experience and my life experience changed my views. Now I think that doing a business is especially a good choice for my daughter. My daughter can apply what she has learned in Canada in doing business with Chinese with her fluent Chinese and English and extensive knowledge of both cultures, which is important in the era of globalization*)).”

Based on their own immigrant experiences in Canada, the parents held specific career aspirations for their children. Sue and Okazaki (1990) claimed that Asians Americans were more likely to believe that success in life depended on the

things studied in school. Their accounts support Chun's (1995) argument that the limited occupational aspirations of Asian immigrants are not necessarily motivated by their personal interests and preferences but by their disadvantaged, visible minority status. These parents' views on career choice are similar to those in Schneider and Lee's study (1990). They argue that the cultural components benefit East Asian children's school performances. For example, the East Asian cultural tradition places a high value on education and East Asian families invest in education to overcome occupational discrimination. The five parents believe that as visible minorities in Canada, their children should receive higher education as a means to compete with children of Caucasian and mainstream families. They said that from their own job search experiences, they even want to go back to school to improve their language proficiency and skills in order to find a decent job.

The parents' job searching experience in Canada also mirrored a widespread social phenomenon that there is still race discrimination in the Canadian labor market. This discrimination in job market prevents visible minorities from gaining equal access to jobs. As a study released by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation revealed despite higher levels of education attained by visible minorities compared to that of white Canadians, immigrants still suffer from lower levels of employment and income; foreign-born visible minorities and Aboriginal people are over-represented in the bottom 20 per cent and are

under-represented in the top twenty per cent of income earners (Kahtou News Online). All parents reported that they were not able to practice their professions in Canada, because their foreign credentials and overseas working experiences are not recognized. In addition, their knowledge of English is not sufficient enough for them to find a job in Quebec where bilingualism is required by provincial government legislation, such as Bill 101. The Chinese are also under-represented in certain occupations such as management and law. This greatly limited the career aspirations of these Chinese immigrant parents and will as a result hinder their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of Canada.

Parenting Styles

Chinese values and philosophies differ from those of western societies, Chinese parents' concept of the ideal child are closely related to traditional values in Chinese culture: respect for elders, good manners, good academic outcome and self-discipline (Shek & Chan, 1999). Chinese parents regard academic achievement as very important and they expect their children to study hard (Cambell & Mandel, 1990; Yao, 1985). Scholastic success has been viewed as the access to social success. Chinese parents pay special attention to training children to adhere to socially desirable and culturally approved behaviours in the family (Kelly & Tseng, 1992).

The five parents unanimously report that they have very good

relationships with their children. They always communicate with their children about school issues and these parents give advice on their children's choice of friends. Their family relationships are very democratic. They said that they will not impose their values and standards on peer choice. However, they will give advice on choosing friends. For example, Ms. Sun says:

我从不干涉孩子对朋友的选择。但是我会给她一些建议。例如，我女儿有一个出生和生长在加拿大的朋友，但是她有一个偷东西的恶习，我就告诉我女儿使她认识到偷东西是个不好的习惯。但是我也告诉她尽管她的朋友有缺点，仍然可以和她来往，但是不要学习她的缺点。

I never intervene with my children's friends' choice. But I gave my advice on her choice. For instance, my daughter has a friend who was born and raised up in Canada, she has a very bad habit of stealing, then I talked with my daughter about her friend, made her realized stealing is her friend's misconduct, but I also told her even though your friend has shortcoming, you still can play with her, you should not learn the bad disposition from her. (Interview with Sun 14 May, 2005)

The parents agreed that their frequent communication with their children makes their children feel safe and warm. As a consequence, they always like to share their happiness and sorrow at school with their parents, so that their parents have a better understanding about their school performance and development. As Ms. Liang says:

对于我来说，我对待我的女儿很公正，并且尊重她。就是这种相互的尊重使得我们相处得像朋友一样。她愿意讲给我学校里发生的事情，也愿意同我分享她的故事。就是通过这种方法，我可以密切关注她在学校的表现和成长。

For me, I treat my daughter equally, giving her respect. It is this mutual respect that makes us like friends. She likes to tell me what had happened at school and share her stories with me. Through this way, I can closely follow her school activities and grasp her development. (Interview with Liang, 20 June, 2005)

The parents all agreed that grades are not foremost for their children's school achievement. They want multitalented children, and they usually encourage their children to participate in social activities to develop various skills, such as problem solving skills. Mr. Deng says:

我不认为分数是衡量学生的学习成绩的唯一的标准。所以，我不是很重视分数。但是，我希望我的孩子能够掌握一定的技能。例如，逻辑思维和解决问题的能力，以及具有独立生活的能力。我认为所有这些能力和技能都会在将来对他有益。

I do not regard grade is the only tool to measure children's academic performance. Therefore, I do not care very much about the scores even back in China. However, I want my child to develop certain skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to be independent. I believe all these skills and qualifications will benefit him a lot in his future. (Interview with Deng 10 April, 2005)

Parental expectations were also derived from and shaped by parenting styles. Baumrind (1991) postulate three family parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. These three parenting styles differ in values, behaviours, standards and expectations. Research in western cultures consistently

has shown that parenting style directly relates to children's school achievement (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown 1992). Parenting style is a central factor in children's growth and learning (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989; Pratt, 1998; Xie, 1996). Studies have shown that authoritative parenting style is positively related to children's academic achievement, while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have a negative impact on children's achievement (Stenberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989; Dornbusch et al., 1987). Based on their descriptions of their parenting style, these five Chinese immigrant parents in this study perceive that authoritarian parenting style has a positive impact on their children's achievement. The parents reported that they all have very warm and close relationships with their children and they frequently express their educational expectations facilitated the desired outcomes. This mutual communication has served as the driving force behind high parental expectations, passionate parental support and demanding parenting practices.

School Satisfaction

Generally, all parents confirm that they are satisfied with what their children have learned from school. Compared with the Chinese educational system, they believe that the Canadian educational system is better for developing knowledge and skills. For example, Mr. Ma expressed his view on the Canadian educational system:

按照中国的价值观，分数是衡量学习成绩的唯一标准。不仅学生，而且他们的父母都很重视分数，希望他们的孩子得到“A”。但是我对加拿大的教育制度很满意，我的儿子得到了很多机会接触社会，参加各种活动，例如为癌症病人筹集资金，去市场调查产品的价格。通过这些活动，我儿子对社会有了一定的了解，他看上去更加成熟和长大了。

According to Chinese culture and values, grades are the only standard to measure school performance. Therefore, not only students but also their parents emphasize grades, they want their children to get “A”. But in Canada, I like their educational system, my son got a lot of opportunities to see the society and participate in various activities, such as raise funding for Cancer patients, going to market to know the product price. Through all these activities, my son has a better understanding of the society, he seems to be more mature and grow up. (Interview with Ma 10 April, 2005)

Mr. Ma’s comments on his satisfaction with his son’s social activities reinforce the importance of social capital in his success. As Burt (2000) explained some people can do better because they may have good connections to others. Society is just like a marketplace, where people exchange varieties of goods and ideas in pursuit of their interests. Some people or some groups of people can do better in a sense of receiving higher returns to their efforts, such as higher income and social status. “The human capital explanation of the inequity is that the people who do better are more able individuals; they are more intelligent, more attractive, more articulate and more skilled” (Burt, 2000, p.3). Bourdieu also expressed similar perceptions of social capital in his theory of capital and different forms of capital:

The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and

on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected. This means that, although it is relatively irreducible to the economic and cultural capital possessed by a given agent, or even by the whole set of agents to whom he is connected, social capital is never completely independent of it because the exchanges instituting mutual acknowledgment presuppose the reacknowledgment of a minimum of objective homogeneity, and because it exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right. (Bourdieu, 1983, p.249)

The parents expressed their concerns about the lack of a well-defined instructional framework, guided by a systematic teaching model that linked new knowledge to previously learned knowledge in Canadian schools. They also uttered their dissatisfaction with the amount of homework their children are assigned. They want students to have at least some homework so that they can go over what they have learned at school and spend more time with their homework instead of watching Television. For instance, Mr. Ma and Ms. Sun comment:

我从来都没有看到我的女儿做作业。当我问她的时候，她说没有作业可做。我希望老师能够留一些作业，至少是给他们一篇法文文章来阅读。这样可以巩固所学的知识。作业的数量不应该像在中国那样繁重，否则学生要熬夜来写作业。但是应该有一定量的作业。我希望两种教育制度的结合。学生需要一些压力来学习，没有了压力她们就不会努力学习。

I never saw my daughter doing her homework, when I asked her, she said there is no homework to do. I wish that teacher can assign some work for them, at least for example giving them a French article to read in order to reinforce what they have learned. The amount of homework should not be too much as that in China, otherwise students had to stay up late to finish it. But there should be some; I wish it would be better to combine the two educational systems. Because students need some pressure to study, without it, they will not study very hard. (Interview with Sun 14 May, 2005)

我儿子大部分业余时间要么是看电视，要么是玩电脑。我很担心他没有学到足够的知识。孩子还小，作业可以起到帮助他们掌握知识的目的。

My son spent all of his spare time either watching TV or playing with computer. I am worried that he did not learn enough knowledge. Children are young; homework can serve as a means to help them grasp the knowledge. (Interview with Ma 10 April, 2005)

All parents also expressed their discontent with the methods of instruction, especially the weak mathematics instruction. Mr Deng said: “我就是不大清楚他们教数学的方法。看上去用中国的方法来计算要简单得多了，例如做乘法和除法。用他们的方法来做需要整整两页纸才能做完一个很简单的题目(*I just do not understand their mathematics instruction, it seems much easier by applying Chinese way of doing mathematics such as division and multiply, but with Canadian way, students need at least two pages of paper for one very simple question*).”

Some studies show that student achievement rises when teachers regularly assign homework and students conscientiously do it. Huntsinger's study (1999) compared the academic performance of local Chinese-American children with that of European-American kids. He found that in the early grades, the Chinese-American students outperformed their white counterparts in math and mastery of vocabulary words. After examining a host of other factors, Huntsinger concluded that homework made the critical difference. Chinese culture emphasizes the importance of hard work in achievement. These five Chinese

parents perceive that homework not only builds their children's foundation skills and competencies but also builds the discipline, concentration and self-motivation required for academic endeavours. Homework also allows parents to see what a child is learning in school. These parents' views on the importance of home also correspond with Cooper's study (1989) that homework can have many beneficial effects on young children. It can help them develop good study habits so they are ready to grow as their cognitive capacities mature. Homework can also foster independent learning and responsible character traits. Homework can involve parents in the school process, enhancing their appreciation for the education and give parents an opportunity to see what's going on in school and express positive attitudes toward achievement.

School Involvement

All parents expressed that they want to participate in their children's school activities, if they were asked. Unfortunately, they said that they had never been asked to participate in any kind of activities and they all attribute language barriers as the main cause of their lack of participation. Mr. Deng and Ms. Liang report:

我们在中国的时候，只要有学校活动，我的妻子和我就会积极参与。例如，有一次孩子的学校举办运动会需要给学生准备矿泉水。我主动去买来水送到学校。但是在加拿大，我从没有被通知学校的活动。我猜想是由于语言障碍使我不能参加学校的活动。

When we were in China, whenever, there were school activities, my wife and I would participate enthusiastically. For example, once there was a sports meeting in my child's school, parents were asked to prepare mineral water for students. I volunteered to buy the water and send the bottles to school. But in Canada, I was never asked to participate in school activities not mention to volunteer to do something for school. I guess it is the language proficiency that prevents me from involving in school activities. (Interview with Deng 10 April, 2005)

我很想帮助我女儿的学习。但是我女儿的英语要比我提高得很快。我不能再给她的学习很大的帮助。

I want to give some assistance in my daughter's study. But my daughter's English improved faster than I did, I could not give her much help with her study. (Interview with Liang 20 June, 2005)

From her own experience, Ms. Liang also said: “我参加过两次女儿学校的家长会。老师很热情我也感到受到学校的欢迎。但是由于语言的障碍，我不能同老师沟通，有时也听不懂老师讲的内容。我希望能单独和老师见面，这样如果老师说得慢一些，我就会有更多的机会了解我的女儿的学校表现 (*I attended PTA twice. The teachers were very nice and helpful. I felt welcomed by school. But due to the language barrier I could not communicate with teacher well and sometimes did not understand what the teacher was talking about. I hope*

that if I can meet the teacher on one by one basis, and if the teacher can speak slowly, I will get more opportunities to know my daughter's school performance)."

Ms. Liang's report of her experience at school and other parents' stories of their experiences all reflect the language barriers that they have to overcome as immigrants. Norton's longitudinal case study (2000) illustrates how investment, identity, and power had profound effects on five women's language experiences and their struggles. She demonstrates that the language we are speaking is not only a tool to express ourselves but also our identities. When people speak, they are not just exchanging information; they are constantly reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Therefore, when people speak a language, they are investing in an identity as speakers of that language.

She argues that:

In other words, "naturalistic" language learning is not always a linguistic utopia in which learners are surrounded by fluent native speakers who enthusiastically provide input and negotiate meaning in an egalitarian and supportive atmosphere. For many immigrants, the linguistic environment represents inequitable relations of power and even hostility, with native speakers "more likely to avoid [learners] than negotiate meaning with them". (p. 113)

The parents articulated their dissatisfaction with the limited contact with teachers. They hope that they could communicate with teachers more frequently to follow up their children's development. As Ms. Liang and Ms. Mu explain:

我认为这是由于文化的差异，我不能像白人父母那样和老师交谈。他们和老师有着同样的文化和价值观，知道主流社会交往的方式。对于我，我感到自己很不合时宜，也很尴尬。尽管有时我有很多的问题要问，但是我不知道应该用什么样的方式来开始我的问题。

I think it is because of different cultures. I could not talk with the teacher in the same way as Caucasian parents did. They share the same cultures and values, and have the knowledge of the communication pattern of their society. For me, I felt myself quite out of place most time and very awkward. Although I have a lot to ask, I just did not know how to start. (Interview with Liang 20 June, 2005)

我曾经向老师打听电话号码，但是她拒绝给我她的号码。我感到很困惑不解。在国内，我和我女儿的老师几乎每天都见面，我们互相沟通我女儿的情况。我真希望在这里我能够有更多的机会和老师沟通来了解我女儿的情况，而不需要预约或其他程序。

I asked the teacher for phone number, but she refused to give it to me. I felt confused. In China, I met my kid's teacher almost everyday and we communicate with each other about the kid's development all the time. I really hope that I could have the opportunity to meet my kid's teacher and know more about her performance without making appointments or other process. (Interview with Mu 12 May, 2005)

All parents attributed cultural differences as another important factor that hinders their school involvement. These parents' frustration with school communication further corroborate with Bourdieu's cultural capital theories that people from higher class can take advantage of their familiarity with the dominant cultures and values and they attempt to preserve their superiority through education. People of lower class have limited access to the dominant cultures. Some people from lower class may give up and accept their low social status,

while others may take the opportunity of education to accumulate their cultural capital and ultimately change their social class. However, the process of capital transmission will take more efforts and time to complete. For new immigrants, the accumulation of cultural capital will even take more time than they may think. As Bourdieu explains:

More precisely, cultural capital, whose diffuse, continuous transmission within the family escapes observation and control (so that the educational system seems to award its honors solely to natural qualities) and which is increasingly tending to attain full efficacy, at least on the labour market, only when validated by the educational system, i.e., converted into a capital of qualifications, is subject to a more disguised but more risky transmission than economic capital. (Bourdieu, 1983, p 253)

Mr. Ma summarized: “加拿大的老师强调父母学校参与，例如参加和帮助筹划各种课外活动。但是在中国，父母被认为是孩子的第一个老师，他们的行为对孩子有很大的影响。因此，中国的学校强调父母在家的参与，鼓励父母帮助孩子做功课，辅导某些科目，甚至要帮助孩子准备考试 (*Teachers in Canada emphasized more on parental school involvement, such as attending and helping preparing all kinds of after school activities. But in China, parents are regarded as children’s first teachers, their behaviours have great influence on their children, therefore Chinese school emphasized parents home involvement, encouraging parents to assist with homework, tutor certain subjects and even help children preparing for the exam*).” His remarks confirmed previous studies that Asian American families emphasize parental influence on children’s education.

Huntsinger (1999) also revealed that Chinese-American families view homework time as “family time”. Often the whole family sits around the dining table and does homework together. The youngest children in the family often request homework from their parents so they can participate with their older siblings.

The parents all reported that communication between home and school not only has positive impact on children’s academic performance but also has great influence on parental school involvement. Chinese immigrant parents want schools and teachers to have frequent communication with them about their children’s school performance and progress. They also wish they could participate in school activities, such as volunteering and fundraising. The finding confirms the argument of previous studies that the connection between home and school is integral to the development of a cohesive and effective ecological learning environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Children’s academic achievement and motivation are linked to home-school communication (Norris, 1999; Watkins, 1997) and the amount of teacher-initiated communication that parents perceive predicts parent involvement (Watkins, 1997).

The most distinctive feature of these Chinese parents’ communication with schools was their high level of expectations for their children’s academic achievement. The parents reported that they communicated more for the sake of their children’s academic progress than for the school’s public events. For instance, the five parents all articulated they want to communicate with their

children's teachers more frequently to get information such as how their children have improved in their studies, on what subject their children should make more efforts. Yet, immigrant parents' lack of involvement in their children's schooling is often misinterpreted by school personnel as a lack of interest in their children's academic work (Commins, 1992).

Parental involvement in education is particularly important for elementary school children whose native language is not the dominant language (Constantino et al., 1995). The parents reported that when their children first attended a Canadian school, they were unfamiliar with the dominant languages, they especially need additional educational support from their families. However, in some circumstances, immigrant parents can only give limited assistance in their studies because of language barriers. The language barriers also work against their effective communication with schools. This finding confirmed Cummins' argument: intimidated by the linguistic barriers immigrant parents face in the dominant language school environment, such parents may be especially unable to participate actively in their children's education (Commins, 1992). The finding also supports the argument that language barriers cause Chinese parents' lack of communication with their children's school (Constantino et al., 1995).

In addition to language barriers, cultural differences may prevent effective home-school communication and hinder parental involvement in school activities. The failure of school personnel to understand and respect minority

parents' culturally behaviours often results in misinterpretation in communication. For instance, Chinese parents may go directly to school to see teachers without appointment, their behaviour may be interpreted by teachers as improper. Immigrant parents who have grown up and been educated in a culture outside North America may hold different view towards school and home communication. Ms. Mu pointed out: “她希望老师和她有更多的沟通，她甚至向老师打听电话号码这样就可以经常和老师联系来了解女儿在学习上的情况 (*She preferred teacher to inform her about her child more frequently and even wanted to have the teacher's number so that she could call her to get first hand information about her child academic progress*).”

Parents of different ethnic groups may think about issues in education in different ways. The teacher needs to understand more clearly how parents think and believe so as to better understand them and their funds of knowledge. In addition, teachers should fully utilize the funds of knowledge of their students. Moll (1992) defines funds of knowledge as: “the essential cultural practice and bodies knowledge and information that household use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive” (p.21). “The funds of knowledge of students represent a potential major social and intellectual resource for the schools (p.22).” By understanding and acknowledging the funds of knowledge of immigrant families and community sociocultural resources, teachers can use them for academic purposes to facilitate their teaching and eventually make positive changes to education.

From the parents' perspectives, they wish that teachers should have better understanding of differences in cultures and values. Therefore, schools and teachers can make efforts to accommodate these immigrant parents, and thus encourage immigrant parents' school participation.

Summary

Drawing from Bourdieu's theory of capital and different forms of capital and Ogbu's social mobility theory, I presented five Chinese immigrant parents' cultural values and beliefs that they perceive have great impact on their children's school performance. In addition, language barriers and cultural difference may be the two primary reasons that hinder Chinese immigrant parents' school participation.

The accounts of the five parents have touched many aspects of their experiences as visible minorities in Canada, and their educational expectations and school involvement reflected their deeply ingrained cultural values. These parents all have very high educational expectations for their children and believe in education as a means for social mobility. Based on their own job searching experiences in Canada, all participants held specific career aspirations for their children. They all encourage their children to pursue higher education to overcome occupational discrimination. These parents also expressed their dissatisfaction with Canadian school's communication style. They felt that schools are not sensitive to their cultural need and beliefs.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In this chapter, I introduce the Chinese immigration history to Canada. As a visible minority, their immigration history is characterized by hardships and discrimination. Their struggle for equal treatment continues even today. I also offer some insight into the needs of Chinese immigrants and recommend some actions policymakers, educators and schools should take in order to accommodate and facilitate their integration into the mainstream society.

Chinese Immigration History to Canada

The Chinese have been in Canada since 1858, when Chinese immigrants were drawn to the Fraser River Valley by the gold rush. For almost a century, the Chinese were subjected to institutional exclusion and legislative control. The history of Chinese immigration to Canada witnessed the change of Canadian immigration law and regulations. It was not until 1967 when the universal points system was introduced for selecting immigrants, that Canada began admitting Chinese using the same selecting criteria for other applicants. Even today, the descendants of first generation of Chinese immigrants and the few survivors have spearheaded a campaign seeking redress from Ottawa for the unfair treatment and the head tax as a result of 1923 exclusion Act. The issues have yet to be resolved.

Immigration from Mainland China to Canada was small in the 1970s. Most Chinese arrived in the 1980s. Many came mainly for family reunions. The 1990s saw a large number of immigration from mainland China to Canada. Today, mainland China has taken over Hongkong and Taiwan as the largest source of Chinese immigration. It also has taken over other countries and regions such as India and Pakistan as the countries providing the most immigrants to Canada (Statistic Canada). In Quebec, Montreal had the third largest immigrant population after Toronto and Vancouver. The Chinese-speaking population has expanded in Montreal. According to Statistics Canada, the Chinese are now the fourth largest ethnic minority group in Montreal.

There are many factors that contribute to the accelerated Chinese immigration including seeking economic prosperity and more freedom, desiring a healthier environment, and among them, pursuing better prospects for the next generation are above all of the other factors. The trend of immigration to Canada is likely to continue in the near future, and the number of immigrants from China is likely constrained only by the processing capacity of Canadian government.

Conclusions

Immigration has helped to make Canada one of the world's richest countries and a culturally diversified country. Immigration stimulates Canada's growth, economic prosperity and cultural diversity. It can reunite families and offer

protection to refugees. Meanwhile, Canada benefits from the talents, experience and economy of immigrants regardless of their status in Canada. The arrival of immigrants stimulates economic growth and enriches Canada's social and cultural life. Today, Canada has been one of the countries in the world that accepts large influxes of immigrants from all over the world based on its own immigration system.

Recent years have witnessed the large number of Chinese immigrants in Canada, with the coming of those immigrants are the large number of school age children. Hence, immigrant families' educational expectations and parental participation in their children's school have become major educational concerns.

From this study, I have come to better understand some Chinese parents' perspectives of success in a Canadian/Quebec context. It is obvious that these Chinese immigrant parents played a key role in their children's school achievement and their educational expectations and their perceptions of school participation were deeply rooted in their cultural beliefs and shaped by their immigrant experiences. These Chinese immigrants' high educational expectations are significantly shaped by Chinese cultural heritage and the challenges in adjusting to a host country.

With this study of an under-researched population, I hope that more voices of the fast-growing and the largest visible minority in Canada can be heard, so that the dominant society can have a better understanding of their needs and

their cultures and values. Schools, educators and policy makers should make a sustained efforts to ensure that the educational system serve as a vehicle to provide equal opportunities to all students regardless of races, and understand immigrant parents' communication styles to better serve their needs and encourage and facilitate this large population to participate in school involvement.

In Quebec, the large immigrant populations in some Montréal schools are seen by some politicians and commentators as a serious threat to the survival of the cultural integrity of the province (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). In other words, students from non-English/non-French speaking backgrounds will increasingly become the mainstream population in urban schools. As a result, they will speak their own languages not only at home but also at school and practice their own cultural traditions, which may become a threat to the continuation of cultural heritage in Quebec especially in terms of the language. As an effort to preserve the French language, in Québec, Bill 101 stipulated that children of immigrants must attend French schools, which leaves no choice for immigrant parents but to comply with the law if they decide to stay in the province. For most Chinese immigrants, they would prefer their children attend English school rather than French school. Because most Chinese immigrants have some knowledge of English and they can help their children with their studies especially at the beginning of their children's Canadian school experiences. Changes should be made by the government to allow immigrant parents to have more freedom to decide which schools they want their

children to attend. The government can take efforts to sustain its cultural legacy by encouraging immigrants to participate in local cultural activities. And also for policymakers, they should do more to provide employment opportunities and recognize foreign credentials to bridge the gap between visible minorities and the dominant class in the job market. For example, the provincial government of Quebec should establish some training programs to help immigrants upgrade their working skills and knowledge thus facilitate immigrants' integration into the Canadian society and contribute to their host country.

In accordance with the demands of immigrant families, schools and teachers should have extensive knowledge of cultural values and communication styles of these diverse cultures. Some issues related to immigrant cultures and communication styles can be addressed by consulting leaders of various ethnic communities and organizations to assess parental needs. Flexible schedules should be made to accommodate immigrants' long working hours. For example, the parent-teacher conference can be held at immigrant parents' convenience, and it should be held off campus and closer to family homes. Important school information should be sent in both English and French, if it is possible in immigrants' native language. When holding PTA, parents should be able to talk with teachers though a translator if needed. If some school personnel can speak the language, they can provide such assistance. Transportation and onsite childcare should also be provided by schools and the funds for these services should be

subsidied by the government. Schools can also establish a program to help parents learn how the school system works and about their rights and responsibilities as parents. A workshop can be organized and a cadre of parents can become educator and mentor of other parents. Parents should be welcomed to visit the classrooms and see how their children are being taught. In order to encourage the immigrant parents' involvement, schools must respond to or address parents' needs and concerns. A committee should also be formed that ensures immigrant parents can voice their educational concerns. School staff should participate in activities that provide greater visibilities in immigrants' cultures, such as various festivals. Schools should make efforts to help immigrant parents tackle language barriers and create more opportunities for immigrant families to get involved in school activities. A language program could be established by government in the school as a part of government immigration settlement services to provide language training for immigrant parents. Schools should organize activities reflecting diverse cultures and consult parents for the activities and extend their invitations to parents. This may help them contribute to, and benefit from an inclusive and open society.

Reflections

The findings of the study further confirm the findings of other studies that the Chinese culture emphasizes education (Ho, 1981). Grounded in a cultural belief in human malleability and effort (Chen & Uttal, 1988), Chinese parents

value academic achievement (Lin & Fu, 1990) and set very high expectations for their children (Ran, 2001). Chinese cultural values have contributed to these Chinese immigrant parents' expectations for their educational achievements of their children. The findings of the study corroborate previous research indicating that language differences may hinder immigrant families' effective communication and involvement with schools (Commins, 1992). The findings further highlight the impact of language barriers and cultural differences on recently immigrant parents' educational expectations of their children and their school participation.

Because the sample is relatively small and the research was mainly conducted in Montreal, future research should attempt to include a larger sample so that the gender differences between parents with respect to educational aspirations can be further explored to see whether there is difference in educational perceptions between fathers and mothers. Research should also include recent immigrants and immigrants who have resided in Canada over a decade, and compare their educational aspirations and school involvement: Do they have similar educational perceptions for their children and how do they view Chinese traditional cultures since they have been in Canada for years? Comparison of intergenerational educational perceptions and anticipations between immigrant parents and their children can also be made. As for school involvement, further research should be done to investigate other factors that hinder recent immigrant parents' school participation in addition to language barriers and cultural

differences.

Summary

Actions should be taken by schools, educators and policymakers to better meet and accommodate Chinese immigrant parents' needs. It includes: the recognition of foreign credentials and overseas working experience, efforts to help immigrant parents tackle language barriers and inform immigrant parents about school programs through various channels and sources. Efforts should also be made to understand and appreciate different cultural values and beliefs to facilitate immigrants to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of Canada. Further research should be done to better understand one of the largest immigration populations in Canada.

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Appendix 2: Letters to Parents

Negotiating Access to Parents

Dear xxxx:

I am a graduate student at McGill University. As a part of my M. A. thesis “Chinese Immigrant Parents’ Educational Expectations and School Participation Experience”, I would like to meet with you to discuss the possibility of engaging in a collaborative research project with you. I would like to meet with you at a date convenient to you and I am most grateful for your interest. This letter briefly explains the background and purpose of the proposed research.

I am interested in exploring Chinese immigrant parents’ educational expectations of their children in a Canadian context. I would like to understand immigrant parents’ perceptions of the roles that school and family should play in children’s education, and their attitudes towards school participation.

I hope that policy makers can learn some lessons from this research. It is hoped that this study will contribute to understanding of how parents’ educational expectation affect their children’s learning and the factors that hinder parents’ school involvement.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Li Ma

Appendix 3: 致家长的信

亲爱的家长：

我是麦吉尔大学教育系的硕士研究生。希望能有机会与你们见面并就我的毕业论文的论题：“中国大陆移民父母的教育期望以及他们的学校活动参与的经历”进行讨论。时间和地点都可以根据你们的方便而定。在这里我向你们简单的介绍我的论文研究内容：该论文的目的是想探究中国大陆移民父母在加拿大对于子女的教育期望，包括移民父母对于学校和家庭在子女的教育中的角色的看法，以及他们对待学校活动的观点。

我希望该研究能够加深对中国移民父母对于子女的教育期望及影响父母学校活动参与的原因的理解，并希望该研究能为社会，学校以及教育工作者总结一些经验和教训。

感谢各位的合作。

此致

敬礼

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

1. About school

Which school does your kid attend?

Is it a public or private school?

Which grade is your kid at?

Is he/she happy with the school?

Are you happy with the school? Why?

Which grade was your kid at before coming to Canada?

Was he/she happy with the school?

Were you happy with the school? Why?

Do you think that school provides support and/or services for students with identified or special needs?

2. School performance

What are your criteria for your child's school performance?

Do you think that grade is very important in learning?

Are you satisfied with your kids' school performance (grade)? Why

Were you satisfied with your kids' school performance back in china? Why?

3. Education expectation

Do you need to help with your child's homework? Why?

If so, how many hours a day do you usually spend on coaching him/her?

Are you satisfied with the knowledge and skills your child learned from school?

Why?

Do you think that kids learn the same knowledge and skills from both Chinese and Canadian schools?

Are you satisfied with the amount of homework and the time he/she spends on homework?

Were you satisfied with the amount of homework and the time he/she spends on homework back in china?

What do you expect your child to do after high school, Continue higher education, vocational education or start working?

If you want him /her to continue higher education, what kind of university do you expect him/her to attend? What are the reasons that you want them to receive higher education?

What kind of occupation would you like your child to pursue in the future, and why? Will you have the same expectation for him/her if you were in China?

4. Parental school participation/involvement

Do you like to participate in your child's school activities?

How frequently are you involved in different ways in her/his school activities?
What kind of school activities would you like to participate?
What are the factors that prevent you from participating school activities?
Back in china, did you participate in school activities? Why?
Do you feel welcome at school?
Do you feel encouraged to participate in a variety of school activities?
Are you provided opportunity to volunteer at your child's school?
Does your child's school effectively communicate information to you?
Are your child's school personnel respectful, receptive and responsive to your questions?
Do teacher help you understand the strengths and needs of your child?

5. Others:

What is parenting styles?
How do Chinese cultural values influence your educational perceptions?
What are the reasons of immigration to Canada?
What kind of job did you do before coming to Canada?

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Name: _____

Sex: _____

Tel: _____

e-mail address: _____

Home address: _____

1. What is your education background?

a. Bachelor degree b: master degree c: Ph. D d: other

2. What is your family income?

a: below 20,000 per year b: between 20,000-35,000 c: more than 35,000 d: other

3. The type of employment:

a: unemployment b: part-time c: full-time d: contract e: other

4. What is your occupation?

a: self-employed b: professional c: blue-collar worker d: other

5. What was your occupation in China?

a: self-employed b: professional c: worker d: other

6. What is your language proficiency?

<u>English</u>	Writing	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none
	Spoken	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none
	Listening	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none
<u>French</u>	Writing	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none
	Spoken	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none
	Listening	a: excellent b: good c: proficient d: none

7. What is your age?

a: 20-30 b: 30-40 c: 40-50

8. How many children do you have?

9. Do you have a boy or a girl? And what is her/his name?

10. How old is he/she?

11. Which grade is she/he at?

12. How long have you been here in Canada?

13. Which school is she/he studying?

