

**Studying Abroad and Post-Study  
Immigration for Chinese Students**

**by**

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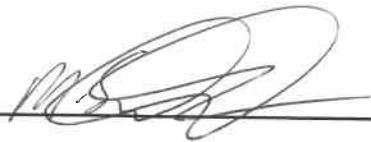
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## **Abstract**

Since 1978 the outbound Chinese student population has consistently increased, year-on-year, resulting in the largest population of international students of any country of origin. The English-speaking world has been the main beneficiary of this trend, although the market shares of the different host countries within this group continue to evolve as a result of various natural, economic and political factors. This thesis attempts to understand the effect that a specific set of factors, i.e. the immigration policies of Canada and the UK, has had on the respective market shares of these two countries. This is done through a case study in Guangdong, China, including questionnaires and several interviews with outbound students in China. The results of this study indicate that some aspects of recent immigration policy changes, specifically those respecting post-study opportunities within a host country, are well-known by students and their families in China. In several subjects, it can be demonstrated that the contrasting policies of Canada and the UK have an effect on long-term, post-study plans, and perceptions of both countries as potential study destinations.

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## Abbreviations

<b>CEC</b>	Canadian Experience Class
<b>FSWP</b>	Federal skilled worker programme
<b>GDUF</b>	Guangdong University of Finance
<b>GDUFS</b>	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
<b>HEI</b>	Higher education institution
<b>IGS</b>	International Graduates Scheme
<b>PBS</b>	Points based system
<b>PGWP</b>	Post-graduation work permit
<b>PSW</b>	Post-study work
<b>SEGS</b>	Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme
<b>UCLan</b>	University of Central Lancashire
<b>UKBA</b>	UK Border Agency

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## Introduction

This will be a study investigating the factors that influence the decision of Chinese students, and their families, about where to study in higher education abroad. In particular, this project will focus on how the changing post-study opportunities and visa policies of the UK and Canada contribute to the decision process, and what impact these changes have had on the inbound Chinese student population of the two countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This subject has been one of personal interest to myself for several years. Having worked in an international office of a university with a large Chinese student population, taught English as a foreign language in Shenzhen, China and spent several months living in a town in Ontario, Canada with a growing Chinese population, I have observed and heard anecdotal evidence of a trend which has not been studied in great detail.

### Researcher's Background

I had a burgeoning interest in this subject from the time I was working in a student-facing service at a UK university which offered visa advice to international students and monitored institutional compliance with Home Office regulations. I worked in the service between 2010 and 2014 and experienced first-hand the evolution of UKBA and Home Office policies, affecting both international students and higher education institutions (HEIs). One of the most significant changes was the phasing out, and eventual closure in April 2012, of the Tier 1 Post-study Work (PSW) visa route by the UK government. An explanation of the UKBA PBS tiers can be seen in Appendix 1. PSW had been a popular route for students to remain for 12 months after completing a programme of study in the UK, with 78,214 international students transferring to this route between 2011 and 2012 (Home Office, 2013). This accounts for 91.6% of all student-to-work visa transfers in this time period. Participating in this programme enabled recent

graduates to gain valuable international work experience, be submerged in a foreign culture and language and, in most Chinese students' cases, earn a higher salary than they would probably be able to in their home country. This allowed graduates to offset a portion of the significant financial burden of tuition fees and associated expenses, which they and their families had been forced to bear during their studies. I heard first-hand accounts of students' disappointment of the closure of this route, which meant that most students would need to return to their home country soon after graduation.

The closure of PSW was followed by measures intended to combat abuse of the student visa route, including interviews with immigration officers prior to arrival, in 2012. More robust international student attendance monitoring, record-keeping and reporting procedures were mandated and would be subject to strict audits by the Home Office. The most dramatic impact of this policy at the time was the suspension of the Tier 4 sponsor licence of London Metropolitan University in August 2012, which left approximately 2,700 international students, now without a host institution, attempting to obtain places at alternative universities at the last minute or leaving the UK (Meikle, 2012). These changes along with repeated government statements of intention to reduce non-EU net migration, including international students, all contributed to some of the students, with whom I have spoken, feeling unwelcome in the UK.

In late 2014, I was teaching English as a foreign language in Shenzhen, Guangdong, in the south-east of China. Although I knew that China was the largest source of outbound international students and that English language was becoming widely learned in the country, it was only here that I first felt the overwhelming demand for English language tuition in China. English language was on every level of the school curriculum, there were private "language-learning centres" on every street and in every mall in the cities and there was also an abundance of opportunities for private tuition and other functions. These opportunities were available to foreign teachers, such as myself, with little or no experience. This was a further illustration that the demand for English language teachers was so great, the schools were struggling to meet it with fully qualified and well-experienced English teachers. While working at the

centre, I came to understand a lot more about the different motivations of Chinese students to learn English and also to seek education abroad.

While teaching, I encountered several students who were taking intense lessons to prepare for a year of high school education in Canada as well as college students, preparing to embark on full university programmes overseas. One recurring reason for choosing Canada was the greater chance for immigration after completing formal education in the country. I spoke briefly to students about the route to permanent residence and citizenship which, even at the time, I thought exhibited an immigration policy which was at stark contrast to that which I had seen first-hand in the UK. The students I spoke to, and their parents, appeared to have placed significant value on the opportunity to remain in, and eventually immigrate to, their country of study.

Finally, in 2016 while living in Markham, Ontario, a Canadian town with a rapidly growing Chinese population just outside Toronto, I experienced life in a community of predominantly Chinese immigrants and Canadian-born Chinese. The number of people who spoke Chinese as their first language in Markham grew from 74,695 (24.8% of the population) in 2011 to 94,555 (28.8%) in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2011; 2016)

Many of the immigrants had transitioned to permanent residence (PR) through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) route. An explanation of the various “classes” in the Canadian immigration system can be viewed in Appendix 2. Most of the people with PR status I encountered had gained, or were in the process of applying for, Canadian citizenship. There are several ways to gain the required experience to take this route, but one of the most prevalent among the people to whom I spoke was through studying in higher education and transferring to the labour market.

I found stories like this to be typical of people living in the UK, China and Canada. Among people I encountered, it was known and understood that Canada had a more liberal immigration policy than that of the UK or the USA and that was the reason that more and more Chinese students were intending to study there. Having looked into this briefly, I found that it is a trend that has not been studied in much detail.

The trend (as I heard it described) is a relatively recent one which will continue to evolve and would benefit from an investigation into the statistical data as well as primary research of a group within the population who are contributing to, and could offer information that could help explain, the trend. An understanding of how this general feeling among potential migrants manifests itself in 2017, could be an important tool for predicting future trends as the Chinese education boom perseveres and the respective immigration policies of different English-speaking countries continue to evolve.

This study is founded on a body of research into the movements of people, the culture and growing economic power of the Chinese middle-class and established quantitative and qualitative methodologies for determining decision-making processes of consumer groups. The outcomes of this research will contribute to a growing body of research data on a subject which has been changing and gaining significance in recent years.

#### Research Questions and Aims

The specific aims of this project are to demonstrate the overall impact of the changes to immigration policy at the population, and the individual, level and increase the understanding of the mechanism which translates government policy into actions or decisions taken by prospective international students. To meet these aims, three research questions were generated.

RQ1 was designed to investigate any possible correlation between changes to immigration policy and inbound Chinese student population. In order to gain some indication of the large-scale effects of policy change, it seemed an obvious initial step to compare the two sets of variables over an extended time period. With two sets of variables as complex as these, however, there became a necessity for the second research question. RQ2 was designed to test the validity of the findings of RQ1, by offering other explanations for trends uncovered. If the first two research questions

revealed any correlation which could not be sufficiently explained by other background cause, it would then be necessary to provide an explanation as to how one variable could affect another in such a way. RQ3 was designed to provide such an explanation. For the project to meet its aim, a research question which would explore the impact of immigration policy at an individual level was required. Only the individuals who had taken the decision to study abroad could reveal if, and to what extent, immigration policy influenced them.

**RQ1. What, if any, correlation exists between reforms in the immigration policies and inbound Chinese student populations of the UK and Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

The available statistical data will be used to show how the respective market shares of Chinese students arriving in the UK and Canada, in comparison to one another and the rest of the world, have changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Changes to immigration policy which have taken place in the UK and Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and how each one impacts on HEIs, international applicants, students and graduates planning to remain in their country of study after graduation, will be described. At this stage, any possible correlation between restrictive visa policies and a reduced market share of outbound Chinese students will be demonstrated.

**RQ2. What other factors may have contributed to this change in student numbers?**

An investigation into the available data and the results of mixed method research will be used to demonstrate how factors other than those related to immigration policy might have contributed to any trends identified. The reason for doing this is to ensure that all the factors have been explored, and their impact taken into account, so that the single factor which is the focus of this project can be viewed fairly and within the

context of the broader decision process. Tuition fees, quality of education, reputation of HEIs and cost of living are among the other factors that may contribute to the decision of where to study, which will be explored in this research. If trends revealed in the first research question show that increased student numbers correlate with less restrictive visa processes, it will need to be demonstrated that this is not the result of some other background causes.

**RQ3. How do Chinese students arrive at a decision of where to study abroad?**

**When in this decision process, if ever, do they consider the student visa process or post-study prospects such as ability to remain temporarily or immigrate?**

This question is intended to reveal the mechanism by which the policy affects the actions of individuals within the subject population. As neither the government of the UK or Canada have imposed a cap on Chinese students, any impact being caused by the policy change is done so indirectly. Answering the question, therefore, requires investigation at the individual level. This question will be answered through mixed methods of research involving Chinese students in Guangdong, China. Questionnaires circulated to 107 students and face-to-face interviews with 10 students in China will generate primary data to answer this research question. Interviews will allow participants to give their own account of the decision process, what consideration is given to each factor, how they have come to hold their opinions of each country and the people who have influenced their choices.

The answers to each of these research questions, as well as any other revelations from the study, will inform the conclusion of the research project. The conclusion, consistent with the evidence presented, will address the impact of immigration policy, recommendations for further research and the effectiveness of the project's methodology.

Chapter 1 will review and critically discuss the literature previously written on the subject, introducing the terms and models which have been used to describe movements of people. Chapter 2 will provide the context within which this research project was carried out, discussing the education and immigration statistics of the countries in question as well as the recent changes in the political climate at the time of the project. The methodology used to answer the research questions will be explained in chapter 3, including the assumptions and adjustments that have been made. I will outline the results of the first-hand research in chapter 4, discussing noticeable trends and comparing them to the results of previous studies. I will finally draw conclusions in chapter 5, explaining the implications of this thesis for researchers in this field and policy makers.

## Chapter 1. Literature Review

This chapter is a review of the current debates and theories in this field of research. It examines the national culture literature with a strong focus on China (1.1) and social developments since the economic reforms (1.2). It then introduces the debates surrounding the internationalisation of education (1.3) and the leading theories about the migration of people (1.4). It closes by describing the contrast in the political landscapes and public attitudes towards immigration in the UK and Canada (1.5).

### 1.1 Chinese Culture

Chinese culture is characterised by Hofstede et al (2010) as one which values collectivism, long-term planning, and accepts an unequal distribution of power in society. Although Hofstede's national culture theory has been criticised for its methodology (McSweeney, 2002a, 2002b) and reliance on intuitive reasoning and national stereotypes as confirmation of its findings (Piller, 2011), critics rarely offer data to refute Hofstede's theory (Taras et al, 2010) and often concede how influential and significant it remains (Baskerville, 2003; Javidan et al, 2006; Holliday, 2011; Piller, 2011; Taras et al, 2011;). Holliday's (2011) critique argues that the study of national culture is widely-based on western-centred essentialism which does not adequately describe the culture of individuals. The author demonstrates how this leads to misunderstanding with a few reported interactions (many of which the author admits are fictional) in which ignorant western characters are guilty of misinterpreting a foreign character's culture. Although all individuals within a nation do not subscribe to a national culture (Hofstede does not claim this is the case), the same criticism can be aimed at any statement about a given culture at any level.

Alternative theories on national cultural values offer similar insights to Hofstede. Schwartz (1999) suggests that Chinese culture values a hierarchical society, which

Nardon and Steers (2009) equate to having a high “power distance” index in Hofstede’s theory, a trait found in Chinese culture (Hofstede, 2010).

Even if the same cannot be said for all national cultures described by Hofstede, his description of some Chinese cultural values and behaviour are consistent with further literature. There is support for Hofstede’s (2001) suggestion that the traits listed previously promote a society in which decisions about individuals are made by, and with the consideration of, the family (Yau, 1988; Stewart, 2017;). In particular, decisions about education, such as selecting a college major, are usually influenced by a student’s parents (Xia et al, 2004) although the autonomy of adolescent children has appeared to increase since the economic reforms (Way et al, 2013).

The traditional route to a successful career in China, since the time of Confucius, has been through education. Confucianism values education as a way to improve oneself (Lee, 1996) and places less value on trade-learning or vocational skills (Liu, 2016). Chinese students and their families, therefore, see education as an investment in their future. Students must consider many things when choosing a place to study in order to get the best possible return on their investment, in terms of income and social status.

## 1.2 Chinese Economic Reform

Since 1978, China has undergone significant changes in policy with regards to internal social structures, power and individual rewards (Stockman, 2000) as well as external relationships and participation in the international capitalist economy (Chow, 2004; Tisdell, 2009). The results of these changes included the centralised power of the Chinese communist party gradually diverting to external bodies as well as the people of China, who gained greater freedom to take advantage of the increasing economical rewards of higher education (Bian and Logan, 1996). Liu (2016) proposes that the “education-first” culture has been a major factor in driving up the demand for higher education as the political and economic freedom of the people has increased. The

number of regular HEIs in China increased from 598 in 1978 to 2,560 in 2015, with the number of enrolled undergraduates increasing from 856,000 to over 26 million in the same time period (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). This rapid growth has led China to become the world's largest source of international students, with 818,803 students going abroad to study in 2015.

### 1.3 Globalisation and Internationalisation of Education

There are many contested definitions of globalisation, but Martell (2010) summarises it as a phenomenon involving the interdependency of national economies, politics and cultures, undermining distance and borders between nations. The process has contributed to increased multi-directional migration and stimulated competition for commodities and education (Ritzer, 2010).

This period of globalisation has often led to culture, language and education being viewed and marketed as commodities. While the commodification of language has offered some ethnolinguistic minorities a means of preserving their culture and language (Heller, 2003), there is an argument that commodifying language as part of a wider policy of neoliberalism promotes an English-biased language hierarchy benefiting global corporations (Heller, 2010; Flores, 2013).

The internationalisation and commodification of education has been the subject of criticism and concern about the potential decline in quality of education and learning culture (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002; Karpov, 2013; Schwartzman, 2013). Despite the criticism, commodification and internationalisation have brought many benefits to HEIs in the form of tuition fees and the growth of the international student market (Knight, 2013; Hegarty, 2014).

While universities world-wide are increasingly focusing on internationalisation, embracing globalisation, governments have taken contrasting approaches to policy-making in this sphere (Coverdale-Jones, 2015). The ability to attract international students is dependent on a variety of factors which can influence such flows of

migration. The ways in which these migration-influencing factors affect an individual or group can be described in various frameworks, the most well-known of these is “push-pull”.

#### 1.4 The Push-Pull Migration Model

Studies on the movement of people often use a “push-pull” model, based on the hypothesis proposed by Lee (1966) to describe the various attractive and repulsive factors in the country of origin and destination which affect this movement. Several studies of international migration flow have identified different factors that can be described in this push-pull model.

Although Lee does not consider temporary migration, such as that of international students, at great length in his description, it continues to be used as a framework to describe such migration. Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) use this model to describe factors influencing the choice of international students regarding their study destination. Since then, the push-pull model has become the standard way of describing external influences on student immigration (Chen 2007; Eder et al 2010; James-MacEachern and Yun 2017; Lee et al 2017; Wilkins et al 2011). Van Hear et al (2018) propose a framework which categorises factors as predisposing, proximate, precipitating and mediating “drivers” as a more refined alternative to simply push and pull. It could be a useful framework for separating the numerous factors related to place of origin and destination, but it does not address the main criticism of the model.

There are two drawbacks to using only push-pull-factors to describe temporary migration. Firstly, it does not satisfactorily explain why individuals leave and return to a country of origin when push-pull-factors are constant. Secondly, it does not explain why a group of factors cause some individuals to migrate while others choose not to migrate under the influence of the same factors. A push-factor common to multiple individuals will have a different effect on each depending on personal circumstance (De Haas, 2008) and ability to overcome intervening obstacles.

A feature of this framework which is often understated, but could possibly offer a solution to these problems, is the influence of personal factors. Personal factors were conceded by Lee (1966) to affect the perception of factors related to the areas of origin and destination differently for each individual.

Takenaka and Pren (2010) explain how migration occurs through networks which develop over time and how personal characteristics account for migrant selectivity in such networks. Constant and Massey (2003) showed that emigration and return migration were selective of personal characteristics in a 14-year study of German immigration, while Dustmann and Weiss (2007) indicate that return migration is often brought about due to an increase in human capital gained in the temporary host country. Dustmann (2000) shows that the behaviour of temporary migrants differ from that of permanent migrants necessitating the use of different empirical models for each. Taylor (1969) proposes a new approach which combines external factors with individual accounts, but concedes that this creates a different problem to consider:

“The particular problem posed by the compromise or ‘combination’ approach concerns the nature of the combination. How is the anarchic and infinite collection of motives to be classified, without distortion and within the framework provided by the objective structural determinants? This is, of course, a problem, and perhaps *the* problem for every investigator engaged on a study of the motives for migration” (Taylor, 1969, page 100)

Despite these concerns, the push-pull framework continues to be utilised to describe causation.

By using the push-pull framework to investigate causal factors at the population and individual level, this thesis will consider the suitability of this model for describing the cause of temporary migration.

A number of push-factors have led to a steady increase in Chinese students studying abroad at all levels since 1978, continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016).

#### 1.4.1 Push-Factors Increasing Chinese Demand for Higher Education Abroad

A predominant contributor to the increase is the failure of higher education institutions in China to keep up with the growing demand. The study by Bodycott (2009, p.358) describes the “inadequate supply of university places in mainland China” as the most important push-factor for parents surveyed. Yang (2007) places the difficulty to gain a place in a Chinese HEI as the second most important factor, after the quality of education.

Another influence driving the demand for education overseas is the rapid increase of graduates from Chinese universities saturating the job market. The number of people in China graduating from higher education each year has risen drastically from 950,000 in the year 2000 to 6,800,000 in 2015, a seven-fold increase (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). As the job market of China has grown ever more competitive due to the increase of graduates, the rates of unemployment and underemployment of college graduates have also increased (Mok and Jiang, 2016).

Wang et al (2017) cite the competitive job market in China as one of the main reasons for studying abroad, as it gives students valuable language skills and greater opportunities. Austin and Shen (2016), meanwhile, suggest that gaining an education overseas is also seen by many as a stepping stone to the ultimate goal of immigration.

#### 1.4.2 Pull-Factors Contributing to Study Destination

The comparative influence of different pull-factors on students of various nationalities and countries of study has been the subject of several studies.

Above all, factors relating to the country of study have been shown to have more importance than those relating to the institution or course of study. Studies such as those by Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) and Chen (2007) demonstrate the varying importance of factors relating to programme and institution, when measured in isolation from country-related factors. These factors are worth considering when attempting to

explain destination choices within a given country, but do not significantly affect the choice of country.

Globalisation has ensured that command of multiple languages, particularly English, is now seen as a valuable commodity in the labour market (Block, 2008). The chance to study in an English-speaking environment has been cited by several studies as a primary pull-factor for various countries. A survey of 111 Chinese students in Canada revealed this to be the most cited factor (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017). Bodycott (2009) shows that students were interested in the range of programmes available, prioritised living on campus and studying in an English-speaking environment, while parents of students placed the most significance on employment prospects after graduation. Chen (2007) cites the desire to gain foreign language skills and experience western culture as the two most important pull-factors for international students from different countries, studying in Canada. A survey of post-graduate Chinese students in the UK by Wu (2014) finds that the opportunity to improve English language ability was the most important influence, as does Foster's (2014) study of Brazilian students considering studying in the UK. Conversely, Li and Bray's (2007) survey of 223 Chinese students in Asia reports that not having an environment conducive to foreign language-learning was the most and second most commonly stated disadvantage of studying in Macau and Hong Kong respectively. A comparative study of two English-speaking countries such as this can assume that this factor would not contribute to a student choosing Canada over the UK, or vice versa. As both countries are English-speaking, and this is a constant during the time period in question, the comparative effect of this pull-factor will be negligible.

Surveys of students from Asia, Africa and Europe in the studies by Lee et al (2017) and Ahmad and Buchanan (2015) reveal that geographical location was a key reason for the Asian students choosing to study in Malaysia. While this may be a significant pull-factor for international students in general, it is not one that changes over time, and therefore could not contribute to a change in inbound student numbers. For this reason, as with language, it can be discounted as a contributory factor in this

research project. Ruling out the significance of language and location as the reason for choosing between these two countries, the other cited pull-factors which differ between the UK and Canada, and which can change over a period of a few years, must be considered.

### 1.4.3 Potential Variable Pull-Factors

The same two studies which cited location as a key factor for Asian students, reveal that financial factors were of great importance to international students from outside Asia, with low tuition fees and living costs being the most mentioned reasons for choosing to study in Malaysia among this group. The influence of financial factors is described by several other studies, with the Chinese students in James-MacEachern & Yun's (2017) study ranking tuition fees as the third most important factor behind an English-speaking environment and a clean, safe environment. Unlike language and location, cost is a factor that changes over time in different host countries, and is worth investigating.

Besides tuition fees, there are other financial factors which have been shown to have an influence on international students' destination choice. Foster (2014) indicates that the difficulty in obtaining scholarships was seen as a barrier to studying in the UK by 28% of Brazilian students who responded to a questionnaire.

The quality of education in a potential host country has been shown to be an influential factor on students' destination choice. A survey of 676 Chinese students and 308 Chinese education agents in the study by Lawson (2011) shows that the quality of education was the most important factor for both groups.

Findlay (2011) suggests that efforts of universities to market themselves to international students, including offering foundation years overseas, had played a role in the recruitment numbers in the UK.

As well as these external factors, the people who have an influence on a student's decision will need to be considered in this project. In their study of Chinese

students MacEachern & Yun (2017) state that the most influential reference was their parents' recommendation, whereas international students from other countries attributed more influence to information from, and interaction with personnel of, their university.

#### 1.4.4 Immigration Policy as an Emerging Pull-Factor

Previous studies have identified immigration policy as an emerging pull-factor. Findlay (2011) states that the link between study and access to the labour market was an understudied feature in the UK, though the author suggests that many students' ultimate aim was to remain under the Tier 1 Post-study work visa. Although this may have been understudied in the UK, the ability to gain visas during and post study, the difficulty in the process and the perception of attitudes towards international students have been shown to play a part in the decision of an increasing number of potential students in other countries. The study by Bodycott (2009) suggests that the emphasis placed on the ability to emigrate after graduation by parents could potentially affect the international student market.

Eder et al (2010) finds that the student visa process in the USA was the only negative aspect of studying there according to 76% of the participants, with several going as far as to say they would not choose to study in the country again because of it.

A study of Chinese nursing students in Australia by Wang et al (2017) finds that the possibility of permanent residency was the most important factor in their destination choice. The same result is reported by Yang (2007) in a study of Chinese students in Australia with 29 of the 30 participants citing this factor as an influence.

Ji (2011) suggests that Chinese students chose to study in Canada because the country's visa process was easier than that of other English-speaking countries. Li et al (2012) finds that when asked about the reason for studying for an M.Ed in Canada as opposed to the USA, Britain or Australia, 5 of the 9 Chinese participants cited the relatively simple student visa process or the possibility of immigration.

Lu & Zong (2016) describe how international students in Canada have been given greater access to work permits and study visas, which have also been increasing in duration for the past ten years in order to give students the experience they need to apply for permanent residence. The study speculates as to the impact that this could have for Canadian immigration, stating,

“There have been two observable trends in the recent changes of Canadian immigration policy, which could have a tremendous impact on the immigration pattern as well as the temporary international student population in Canada” (Lu & Zong, 2016, page 2)

Canada’s more liberal visa policy has allowed it to take in Chinese students who were unable to gain entry to their first choice of host country. 37% of international students surveyed in Canada felt that opportunities to gain permanent residence were essential in their deciding to choose that country (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2013) and 51% of students surveyed intended to seek permanent residence status in Canada (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2015).

The UK’s student visa policy changes in 2013, in contrast to those of Canada, have been linked to an increasingly negative opinion held by prospective and current international students which may in turn affect recruitment numbers across the UK sector (Universities UK, 2014). The UK is likely to be replaced by Australia as the second most popular study destination for international students after the USA, and Marginson (2018) attributes this to immigration policy and the political climate.

Australia saw a significant effect on international student recruitment numbers when the government tightened its immigration policy in 2010. Student visa rules were strengthened, checks on available funds became more rigorous and requirements for permanent residency were increased to combat abuse of the system as perceived by the government (Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2013). The number of inbound international students arriving in Australia fell from 271,231 in 2010 to 249,588 in 2012 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). This is the only example of consecutive annual decreases in inbound international students for any of the four major English-speaking countries in the last 20 years. Although the most significant

impact was due to a fall in Indian students, the number of Chinese students only increased by 0.5% between 2010 and 2013 compared to a worldwide increase of outbound Chinese students of over 25% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). Chinese students were at the time, and still remain, the largest group of international students in Australia. In 2013, Australia reversed its policy, introducing post-study work entitlements to regain its share of international students (International Education Advisory Council, 2013) and the numbers began to rise again, reaching an all-time high of 294,438 in 2015 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017).

The Australian case is an extreme example of how policy can affect recruitment numbers and gives some indication that visa policies have an influence on where students from China, and other countries, choose to study. Although this would be an interesting example to research, the various changes in direction of policy and student recruitment numbers would make it more difficult to identify trends and correlation. The policies of the UK and Canada, however, have adopted more consistent, albeit opposing, amendments over the past ten years, allowing analysis of the different approaches.

This negative effect of restrictive policies are a concern for the UK student recruitment. Several “threats” to international recruitment identified by Universities UK (2014, p.25) included the policies of the UK’s competitors actively aiming to attract greater international student numbers, with the USA and Australia, for example, offering work visas to international graduates. The UK’s international student recruitment fell in 2013 while that of the USA, Australia and Canada all grew. The UK’s restrictions on post-study work opportunities and student visa policies coincided with this decline, as predicted by Milligan et al (2011) at the time of the policy’s implementation.

## 1.5 International Students within Immigration Debate

Despite having been shown to have a significant benefit to the economy of their host country (Levent, 2016; London Economics, 2018), international students have become part of a wider debate concerning overall immigration to the UK which has been the subject of much election campaigning (Carvalho et al, 2015) and increased coverage in the press in recent years (Allen, 2016). The UK government has been reluctant to remove international students from national immigration reduction targets (Conservative Party, 2010; 2015; 2017) despite repeated calls to do so from within and outside of the party (Cavanagh & Glennie, 2012; British Future and Universities UK, 2014; Universities UK, 2014; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2018). The reluctance is possibly due to the government's fear of appearing to manipulate data in the eyes of the electorate (Tarran, 2017).

The political climate in Canada differs to that of the UK in that immigration is not such a contentious subject among the electorate or major parties. High levels of immigration and citizenship, among other factors, have produced a voting population in Canada which is sympathetic to immigrants (Bloemraad, 2012). As a result, the debate has moved further to the political left than in the USA or Europe, focusing on effective integration rather than overall reduction (Banting and Kymlicka, 2010).

The recent immigration policies of the UK and Canada, which will be looked at in more detail in the context chapter, reflect these contrasting political landscapes.

## Chapter 2. Context

This chapter provides the context against which this study is carried out. It illustrates the change in outbound Chinese students as well as respective market shares of inbound Chinese students in the UK and Canada. It provides a brief overview of the changes to factors which contribute to the decision about where to study abroad, attributed in previous literature. It isolates and explores such factors in an attempt to gauge their influence on the flow of inbound student populations to a given host country. This is done in an attempt to provide an alternative explanation for the shift in market share direction before investigating immigration policy. The chapter concludes with a summary of the recent immigration policy amendments and significant political milestones in the UK and Canada. How these factors affect individual students will be ascertained through mixed research methods.

### 2.1 Outbound Chinese Students

The push-pull factors described in this chapter, among others, have caused increasing numbers of Chinese students to enrol in higher education overseas. Between 1998 and 2015, even as the number of universities in China continued to increase, the number of outbound Chinese students grew from 151,055 to 818,803. This is an increase of approximately 442%, with the UK (3,081%), Canada (1,838%), Australia (2,257%) and the USA (520%) all experiencing significant growth in Chinese student enrolment numbers during this time period (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). Table 2.1a shows the UK and Canada's combined market shares of outbound Chinese students changing between 1998 and 2015.

Table 2.1a: Outbound Chinese students, UK-Canada combined inbound population and market share by year

Year	Outbound Chinese Students	Total inbound Chinese students to UK and Canada	Combined market share of UK and Canada
1998	151,055	5,697	3.8%
1999	154,265	7,739	5.0%
2000	165,348	10,859	6.6%
2001	188,325	17,360	9.2%
2002	236,202	27,659	11.7%
2003	318,813	45,282	14.2%
2004	371,761	65,879	17.7%
2005	407,520	72,429	17.8%
2006	411,267	63,032	15.3%
2007	434,040	70,675	16.3%
2008	463,768	65,317	14.1%
2009	519,751	70,652	13.6%
2010	570,449	81,794	14.3%
2011	656,205	92,144	14.0%
2012	701,393	111,515	15.9%
2013	719,202	123,787	17.2%
2014	768,278	136,235	17.7%
2015	818,803	146,178	17.9%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018)

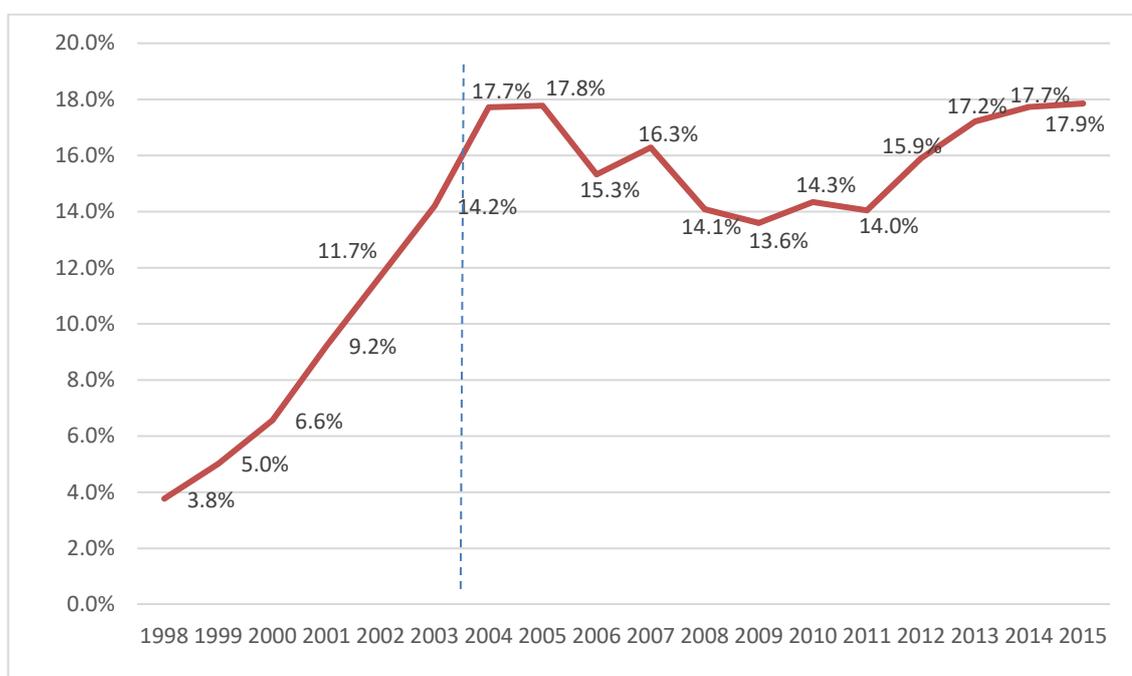


Fig 2.1a: Canada and the UK's combined share of outbound Chinese students, 1998-2015

The combined market share of outbound Chinese students attracted by the UK and Canada has been fairly consistent over the past 12 years for which the data are available. The percentage of students arriving in these two countries has stayed between 13.6% and 17.9% between 2003 and 2015. This indicates that during this time the net effect on the combined share produced by the pull-factors of other external countries has been minimal.

Table 2.1b shows the contrasting inbound Chinese student populations of the UK and Canada between 1998 and 2016 as a market share percentage.

Table 2.1b: Comparative inbound Chinese student population and market shares of UK and Canada by year

	<b>Inbound Chinese students (UK)</b>	<b>Market share Inbound Chinese students (UK)</b>	<b>Inbound Chinese students (Canada)</b>	<b>Market share Inbound Chinese students (Canada)</b>
<b>1998</b>	2,877	51%	2,820	49%
<b>1999</b>	4,250	55%	3,489	45%
<b>2000</b>	6,158	57%	4,701	43%
<b>2001</b>	10,388	60%	6,972	40%
<b>2002</b>	17,483	63%	10,176	37%
<b>2003</b>	30,690	68%	14,592	32%
<b>2004</b>	47,738	72%	18,141	28%
<b>2005</b>	52,677	73%	19,752	27%
<b>2006</b>	50,753	81%	12,279	19%
<b>2007</b>	49,594	70%	21,081	30%
<b>2008</b>	45,356	69%	19,961	31%
<b>2009</b>	47,033	67%	23,619	33%
<b>2010</b>	55,496	68%	26,298	32%
<b>2011</b>	65,906	72%	26,238	28%
<b>2012</b>	76,913	69%	34,602	31%
<b>2013</b>	81,776	66%	42,011	34%
<b>2014</b>	86,204	63%	50,031	37%
<b>2015</b>	91,518	63%	54,660	37%
<b>2016</b>	95,090*	61%	60,936	39%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) \*Source: HESA (2018)

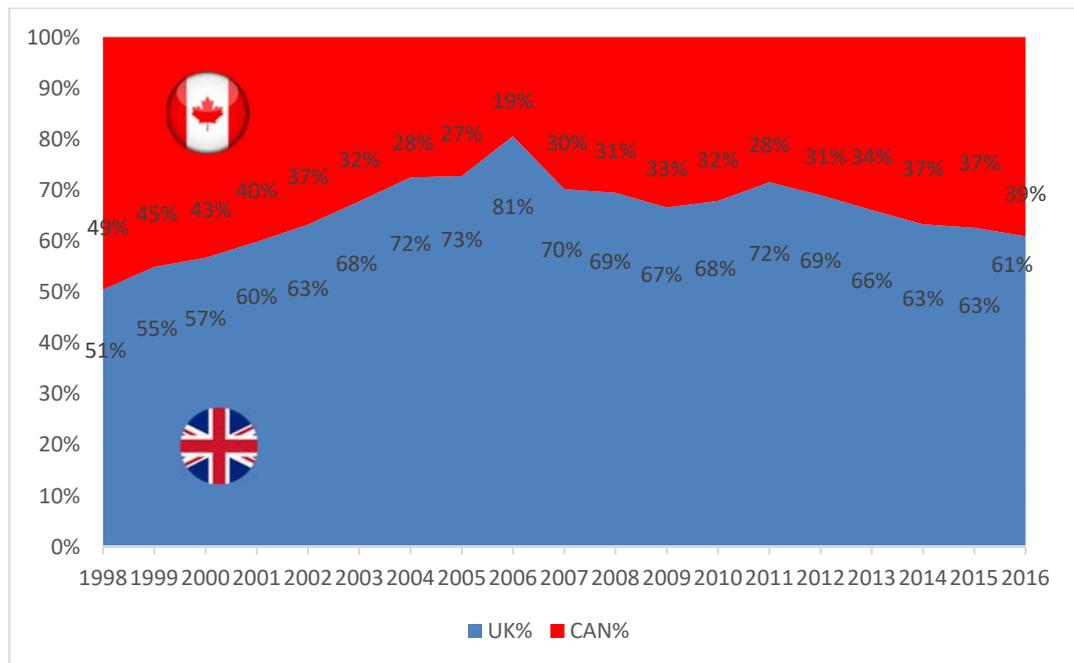


Fig 2.1b: Comparative shares of inbound Chinese students of the UK and Canada, 1998-2016

The 1998 combined inbound Chinese student population of the UK and Canada was fairly evenly split, with the UK receiving 51%. The UK's share steadily increased until 2006, when the market was shared 81% to 19% in favour of the UK. The direction then changed, and Canada's share grew until the latest available data in 2016, when the respective shares were 61% and 39% in favour of the UK. From this data, it can be argued that the change in the pull-factors within these two and, to a lesser extent, other countries had the effect of increasing the UK's market share (compared to Canada's) until 2006 and then doubling Canada's market share of Chinese students between 2006 and 2016.

As explained earlier, the net effect of pull-factors external to these countries can be assumed to be minimal. It might be the case that Canada was able to withstand an external pull to a greater extent than the UK during this time and this is what led to the market shift, so it cannot be stated that there was no effect whatsoever. Even if this was the case, investigation into the potential external factors would not enlighten the aims of this project and there would still be a necessity to investigate the internal pull-factors of the two countries to determine why Canada was able to protect more of its

market share than the UK. It is for these reasons that I will only probe pull-factors associated with Canada and the UK for possible explanations.

To attempt to answer the first and second research questions, therefore, this chapter will focus on the immigration policy changes, and other contributing factors, of the two countries since 2003. Amendments to immigration policy in this time period will demonstrate how those of the respective countries evolved from three years before the change of market share direction, right up until UK finally fell below its 2003 market position, after ten years of steady decline.

## 2.2 Assumptions and Justifications

In this chapter the inbound student populations of the UK and Canada are described as a market share percentage. A market share is more appropriate for illustrating the trend than simply student numbers as it normalises for the overall increase of Chinese students worldwide, presenting more useful comparative data. I have done this under the assumption that any push-pull factors external to the UK and Canada affect both countries equally. Hence, the comparative inbound populations of each country are expressed as a market share percentage of the combined inbound Chinese student population of both. This has been done for clarity and simplicity. The number of students available for recruitment by these countries increases or decreases year on year, and there are countless external factors which contribute to this. It has therefore been assumed that the only data relevant to this research is how each country's share of this available population changes over the time period in question.

The figure for the UK's 2016 inbound students is not yet available from UNESCO, the source of the other figures in the table. The figure used is that stated by HESA. In 2015 the HESA and UNESCO figures for the UK had a difference of 303 students. The market share percentages stated in the table in 2016 could therefore be subject to revision.

## 2.3 Variable Pull-Factors

Table 2.3a lists pull-factors from previous studies discussed in the literature review chapter which may have changed in recent years, affecting the destination choices of outbound Chinese students.

Table 2.3a: Pull-factors identified and source

<b>Pull-factor</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>
<b>Tuition fees</b>	James-MacEachern & Yun (2017)
<b>Scholarships</b>	Foster (2014)
<b>Quality of Education</b>	Lawson (2011)
<b>Marketing</b>	Findlay (2011)

### 2.3.1 Tuition Fees

Table 2.3b shows the changing tuition fees for international students of comparable courses at mid-ranking universities in Canada and the UK between 2006 and 2017. The University of East Anglia (UEA), UK and McMaster University (MU), Canada were ranked 252<sup>nd</sup> and 149<sup>th</sup> respectively, according to the QS World Rankings (2017).

Table 2.3b: International tuition fees charged by UEA and MU, with contemporaneous exchange rate by year

	<b>University of East Anglia (BA Courses)</b>		<b>McMaster University (BA Level 1 Courses)</b>	
	<b>Annual full-time international tuition fees* (annual % increase)</b>	<b>International tuition fees in RMB at contemporary exchange rate (annual % increase)</b>	<b>Annual full-time international tuition fees** (annual % increase)</b>	<b>International tuition fees in RMB at contemporary exchange rate (annual % increase)</b>
<b>2006/07</b>	£8,700	¥133,197	\$11,388	¥76,300
<b>2007/08</b>	£8,950 (+2.9%)	¥129,865 (-2.5%)	\$11,388 (+0.0%)	¥83,360 (+9.3%)
<b>2008/09</b>	£9,300 (+3.9%)	¥91,977 (-29.2%)	\$12,071 (+6.0%)	¥67,600 (-18.9%)
<b>2009/10</b>	£9,850 (+5.9%)	¥108,744 (+18.2%)	\$12,795 (+6.0%)	¥83,040 (+22.8%)
<b>2010/11</b>	£10,400 (+5.6%)	¥107,016 (-1.6%)	\$13,563 (+6.0%)	¥89,653 (+8.0%)

<b>2011/12</b>	£11,000 (+5.8%)	¥107,470 (+0.4%)	\$14,377 (+6.0%)	¥88,562 (-1.2%)
<b>2012/13</b>	£11,700 (+6.4%)	¥118,638 (+10.4%)	\$15,239 (+6.0%)	¥95,703 (+8.1%)
<b>2013/14</b>	£12,300 (+5.1%)	¥123,246 (+3.9%)	\$16,154 (+6.0%)	¥91,903 (-4.0%)
<b>2014/15</b>	£12,900 (+4.9%)	¥124,645 (+1.1%)	\$17,123 (+6.0%)	¥91,413 (-0.5%)
<b>2015/16</b>	£14,200 (+10.1%)	¥136,344 (+9.4%)	\$18,150 (+6.0%)	¥85,320 (-6.7%)
<b>2016/17</b>	£14,500 (+2.1%)	¥124,252 (-8.7%)	\$19,238 (+6.0%)	¥99,418 (+16.5%)
<b>2017/18</b>	£14,800 (+2.1%)	¥129,955 (+4.6%)	\$20,777 (+8.0%)	¥107,062 (+7.7%)

\*Source: University of East Anglia (2017)

\*\*Source: McMaster University (2017)

The data in the table show that tuition fees at the mid-ranking Canadian university increased at a higher rate than those of the mid-ranking UK university in eight of the eleven years between 2006 and 2017. UEA and MU increased their international tuition fees by 70% and 82% respectively over the eleven years for which the data are available. When factoring in the contemporaneous exchange rate with the Chinese Yuan, MU increased its fees by 40% overall, while UEA's fees fell by 2.4% in the eleven-year period.

Table 2.3c shows the changing tuition fees for international students of comparable courses at high-ranking universities in Canada and the UK between 2005 and 2017. Oxford University (OU), UK and The University of Toronto (UT), Canada were ranked 6<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> respectively, according to the QS World Rankings (2017).

Table 2.3c: International tuition fees charged by OU and UT, with contemporaneous exchange rate by year

	Oxford University, BA History		University of Toronto, Innis College, Faculty of Arts & Science	
	Annual full-time international tuition fees*** (annual % increase)	International tuition fees in RMB at contemporary exchange rate (annual % increase)	Annual full-time international tuition fees**** (annual % increase)	International tuition fees in RMB at contemporary exchange rate (annual % increase)
<b>2005/06</b>	£9,960	¥138,245	\$16,000	¥110,880
<b>2006/07</b>	£10,360 (+4.0%)	¥158,612 (+14.7%)	\$16,800 (+5.0%)	¥112,560 (+1.5%)
<b>2007/08</b>	£10,775 (+4.0%)	¥156,345 (-1.4%)	\$17,640 (+5.0%)	¥129,125 (+14.7%)
<b>2008/09</b>	£11,205 (+4.0%)	¥110,817 (-29.1%)	\$19,404 (+10.0%)	¥108,662 (-15.8%)

<b>2009/10</b>	£11,750 (+4.9%)	¥129,720 (+17.1%)	\$21,344 (+10.0%)	¥138,523 (+27.5%)
<b>2010/11</b>	£12,200 (+3.8%)	¥125,538 (-3.2%)	\$23,478 (+10.0%)	¥155,190 (+12.0%)
<b>2011/12</b>	£12,700 (+4.1%)	¥124,079 (-1.2%)	\$25,826 (+10.0%)	¥159,088 (+2.5%)
<b>2012/13</b>	£13,200 (+3.9%)	¥133,848 (+7.9%)	\$28,409 (+10.0%)	¥178,409 (+12.1%)
<b>2013/14</b>	£13,860 (+5.0%)	¥138,877 (+3.8%)	\$32,075 (+12.9%)	¥182,507 (+2.3%)
<b>2014/15</b>	£14,415 (+4.0%)	¥139,283 (+0.3%)	\$35,280 (+10.0%)	¥188,346 (+3.2%)
<b>2015/16</b>	£14,845 (+3.0%)	¥142,537 (+2.3%)	\$38,460 (+9.0%)	¥180,792 (-4.0%)
<b>2016/17</b>	£15,295 (+3.0%)	¥131,064 (-8.0%)	\$41,920 (+9.0%)	¥216,634 (+19.8%)
<b>2017/18</b>	£15,755 (+3.0%)	¥138,342 (+5.6%)	\$45,690 (+9.0%)	¥235,436 (+8.7%)

\*\*\*Source: Oxford University (2017) \*\*\*\*Source: University of Toronto (2017)

The data in this table show that the annual increases in tuition fees between 2005 and 2017 have consistently been much greater in the high-ranking Canadian university, in comparison to the high-ranking UK university. In every year between 2005 and 2017, the increase in UT's tuition fees was greater than that of OU. These increases contributed to a twelve-year increase of international tuition fees at UT of over 185%, compared to OU's 58% fee increase in the same period. When factoring in the contemporaneous exchange rate with the Chinese Yuan, UT implemented the higher increase in tuition in nine of the last twelve years, resulting in an overall increase of 112% compared to OU's increase of 0.7%.

The comparison of tuition fees charged for similar courses at mid-ranking and high-ranking universities indicates that prices have increased at a greater rate in Canada. From this data, it cannot be stated that changes in tuition fees were a significant factor contributing to the market shift, although this is admittedly a small sample using the historical data which are most readily available. Research into the changing tuition fees of a larger sample of HEIs, and the international student populations within them, would give a stronger indication of the influence of this factor.

### 2.3.2 Scholarships

Although the data about the payment of scholarships, and how they have changed over the years, are not as readily available as tuition fee data, the effect of this factor could be shown to have had an influence in this study.

### 2.3.3 Quality of Education

Table 2.3d shows the data from two different metrics for measuring the quality of education in a country, showing the number of HEIs in the world's top 50 and top 200 in each country, according to the QS World Rankings between 2004 and 2017 (the rankings did not exist prior to 2004).

Table 2.3d: UK and Canadian HEIs in QS World Rankings top 50, top 200 by year

<b>Total HEI in Top 50 (Total in Top 200)</b>		
	<b>UK</b>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>2004</b>	8 (30)	3 (7)
<b>2005</b>	8 (24)	3 (8)
<b>2006</b>	8 (29)	3 (7)
<b>2007</b>	8 (32)	3 (11)
<b>2008</b>	8 (29)	3 (12)
<b>2009</b>	8 (29)	3 (11)
<b>2010</b>	8 (30)	3 (10)
<b>2011</b>	9 (30)	2 (10)
<b>2012</b>	8 (30)	3 (9)
<b>2013</b>	8 (29)	3 (9)
<b>2014</b>	8 (29)	3 (10)
<b>2015</b>	10 (30)	3 (8)
<b>2016</b>	9 (30)	3 (9)
<b>2017</b>	9 (28)	2 (7)

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds (2017)

The table suggests that the comparative education quality of the UK and Canada has not significantly changed during the time period in question. Subject to further research on how the subject demographic assesses education quality, it can be assumed that this pull-factor has not been the driving factor behind the market shift.

#### 2.3.4 Marketing

Although the marketing strategies of HEIs is a factor that does change over time, it is difficult to use data alone to estimate its impact for two reasons. Firstly, marketing strategies vary from institution to institution within a country, meaning that any metric used to measure increased or decreased marketing, such as a comparison of budgets year-on-year for example, would need to be done for multiple institutions to illustrate an overall pattern for the country. Secondly, the effectiveness of a single institution's strategy cannot be determined without extensive research, even if the data were available. This factor might be of significance to international students, however, it must be conceded that it will be extremely difficult to construct a research instrument which returns an accurate, objective explanation of whether, and to what extent, a subject has been influenced by marketing. With new and evolving marketing mediums, measuring the effectiveness of one stream in the context of others has posed challenges to traditional methods for measuring marketing effectiveness (Pavlou and Stewart, 2000).

#### 2.4 Immigration Policy and Political Climate

This section will examine correlations between changes to immigration policy and the respective inbound Chinese student populations of the UK and Canada.

I sourced information about amendments to different countries' student and post-study visa policies, including the reasoning and aims behind each amendment, from publicly available government policy documents, announcements and reports on higher education from each country. An archive of all amendments to the immigration

policy of the UK since 1994, along with an explanatory memorandum accompanying each parliamentary paper, is available on the UK government's website, [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Previous versions of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR), a document which lists the regulations under which visas are issued, are available through the website of the Government of Canada, [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca). The information in these government documents are used here to illustrate an overall direction of each country's policy over the time period on which this research is focused. Each documented amendment between 2003 and 2017 was explored, with sections affecting applications for student visas, post-study work permits and indefinite leave to remain being highlighted. This was then further refined to changes that would most significantly affect Chinese students.

To determine which amendments to each country's immigration policy are relevant to the demographic in question (outbound Chinese students), it is necessary to identify the characteristics of the individuals within this demographic. This approach is taken to eliminate policy amendments that do not apply to the vast majority of individuals within the subject group.

#### 2.4.1 The 'Typical' Chinese International Student in the UK

According to the Home Office (2017), 95% of Chinese students in the UK fall into the following categories:

- **Studying without dependents** – of the 72,516 Tier 4 general student entry clearance visas granted to Chinese students in 2016, only 411 Tier 4 general student dependent visas were granted. This indicates that only 0.6% of Chinese students have dependents.
- **Aged 18 and above** – in addition to the 72,516 Tier 4 general students entry clearance visas, 3,693 tier 4 child student visas were issued to Chinese students in 2016, accounting for just 4.8% of Tier 4 visas granted.

With these characteristics in mind, the UK immigration policy changes which will be deemed to be most significant to Chinese students, will not include those specifically relating to dependents or people under the age of 18.

#### 2.4.2 Assumptions and Concessions

For the purposes of this research, some changes to the immigration policies have been deemed to be irrelevant:

- Amendments specifically affecting migration to and from countries other than China have been omitted from this research.
- Amendments affecting visa categories which have been deemed to have an insignificant impact on Chinese students have not been explored in any detail. These categories include those intended for use by spouses, asylum seekers, entertainers, diplomats, former UK nationals and armed forces personnel etc. Although it is possible for a Chinese person to enter the UK in these categories, and later undertake study, the impact on Chinese students of amending these policies would be negligible.
- Minor amendments, corrections and updates to the immigration rules have not been included in this section.

This section provides an overview of the immigration rule amendments which have been judged to be significant by the researcher with the assumptions listed above. Constraints on time and resources have necessitated these assumptions. They have not been made with the intention of misrepresenting the available data. A more in-depth study of the impact of each individual rule change may be needed to support the conclusions of this section.

### 2.4.3 UK Immigration Policy

Amendments to the immigration policy of the UK have been reviewed from archived parliamentary papers available online. These have been summarised in table 2.4a to show amendments with the most impact on Chinese students. All policy amendments have been highlighted to indicate whether they have a positive, negative or neutral impact on students (see key below).

Impact	Positive
	Negative
	Neutral

Table 2.4a: Summarised UK immigration policy changes affecting Chinese students

Year	Change to UK immigration policy	Source
2005	The new <i>Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme</i> is introduced allowing recent graduates of Scottish HEIs to enter or remain the UK for up to 2 years for the purposes of work	The Stationary Office (2005)
2006	Master's and PhD students of all subjects are allowed to work in the UK for 12 months after they complete their study through the <i>Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme</i> (SEGS), in contrast to the old policy which only allowed Science and Engineering graduates	The Stationary Office (2006a)
	English language requirement for anyone switching to <i>Highly Skilled Migrant Programme</i> (HSMP) is introduced	The Stationary Office (2006b)
2007	SEGS is replaced by the <i>International Graduates Scheme</i> (IGS), and allowing graduates of all subjects to apply, as well as holders of degrees below second class	The Stationary Office (2007a)
2007	<i>Student visitor visas</i> are introduced, enforcing students who enter the UK as a student visitor for 6 months or less, to provide proof of being offered a place and don't work or engage in business. Previously short-term students could enter without any such visa, or proof of offer	The Stationary Office (2007b)
	Entry clearance requirement is introduced for those coming to the UK to study	
	Visa categories from which one can switch to the student category limited to five: <i>Work permit; Those here to re-sit an examination; Sabbatical officers; Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme; SEGS/IGS</i>	
	Regulations are introduced requiring all institutions to maintain satisfactory records of student enrolment and attendance	
	Regulations are introduced requiring external students to be registered with a UK degree awarding body	
	Regulations are introduced preventing student visitors from engaging in paid or unpaid work placements as part of their course	
	ATAS certificate requirement is introduced for postgraduate students of certain Engineering, Science and Technology subjects	The Stationary Office (2007c)
2008	The <i>PBS Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) Visa</i> is introduced for recent UK graduates with £800 in funds to remain for 12 months for the purposes of work, replacing <i>IGS, Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme, Highly Skilled Migrant</i>	The Stationary Office (2008)

	<i>Programme and the China Graduate Work Experience Programme</i>	
2009	The <i>PBS Tier 4 (Student)</i> Visa is introduced, and regulations requiring all students to have a visa letter issued by a Tier 4 licence-holding education provider, as well as suitable maintenance funds	The Stationary Office (2009)
	Regulations are introduced removing available points for postgraduate certificates gained outside the UK for PSW visa applications	
	Regulations are introduced removing available points for Bachelor's Degrees for <i>Tier 1 (general)</i> application	
	Regulations are introduced preventing students from studying at an institution which is not their Tier 4 sponsor	
	Regulations are introduced allowing students to work full time during vacations from study	
2010	Minimum English requirement of B1 is introduced for Tier 4 students	The Stationary Office (2010a)
	<i>Tier 1 (general)</i> category is closed for entry clearance applications	The Stationary Office (2010b)
	Conservative Party forms coalition government after general election, having pledged to lower net migration including international students. Coalition agreement document reaffirms this pledge.	HM Government (2010), Conservative Party (2010)
2011	<i>Tier 1 (general)</i> category closed to in-country applicants other than for extensions	The Stationary Office (2011a)
	Requirement to pass <i>life in the UK test</i> prior to gaining indefinite leave to remain is introduced	
	Limit placed on the number of CAS numbers issued by some Tier 4 sponsors	The Stationary Office (2011b)
	Minimum English requirement raised to B2 for Tier 4 students	
2012	<i>Tier 1 (Post-study work)</i> visa category is closed to new applicants	The Stationary Office (2012a)
	Introduction of student interviews to determine whether applications are genuine, allowing Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) to refuse entry clearance based on interview	The Stationary Office (2012b)
2015	<i>Tier 1 (general)</i> category closed for extensions	The Stationary Office (2015)
	Conservative party forms a majority government after general election, having pledged to lower net migration including international students and give the electorate a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Prime Minister David Cameron reaffirms pledge on referendum during first speech after election.	Cameron (2015) Conservative Party (2015)
2016	UK electorate vote to leave the EU in referendum.	The House of Commons Library (2016)
2017	Conservative party forms a minority government after general election, having pledged to lower net migration including international students.	May (2017) Conservative Party (2017)

#### 2.4.4 Canadian Immigration Policy

I reviewed amendments to the immigration policy of Canada by comparing archived versions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* and various

Operational Procedure documents. The significant policy amendments have been summarised in table 2.4b.

Table 2.4b: Summarised Canadian immigration policy changes affecting Chinese students

Year	Change to Canadian immigration policy	Source
2005	Maximum length of <i>Post-graduation work permit</i> (PGWP) extended from 1 to 2 years in duration	Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005)
2006	<i>Off-campus work permit program</i> announced, allowing 20 hours of work per week	Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008)
2008	<i>Canadian Experience Class</i> (CEC) announced, allowing temporary migrants to transition to permanent residency provided they have reached the criteria of the class. The main criteria is to have worked for 1 year in Canada within the last 3 years	Government of Canada (2008)
	Maximum length of post-graduation work permit extended to 3 years, with no restriction on the type of work, allowing graduates more time to gain the work experience required to apply for PR through CEC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008)
2014	Full time students allowed to work off-campus without a work permit	Government of Canada (2014)
2015	The Liberal Party forms a majority government following a federal election, having pledged to make it easier for international students and other temporary residents to become Canadian citizens.	Chief Electoral Officer of Canada (2015) Liberal Party of Canada (2015)
2017	Residency obligation of permanent residency reduced allowing greater flexibility for people wishing to become Canadian citizens.	Government of Canada (2017)

## 2.5 Correlation between Immigration Policy and Inbound Chinese Student Population

The respective immigration policies of the UK and Canada each became more favourable to prospective international students between 2003 and 2006. In the UK, only three significant changes related to international students were implemented during this period. In general, these changes could be seen as positive, but only affecting limited numbers of students. The introduction of *Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme*, for example, only affected international students in Scotland, which, as a group, currently make up less than 10% of the UK-based international student population (HESA, 2017). Two changes to Canada's policy were also identified in this period. They were comparable to those implemented by the UK in terms of direction and impact. During this period, the UK's market share of Chinese students increased

from 68% to 81%. No correlation can be identified between policy direction and inbound student share for the period of 2003 to 2006 because the respective policies of both countries were generally favourable towards Chinese students. Nevertheless, the market shares of the countries changed in favour of the UK.

From 2006 onwards, Canada's policy continued in its direction of favourability towards international students, while the UK began to implement stronger restrictions and regulations. The result of the two most significant policy amendments in Canada was that international students had a direct path from student visa to three-year work permit and finally permanent residency. This trend continued as Justin Trudeau's successful presidential election campaign focused on progressive policies which would benefit international students (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). Meanwhile, the UK government actively worked to reduce the number of international students transitioning into the labour market. In terms of that aim, the closure of PSW was a success, as the number of international students who were granted an extension to stay and work in the UK fell from 46,875 in 2011 to just 6,238 in 2013 (Home Office, 2016). From the perspective of HEIs and international student recruitment, however, the policy appears to have had an adverse knock-on effect. From 2006 to 2017 Canada's market share steadily grew in comparison to that of the UK, from 19% to 37% the highest share Canada has held since 2002. Although the number of Chinese students in tertiary education abroad continued to increase between 2011 and 2017, the number of inbound students in the UK only increased by 39% compared to 108% in Canada (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). The UK's market share decreased in comparison to Canada's when the government was implementing more restrictive policies and publicly stating its intention to reduce net migration (including international students) and deliver a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Although it is difficult to state a definitive cause of population movement, a correlation can be identified between restrictive immigration policy affecting international students, and a reduced inbound Chinese student market share for the period of 2006-2017 based on the data presented here.

Further research about what applicants feel about this, and whether it contributed to their choice of study destination, is therefore required.

## 2.6 Concessions Made by the Researcher

Although accurate, like-for-like data of student movement are available for both countries in this research, stating any correlation between policy direction and market share of inbound students is reliant on being able to accurately determine the direction of an immigration policy. In this case, the policy directions of the two countries are as unidirectional and contrasting as one could hope to find for a comparison. There are limits, however, to the extent that this can be stated. This chapter has attempted to fairly portray the broadest and furthest-reaching policy changes of the two countries in question to most effectively illustrate the general trend of change. It must be understood that inclusion of all amendments would add extraneous detail to this section without altering the general outcome. Any correlation, therefore, can only be stated as being modest and subject to further research.

Other potential causal factors were examined over the time period in question to identify any significant changes using several different metrics. It is possible that the respondents and participants in the results of this thesis use another metric to measure these factors. This must be addressed, in order to normalise the trends described in this section.

### Chapter 3. Methodology

The literature review chapter introduced some of the findings of previous case studies carried out over the past 15 years, with varying subject groups and methodologies. While they are useful for generating push-pull-factors which will inform this research, they were not designed to answer the specific research questions of this project, necessitating this study. Where the context chapter introduced data which will be used to answer the first and second research questions regarding correlation between immigration policy change and inbound student population across different countries, this chapter will focus on the third research question, describing the method by which influential factors on individuals within the international student market were investigated.

This research was carried out using a mixed method design involving outbound Chinese students in two international universities in Guangdong. The mixed methods included the circulation of a questionnaire and conducting several face-to-face interviews. The results of the questionnaire were intended to inform the design of the interview questions. Using several research methods, such as these, to investigate one subject promotes stronger confirmation of results (Berg, 2001).

The correlation between policy and student population, the comparative significance of various other factors, discussed in the literature review chapter, and findings from the mixed method research will converge to inform any hypothesis that may be reached.

Three previous studies of Chinese students, those of Austin and Shen (2016), Li et al (2012) and Chen (2007), used methodologies which were effective in generating at least some data that would contribute to the research aims of this project. There is, however, a divergence of the specific research aims of those studies and this one, necessitating the utilisation of a new methodology, informed by those used previously.

Austin and Shen (2016) had similar research aims and an appropriate methodology for promoting factors which participants perceive to have been influential on their decision to study in their chosen country, the United States. The study utilised coded analysis of 20 interview transcripts of Chinese students in the USA, identifying influential factors which were categorised into different themes. If that study was entirely replicated in Canada and the UK, it would go some way to answering the research questions of this project. The main criticism of the study is that the influential factors uncovered in the interviews are not categorised by the stage of decision process, but rather listed together in a single table. Categorising responses, and even distinguishing between these categories at the data collection stage, is important for this research as will be described in this chapter.

Li et al (2012) focused on Chinese students in Canada and included a question in the interviews which would inform the research of this project. The first question in the study's interview stage asked participants directly why they chose Canada over the United States, Britain or Australia. While this might promote pull-factors which could be researched further, the question relies on participants fairly weighing each of the countless factors that led to a single decision in the past to give a short answer. Several of the answers given to this question were intriguing and with further enquiry might have returned even more significant data. Besides the lack of detail in the answers, or follow-up questions, one of the main shortcomings of the study, with regards to this project, is that the interviews were conducted in 2009. The pull-factors which are the subject of this research have changed significantly in the intervening eight years, and a new study on this subject group is warranted.

Chen (2007) utilises questionnaires and interviews in a similar method to that of this study. Push-pull factors identified by the questionnaire were categorised into those related to studying abroad, studying in Canada and studying at a specific institution. Although this study is less concerned with the institutional factors, separating the first two steps in the decision process for further investigation in the interview stage is appropriate for this study, as will be explained in this chapter. Although the study, like

that of Lee et al, is not a contemporary one, and focuses on postgraduate students who might have different decision-making processes to undergraduates, the methodology used by Chen, with a few changes, would be a useful one to adopt in this study.

The studies described do not, and were not designed to, answer the specific research questions of this project, necessitating the undertaking of this project. The methodology of this research project was informed by effective methods adopted by the previous studies on the subject with consideration given to the shortcomings outlined here.

### 3.1 Mixed Methods Research Design

The utilisation of multiple complimentary methods of research has been discussed as early as Campbell and Fiske (1959) who advocate their use as a means for validating results. Further development by Jick (1979) highlights an aspect of the mixed methods approach that should be addressed, but is often excluded, by the researcher at the design stage: explaining exactly how and why the results of the multiple methods are converged. Greene et al (1989) expands on this issue and proposes a framework that grounds the countless strategies for mixing methods into five distinct sub-categories of research method: *triangulation*, *complementarity*, *development*, *initiation* and *expansion*. The “development” method, utilising results from one method to inform the other, is promoted by Sieber (1973) for developing fieldwork methods in light of survey results or vice versa.

Due to the limited amount of time available to conduct first-hand qualitative data collection in China, it was necessary to gather survey data at an early stage which could inform the subsequent research design. The first stage survey was designed to reveal common responses which were likely to be offered in the second stage. This data and an understanding of the previous literature and wider data sets allowed follow-up questions to be planned accordingly.

Furthermore, the two methods of research complement each other in this type of social research. The quantitative questionnaires can demonstrate a pattern on a large scale while the qualitative interview can generate, with more detail than the quantitative, data which, while not necessarily being generalisable, can begin to uncover a practical mechanism that could contribute to the large-scale pattern (Maxwell, 2004). Combining quantitative data collection and establishing narratives in an interview setting are likely to reveal participants' actions as well as their understanding of such (Brannen, 2005).

Previous studies including those conducted by Bodycott (2009), Findlay (2011), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), Tang (2002), and Wu (2014) highlighted several factors that informed the construction of the research method. Although the aims of this study differ from those of the studies listed, there are overlapping areas of interest. A knowledge of the factors cited in these studies, therefore, was needed to mitigate the chance of unanticipated responses appearing in the interview.

The subject of the studies informing this research, will be mainly Chinese students, although studies that have generated other influencing factors will also be useful, regardless of the subject. The study by Tang (2002), for example, focuses on Asian Americans, Caucasian Americans as well as students from mainland China, but offers valuable insight into how people can be influenced in decision-making.

Building on the findings of the previous studies discussed in the literature review, the mixed methods study of outbound students from Guangdong was designed comprising 3 parts: Distribution of a questionnaire, conducting face-to-face interviews and data analysis.

The students in this study had already made a final decision about their host country, unlike the study of Bodycott (2009), in which the students were still in the initial stages of selection. Only upon making the decision, can the actual influence of each factor be realised. Students were therefore interviewed at a later stage of the decision to mitigate participants expressing elevated perceptions of influencing factors which might ultimately have no impact on their final decision.

## 3.2 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaires (an example of which can be found in Appendix 3) were circulated to outbound Chinese students in Guangdong, generating 107 responses. Of these respondents, 77 had chosen to study in the UK and 30 had chosen Canada. The questionnaires provided information about the movement and influencing factors of the respondents.

### 3.2.1 Recruitment of Questionnaire Respondents

In advance of travelling to China, I contacted Mr. C (this is a pseudonym), an academic member of staff of the International College at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) to summarise the research project and ask for assistance with the data collection stage. Students enrolled in the International College have the option of studying part of their degree course at one of several different partner institutions in different countries. Once enrolled on the GDUFS course, students choose between two or more partners (depending on the course) at which to complete their programme. The students in this survey had already made their decision about which overseas institution to complete their programme of study. Recruiting students such as these as a sample for data collection has two key benefits. Firstly, it allowed students who will be studying in two different foreign countries (in this case, the UK and Canada) to be selected and grouped at the data collection stage with minimal difference in conditions (such as time of year, geographical location, environment etc.). Secondly, the students' opportunity to choose their country of overseas study allows the data collection and analysis to be carried out with the knowledge that the respondent had a viable alternative to their ultimate study destination. The respondents could therefore more accurately approximate the relative influence attributed to the various factors in the questionnaire than could a group of students who had made a choice to study in a single destination without a clear route to any alternatives. That is not to say that direct

entrants have no choice in their study destination, but to arrive at a final decision between two HEIs in different countries would necessitate the pursuit of multiple independent application processes without discrimination until a final decision is required. For direct entry students it is more likely that multiple study destinations are eliminated at various stages of the decision process due to a wide range of factors until the most attractive destination is fully pursued. The stage that this would happen would be different for every individual in a data collection sample and the viability of any alternative destinations could not be assumed to be equal for all.

Mr. C agreed to circulate the questionnaire, designed by myself, to students in four different classes (three classes of students who would progress to UK universities and one class of students who would progress to Canadian universities). All students in the classes were asked to complete the questionnaire without discussing their answers with their classmates. Mr. C supervised the students as they completed the questionnaire. Once complete, he collected, scanned and emailed the questionnaires back to me for analysis. He did not exclude any students or responses from the data. Table 3.2 shows various attributes of the questionnaire respondents.

Table 3.2: Attributes of questionnaire respondents by category

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Category 1 (number of respondents)</b>	<b>Category 2 (number of respondents)</b>	<b>Invalid responses</b>
Country of overseas study	UK (77)	Canada (30)	0
Parent's education	Below degree level (62)	Degree level or higher (45)	0
Siblings studied abroad	None (82)	At least one (25)	0
Source of funding	Parents (95)	Other (11)	1

Questions in this section were designed to generate more definitive answers and be less open to interpretation and feeling. As there was no chance for follow-up and clarifications at the questionnaire stage it was important to mitigate against ambiguous responses which could contaminate the data-set or cause it to be unusable. The first part of the questionnaire generated information about the respondents, in order to

group responses to the second and third parts of the questionnaire by different traits.

Areas of inquiry in this part include:

- **Course information**
  - Country, city and institution of study
  - Subject and level of programme;
- **Respondent and family history**
  - Education level of parents and siblings
  - Location of highest education of these family members
  - Any residence permit or change of nationality of friends and family members.
  - English-speaking countries visited in the past
- **Application information**
  - How respondents heard about their course of study
  - Other institutions and countries applied to
  - Order of preference for each study destination
  - Source of funding for course of study

The second part of the questionnaire was open to more interpretation and asked for the respondents' opinions and influences. The following subjects were of interest in this part:

- **Why do you want a degree?**
- **Why did you choose to study outside of China?**
- **Why did you choose your country of overseas study?**

There was only one line for answers to each of these questions, allowing respondents to give one or two sentences. Short answers were required so only the most significant influential factors would be given and would, therefore, be easier to analyse in a statistical context than a full page response which might give extraneous details on the matter. These responses were to be used as an indicator as to what type of answers

might be offered in the interview stage, and follow-up questions could be prepared in advance.

The third part of the questionnaire was a multiple-choice section. Multiple-choice questions are more useful for large volume data analysis, unlike the open questions which require some interpretation before they can be analysed as a data-set. In this part, respondents were asked about the following subjects:

- **Factors which contributed to respondent's decision:**

Respondents were asked to confirm whether various statements, regarding the influence of a pull-factor, were true or false in their case. Adding the total number of positive responses to each statement is more suitable than asking students to give a 1 to 5 score noting the level of influence, a method used by some previous case studies. The scaled response is too subjective and adds an extra dimension of uncertainty, requiring further investigation into the method by which respondents arrived at a number. With a questionnaire, such as this, the level of follow-up required would be impractical. A simple binary response removes this ambiguity. Respondents were asked to choose 6 out of 18 statements which most apply to them, and their decision to study in their host country. Respondents were specifically asked to make 6 selections in order to mitigate against respondents selecting every option, or just one. Having the same number of selections on each questionnaire made it easier to compare influence on different students.

- **Respondent's opinions about various pull-factors in English-speaking countries:**

As this questionnaire was circulated to a relatively high volume of potential respondents with no chance of clarifying any answers, the questions in this section were designed to generate concise, unambiguous data. Respondents were asked to indicate how, in their opinion, the four major English-speaking countries are ranked in various categories, based on major pull-factors.

These two areas overlapped in some aspects, but investigating the same subject in a number of different ways can enable triangulation of responses. Using multiple indicators of a variable in this way, two questions on the same questionnaire, also reduces the possibility of systematic errors in the method, increasing reliability (Neuman, 2006). As well as questions about how participants perceive a country, whether certain country-related factors had an influence on a student's choice of study destination, were asked. It was expected that the response to the second part will, in many cases, simply confirm what was answered in the first. In these cases, it was useful as a means of clarifying and consolidating respondents' views. In some other cases, however, the combination of two responses can reveal much more than a single response could. A respondent might state that the possibility of post-study immigration had no influence on their decision to study in their chosen country of Canada, for example. When asked to rank four English-speaking countries from most likely to least likely route to immigration, however, the same respondent might state their belief that Canada is more favourable. This combination of responses would be useful for two reasons. Firstly, it gives some insight into the general opinion in China about a pull-factor of a host country which, in this respondent's case, may not have been influential but might have been to others. If responses to this question indicated that it is generally held that one country is more favourable than others, it is worthy of discussion. Secondly, it gives a more objective indication of how much weight was given to each factor. If, for example, a respondent states that low tuition fees and quality of education both influenced their decision, but they only ranked their host country highly in one of those categories, there is an indication that this one category ultimately had a greater influence than the other.

An alternative method for determining the relative influence would be to ask participants to respond with a Likert scale 1-5 ranking of how much each factor contributed to their decision, although the validity of doing this would be overly reliant on participants' own objectivity, a quality which cannot be measured. Data collected

using this method can often be affected by different biases (Moors et al, 2014). It would also fail to produce as much data about how the countries are perceived in general.

A concern which arose from the fact that the researcher would not be present when the first questionnaires are circulated, is that queries could not be answered and participants might not fully understand one, or more, of the questions. This was mitigated in two ways: Piloting the questionnaire with respondents of a similar background as the target group (international students and graduates in the UK) and including a Chinese translation of each question on the questionnaire. Piloting the research tool ensures it will be effective at producing data in the field (Davies, 2007). The outcome of the pilot was not the content of the responses, but the understanding of what the questions required from participants. Responses given at this stage informed the final draft of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed so that it would not take more than five minutes to complete. If more than five minutes was required, students might be less likely to participate. At this stage it was more important to generate a high volume of responses on the key questions, than a limited number of responses which return more details.

### 3.2.2 Language Considerations for Questionnaires

As the questionnaire was to be circulated to students in China of differing levels of English-speaking ability, it was necessary to translate the questions and instructions into Chinese. My wife, who is a native Chinese speaker, wrote a translation next to each question on the circulated questionnaire. Where responses were written in Chinese, my wife also provided the English translation. Although the open questions were brief and the space provided for answers only allowed one or two short sentences, it must be conceded that using translated responses allows for an additional degree of interpretation from the translator. When translating into a single target language (as was done in this case) it is desirable for the questionnaire to be “back-translated”, using

two independent translators, to check for any ambiguity in the wording of the questions before circulation, although this method of translation would still not guarantee all respondents' comprehension (McGorry, 2000). Due to constraints on time and resources, the questionnaire and subsequent responses were translated using a simple one-way translation. McKay et al (1996) suggest that this method of translation can be effective when using an appropriate translation objective.

If the survey is to be broadened to include speakers of a language other than Chinese, the translations would need to be reviewed to ensure equivalence between the multiple versions before data can be compared (Pan and Fond, 2014).

### 3.2.3 Assumptions

The questionnaires were not completed under the supervision of the researcher. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the questionnaires were completed honestly and with the full understanding of the questions. Attempts were made to ensure the clarity of meaning of the questionnaire, including piloting the questions with non-native English speakers and making amendments following feedback from said pilot. For a more in-depth study, greater insurance against any misunderstanding could be have been made by having a researcher supervising the respondents and answering any queries during completion.

The respondents were asked about influences that led them to make a decision several months previously. Students on the second year of a franchise programme might have made a decision of where to study up to 2 years before completing the questionnaire. This is a short time compared to some similar studies, and it is likely that the respondents were able to clearly recall the information required for this research. The accuracy of their responses, however, cannot be quantified. The results of this study assume that the answers given are accurate.

### 3.2.4 Adjustments

Some of the questionnaire responses had one or more sections removed from the results as they were deemed to be invalid due to one or more of the following reasons:

1. The question was not answered.
2. The question was answered in such a way that the intention of the respondent cannot reliably be determined (see Appendix 4 for examples of this kind of invalid responses).
3. The respondent did not put any thought into their answer to a question (see Appendix 5 for an example of this kind of invalid response).

### 3.3 Interviews

In total, ten one-to-one interviews took place in China in December 2017. Five were conducted in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) in Guangzhou, four were conducted at Guangdong University of Finance (GDUF) and one, CAN3, was conducted over the phone. The participants from the two Chinese HEIs were studying the first two years of their programme in China before completing the final two years in their chosen overseas HEI, whereas the telephone interviewee was a direct entrant into their overseas institution through an agent. The interviews were conducted in English and ranged between 21 and 38 minutes in duration. At the start of the interviews, each participant was asked their name, course of study, institution and country of overseas study to allow grouping of answers of, and comparisons between, students intending to study in different countries.

#### 3.3.1 Recruitment of Interview Participants

It was originally agreed that interview participants would be selected by myself from the questionnaire respondents based on their responses. This would allow further questioning of students who had revealed information deemed to be valuable to the research aims. However, after the questionnaires were returned, I was informed that

the students would not be available for interviews. As I was working and studying at one of GDUF's partners, UCLan, and the questionnaire respondents would be progressing to one of the institution's other partners, staff in the college decided it would be more suitable for me to interview students who were progressing to UCLan. I was referred to three academics in GDUF, Ms. S, Mr. W and Mr. K (these are all pseudonyms), who taught students on UCLan programmes. S, W and K asked students to volunteer and scheduled five interviews in one day, allowing 45 minutes for each participant. I contacted an academic at GDUF, who agreed to schedule interviews with two students who would be progressing to Canada and two progressing to the UK. A tenth interview participant was recruited through an agent. The agent gained permission to share the student's contact details with me and I made the interview arrangements with the student over the phone.

The two HEIs were selected for the data collection sample due to the structure of the programmes allowing students to choose between two or more overseas HEIs at which to complete their degree. The benefits of this have been discussed in section 3.2.1 of this chapter. The tenth participant was selected to increase the number of participants in the group who would be studying in Canada. It was only possible to recruit two participants from GDUF who intended to study in Canada. This would not generate enough data for the analysis stage so the additional participant was recruited.

Table 3.3 shows the details of each of the interviews including an "Interview ID" which will be referenced in later sections of this and other chapters.

Table 3.3: Course, Chinese HEI, overseas HEI and interview duration by anonymous interview ID

Interview ID	Gender	Course of study	Chinese HEI	Overseas HEI (Country)	Duration (minutes)
UK1	M	International Business	GDUFS	UCLan (UK)	38
UK2	F	International Business	GDUFS	UCLan (UK)	24
UK3	M	International Business	GDUFS	UCLan (UK)	30
UK4	F	International Journalism	GDUFS	UCLan (UK)	23
UK5	M	International Journalism	GDUFS	UCLan (UK)	38
UK6	F	Finance	GDUF	UWE (UK)	21
UK7	F	Accounting	GDUF	UWE (UK)	21
CAN1	M	Accounting	GDUF	St. Mary's (Canada)	28
CAN2	M	Finance or Accounting	GDUF	Monarch (Australia) or St. Mary's (Canada)	27
CAN3	F	Economics	NA	University of Manitoba (Canada)	33

After the introductory questions were answered, long-form, semi-structured interviews of approximately 30 minutes in length were conducted to allow the participants to explain their thoughts in their own words. The interviewer did not explain from the outset what the specific aims of the research project entail, to avoid influencing the outcomes. A brief introduction was given, with full details being disclosed to the participants at the conclusion of the interview.

### 3.3.2 Interview Design

Questions in the interview explored the “how” and “why” questions as opposed to the initial questionnaire’s “who”, “what”, “where” and “when”. The interview included several sections beginning with an open question allowing participants to give responses in their own words which would be probed with further follow-up questions. The open questions focused on the following points:

### *Why participants want a degree*

Although this opening question does not directly address contrasting pull-factors of potential host countries, it was included as a way of demonstrating the priorities of different groups of students. Based on the studies visited in the literature review chapter (Bodycott, 2009; Chen, 2007; Mok and Jiang, 2016; Sanchez et al, 2006; Wang et al, 2017), it was expected that common responses would include ones which reference career prospects. With this in mind, follow-up questions to such responses were prepared which attempted to ascertain in which country the participants intend to pursue their career. This line of inquiry was included to indicate whether students who intended to remain overseas were more likely to choose Canada over the UK as a study destination.

The follow-up question, "What was your back-up plan?" was included in anticipation of a response which was given by both participants in a brief pilot of the interviews with two Chinese graduates from UK HEIs. When asked why they wanted a degree, initial responses suggested that there was no other choice available to them, or that everyone has a degree.

Other follow-up questions such as "Who influenced the decision to get a degree?", "When was this decision taken?" were also asked in an attempt to map the decision process and potentially open other lines of enquiry.

### *Why participants chose to study outside China*

Knowledge of the established push-factors in China were important for anticipating responses and offering constructive follow-up questions. It was necessary for the interviewer to understand the differences between push-pull-factors from previous research in order to keep the participant from straying into areas of research for a later part of the interview. An example of how this could have manifested is as follows: The interviewer asks why the participant chose to leave China for their undergraduate study.

The participant responds that they love British culture and they like the convenient location of their university's campus in Manchester. This response, although useful for the research as it promotes pull-factors of both the country and the institution of study, would not satisfy the aims of this section. The participant might need to be steered back to focusing on China-based push-factors before moving on. Only when several satisfactory responses were generated, did the interviewer proceed. At this stage in the methodology it is worth explaining why push-factors are an important area of research in this project which, in its aims, is focusing on an emerging pull-factor in contrasting countries. The push-factors which are influential on different participants, enable another perspective for grouping in the data analysis stage and could reveal more interesting trends than that of standard profiling. Students who were refused entry into the most prestigious universities in China, for example, can be compared to students who could not afford tuition fees in China. The initial push-factors influencing a candidate might be shown to be a stronger indicator of a student's route to higher education overseas than any of the established pull-factors. The data for an investigation of this sort have been generated in previous studies but not analysed in this way, making it an interesting path to pursue. Another possible outcome of determining push-factors, which would be invaluable to this project, would be if any of the participants state that they are pursuing education overseas with the specific intention of immigrating in the future. It would be very interesting to map the route of a student with this clear intention. In any case, the outcome of this section will add to the body of research on push-factors, even if not directly answering any of the research questions of this project.

During the pilot of the interviews it proved to be useful to ask the question in two ways, "Why did you choose to study abroad?" and "Why not study in China?". Although, the two questions are essentially the same, they returned different responses. When asked only the first question, participants gave answers about the attractiveness of their chosen host country, or the wider world. When asked the second, however, participants gave answers about China, and the limitations of studying there. So as not

to lead participants in the study, both versions of the question were asked before allowing a response.

#### *Why participants chose their specific country of study*

Having satisfied the aim of listing several push-factors from each participant, the interview proceeded to the pull-factors of potential countries of study. The aims of this section were deemed to be satisfied when several pull-factors unique to the country of study were offered. For example, choosing to study in Canada because the student wants to improve their English skills in an authentic environment, will contribute to the wider data-set but it would not satisfy this section of the interview. The English-speaking nature of the country of study would be the same in the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia and so cannot significantly pull applicants towards one more than another. It was vital that the interviewer kept this in mind, to extract feedback which satisfied this section from each of the participants' interviews.

#### *Why participants rejected other countries*

In some interviews, the participants and interviewer went back and forth between this and the previous question. As both questions aimed to generate push-pull-factors of potential host countries, the exact question at hand did not need to be stuck to as rigidly as the question about leaving China. As long as factors from the student's host country as well as other countries were generated, this stage of the interview did not need to be constrained to a specific order. Before moving on from these two questions, efforts were made to generate and discuss at least three pull-factors. As these factors were offered, the source of the participants' knowledge was probed. If a participant believed tuition fees are too high in the USA, for example, inquiries were made as to why they believe this, whether they had gone to the source of the information or relied on friends', agents', and parental advice. This further enquiry added more information

about the people, as well as the external factors, that influenced their decision with the possibility of revealing how a widely-held perception of a single pull-factor and the statistical data or traditional methods of measuring such factors have a comparative influence. An individual's perception of an aspect of a foreign culture can be subject to misconception, and therefore have a different influence than the aspect itself would have if an accurate perception was held (Wang, 2008). This could open up another area of research for further investigation.

#### *What participants' long term goals are in 1, 5, and 10 years*

A question of this nature was included to potentially reveal factors in the decision process that participants might have considered subconsciously and would be unable to offer in the previous more direct questions about why they chose their institution and country of study. If a student plans to have immigrated permanently within 5 years this may influence their decision between two countries in a different way than a student who plans to return to China and start their own business.

#### *The participants' views on potential host countries*

After speaking about their own experience and decision process, this question probed the participants to establish their held beliefs about potential host countries' positive and negative traits. Even if the participants claimed not to be influenced by these traits, the responses from this section of the interview might have demonstrated a general feeling about the different countries within China and why such feelings exist.

The open questions on the topics discussed here were expanded upon until several influential factors had been identified for each of these steps in the decision path of the students. Statements about influential factors were, in turn, probed in attempts to uncover the genesis of the participant's viewpoint. Where it was revealed that a participant places a high value on one quality of their host country, it needed to

be ascertained how the participant came to perceive this quality in the way they do. The medium through which the participant learned about the quality in question might be revealed, in this case, to have more influence than the quality itself. The interviewer needed to ensure that this data were generated in a way that could be identified in the analysis stage. Open questions can often generate responses that are not easily coded or compared (Jones, 1985) so the interviewer had a list of required outcome categories for each stage so that none were missed, or the best effort was made to attain them.

To avoid leading the participants or otherwise affecting the responses, it was important that the interviewer did not suggest or even mention any particular push-pull-factors until the closing section of the interview, in which the interviewer asked the participants why they think a shift towards Canada has taken place since 2006, and why they held such beliefs. When all avenues of enquiry were exhausted and all opportunities had been given for participants to offer influences and explanations without being prompted with specific factors, the interviewer then asked directly whether various aspects of the immigration policy of either country had influenced their choice of study destination. It is important to distinguish between the body and closing section of each interview in this way as more weight was given to responses before the participant was prompted, as will be outlined in the data analysis section of this chapter.

### 3.3.3 Interview Design Informed by Questionnaire Data

As described earlier, the questionnaire was circulated in order to generate data which would inform the interview design as promoted by Sieber (1973). This proved to be useful for some key elements of the interview design.

The lack of significant data returned from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires necessitated the rewording of the opening question to each section as well as having alternative phrasings of the same question prepared in the event that no significant response was given by the interview participant. Initial interview questions were piloted and rephrased several times, thus questions to which participants gave

more full answers were generated. For example, the inclusion of open questions related to English-speaking countries other than that in which the participant had decided to study allowed the participant to compare and contrast the qualities of each country and offer the value they place on a variety of pull factors which lead them to their decision.

A common response from the questionnaires was that the respondent is attending university as they had no other choice. This result prompted the inclusion of a section in the interview as to what they might do in the event that they could not go to university. In several cases, this question revealed significant responses.

A copy of the interview guidance with the outcomes needed from each section can be seen in Appendix 6.

#### 3.3.4 Language Considerations for Interviews

Because of the level of detail in which participants had to communicate there was the potential of interviews needing to be conducted with the assistance of a translator fluent in English, Mandarin and Cantonese, to allow the participants to seek clarification about a question in their first language, or respond in Mandarin or Cantonese. My wife, who is fluent in English, Mandarin and Cantonese, was present at each of the interviews and would have been able to translate if requested.

Using a translator in interviews is not ideal as meaning can be lost between languages. Errors can occur when conducting entire interviews with a translator the integrity of the data can often be compromised (Ingvarsdotter et al, 2010). Even with accurate translations, there will always be a degree of interpretation on the part of the translator which will affect the outcomes of the interview (Temple and Young, 2004). When translating entire interviews it is advisable to use a translator with knowledge of the research subject, or even a panel of experts on the subject and languages utilised (Chen and Boore, 2009).

The need for a translator was avoided in part by the simple language used in the opening questions and building up to more complex themes within certain subjects rather than opening by introducing complex concepts. For example, to uncover a list of push-factors, a researcher might ask a fellow native English speaker “*What were the main factors which lead you to determine that Australia was a less desirable study destination than Canada?*”. From this question, the participant could give a response that would satisfy the aims of the research. When interviewing an intermediate English-speaker, however, some translation might be required, which could potentially alter the meaning of the question and the response. As it turned out, none of the participants gave answers in Chinese, although it was necessary to translate some interview questions for one participant.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Responses to the initial questionnaires were reviewed and distilled into a spread sheet of 107 rows (1 for each respondent) and 67 columns, holding 7,169 fields of data for analysis.

Responses to the open questions were listed and grouped together by different themes. For the question “*How did you hear about the course?*”, the themes included *the internet, friend/family recommendation, school/teachers/agent recommendation, all recommendations, marketing/promotion/fare* etc. The total number of responses within each grouping were compared to identify the most common responses overall and within each subject group. The full list of responses for this question can be seen in Appendix 7, showing how they were grouped into one of the themes mentioned here.

Responses to the section asking respondents to indicate the six most influential factors from the list were isolated from the invalid responses and grouped in three tables: *all students, UK students* and *Canada students*. Although students were asked to number the factors from 1-6 indicating their relative influence, several respondents simply ticked the box, or chose six factors and numbered them in numerical order from

top to bottom. It was not therefore possible to analyse the relative influence for most of the data. Instead, the number of respondents who attributed influence of each factor was calculated as a total rather than an average level of influence.

Responses to the section asking respondents to rank each English-speaking country in various categories were isolated and listed in the same three ways as the previous section. The majority of respondents had answered these questions as was intended and therefore an average ranking of each country could be calculated. While tables showing the combined responses to all questions gave an overview of the opinions of Chinese students in general, responses grouped by respondents' country of study showed differences between the opinions of the two groups.

Further to this, the data were analysed to show how responses to different aspects of the questionnaire correlate. Some examples include: the study destination of students who have previously visited different English-speaking countries; the ultimate study destination of students who had a different country as their first choice; disparity in responses to various sections of the questionnaire from students going to different host countries.

The interviews were recorded on an audio device and transcribed. Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis to highlight recurring concepts from the participants, and sorted into categories of concepts, illustrating factors and people that had an influence on the students' final decisions. The first stage of the thematic analysis was to highlight different phrases which appear to be interesting in a transcript as can be seen in Appendix 8.

The second stage was to code each phrase and group the different codes into themes. Themes included *family influence*, *economic mobility*, *individual perception*, *personal preference*, *social media*, *crime/violence*, *policy/political climate*, *education quality*, *subject of study*. Some of these themes contained one predominant recurring code, such as *family influence*. Most others themes (such as *British culture*) were groups of smaller codes with fewer citations (such as *British manners*, *UK history*, *British TV shows*). The third stage was to count the number of phrases ascribed to

each theme. Where initial themes proved to be insignificant or rarely cited, it was necessary to combine multiple similar themes to be listed in the table of results. The three stages here resemble phases 2, 3 and 4 of the thematic analysis guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The coding method enabled concepts to be identified within descriptions that might be abstract with some participants. Key information was distilled into tables to show how students spoke about certain factors and at which stage of the interview. These will be discussed in the results chapter.

The influence of the factor which is the focus of this project, immigration policy, was measured using a combination of the coded analysis as discussed and a 1 to 4 rating scale. Where an interview participant made reference to any aspect of immigration policy in their decision-making process, it was highlighted and given a ranking (1=greatest influence, 4=lowest influence) based on how the information was offered. Table 2.4 indicates how each rating was given to each participant’s response.

Table 3.4: Ratings used to determine influence by participant response

<b>Response to interview questions</b>	<b>Rating given to influence (1 = highest, 4 = lowest)</b>
When asked the open question “why did you choose your country of study?” the participant cites policy-related factor	1
When asked follow-up question such as “Did you consider studying in Australia?” the participant cites policy-related factor	2
When asked directly whether policy-related factor influenced their decision, participant confirms the influence	3
When asked directly whether policy-related factor influenced their decision, participant denies the influence	4

With the influence of government policy identified and graded for each participant, various grouping configurations were arranged and compared. There are countless ways to group participants by a common attribute, the most obvious would be by

country of study. Responses to interview questions from students going to one country can be compared to those of the students going to another, with any disparity being identified. The responses of candidates can then be regrouped by gender or major, for example. The regrouping process was repeated several times so to explore the trends within different groups. In each iteration of the grouping process, particular attention was paid to the responses containing mention of potential immigration, post-study work opportunities and the student visa processes. Where there was no uniform response throughout the case study, but a response regarding this factor was common to a specific grouping, the pattern within the groups will be explained.

As this research is focused on the immigration policy of the two countries, the next stage was to collate the outcomes from each method of data collection relating to policy. It will be demonstrated how these policies have been shown to have influence in differing degrees to individual students, to student groupings within each method, to the overall cohort in each data collection method and to the outbound Chinese student population as a whole. As described earlier, the various methods of this project generated their own outcomes. The final stage of the project was to triangulate outcomes that are common to two or more research methods. If results generated by the government-held data are supported by responses to the questionnaires and interviews, this will be highlighted in the results and conclusion chapters. The results of the various methods outlined here will be presented with consideration given to previous studies, offering explanations for disparity between the results of this and previous research projects. The research questions outlined in the introduction chapter will be revisited, with any progress which has been made towards answering them being offered.

### 3.5 Contingencies

Contingency plans were made in case of any unforeseen circumstances. There were a number of potential issues which could have arisen throughout the project, and these were addressed.

When circulating a questionnaire, it was a concern that the number of responses would be unsatisfactory. This was partially mitigated by circulating the questionnaires in advance of travelling to China for the data collection. The quantity and quality of responses could therefore be gauged with enough time to adjust if the requirements of the study had not been met. Further questionnaires could be circulated electronically with any relevant amendments made, or plans could be made to physically give questionnaires to participants in China. The number of valid responses exceeded the requirement of the study and no additional responses were required.

Although the interviews were scheduled for one week in early December, the researcher made arrangements to be in China for over 3 weeks, allowing time to recruit more participants if the intended number was not reached in the first week, or any of the scheduled participants withdrew. This proved to be a useful adjustment, as the interviews scheduled by the Chinese HEIs only included two students who intended to study in Canada, necessitating arrangement of an additional interview.

### 3.6 Safety and Ethical Considerations

The methodology proposed here had been evaluated by the researcher as well as by the University of Central Lancashire Ethics Council (see ethical approval letter in Appendix 9). No safety concerns were identified and the project was given ethical approval prior to the data collection being carried out. All interview participants read and signed a consent form, allowing their responses to be shared with other people. It was explained to all that the identity of the interview participants and questionnaire respondents would remain anonymous throughout the project.

## Chapter 4. Results and Discussion

This chapter will describe the findings of the questionnaire (4.1) and face-to-face interviews (4.2). Trends and recurring themes from these sections will be highlighted (4.3) before an in-depth discussion of the findings is presented (4.4).

### 4.1 Results of Questionnaires

For the most part, the questions included in the questionnaire returned results which were useful for meeting the aims of this research project. Some questions, however, failed to return significant results. The main reason for the unsatisfactory results on these few questions was the inability to ask respondents follow-up questions. The intention was to select interview participants based on the questionnaire responses. Due to unforeseen circumstances, it was not possible to interview the respondents to interrogate their responses further.

#### 4.1.1 Family Background Questions

Three questions were included in the questionnaire to determine the level of education of the respondents' family members, details of any family members who had studied abroad and any friends or family members who had gained permanent residence overseas. The questions were intended to indicate how many students select their country of study based on their friends' and families' experience abroad. Of the 28 respondents who stated where a family member had studied abroad, 14 (50%) ultimately chose the same study destination. This shows that a family member's study destination is a mild indicator of where a student will study, but without follow-up questions it cannot be shown to be a cause. It is likely that the same pull-factors that affected one family member, would do so with another.

#### 4.1.2 Questions about Students' Decision Processes

*How did you hear about the course?*

This question generated 71 valid responses. 27 of those cited either *online, internet* or *website* in their answer. 22 cited *teachers, school* or *university*. 19 made reference to their friends' or families' influence, while only 7 had been told about the course via traditional recruitment strategies such as *agents* (3), *study fares* (3) and *leaflets* (1). These responses could benefit from a qualitative research approach to clarify how respondents interacted with each of these resources throughout their application process.

*List the English-speaking countries visited in the past*

Only 47 respondents stated that they had previously visited an English-speaking country in the past. 18 had previously been to Canada, the UK or both. Of these 18, 13 will be studying in the country they had previously visited. This indicated that having visited in the past is not an influential factor for the majority of students.

*Including the country you are going to, in which countries did you apply to study?*

Most students (87 of 107) either failed to answer this question, or stated that the country they were studying was their first choice. The question was included to identify students who ultimately studied in a country which was not their first choice, and the factors that led them to do so. As this was rarely the case, it was not possible to peruse this line of inquiry with a significant sample.

*Have you ever been offered a place at a university in China?*

The question was intended to determine whether students who choose to study abroad do so because they were not offered a place at their desired university in China. Due to the fact that not all respondents answered this question and there was no opportunity to follow up on the limited responses, this question failed to return any significant results.

*Who is paying for your course?*

The overwhelming majority of respondents (95 of 106 valid responses) were being funded by their parents. Due to the lack of contrary answers to this question, it is not possible to compare responses of parent-funded students to the rest of the population, as the sample size is too small. The fact that most students in this study are parent-funded, however, might provide some explanation for other trends which are uncovered.

After the profiling questions, respondents were asked a series of open questions with space for responses of one or two sentences which were analysed for recurring themes.

OQ1 *Why do you want a degree?*

The most common response to this question made reference to career prospects with 50 of 94 (53%) valid responses including the words *work, career, job, income* or *money*. Many of the answers to this question were quite vague and therefore failed to provide valuable insight. Students provided answers such as “Certification”, “for a better life” and “Contribute to society”.

## QQ2 *Why did you choose to study outside of China?*

Of the 83 valid responses to this question, 34 made reference to self-improvement in various ways such as “*expand my horizons*”, “*enrich my experience*”, “*improve my knowledge*”, “*improve myself*” and “*open my eyes*”. Responses such as these do not give any specific push-pull-factors associated with China or potential host countries, but give some indication of the priorities of Chinese students.

## QQ3 *Why did you choose your country of overseas study?*

There were 77 valid responses (60 from the UK, 17 from Canada) to this question. Invalid responses included “I like Canada”, “various factors” and “most suitable country”. 10 of 60 (17%) UK-based respondents and 5 of 17 (29%) Canada-based respondents cited the influence of a friend or family member.

Overall the open questions failed to return any significant results. Although attempts were made to mitigate against invalid responses, as described in the methodology chapter, the results of the open question section were unusable due to the lack of supervision given while answering the questions and the inability to ask follow-up questions for clarification. This type of question would be more suitable in an interview and would therefore be included in the interview stage of the research.

Upon reviewing the responses to multiple-choice questions, as described in the following section, it is clear that such questions are more effective, given the volume of respondents and level of supervision.

### 4.1.3 Multiple-choice Questions

After the open questions, respondents were prompted with various statements about their choice of study destination and were asked if the statements applied in their case.

Respondents were asked to select 6 options from the 16 factors. 96 of the responses were complete and valid. Table 4.1a shows which factors respondents cited as being influential on their study destination.

Table 4.1a: Influential factors cited in questionnaire, overall and by country of study

Factor	Number of respondents who confirmed the influence of factor on their decision		
	Total (of 96 valid)	Students in UK (of 75 valid)	Students in Canada (of 21 valid)
University reputation	79 (82%)	66 (88%)	13 (62%)
High quality education	72 (75%)	62 (83%)	10 (48%)
<b>Total education-related factors</b>	<b>151 (79%)</b>	<b>128 (85%)</b>	<b>23 (55%)</b>
Low crime	62 (65%)	45 (60%)	17 (81%)
Tolerance of foreigners	32 (33%)	27 (36%)	5 (24%)
Climate	34 (35%)	23 (31%)	11 (52%)
Previous visit to country	13 (14%)	10 (13%)	3 (14%)
<b>Total factors related to life in country</b>	<b>141 (37%)</b>	<b>105 (35%)</b>	<b>36 (43%)</b>
Parents' preference	37 (39%)	35 (47%)	2 (10%)
Knowing people in the country	38 (40%)	26 (35%)	12 (57%)
Friend/sibling studied in country	21 (22%)	17 (23%)	4 (19%)
Friend/sibling recommendation	25 (26%)	22 (29%)	3 (14%)
<b>Total third-party influences</b>	<b>121 (32%)</b>	<b>100 (33%)</b>	<b>21 (25%)</b>
Work opportunities while studying	32 (33%)	19 (25%)	13 (62%)
Post-graduate work opportunities	37 (39%)	25 (33%)	12 (57%)
Possibility of immigration	21 (22%)	13 (17%)	8 (38%)
Simple student visa process	17 (18%)	14 (19%)	3 (14%)
<b>Total policy-related factors</b>	<b>107 (28%)</b>	<b>71 (24%)</b>	<b>36 (43%)</b>
Low cost of living	24 (25%)	20 (27%)	4 (19%)
Low tuition fees	31 (32%)	25 (33%)	6 (29%)
<b>Total finance-related factors</b>	<b>55 (29%)</b>	<b>45 (30%)</b>	<b>10 (24%)</b>

Fig 4.1a shows the influential factors, sorted by level of influence cited by all valid questionnaire responses.

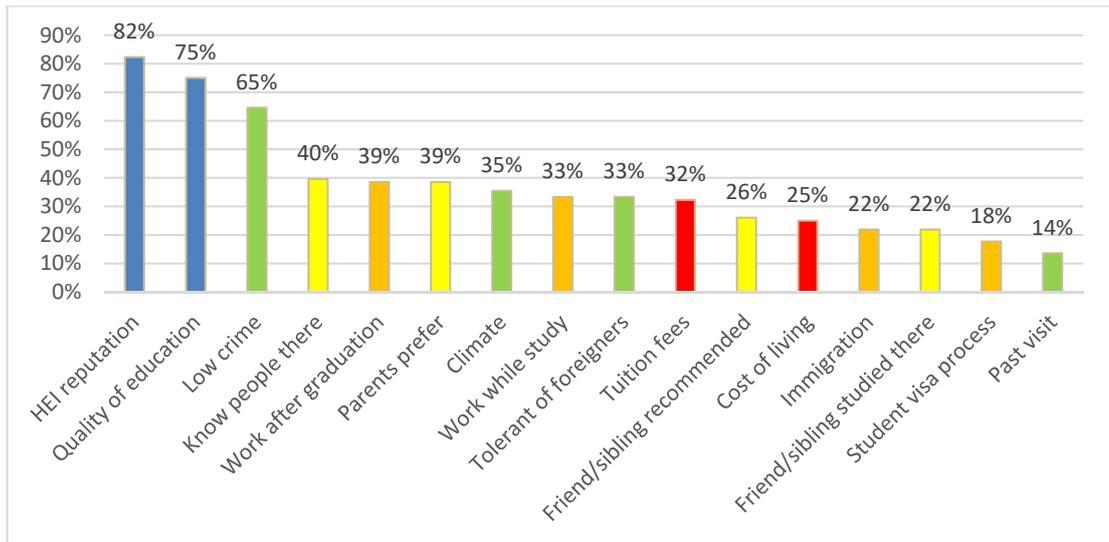


Fig 4.1a: Influential factors by % of respondents' citations

Fig 4.1b shows the same factors as 4.1a, but sorted to show the comparative influence cited by students of the two host countries. The left-most column shows the factor which had the greatest comparative influence on UK-based students (+37%), while the right-most column shows the factor which had the greatest comparative influence on Canada-based students (+37%).

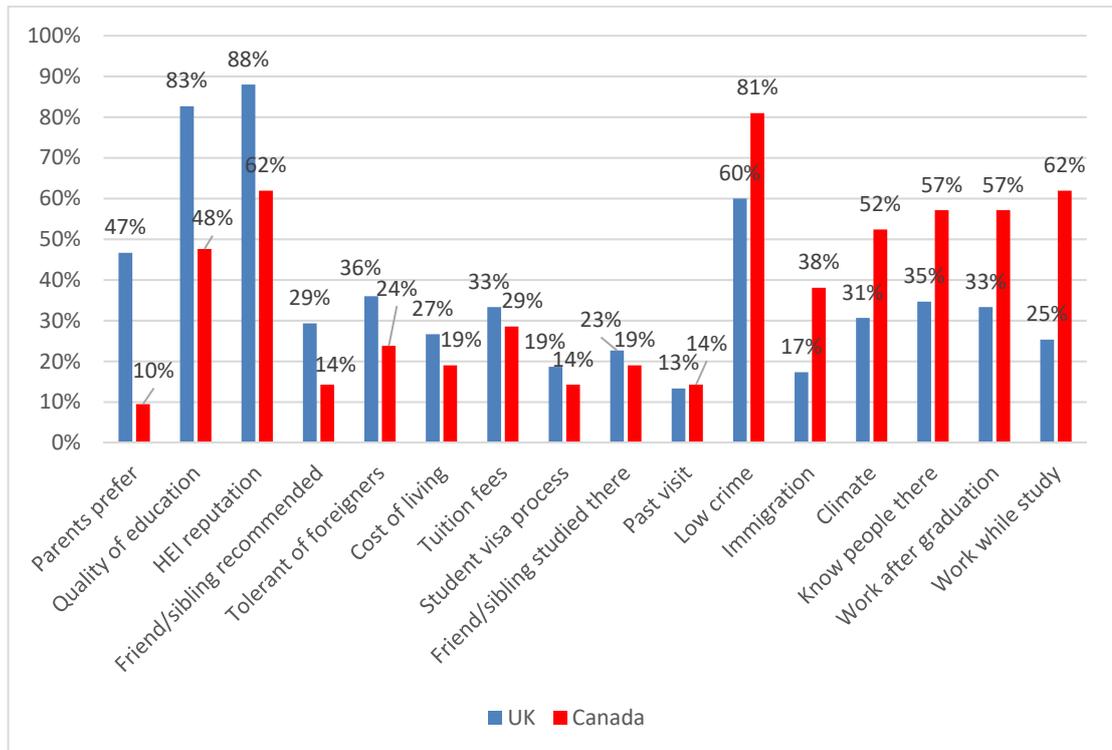


Fig 4.1b: Influential factors by % of respondents' citations and country

Fig 4.1c shows the influential categories of factors, sorted by level of influence cited by all valid questionnaire responses.

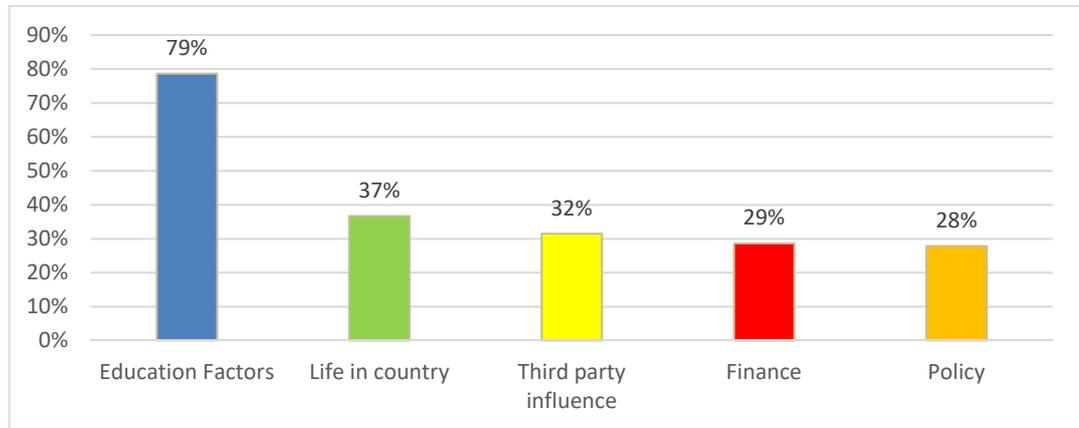


Fig 4.1c: Influential factor categories by % of respondents' citations

Fig 4.1d shows the same categories as 4.1c, but sorted to show the comparative influence cited by students of the two host countries. The left-most column shows the category which had the greatest comparative influence on UK-based students (+30%), while the right-most column shows the category which had the greatest comparative influence on Canada-based students (+19%).

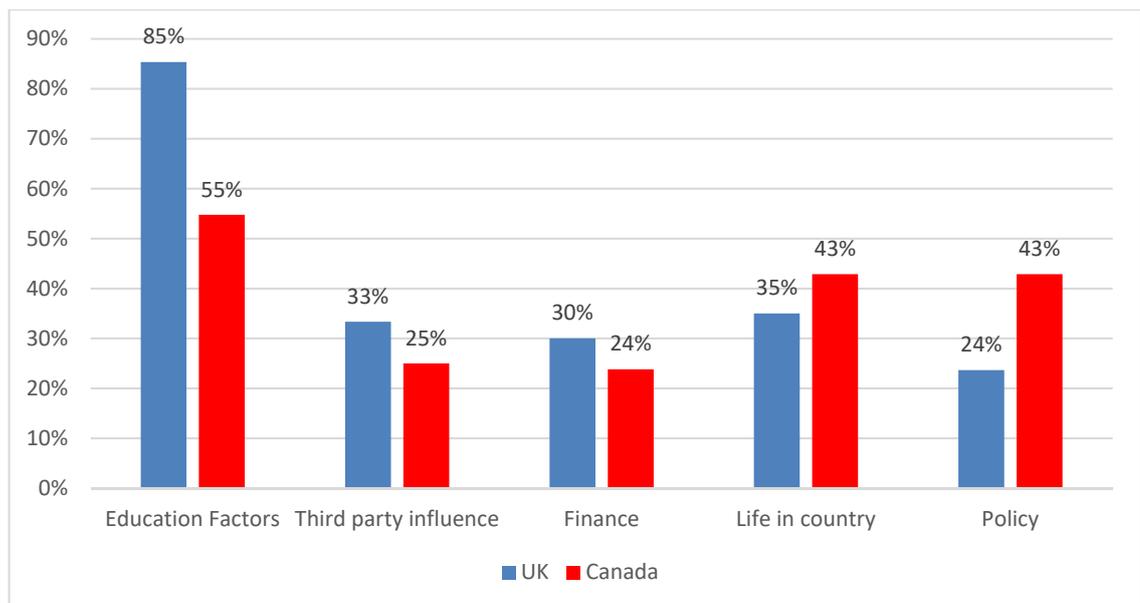


Fig 4.1d: Influential factor categories by % of respondents' citations and country

### *Education-related factors*

The factors which, of the options, were most commonly cited as an influence for students in the UK and Canada combined were those related to the university reputation and quality of education in the country. These factors were cited much more by UK students, however. The two factors in this category were the two most influential for students in the UK, in contrast to students in Canada who awarded them the second and seventh most citations. This indicates that although they are an important consideration for both groups, students going to the UK prioritise these factors to a greater extent.

### *Finance-related factors*

Students going to the UK also attributed more influence on finance-related factors than their Canadian counterparts, although the influence was minimal for both groups. This can possibly be explained by the fact, revealed in the previous section of the questionnaire, that most of the students are funded by their parents. The financial aspect may influence the parents, which in turn influences the student, but this is not necessarily a direct concern for students.

### *Third-party influences*

The final category which UK students gave more citations than those of Canada was third-party influences. The most interesting results of the questionnaire, considering the previous literature, was the high influence attributed to UK students' parents' preference. 35 of 75 UK students listed their parents' preference as a contributory factor, but only 2 of 21 valid responses from Canadian students stated the same. This factor might have been overlooked in previous studies, and would be worth investigating at the interview stage.

### *Factors related to life in country*

Students in Canada cited more factors related to life in the country than did students in the UK. Interestingly, the low crime rate in Canada was the single most cited factor for choosing to study there.

### *Immigration policy-related factors*

Responses to the questionnaire showed little influence of factors related to immigration policy for students going to the UK, while students in Canada awarded two of these factors with the second and fourth most citations. Of the five factors which most concerned students in Canada compared to those in the UK, three related to immigration policy (the ability to work while studying, the ability to work after graduation and the possibility of immigration).

The final part of the questionnaire, asking respondents to rank the four major English-speaking countries in various categories, generated 75 valid responses. Table 4.1b shows the average ranking given to the different countries, by all respondents, in various categories.

Table 4.1b: Respondents' average ranking of countries by category

Category	USA	UK	Canada	Australia
1 = Highest quality of education 4 = Lowest quality of education	2.13	<b>2.01</b>	2.99	2.87
1 = Most welcoming to international students 4 = Least welcoming to international students	2.91	2.43	<b>2.29</b>	2.37
1 = Easiest to obtain student visa 4 = Hardest to obtain student visa	3.19	2.36	2.41	<b>2.04</b>
1 = Best chance of remaining after graduation 4 = Lowest chance of remaining after graduation	2.84	2.95	<b>2.11</b>	<b>2.11</b>
1 = Best chance of immigration 4 = Lowest chance of immigration	3.15	3.03	<b>1.77</b>	2.05
1 = Lowest tuition fees 4 = Highest tuition fees	3.04	2.36	2.37	<b>2.23</b>
1 = Lowest cost of living 4 = Highest cost of living	3.05	2.43	2.31	<b>2.21</b>
1 = Most safe to live 4 = Least safe to live	3.65	<b>1.91</b>	2.40	2.04

The combined responses from all students indicate that the USA is generally viewed as having the highest quality of education, but was ranked lowest in every other category. The USA scored particularly poorly in students' perception of safety in the country, with 63 out of 75 (84%) valid responses ranking the USA as the least safe place to live. Table 4.1c shows how students studying in the UK or Canada ranked their own country of study in the same categories as the previous table.

Table 4.1c: Respondents' average ranking of own host country by category

	UK (as ranked by students attending UK HEI)	Canada (as ranked by students attending Canadian HEI)
1 = Highest quality of education 4 = Lowest quality of education	<b>1.79</b>	2.23
1 = Most welcoming to international students 4 = Least welcoming to international students	2.34	<b>1.31</b>
1 = Easiest to obtain student visa 4 = Hardest to obtain student visa	2.44	2.92
1 = Best chance of remaining after graduation 4 = Lowest chance of remaining after graduation	2.79	<b>1.23</b>
1 = Best chance of immigration 4 = Lowest chance of immigration	2.94	<b>1.15</b>
1 = Lowest tuition fees 4 = Highest tuition fees	2.39	2.31
1 = Lowest cost of living 4 = Highest cost of living	2.44	2.46
1 = Most safe to live 4 = Least safe to live	<b>1.76</b>	2.15

Students who will be studying in Canada ranked their host country most favourably in three categories: *Best chance of immigration*, *best chance of remaining after graduation* and *most welcoming to international students*. The three categories are linked in that they all reflect Chinese students' perception of Canada's hospitality, although the country was not ranked as favourably for ease of student visa attainment.

Students who will be studying in the UK ranked their host country most favourably in two categories: *Quality of education* and *safety*, and least favourably for chance of remaining temporarily and permanently.

Although this section does not ask for the comparative influence of the various factors, as the previous section does, it gives some indication as to the consideration given to the factors. The fact that students chose to study in the UK despite ranking it so poorly in the immigration policy categories, indicates that students choose the country for other reasons. Conversely, Canadian students probably consider factors other than quality of education when choosing to study there.

Admittedly, the data in this section cannot be used to draw a certain conclusion on its own, but it does appear to be in line with the investigation of changing factors in the context chapter and the results of the previous section of the questionnaire. The contrasting rankings given by the two groups of students could reveal how each group prioritises these various factors.

The data in the multiple-choice part of the questionnaire alone, therefore, suggest three results:

1. Students who are primarily concerned with getting the best education for their financial investment study in the UK.
2. Students who want to experience life in a desirable country and possibly remain after graduation study in Canada.
3. Students who give more consideration to the preferences of their families are more likely to study in the UK.

## 4.2 Results of Interviews

The responses of 10 interview participants provide detailed information of the various push-pull-factors which led them to choose their respective countries of study. The participants of the interviews included 7 students who had accepted places at UK universities, 2 who had accepted places at Canadian universities and 1 who had applied for places at universities in Australia and Canada.

### 4.2.1 Assumptions

Participants in the interviews were asked about the opinions and preferences of people who influenced their decision as well as their own. For the purposes of this research, the participants' testimonies have been taken at face value under the assumption that the interview participant was accurately reporting the third parties' views. A more in-depth study might benefit from interviewing these people directly. In this context, however, a second-hand explanation is enough to construct a general profile of each participant.

### 4.2.2 Results of Interview Questions

Each of the 10 semi-structured interviews included several sections which started with a common opening question, the answers to which generated follow-up questions. An example of a complete interview transcript can be seen in Appendix 10. This section describes the data resulting from each of the interview sections.

#### *Third party influences*

Before discussing the importance or level of influence that participants ascribed to specific factors in terms of shaping their decision, it is worth reporting on the third party

influences mentioned in the interview stage. Knowledge of the third party influences provides context as to how the external factors initially present themselves to students.

Table 4.2a shows how many of the 10 participants cited the influence of their parents at various stages of the decision-making process.

Table 4.2a: Number of participants' cited influence of their parents/family at various stages

Stage of decision process	UK-based students	Canada-based students	Total
Reason for attending HEI	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	10
Reason for studying abroad	UK2, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	9
Reason for choosing host country, or rejecting other countries	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK6	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	7
How did you hear about the course?	UK1, UK2, UK4	CAN1, CAN2	5
Plans after graduation	UK4	CAN1	2

During the interviews, all ten participants revealed that their family had been influential in their decision to attend a HEI and attempt to get a degree. Some of the participants stated that it had been their parents' decision entirely. When asked the opening question as to why they want a degree, one UK-based student said, "Because my family, they want me to get a degree."

Further to this, 9 of 10 participants stated that their family had influenced their decision to study abroad. One stated,

My parents wanted me to study abroad because they think the UK is a great country and both of them like the UK. They think if I learn in the UK I can broaden my horizons and not be limited in China. [UK2]

All of the Canada-based students, and most of the UK-based (4 of 7), explained that their family had influenced their choice of study destination. One participant explained how their parents had rejected their first choice,

First, I have asked my parents could I go to America? But they say that America is really dangerous, because there is some terrorism. It's not really safe for me, especially a girl. So they don't want me to go to America, so Britain is a good choice. [UK6]

CAN1 explained that the different pull-factors were all considered by his parents, who had made most of the decisions about his education. He stated “Most of my future is planned by my family.”

### *Reasons for wanting a degree*

Table 4.2b shows the various factors offered in response to this, and further follow-up, questions.

Table 4.2b: Reasons for wanting a degree and participants’ citations

<b>Factor</b>	<b>UK-based students</b>	<b>Canada-based students</b>	<b>Total</b>
Career prospects / higher earnings	UK1, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	9
Chinese job market	UK1, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7		5
To get a master’s degree	UK2, UK7		2
A necessity	UK2, UK5		2
Set up business	UK2		1
Personal growth		CAN3	1

In the methodology chapter, it was stated that responses related to career prospects were anticipated when participants were asked this question. This proved to be the case with most of the participants (9 of 10) wanting a degree to improve their job prospects, using the terms *find work*, *get a good job*, and *earn a lot of money*.

5 of 7 UK-based students specifically cited the competitive job market in China.

One participant said,

Because I think it is easy for me to apply for a good job in China. As you know there are numerous competitors, and a competitive force in Chinese markets and I hope I can get a higher degree in UK to apply for a good job. [UK1]

Interestingly, no Canada-based students gave this as a causal factor. This could be indicative of the difference of long-term aspirations of the individuals within the two groups.

A follow-up question which was asked to all participants was whether they had a back-up plan, and what that was. Four of the ten participants (all UK-based) admitted that they did not have one and had never considered any other option. One participant admitted,

If I couldn't go to university? It's hard for me to think because I have never thought about that. I don't know. [UK6]

Another common response to this follow-up, was that it was necessary to have a degree if one is to get a good job in China. One participant stated,

To be honest, I've never thought about it. Because nowadays university is necessary for everyone. [UK5]

As mentioned, the predominant response, one associated with career prospects, is to be expected. The disparity between the two groups' responses regarding the Chinese job market is a result which will be revisited later in the chapter.

### *Reasons for studying abroad*

Participants were next asked for their reasons for studying abroad. Their responses to this and further follow-up questions is displayed in table 4.2c.

Table 4.2c: Reasons for studying abroad and participants' citations

<b>Factor</b>	<b>UK-based students</b>	<b>Canada-based students</b>	<b>Total</b>
Not meeting entry requirements to top Chinese HEI	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	10
Experience other cultures / broaden horizons	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK5, UK6	CAN1, CAN3	7
Improve English	UK3, UK4	CAN1	3
Flaws in Chinese education system	UK1, UK3, UK5		3
Gain independence	UK3		1
Friend's recommendation	UK6		1

Although not always given as a primary response, after follow-up questions all 10 interview participants revealed that failure to meet the entry criteria for a desirable university in China in the national university entrance exams (GaoKao) had forced them to look at HEIs abroad. When asked the follow-up question, “When was the decision taken to study abroad?” one participant responded,

After the Gaokao. My dream school is Shenzhen University. I wanted to go there to study but my score is not enough and so I can't get my dream school. So going abroad to study is better. [UK5]

To a lesser extent, the chances to experience other cultures and broaden one's horizons were shown to be influential to 7 of 10 students. Other influences cited by multiple participants include friend's recommendations, the chance to improve one's English and flaws in the Chinese education system.

#### *Reasons for studying in the UK*

Table 4.2d shows the most common factors, cited by the seven UK-based students.

Table 4.2d: Reasons for studying in the UK and participants' citations

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Cited in interview</b>	<b>Total</b>
Friend/Sibling in UK	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK7	6
British culture	UK1, UK5, UK6	3
English language	UK1, UK3, UK5	3
British education	UK1, UK4	2
Previous visit	UK2, UK4	2
Scenery	UK2	1
Friendly people	UK4	1

There was no single pull-factor that influenced all 7 UK-based participants. However, 6 of 7 stated that they had friends or siblings who had studied there in the past. Several

participants cited British culture (3), an authentic English-speaking environment (3), British education (2) and having visited the UK in the past (2).

### *Reasons for studying in Canada*

When asked directly why they would be studying in Canada, the three participants gave a range of different reasons, none of which was applicable to all three. Table 4.2e shows a list of the different factors the Canada-based students offered in the interviews.

Table 4.2e: Reasons for studying in Canada and participants' citations

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Citations</b>
Environment/atmosphere	CAN1, CAN3
Family in country	CAN1, CAN3
Friend's recommendation	CAN2
University/course reputation	CAN2
Quality of education	CAN3
Weather	CAN3
Low cost	CAN1

Similarly to the UK-based students who stated that they are going to the same country of study as their siblings, 2 of 3 Canada-based students chose their study destination, partly because they have family already there. Along with having family members there, the main reason for choosing Canada, cited by two of the three participants, was related to the general atmosphere in the country. One Canada-based participant stated,

I think Canada is a very good place to stay. Its environment and people are very easy-going and the atmosphere is very warm and easy. [CAN3]

### *Push-factors of English-speaking countries*

Participants were asked why they had not chosen to study in one of the other English-speaking countries. Their responses are shown in table 4.2f.

Table 4.2f: Push-factors of the USA and participants' citations

<b>USA Push-Factor</b>	<b>UK-based students</b>	<b>Canada-based students</b>	<b>Total</b>
Safety	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, UK5, UK6	CAN1, CAN2, CAN3	9
Parents' concerns	UK2, UK6	CAN1, CAN2	4
Education environment/style	UK4, UK7		2
Tuition fees		CAN1	1

The most common factor related to the USA was safety. 9 of 10 participants explained that news reports of gun crime, terrorism and racial tension or general concern about danger within the country was a concern about studying in the USA. When asked why they did not choose to study there, one participant gave the answer,

For many reasons. I think security can be an issue. There are a lot of guns and shooting cases in America. Because I am a journalism student and read papers and see lots of news from America, and I think it's more dangerous than the UK because carrying guns is legal. [UK5]

Several other participants mentioned that their concerns about safety were influenced by traditional and social media, with one stating,

America, it's a little dangerous there now. Because of the guns and some racial conflict are a little dangerous. From the news we always see that some students are murdered and very dangerous things happening, from *WeChat* and some from the news on TV and newspapers. [CAN3]

Other factors included concerns about the study environment, high tuition fees and parents' concerns.

For Australia, the main push-factor was the cost of living and tuition, with 4 of the 9 UK and Canada-based participants citing the expense as a reason they were not attracted to studying there. Table 4.2g shows the various push-factors cited by the participants.

Table 4.2g: Push-factors of Australia and participants' citations

<b>Australia Push-Factor</b>	<b>UK-based students</b>	<b>Canada-based students</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tuition fees	UK2, UK4, UK5	CAN1	4
Cost of living	UK2, UK5	CAN1	3
Too many Chinese people	UK6, UK7	CAN3	3
Safety	UK1		1
Unwelcoming to Chinese	UK1		1
Education/teaching style		CAN1	1
Weather		CAN3	1

A surprising factor cited by 3 students was the number of Chinese people already in the country, which participants believe would be detrimental to their English language learning. One of the participants stated,

There is so many Chinese in Australia, less Chinese in UK. So I don't want to study abroad and all my classmates are Chinese. [UK6]

A reason that this is seen as an issue is that some students believe being surrounded by international students is not conducive to a good English language learning environment. Another participant stated,

There are too many Chinese there now. I want a surrounding with less Chinese people to improve my English [CAN3]

The three Canada-based students did not have any response in common related to push-factors of the UK. The only factor which was mentioned by multiple participants was the cost of living. CAN2 states "As we know, the things in the UK are more expensive than other places, like food, clothes and other things."

CAN3, similarly, states “The living expenses are a little high for me, the house, the rent”. Table 4.2h lists the various push-factors of the UK cited by the Canada-based students.

Table 4.2h: Push-factors of the UK as cited by Canada-based students

<b>Push-factor</b>	<b>Citations</b>
Cost of living	CAN2, CAN3
Lack of available work	CAN3
Weather	CAN3

As well as the reasons listed in the table, two of the students stated that the UK-based HEI partnerships with GDUF were not as attractive as the ones in Canada. This reason is not generalizable as only students within this Chinese HEI are presented with this set of choices. A study into how these partnerships have evolved at a range of Chinese HEIs would be able to investigate any correlation or cause of student movement.

The seven UK-based students were asked why they did not choose to study in Canada. Their responses are shown in table 4.2i.

Table 4.2i: Push-factors of Canada as cited by UK-based students

<b>Push-factor</b>	<b>Citations</b>
Lack of knowledge of Canada	UK1, UK2, UK3, UK5, UK6, UK7
Weather	UK4, UK7

For Canada, the main push-factor was that the higher education of the country does not have the same reputation as that of the UK. That is not to say that it has a bad reputation, just that 6 of the 7 UK-based interview participants had no knowledge or opinion about studying in Canada and had never even considered studying there. UK2 responded, “We didn’t consider it. We are not familiar with Canada at all”.

Similarly, UK5 admitted, “To be honest I don’t know a lot about Canada. I never thought about it”. The weather was the only other push-factor offered by UK-based students.

### *Plans after graduation*

Of the seven UK-based students, only one stated that they would like to find a job in the UK, but admitted,

I want to get a job in the UK but I think it’s not easy. If I can’t have a job in the UK, I will go back to China to work in a company. [UK4]

Two stated that they would try to get a Master’s degree in the UK. Four stated that they plan to return to China after graduation to find a job. One explained,

My dream, I’m not sure I can fulfil it, is to be a primary school teacher in China [UK5]

When asked about whether they had considered the possibility of working in their host country, UK2 stated,

It’s impossible because the UK doesn’t allow foreigners to stay and work, and I will not choose to work in another country because my parents are in China. [UK2]

All of the 3 Canada-based students stated that they would prefer to remain and look for a job in their host country, with one stating they would seek to remain permanently. When asked about their plan for the first year after graduation, CAN1 explained, “I will get a working visa. Maybe I will stay there. Or maybe I will go back home and get a job”. After being asked which they would prefer, the participant responded, “Stay in Canada”.

CAN3 indicated that they held long-term plans to remain in Canada, stating, “I will consider applying for residency in Canada”.

The results show how the long-term plans of Chinese students in the two countries differ. This would suggest that the immigration policies have had one of the following, or a combination of both, effects:

1. Chinese students make long-term plans based on the opportunities in the country which is most attractive to them, due to a range of pull-factors. Students who are attracted to Canada as a study destination are able to make long-term plans to remain temporarily or permanently post-study, while those in the UK do not make such plans to remain.
2. Chinese students have long-term plans in mind when choosing their country of study and will make that choice, considering which country will give them the best chance of realising those plans. Students who have long-term plans of leaving China for work or permanent settlement will choose to study in Canada, while students who have long-term plans of returning to China will choose to study in the UK.

If the second scenario is true for a large number of students, the policy changes could have an effect on the inbound student populations of the two countries in question.

#### *Explanations offered for immigration trend*

In the final stage of each interview, participants were asked to suppose why they believe Canada's market share of inbound Chinese students has been growing compared to that of the UK in recent years.

The most common explanation overall, was the immigration policy of one, or both, countries. On the Canadian policy, one participant suggested,

I think it's the policy of immigration in Canada. I know some news about the policy in Canada. It seems that they allow Chinese to immigrate such as for investment or business [UK2]

Another participant contrasted the two countries' immigration policies, stating,

Maybe some people choose to go to Canada because of the migration. You know in the UK, the graduated students can't get a good a job in the UK after they graduate. If you have a good job, you can get a green card in Canada. So if some people want to immigrate to Canada, so they immigrate to Canada to study [UK6]

Table 4.2j shows the reasons that the interview participants believed had contributed the recent market shift.

Table 4.2j: Explanations offered for immigration trend and number of citations

Explanation offered	UK-based students	Canada-based students	Total
Immigration policy	UK2, UK4, UK5, UK6, UK7	CAN3	6
Environment	UK1	CAN1, CAN2	3
Financial factors	UK3	CAN2	2
Less people / more space	UK1	CAN2	2
Weather		CAN3	1
Quality of education		CAN2	1
Close to the USA	UK1		1
Job market	UK4		1

When addressing the policy of the two countries, none of the participants mentioned the liberal or restrictive nature of the respective countries' student visa policy such as language or maintenance requirements, genuineness tests or attendance monitoring. Participants who did discuss policy in specific terms spoke about *staying after finishing their studies, getting a job* and the prospect of *Green Cards* and permanent immigration.

#### *Immigration Policy as a Push-Pull-Factor*

Having asked about the reasons that different decisions were made on the route to studying abroad, more direct questions about the influence of immigration policy were asked. Table 4.2k demonstrates the rating of each participant's influence related to immigration policy, as calculated by the metric explained in the methodology chapter. 1 indicates the most influence, 4 indicated the least influence.

Table 4.2k: Influence of immigration policy by participant and host-country average

	UK1	UK2	UK3	UK4	UK5	UK6	UK7	UK Average	CAN1	CAN2	CAN3	CAN Average	Overall Average
Influence of immigration policy 1 = high influence 4 = low influence	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3.7

As shown in the table, none of the UK-based participants cited any influence of their host country's immigration policy and stated that it was not influential when asked about it directly. Each of the three Canada-based students, in contrast, stated that this factor did influence them when asked directly about it. The rating attributed to each Canada-based participant was 3, meaning that none of them offered immigration policy as a factor in their decision process until the final part of the interview when it was suggested to them. This would indicate that, although it has more influence on Canada-based students than UK-based students, it is not the driving factor that led them to their study destination.

#### 4.3 Triangulation of Results

This section identifies themes or trends common to both the questionnaire and interview stage of the research.

Financial push-pull-factors were not shown to be of great importance to the questionnaire respondents or interviewees. For both, the most cited reason for wanting a degree was improved career prospects and the opportunity to earn a higher salary.

Results from both stages of the study indicate that education in the UK has a better reputation in China than that of Canada. More UK-based questionnaire respondents cited education quality and HEI reputation as reasons for choosing their host country than did Canada-based respondents. Three UK-based interview

participants cited their dissatisfaction with the Chinese education system as a reason for studying outside of China, whereas no Canada-based participants gave such a response.

An unexpected theme of both the questionnaires and interviews was the students' perception that the USA is more dangerous than the other countries in question. It was almost unanimously ranked lowest for safety in the questionnaires and safety was the most common reason given by the interview participants for not studying in the USA. Responses to follow-up interview questions showed that this perception was influenced by family members, traditional media and social media. This result was not as apparent in previous literature, which may indicate that the perception of safety within the USA among Chinese people has been affected by increased media exposure in recent years.

On specific points of the immigration policy, the results of the questionnaires and interviews both point to a higher level of influence of post-study rules than rules regarding the undertaking of study. The ease of the student visa process was the 17<sup>th</sup> most cited influence out of 18 on the questionnaire overall, and by both cohorts grouped by study destination. Neither group ranked their host country as the most attractive in terms of the student visa policy, with Canada-based students ranking their host country lower in this, than any other category. The category in which Canada-based students gave their host country the highest ranking was the possibility of immigration. In the interviews no influence was attributed to student visa policy by students in either country, whereas a mild influence was attributed, by Canada-based students, to the possibility of remaining. This suggestion that post-study policy is of greater concern is also reflected in the interview participants responses as to what had caused the market shift in recent years. Between these two aspects of immigration policy, participants more often suggested that the ability to work, remain or immigrate were the main causes.

## 4.4 Discussion

This section examines the findings of this study within the context of the wider literature in the field. It highlights results consistent with previous work as well as those which offer divergent descriptions of the subjects in question. It concludes by offering explanations for any such divergence and assessing the suitability of the methods used.

### 4.4.1 Findings Related to Chinese Culture

Several aspects of Chinese culture described in the literature reveal themselves in the results of this study. There is clearly a strong parental influence on decisions of Chinese students related to education. There are several findings which are consistent with Hofstede's (2010) descriptions of a culture which values collectivism (desire to improve China; intention to work in family business after graduation), long-term planning (choosing major based on career prospects and family business interests; giving less consideration to financial factors such as tuition fees in the short-term) and accepts power distance in society and in the family (deferring to older family members on decisions about one's education).

### 4.4.2 Suitability of the Push-Pull Framework

As discussed in the literature review, the push-pull model has become the standard for describing driving factors affecting migration, although it does not satisfactorily explain selectivity of migrants or the cause of temporary migration, such as that of international students, and could benefit from a revised description.

As explained by Takenaka and Pren (2010), the factors which determine migrant selectivity into a migratory network could be more useful for uncovering the cause of immigration than a list of push-factors common to a population. Established temporary migration routes, such as international study, can be described as a

migratory network which selects for individual-related factors in this way. The findings of this study can be described in a model consistent with this explanation.

The findings show positive selectivity for available funds (almost all of the questionnaire respondents' tuition fees were being paid by their parents) and a negative selectivity for educational attainment (none of the interview participants had achieved a high enough score on the Gaokao exam to attend a HEI in China which they deemed to be suitable).

The push-pull model remains an effective framework for investigating the reason for choosing between potential host countries. When selective factors (as discussed) lead to a decision to study abroad, a comparison of potential hosts consistent with Lee's (1966) model follows. Figure 4.4a illustrates how the selectivity for emigration networks combined with push-pull factors in potential host countries operate in the case of this study's interview participants.

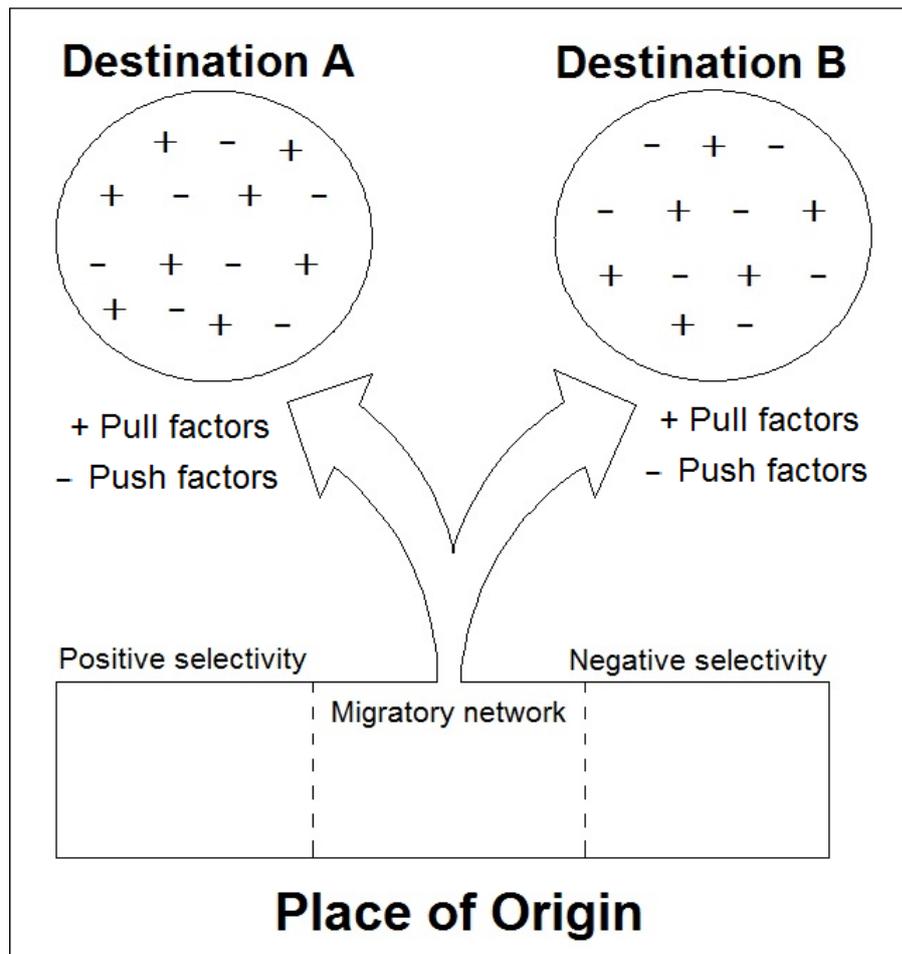


Fig 4.4a: Model of causal factors including network selectivity

Figure 4.4b shows how the model can be used to illustrate selective factors for studying abroad from findings of this study.

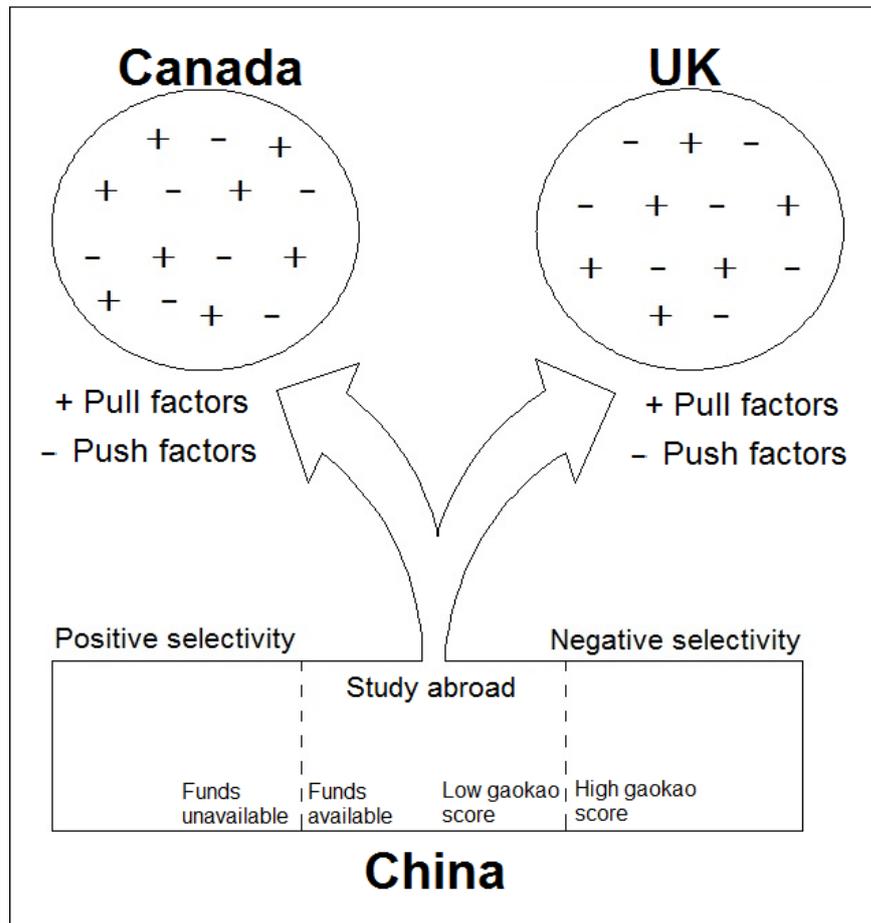


Fig 4.4b: Model illustrating causal factors revealed in this study

The sample size and selection of the participants in this study mean that these conditions are not generalisable to Chinese students as a whole as all of the data came from students on franchise programmes at international colleges. It is likely that Chinese students applying directly to overseas HEIs are part of a distinct migratory network which would have its own selective factors.

#### 4.4.3 Findings Related to Influential Factors

The preeminent driving factors behind the choice to study abroad and the destination choice within the previous literature relate to quality of education and the difficulty in

obtaining a place at a Chinese HEI. While this study identified high quality education as an attractive feature of both the UK and Canada, it is not necessarily an isolated push-factor which prompts students to study abroad as explained by Bodycott (2009) and Lawson (2011). For each of the interviewees the lack of access to high quality education in China was a result of their low Gaokao score.

#### 4.4.4 Findings Related to Immigration Policy

Although, immigration policy was not revealed to be the driving factor behind the choice of study destination of the questionnaire respondents or interview participants, Canada-based students were more influenced by this factor than were their UK-based counterparts, but only citing their influence when asked about it directly. It is a widely-held belief of students studying in both countries that the UK has a more restrictive post-study visa regime than Canada, with less opportunity to temporarily or permanently remain after graduation. Competition in the Chinese job market was shown to be of greater concern to those studying in the UK than those in Canada, possibly indicating that UK-based students are more certain of returning to China post-study than those in Canada.

#### 4.4.5 Suitability of the Methodology

The method of identifying and describing the changing visa policies of the two countries served its purpose of giving an overview of amendments within the parameters described in the literature review. It would not be possible to view the impact of a single policy change in isolation. A full description of all policy amendments affecting immigration, on the other hand, would generate extraneous details which would make the general direction of government policy unclear. For these reasons, an overview based on the adjudged level of significance, shown in the context of the changing student numbers, is sufficient.

The questionnaire had some sections which did not generate meaningful data and would be removed if this research project were to continue further. Questions about family background, countries visited in the past and other countries to which the respondent had applied to study were useful in the interviews when follow-up questions could be asked. They did not, however, reveal anything of significance in isolated questionnaires, and would be removed if the project continued further. The three “why” questions also failed to generate significant results without the opportunity for follow-up questions. Responses to these questions were often vague and did not identify specific pull-factors. In contrast, the responses to the multiple-choice section were much more valuable. The section asking respondents to rank four English-speaking countries was misunderstood by 32 of 107 respondents and the responses were unused. The 75 valid responses were useful for the research. Similarly, the section asking respondents to indicate 6 influential factors from a list generated useful data with 9 invalid responses due to misunderstanding on the side of the respondent, or failing to answer completely. A better explanation or some supervision would ensure a greater number of valid responses, although it may not be feasible with a high volume of responses.

The mixed method design proved to be difficult for two reasons. Firstly, unforeseen circumstances meant interview participants were unable to be selected from the pool of questionnaire respondents, meaning it was not possible to follow up on interesting responses. Secondly, there was not enough time between the two stages to translate all of the questionnaire responses to enable the interview design to fully include trends identified in stage one. For further research, more time between the two stages for translation and analysis of the questionnaires would benefit the project. The questionnaire responses that were analysed, however, proved to be useful in preparation for the interviews.

All of the questions in the interviews generated data which were useful for the research from at least one participant. For this reason, the interviews were the most successful part of the method. If the study were to be recreated or extended with similar aims, all of the sections from the interview would remain, possibly with some

adjustments or additions. With more time and resources to review the literature, more questions might be added to explore different areas of the students' decision-making process.

#### 4.4.5 Limitations of the Study

The study aimed to investigate what effect a potential host country's visa policy has on the decision of Chinese students hoping to study abroad. A significant problem within the initial stage of correlating these two trends is that it is difficult to know the time it would take to actually see an impact of a single policy change. Attitudes and perceptions of a country, which contribute to a decision, change gradually over years based on feedback from others and individual experiences. There could also be longer-term knock on effects which are hard to measure. A student may choose to study in a country in which an older sibling had studied several years before. Factors that pushed students away in the past, therefore, could continue to have an effect years after they have disappeared. That is the reason this study was focused on two countries that have had a relatively uniform evolution of their respective immigration policies over a significant time frame.

One issue arising from the fact that no two countries are identical in all but visa policy, is that this factor cannot be viewed in isolation from any other background factors. Attempts have been made to mitigate this issue by exploring other external factors. The context chapter made an attempt to describe changes to significant pull-factors within the two countries. International students might have a different method for gauging these factors than that utilised in the context chapter, and measuring in such a way might have an impact on their decision.

A further limitation of the study is that it is mostly limited to one region of China, and to students with a similar route to higher education abroad. Nine of the ten interview participants were enrolled on programmes which have their first two years in China, and the final year in another country. Factors which influence students on this

route, or in this region, may be different to those on another. This could, therefore, skew the results.

Finally, and most importantly for future research intended to meet the aims of this project, there should be more students intending to study in Canada in the study. The aim of the project was to find the main reason students are choosing Canada over the UK. This information is more likely to be revealed by students going to Canada, although UK students are also needed as a control group. For future research towards these aims, time and resources would be better spent looking at Chinese students going to, or already in, Canada.

The implications of the results discussed here, as well as the assessment of the project's method will be addressed in the conclusion chapter.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

This chapter will draw conclusions to the research project, detailing what progress has been made towards answering the research questions posed in the introduction chapter, and any additional findings. These conclusions will be drawn from the convergence of the results detailed in the previous chapter, with consideration being given to the limitations of the study and what further research could be of importance to this field.

### 5.1 Research Question 1

*What, if any, correlation exists between reforms in the immigration policies and inbound Chinese student populations of the UK and Canada in the 21st century?*

The data appear to show a positive correlation between the tightening of both student visa policy and possible routes to post-study temporary and permanent residence and a reduction in inbound Chinese student market share. At a time when it was making such immigration policy changes, the UK saw a reduction in its market share with Canada, a country which opened new routes to permanent residence for recent graduates in the same time period.

It is not possible to conclude, however, whether student visa policy or post-study visa policy had the most significant impact on the inbound population, as both of these policies were being simultaneously altered by the UK government. To ascertain the impact of one in isolation, a statistical analysis of two countries with specific respective immigration policies would be required. These countries would need to have had opposing policy changes in one of these areas, and stable policy in the other. This would enable an investigation into one of these policy change directions in isolation.

The possibility of other factors contributing to this shift necessitated the posing of the second research question.

## 5.2 Research Question 2

*What other factors may have contributed to this change?*

Several pull-factors, generated by a review of previous studies, were identified in the literature review chapter. The context chapter examined how these factors changed over the time period in question in an attempt to give some indication as to how they might have affected the inbound Chinese student population of each country. The data suggested that major factors such as tuition fees and education quality were not responsible for the shift towards Canada as a preferred destination of Chinese students. If anything, these two factors appeared to change in favour of the UK, based on the initial metric used to measure them, at a time when the UK was losing some of its market share to Canada. Further research as to how students measure these factors, and whether these measurements yield different results, would be required to give a more definitive answer to this question.

Initially, the responses to the questionnaires suggested that students who had chosen to study in Canada placed more emphasis on the ability to remain after graduation and possibility of immigration than did the students studying in the UK. Chinese students, regardless of their host country, ranked Canada as the country which offers the best chance of remaining after graduation and possibly immigrating out of the four major English-speaking countries (USA, UK, Australia and Canada). The UK was ranked lowest for chance of remaining after graduation.

The possibility of all factors other than immigration policy being responsible for the market shift cannot be ruled out based on this research alone. The influence of the marketing strategies of different HEIs, for example, is impossible to quantify from the data collected. There is no obvious reason to suppose that the marketing strategies of HEIs in one country would be significantly more effective than those in another, but further research into comparative marketing budgets, social media presence or amount

of contact with potential international students of various HEIs could disprove that assumption.

To summarise, the results of the study combined with the previous literature do not suggest any other factor that could have led to the Chinese student market shift, although they cannot be conclusively ruled out without further research.

### 5.3 Research Question 3

*How do Chinese students arrive at a decision of where to study abroad? When in this decision process, if ever, do they consider the student visa process or post-study prospects such as ability to remain temporarily or immigrate?*

The mixed methods were designed to examine students' consideration of several pull-factors and how these contributed to their decision. On reflection, the first part of this research question is a broad one. There are countless factors influencing students for many years leading to this decision. The mixed methods were able to look at the influential people and country-related pull-factors that students considered in the application process, which goes some way to answering this question. Chinese students going to both countries share the aim of creating long-term opportunities for themselves, with most citing improved job prospects as the main reason for obtaining a degree. How students determine which host country would afford them the greatest long-term benefits depends on personal circumstances. If the student is intending to return to China, the best choice would be to get a highly respected degree overseas which would have a high value in the Chinese job market. If the student is intending to emigrate for a better life, however, the quality of degree and education institution maybe less important. The focus on the long-term is common to students in both scenarios. The influence of students' parents was revealed to be significant for most questionnaire respondents and interview participants in the study. The value placed on parental opinion is possibly linked to the Chinese culture of collectivism, hierarchical

family structure and the fact that the vast majority of students' tuition fees were being paid by their parents.

The second part of this question is more specific and results of the study were able to provide a more specific explanation. The data generated by this study indicated that Chinese students who study in Canada consider the ability to work while studying, remain after graduation and the possibility of immigration more important than do those in the UK who prioritise quality of education to a greater extent. Questionnaire respondents ranked Canada higher than the UK in categories related to post-study opportunities. Canada-based students had more long-term aspirations of remaining outside China than did UK-based students. Student visa policies, however, were not shown to have any significant influence on students going to either country.

Overall, these results would indicate that the post-study opportunities of the countries in question could potentially influence the choice of study destination for those who have intentions of leaving China in the long-term. The same conclusion cannot be stated for the influence of student visa policies, although it is not possible to rule it out.

#### 5.4 Primary Aim

*How the student immigration policies and post-study visa policies of Canada and the UK have contributed to Chinese students' decision of where to study in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

While the statistics gave some indication that the policies have probably had an effect on some Chinese students' decision of where to study, positive results from mixed research methods were necessary for stating this conclusively. The questionnaires seemed to indicate that Canadian students considered these factors more than those in the UK. Furthermore, the results of the interview generated additional data that indicated a greater proportion of the students in Canada had taken the immigration

policy into consideration when choosing their country of study and had intentions of remaining in the country post-study.

The results of each of the three stages of the project would support the hypothesis that the changes in immigration policy of the two countries has allowed Canada to attract additional students who might have, in previous years, considered the UK a more suitable option. Due to the limitations of the study and the shortcomings of the study's methodology, as discussed, it cannot be concluded to what extent this factor has contributed to the change in student numbers. It can be stated that it is very likely to have done so.

## 5.5 Beyond the Aims of the Project

As well as contributing to the specific research aims of this project, the data generated by this study has revealed some themes which might prove useful in other areas of research:

1. Many Chinese students feel that getting a degree is a necessity in an increasingly competitive job market in China. Very few of the students in the study had considered any path to a successful career other than through higher education.
2. The primary push-factor, identified by this study, forcing Chinese students to look outside their home country is the unavailability of places at top universities in China. Several students admitted that their first choice of HEI would be a top university in China but they had not met the entry requirements and had instead decided to study abroad.
3. A perception among large groups of Chinese students and parents is that the USA is not a safe country in which to study. This was the most cited reason that the USA was not selected as a study destination in both the questionnaires and interviews.

## 5.6 Implications of the Thesis

The conclusions reached in this thesis have empirical implications for policy-making in the education sector and for HEIs aiming to recruit international students. There are also theoretical implications for the research field.

### 5.6.1 Implications for Policy Makers

Although Chinese students still consider the UK to be a desirable destination to study due to the quality and prestige of education, they do not consider it to be a destination for permanent immigration. This could make it more difficult to attract students who have ambitions of long-term immigration to study in the UK in the future.

Having Chinese students leave the UK upon completion of their studies is what the current government apparently desires, given the targets set out by the Conservative Party (2010; 2015; 2017) to reduce net migration including international students. The continuation of the policy to include international students in this figure appears to be a short-sighted one, which has cost the UK a significant portion of desirable migrant labour in exchange for favour with the electorate. Many have argued that international students should not be included in the figure used for targets (Cavanagh & Glennie, 2012; British Future and Universities UK, 2014; Universities UK, 2014; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2018) and I believe this would have been an appropriate exclusion. I would suggest that international students, Chinese students in particular, are a desirable immigrant group due to their level of education, remaining years in the labour market and independence from social welfare which is why other English-speaking countries have been more welcoming of them than the UK in recent years. Removing international students and graduates from immigration targets would facilitate the restoration of incentives to remain post-study so graduates could apply the knowledge and expertise of their high quality education in the UK without negatively impacting on the government's stated election campaign

aims. The government will also need to consider what incentives are offered to European students after the UK leaves the EU. If policies similar to those for non-EU students are applied, the UK is likely to face a further exodus of graduates and possibly a reduction in European student numbers.

### 5.6.2 Implications for HEIs

There are two main implications for HEIs in the UK. The first is that the trend of reduced market share of Chinese students could continue unless either immigration policy is changed or outbound students from China become more inclined to return home after graduation and therefore give less consideration to the ability to remain post-study. The second is that European student numbers may come under threat following the UK's exit from the EU. HEIs will need to consider their marketing strategies and efforts to lobby policy makers before laws are passed which could damage the reputation of the UK in the eyes of European students.

### 5.6.3 Theoretical Implications

In theoretical terms, this thesis discusses the shortcomings of the push-pull model when used to describe causal factors for temporary migration such as that of international students. Although, it is useful to describe the comparison of multiple host countries, it is too simplistic to describe the combined effects of origin-related and destination-related factors, personal attributes leading to selective migration and changing personal circumstances in the country of origin attained through temporary immigration.

The new model proposed in the discussion section is more representative of the causal factors which led the interview participants to study abroad than simply a list of push-pull-factors. It separates causal factors which select individuals into a migratory network from those related to potential host countries.

## 5.7 Further Research

Due to the limitations of the study outlined in this chapter, there remain areas of research that would benefit from further investigation.

1. To more comprehensively meet the specific research aims of this project, a larger sample of questionnaires and interviews involving Chinese students on a range of programmes at Canadian HEIs could be undertaken using similar methods to the ones employed here.
2. Qualitative research on how the subject group gather and interpret data on known pull-factors of potential host countries would make it possible to measure the changes of said factors, as perceived by Chinese students, over a designated time period.
3. Data collection using a similar methodology to this, involving Chinese students who are studying their whole programme overseas (as opposed to only one or two years) could reveal different migratory networks with unique selectivity. Combined with the results of this thesis, consistent trends would be more generalizable.
4. A year-long case study of Chinese students in the 12 months immediately before they accept a place at a university outside China, identifying the order of preference of English-speaking host countries at different stages could more suitably answer the third research question. Any changes to a student's order of preference could be explained by the individual without having to rely on approximate recollections, months or years after the fact, and could therefore be more reliable.

## 5.8 Closing Comments

The study has revealed some results which were unexpected and some which were in line with findings from the existing literature. This has had the result of increasing the understanding of the rapidly-growing and evolving subject group, namely outbound Chinese students. For this reason it can be viewed as a successful project, generating data which could inform further research in this field.

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Appendix 1 – UK Points Based System (PBS) Immigration Tiers

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Sub Category</b>
<b>Tier 1 High Value Immigrants</b>	General (closed 6 April 2011)
	Investor
	Post-study Work (closed 6 April 2012)
	Graduate Entrepreneur
<b>Tier 2 Skilled Workers</b>	General
	Intra-Company Transfer
	Minister of Religion
	Sportsperson
<b>Tier 3 Low Skilled Workers</b>	NA (Never opened to applications)
<b>Tier 4 Students</b>	General
	Child
<b>Tier 5 Temporary Workers</b>	Charity Worker
	Creative and Sporting
	Government Authorised Exchange
	International Agreement
	Religious Worker
	Youth Mobility Scheme

## Appendix 2 – Canadian Permanent Residence Program Economic Classes

<b>Class</b>
Federal Skilled Workers
Canadian Experience Class
Federal Skilled Trades
Start-up Business Class
Investors
Entrepreneurs and self-employed persons
Self-employed persons class
Quebec Economic Classes
Provincial Nominees
Caring For Children and Caring for People with High Medical Needs Classes
Immigrant Investor Venture Capital Class
Liv-in Caregivers in Canada
Atlantic Immigration Pilot Programs

## Appendix 3 – Blank Questionnaire

(page 1)

Disclaimer: The information gathered in this questionnaire is for a university research project. The identity of the participants of this questionnaire will remain anonymous in the results of the study. Information will not be shared with any persons or external bodies unrelated to the research project itself. 免责声明：本调查问卷中所收集的信息仅用于硕士研究生研究项目。本调查问卷的参与者的信息在研究结果中将保持匿名。此信息不会与研究项目本身无关的任何个人或外部机构分享。

Name or initials 姓名: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age 年龄: \_\_\_\_\_  
Course of overseas study 将要去国外学习的学科: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution of overseas study 将要去国外学习的大学名称: \_\_\_\_\_  
Country of overseas study 将要去的国家: \_\_\_\_\_  
WeChat ID or email (to clarify your answers) 微信号或者邮箱地 \_\_\_\_\_

Family members with a degree (or higher qualification): 拥有本科或以上学历的家庭成员  
 Father 父亲                       Mother 母亲                       Brother/Sister 兄弟姐妹

Family members who gained a degree (or higher qualification) outside of China:  
拥有国外本科或以上学历的家庭成员  
 Father 父亲                       Mother 母亲                       Brother/Sister 兄弟姐妹  
Country: 国家 \_\_\_\_\_      Country: 国家 \_\_\_\_\_      Country: 国家 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have Chinese friends or family members with permanent residence /citizenship of another country      YES / NO  
拥有外国永久居留权/国籍的中国朋友或者家庭成员      是/否  
give details: 请提供详情  
example: brother in Australia \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the course you are studying? 你是如何得知你将要出国读的课程方面的信息?  
\_\_\_\_\_

List the English-speaking countries visited in past: 列出你所去过的说英语的国家? \_\_\_\_\_

Including the country you are going to, in which countries did you apply to study? 包括你要去的国家，你申请了哪些国家去留学?  
1<sup>st</sup> Choice: 第一选择 \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice: 第二选择 \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> Choice: 第三选择 \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been offered a place at a university in China? 你是否收到国内大学的录取通知书? YES / NO 是/否

Who is paying for your course? 谁将支付你的学费  
 Parents 父母       Myself 自付       Government 政府       Other. Specify: 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want a degree? 你为什么想要拥有本科学位? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose to study outside of China? 你为什么想出国留学? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose your country of overseas study? 你是如何选择出国留学的国家? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 – Blank Questionnaire

(page 2)

Country of overseas study 出国留学的国家					
Select 6 of the most important factors below, which <b>influenced your decision</b> of where to study overseas, and rank them. 请选择以下哪六个最重要因素影响你出国留学的决定					
FACTOR 因素		范例			
请选择你认为最重要的六项因素，并在圆圈里标明重要性（1为最重要，6为最不重要）					
The University has a good reputation	大学的有很好的声誉	<input type="radio"/>	1		
The country offers high quality education	该国提供高质量的教育	<input type="radio"/>			
The cost of living is low in the country	该国家的生活成本很低	<input type="radio"/>	6		
Tuition fees are low in the country	该国学费低	<input type="radio"/>			
The country's student visa process is simple	该国的学生签证过程很简单	<input type="radio"/>	5		
I know people already in the country	我有认识的人已经在这个国家了	<input type="radio"/>			
My parents prefer this country/university	我父母想要我去这个国家/大学	<input type="radio"/>	2		
My friend/brother/sister recommended the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹推荐我去这个国家/大学	<input type="radio"/>			
My friend/brother/sister studied in the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹曾经在这个国家学习	<input type="radio"/>			
There is opportunity to work while studying	这里有可以一边读书一边工作的机会	<input type="radio"/>	3		
There is opportunity to work after graduation	这里有毕业后可以有工作的机会	<input type="radio"/>			
There is opportunity for future immigration	这里有未来移民的机会	<input type="radio"/>			
The country has a nice climate	这个国家气候很好	<input type="radio"/>	4		
I have enjoyed visiting the country in the past	我曾经来过这个国家旅游	<input type="radio"/>			
The country has low crime	这个国家犯罪率低	<input type="radio"/>			
The country is tolerant of foreigners	这个国家欢迎外国人	<input type="radio"/>			
Comparing English Speaking Countries 比较不同说英语的国家					
Give your opinion about how different countries compare in different qualities. For each category, rank the countries from 1-4: 就不同的国家比较不同的质量给予你的意见。请对以下每个类别按 1-4 给以下四个国家作出排序。					
		USA 美国	UK 英国	Australia 澳洲	Canada 加拿大
<i>Example:</i>	<i>范例</i>	<u>  3  </u>	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  4  </u>	<u>  2  </u>
1 = Highest quality of education	1 等于高质量的教育体系:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Lowest quality of education	4 等于低质量的教育体系:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Most welcoming to international students	1 等于最欢迎国际学生:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Least welcoming to international students	4 等于最不欢迎国际学生:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Easiest to obtain student visa	1 等于最容易获得学生签证:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Hardest to obtain student visa	4 等于最不容易获得学生签证:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Best chance of remaining after graduation	1 等于最多机会毕业后留下工作:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Lowest chance of remaining after graduation	4 等于最少机会毕业后留下工作:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Best chance of immigration	1 最高机会可以移民:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Lowest chance of immigration	4 最低机会可以移民:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Lowest tuition fees	1 等于学费最低:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Highest tuition fees	4 等于学费最高:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Lowest cost of living	1 等于生活费最低:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Highest cost of living	4 等于生活费最高:	_____	_____	_____	_____
1 = Most safe to live	1 等于治安最安全:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4 = Least safe to live	4 等于治安最不安全:	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Appendix 4 – Invalid Questionnaire Response (unclear)

**Country of overseas study 出国留学的国家**

Select 6 of the most important factors below, which **influenced your decision** of where to study overseas, and rank them.  
 请选择以下哪六个最重要因素影响你出国留学的决定

请选择你认为最重要的六项因素，并在圆圈里标明重要性（1为最重要，6为最不重要）*范例*:

The University has a good reputation	大学的有很好的声誉	①
The country offers high quality education	该国提供高质量的教育	①
The cost of living is low in the country	该国家的生活成本很低	③
Tuition fees are low in the country	该国学费低	④
The country's student visa process is simple	该国的学生签证过程很简单	④
I know people already in the country	我有认识的人已经在这个国家了	⑤
My parents prefer this country/university	我父母想要我去这个国家/大学	④
My friend/brother/sister recommended the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹推荐我去这个国家/大学	⑤
My friend/brother/sister studied in the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹曾经在这个国家学习	⑥
There is opportunity to work while studying	这里有可以一边读书一边工作的机会	①
There is opportunity to work after graduation	这里有机会毕业后可以有工作的机会	①
There is opportunity for future immigration	这里有未来移民的机会	①
The country has a nice climate	这个国家气候很好	②
I have enjoyed visiting the country in the past	我曾经来过这个国家旅游	⑥
The country has low crime	这个国家犯罪率低	①
The country is tolerant of foreigners	这个国家欢迎外国人	①

## Appendix 5 – Invalid Questionnaire Response (No thought given to response)

**Country of overseas study 出国留学的国家**

Select 6 of the most important factors below, which influenced your decision of where to study overseas, and rank them.  
请选择以下哪六个最重要因素影响你出国留学的决定

请选择你认为最重要的六项因素，并在圆圈里标明重要性（1为最重要，6为最不重要）范例

The University has a good reputation	大学的有很好的声誉	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The country offers high quality education	该国提供高质量的教育	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The cost of living is low in the country	该国家的生活成本很低	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Tuition fees are low in the country	该国学费低	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The country's student visa process is simple	该国的学生签证过程很简单	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
I know people already in the country	我有认识的人已经在这个国家了	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
My parents prefer this country/university	我父母想要我去这个国家/大学	<input type="radio"/>
My friend/brother/sister recommended the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹推荐我去这个国家/大学	<input type="radio"/>
My friend/brother/sister studied in the country	我的朋友/兄弟姐妹曾经在这个国家学习	<input type="radio"/>
There is opportunity to work while studying	这里有可以一边读书一边工作的机会	<input type="radio"/>
There is opportunity to work after graduation	这里有机会毕业后可以有工作的机会	<input type="radio"/>
There is opportunity for future immigration	这里有未来移民的机会	<input type="radio"/>
The country has a nice climate	这个国家气候很好	<input type="radio"/>
I have enjoyed visiting the country in the past	我曾经来过这个国家旅游	<input type="radio"/>
The country has low crime	这个国家犯罪率低	<input type="radio"/>
The country is tolerant of foreigners	这个国家欢迎外国人	<input type="radio"/>

**Comparing English Speaking Countries 比较不同说英语的国家**

Give your opinion about how different countries compare in different qualities. For each category, rank the countries from 1-4:  
就不同的国家比较不同的质量给予你的意见。请对以下每个类别按 1-4 给以下四个国家作出排序。

	USA 美国	UK 英国	Australia 澳洲	Canada 加拿大
<i>Example:</i>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Highest quality of education 4 = Lowest quality of education	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Most welcoming to international students 4 = Least welcoming to international students	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Easiest to obtain student visa 4 = Hardest to obtain student visa	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Best chance of remaining after graduation 4 = Lowest chance of remaining after graduation	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Best chance of immigration 4 = Lowest chance of immigration	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Lowest tuition fees 4 = Highest tuition fees	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Lowest cost of living 4 = Highest cost of living	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1 = Most safe to live 4 = Least safe to live	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

## Appendix 6 – Interview Guidance Notes

<u>Line of Enquiry</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
<p><b><u>Why University?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you want a degree?</li> <li>• Back-up plan?</li> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• When was decision taken?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Driving factors of Chinese education boom</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Why overseas?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you want to study abroad? Why not China?</li> <li>• Did look for places at Chinese Universities?</li> <li>• If not, why not? If so, why not suitable?</li> <li>• Influence?</li> <li>• When was decision taken?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Aim for 3 Push factors</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Choice of country</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you apply to your chosen country?</li> <li>• Did you consider any other country?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If not, why not? Why not Australia? USA? Canada? UK?</li> <li>○ If so, why didn't you study there?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Influence?</li> <li>• When was decision taken?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Aim for 3 Pull factors</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Aim for 1-2 push factors per country</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Programme/Uni specific factors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you hear about course?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>More Pull factors</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Prompt interviewee with immigration statistics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think more students starting to choose Canada?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>More push/pull factors</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Knowledge of changing factors</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Future plans</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year after graduation</li> <li>• 3-5 years</li> <li>• 10 years</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Compare UK – Canada student post-study plans</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Direct Yes/No questions about influence of immigration policies</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student visa policy</li> <li>• Able to work while studying</li> <li>• Chance to remain post-study</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Determine whether influential or not</u></b></p>

## Appendix 7 – Questionnaire Responses Grouped by Theme

Row	Hear did you hear about the course?	Baidiu, internet, online, website
1	Agents	
2	Agents	
3	BaiDu	1
4	Course info from school	
5	Education institution (agent)	
6	Father's friend	
7	Friends recommendation	
8	Friend's recommendation (graduate from GDUFS)	
9	Friends told me	
10	From internet and teacher	2
11	From parents	
12	From relations and online research	3
13	From School	
14	From teacher	
15	From the brochure of the course	
16	I have been there	
17	I hear about the school and teacher	
18	Influence by people around me	
19	Influence by people around me	
20	Information from uni	
21	Information from Uni	
22	Information from uni & official website	4
23	Internet	5
24	Internet	6
25	Internet	7
26	Internet	8
27	Internet	9
28	Internet	10
29	Internet	11
30	Internet	12
31	Internet	13
32	Internet	14
33	Internet	15
34	Internet research	16
35	Internet research	17
36	Internet research	18
37	Internet, parents	19
38	Leaflets from GDUFS	
39	Leaflets, internet, teacher's report	20
40	My friend	
41	My parents told me	
42	My parents told me to research	
43	My teacher told me	
44-79	NA	
80	Online	21
81	Online	22
82	Online and consult foreign teachers	23
83	Online Uni introduction	24
84	Online, from teachers	25
85	Overheard from other people	
86	Promotion by university	
87	Promotion by university	
88	Recommened by Auntie	
89	Recommened by friends	
90	Recommended by friend	
91	Recommended by friend	
92	Recommended by friend	
93	Recommended by friend	
94	Recommended by parents	
95	Search online, recommended by teachers	26
96	Study fare	
97	Study fare at uni	
98	Teachers	
99	Through school	
100-104	Uni	
105	Uni fare	
106	Uni information	
107	University website	27

## Appendix 8 – Initial Identification of Themes in Interview

### When was the decision taken?

Participant: When I was young, my father and uncle told me I need to work hard and go to a good university then you can get a good job like theirs. They ran away from the poor areas to the modern city to get a good job. So this decision is made when I was very young. 6-8 years old.

### Why did you choose to study abroad? Why not study in China?

Participant: I was born in China, I studied in China. I studied in Chinese education system for 15 years, so I think it's enough I can change to another education style. The UK is classical education system. The world is very big and there are lots of education styles so why not try another one?

### Did you look for places in China?

Participant: After the Gaokao, my dream school is Shenzhen University. I wanted to go there to study but my score is not enough and so I can't get my dream school. So going abroad to study is better.

Interviewer: So if you got the high score, do you think you would have just gone to Shenzhen University?

Participant: Yes because I live in Shenzhen, so studying there is near my home and I can save some money and stay near my family.

Interviewer: When you didn't achieve the high score, did you ever consider going to one of the lower entry universities in China?

Participant: Yes I got offers from some universities. But I think it's not my dream school and not good enough so I decide to go abroad.

### Who influenced this decision?

Participant: My neighbour's son is a Dr in Harvard University and when I told him I got offers from the Chinese university, it's not good. He recommended that I go abroad to study. He think university education style in foreign country is better than China. Because there is also Chinese university students waste their time in Chinese university because they play video game and do little studying. If you go abroad, you have to worry about your essay, worry about your presentation, it improves you to study hard.

### When was this decision taken?

Participant: In my high school, my parents told me you have 2 choice. 1 is go to Chinese university and be hard working and pass the Gaokao. The other is go abroad. But my score is not enough for my dream school so I chose the other choice.

Interviewer: So after the Gaokao?

Participant: Yes.

### Why did you choose to study in UK?

Participant: People have asked why I didn't go to America, Australia, Canada. I'm interested in history and I think the UK has a long history. America only has a 300-year history, it's quite short and I think the UK is traditional western country. If you want to learn western culture, you need to learn their language. So I learned English and English originated in England so I think the UK is better. They also have a lot of ancient buildings, castles, museums. This kind of things also attract me to UK.



19 October 2017

Mark Orme/Mark Smurthwaite  
School of Languages and Global Studies  
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Mark and Mark

**Re: BAHSS Ethics Committee Application**  
**Unique Reference Number: BAHSS 492**

The BAHSS ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Studying abroad and post-study immigration for Chinese students: How the student immigration policies and post-study visa policies of Canada and the UK have contributed to Chinese students' decision of where to study in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify [roffice@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:roffice@uclan.ac.uk) if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use [e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma](#)).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Douglas Martin".

Douglas Martin  
Deputy Vice-Chair  
BAHSS Ethics Committee

\* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

*NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.*

## Appendix 10 – Interview Transcript

(page 1)

**Participant Name:** UK5 (Male)  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017  
**Time:** 2.27pm - 3.05pm (38 minutes)  
**Course of Study:** International Journalism GDUFS  
**HEI:** UCLan  
**Country:** UK

### Why do you want a degree?

**Participant:** I think it depends on the situation of the society. In China, we have a large population and we have a high competition in society. If you don't have a high degree you can't get a good job. Because many people are better than you so why would the boss choose you? You have to show your talent and your qualification and quality to the boss to get the job.

**Interviewer:** So it's about getting a good job?

**Participant:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think a degree would enable you to do that?

**Participant:** If you get a degree you need to spend time to study. During these 4 years it means you study and show you have the knowledge from the university. And I think this is a symbol of your talent.

**Interviewer:** And what kind of job are you hoping to have?

**Participant:** I chose journalism because it's about English writing. I am interested in History, Geography and English writing. I am not good at maths and science subjects. I hated chemistry and physics so I choose journalism so I think to be a journalist you need to write an English news story and communicate with the foreign people. It's related to the culture, the language, the history and geography. My dream, I'm not sure I can fulfil it, is to be a primary school teacher in China. But I chose journalism because journalist skills can make my English better. And if I can be a journalist in China, I would be lucky. But I think it's quite difficult for young people to get a job in China now.

### What was the back-up plan? If you couldn't go to university?

**Participant:** To be honest, I've never thought about it. Because nowadays university is necessary for everyone. I know there are people in the rural areas who are too poor to go to university can only get some low salary job like washing dishes, waiter. I don't think of these jobs as low, but everyone wants a better life.

### Who influenced this decision?

**Participant:** My father and my uncle. They are from the rural area of eastern GuangDong. They were very poor when they are young, but through their hard work, my uncle is an English teacher in primary school, he affected me a lot. When I was young he told me lots of things about English. So when other children didn't know English I can sing "ABC song" and simple English words. My uncle inspired my interest in English and being a knowledgeable person. My father is a civil servant. He has a stable salary from the government. So I think my family is good and my father has enough money to support me studying abroad in the UK. So I think I am lucky. I am much luckier than the poor student in the rural areas. I also want to give a much better platform for my children, to give them more chance in the future.

**Interviewer:** Did your father go to university?

**Participant:** Yes. 20-30 years ago in China, it means you get a nice job.

**Interviewer:** Do you have brothers and sisters?

**Participant:** No. I am an only child.

## Appendix 10 – Interview Transcript

(page 2)

### When was the decision taken?

Participant: When I was young, my father and uncle told me I need to work hard and go to a good university then you can get a good job like theirs. They ran away from the poor areas to the modern city to get a good job. So this decision is made when I was very young. 6-8 years old.

### Why did you choose to study abroad? Why not study in China?

Participant: I was born in China, I studied in China. I studied in Chinese education system for 15 years, so I think it's enough I can change to another education style. The UK is classical education system. The world is very big and there are lots of education styles so why not try another one?

### Did you look for places in China?

Participant: After the Gaokao, my dream school is Shenzhen University. I wanted to go there to study but my score is not enough and so I can't get my dream school. So going abroad to study is better.

Interviewer: So if you got the high score, do you think you would have just gone to Shenzhen University?

Participant: Yes because I live in Shenzhen, so studying there is near my home and I can save some money and stay near my family.

Interviewer: When you didn't achieve the high score, did you ever consider going to one of the lower entry universities in China?

Participant: Yes I got offers from some universities. But I think it's not my dream school and not good enough so I decide to go abroad.

### Who influenced this decision?

Participant: My neighbour's son is a Dr in Harvard University and when I told him I got offers from the Chinese university, it's not good. He recommended that I go abroad to study. He think university education style in foreign country is better than China. Because there is also Chinese university students waste their time in Chinese university because they play video game and do little studying. If you go abroad, you have to worry about your essay, worry about your presentation, it improves you to study hard.

### When was this decision taken?

Participant: In my high school, my parents told me you have 2 choice. 1 is go to Chinese university and be hard working and pass the Gaokao. The other is go abroad. Put my score is not enough for my dream school so I chose the other choice.

Interviewer: So after the Gaokao?

Participant: Yes.

### Why did you choose to study in UK?

Participant: People have asked why I didn't go to America, Australia, Canada. I'm interested in history and I think the UK has a long history. America only has a 300-year history, it's quite short and I think the UK is traditional western country. If you want to learn western culture, you need to learn their language. So I learned English and English originated in England so I think the UK is better. They also have a lot of ancient buildings, castles, museums. This kind of things also attract me to UK.

### Did you consider any other countries? Australia, USA, Canada?

## Appendix 10 – Interview Transcript

(page 3)

**Participant:** Yes because I have some high school class mates who went to Australia and USA to study. If I went there I can be with them. But I think for the reason I just said the UK is better.

### Who influenced this decision?

**Participant:** My mum has a colleague whose son graduated from the UK. He told me the UK is better than other countries. He studied in Coventry. He said the weather and the lifestyle is better than USA.

**Interviewer:** So the lifestyle is better?

**Participant:** Yes. Another reason: In the UK you only need 3 years to get a bachelor and 1 year for the masters. In America, its 4 years and maybe more. So it can save time and money so it's a better choice.

### When was this decision taken?

**Participant:** Last summer after the Gaokao.

### How did you hear about the course?

**Participant:** From the son of my mother's colleague. He recommend me to come to the international college of Guangwai GDUFS. He said 2 years in China, 2 years in UK is a good style. Better than going directly there.

**Interviewer:** The "2+2 course". He did the same route?

**Participant:** Yes he is a former student in international college. And now he found a good job in Shenzhen so I think it's good.

### Why didn't you choose to study in the USA?

**Participant:** For many reasons. I think the security can be an issue. There are a lot of guns and shooting cases in America. Because I am a journalism student and read papers and see lots of news from America, and I think its more dangerous than the UK. Because carrying gun is legal and you don't know who will shoot you.

### Why didn't you choose to study in Canada?

**Participant:** To be honest I don't know a lot about Canada.

**Interviewer:** So you never even considered it?

**Participant:** Yes. I never thought about it.

### Why didn't you choose to study in Australia?

**Participant:** The price. I think the price maybe is higher than the UK. The price of food, dormitories, tuition.

**Interviewer:** Do you think if it was the same price you might have gone there?

**Participant:** No because of the history and culture attracted me to the UK.

### The statistics show more and more Chinese students are choosing Canada over the UK. Why do you think that is?

**Participant:** It depends on the government of Canada. The UK government have some problems about the UK's land is smaller than Canada and the population is larger. So maybe the opportunity of the education is less than Canada. They also have some problems, the UK government got some trouble in their policy so maybe they need to control the student. Because of the current situations, such as Brexit and the political issues of different parties. So that's why the UK is not secure of their own people's job so they might be reluctant to recruit overseas people.

**Interviewer:** So you think the UK government doesn't want as many students?

## Appendix 10 – Interview Transcript

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Participant: They don't want too much, because the UK is a popular choice for students. If too many Chinese students go there, there will be some problem. Canada have a lot of land and plenty of opportunity so they welcome the Chinese people to go there.

**What are you plans after graduation? After 1 year?**

Participant: Maybe I will plan to study further to get a master's degree, but I'm not sure at which university.

Interviewer: In which country would you do that?

Participant: I would stay in the UK or maybe go to Hong Kong. But I think the UK is better.

**What are you plans after graduation? 3-5 years?**

Participant: If I can be a reporter, journalist in China that's great. Because I study journalism. But if I can't get my job in TV or news magazines I will try to be an English teacher. Because a studied abroad, I learn English and can speak it well, I can teach students in China.

**When choosing your country of study, did you consider?**

**The student visa process?**

Participant: I know some things about the visa issues but it's not a key reason.

**The possibility of working while studying?**

Participant: No because I will come back to China. Working in my home town in better.

Interviewer: What about working while studying? Is that important? Did you look into that?

Participant: I think its ok. If I have a chance to work, if the government allows foreign students to work in the UK I think it's good. It would give me chance to practice my English and improve my skills and get some experience. But if the government doesn't allow, that's ok. Because I don't need the money to support my daily life.

Interviewer: So that's not that important to you?

Participant: Yes.

**Do you have any comments that might help with the research?**

Participant: The reason I chose UCLan, is because UCLan is famous for media and journalism in the UK. They're linked to BBC and some media in the UK. I can get some knowledge and experience from this. And Its located in Lancashire, the northwest so the price is lower than London.