

LEISURE EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Chinese international students are the largest group among international students in Canada. They play an important role in Canadian universities as well as in leisure research. The current study aims to reveal Chinese international students' leisure experience, and to explore their leisure constraints and negotiation strategies in their everyday lives. The framework of leisure constraints negotiation (Jackson, 1993) was employed. Eight interviews with Chinese international students from the University of Manitoba were conducted to hear the stories about their leisure experiences. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. Chinese international students were found to be constrained intrapersonally, interpersonally, structurally, and culturally in their leisure. However, they were trying to be active by applying some negotiation strategies. The results of this study can not only benefit this group but also other international student groups by identifying their leisure preferences and constraints, and help leisure service providers to facilitate leisure activities on campus.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Each year, Canada attracts numerous international students to study in its educational institutions because of its well-known bilingual teaching system and cultural diversity. According to the statistics of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC, 2010), there were 196,138 foreign students in Canada in 2009 – 49,905 from the People’s Republic of China, which ranked as the largest international student group in Canada since 2002 and constituted more than a quarter of the whole population of international students. International students play an important role in Canadian universities. They not only contribute to the cultural diversity of the schools, but also bring great economic benefits for the academic institutions by contributing more than the full “cost” of expenses. For local communities they provide employment opportunities and revenue (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada [AUCC], 2001). Although international students have temporary student status during their study, they are potential and ideal candidates to become Canadian immigrants upon their graduation (CIC News, 2008) because they are typically young, are well educated, and adapt to life in Canada without settlement-integration costs. Therefore, international students are a significant component of Canadian society while they remain students, and are potentially a significant segment of Canadian society after graduation if they decide to remain in Canada.

The leisure experience of international students however has not received enough attention from leisure researchers and only limited research exists. Some research

focused on leisure experiences of Chinese international students was conducted in the United States recently (Li & Stodolska, 2006; Li & Stodolska, 2007), but little research has been conducted in Canadian universities yet. As a minority group in Canadian society, Chinese international students live in a cross-cultural environment and experience cultural change in their lives and study. The mainstream culture could influence every aspect of their lives, including their leisure activities. Meanwhile, they maintain close connections to their origin country and keep their unique cultural traits (Li & Stodolska, 2007). They might have similar experiences in cultural change and integration as Chinese immigrants, but they do not share the same stories as the permanent migrants because their status is temporary. Thus, their leisure experience should have special characteristics, distinct from immigrants, Canadian students or even those in China.

Leisure is a broad concept that contains diverse dimensions in different contexts. The word leisure comes from the Latin word *licere*, meaning “to be free” (Kelly, 1996). In the scholarly literature, leisure is commonly defined as “nonproductive consumption of time” (Veblen, 1899, p. 46) or an “activity that is chosen primarily for its own sake” (Kelly, 1996, p. 22). Kelly sums up the range of leisure experiences this way: “It refers to an experience for some users and to a quality of time for others” (p. 16). In Chinese, “leisure” is usually translated into *Xiu Xian*, which means relaxing and resting, and free and unoccupied (Liu, Yeh, Chick & Zinn, 2008). Chinese people tend to prefer passive activities to active activities because of Chinese culture (Walker & Wang, 2009). It is reported in a recent study that the most popular leisure activities for urban Chinese

people are watching TV, reading books or newspapers, listening to the radio, playing Majiang (a Chinese table game), and chatting with family members (Yin, 2005). Data suggest that Canadians, 27% of whom are physically active in their leisure time, spend more time in physical recreation than immigrants (Gilmour, 2007, p. 46). For the purpose of this thesis, “leisure” refers to a period of time, experience, and activities, including recreation and sports, physical activity and free time activity, which are important components of Chinese international students’ lives.

Since constraints research for more than two decades has become a major theme in leisure studies to understand leisure behavior (Jackson & Scott, 1999), this thesis aims to reveal the current situation of leisure participation of Chinese international students in Canadian universities and understand the perceived constraints to their participation, as well as their negotiation strategies in leisure activities. The definition of leisure constraints was conceptualized by Jackson as “factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (2000, p.62). Despite the constraints experienced in leisure, people take some actions to participate in leisure, which was defined as leisure constraints negotiation (Samdahl, 2005). More details of these two conceptions will be introduced in the following chapter. Stodolska (2000) stated that leisure research on ethnic and racial minorities is significant to leisure studies because it contributes to leisure theories and theoretical development by expanding our understanding and views. Therefore, the study focusing on constraints and

negotiation strategies to leisure participation of Chinese international students in Canada can not only contribute to leisure theory, but also benefit this particular group by identifying ways to improve their leisure satisfaction and the quality of life in Canada.

The purpose of this study is to examine the types of leisure activities including recreation and sports that Chinese international students believe are available to them, the types of leisure activities in which Chinese international students are actively involved in Winnipeg, and what constraints they face to their participation. In addition, the study will also explore the negotiation strategies students adopt to engage in leisure. Research that is designed to advance our understanding of the needs, constraints, and negotiation strategies of this group could help recreation planners in the provision of programs and recreational facilities for the Chinese international student community.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Leisure Constraints and Constraints Negotiation

The research on leisure constraints has existed for more than a century (Jackson, 2000); however, systematic leisure constraints research has been conducted in the last two decades in North America. Leisure constraints may happen in people's everyday life and impact people's leisure participation and fulfillment. Research about leisure constraints is thus important in leisure research as it can contribute to leisure research in three ways (Jackson, 2005). It can: 1) uncover both positive and negative factors that influence individuals' leisure choices; 2) provide information that might challenge the assumptions of leisure researchers or providers about their understandings of leisure; 3) facilitate communication among scholars from various fields, for example between those who study leisure and those who study sport delivery. Therefore, more researchers have shown interest in leisure constraints research and more empirical research has been conducted since the late 1980s (Jackson, 2005).

In 1987, Crawford and Godbey made positive contributions to the conceptual development of leisure constraints research. They classified constraints into intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal constraints "involve individual psychological states and attributes which interact with leisure preferences rather than intervening between preferences and participation" (p. 122); interpersonal constraints result from intrapersonal constraints or individual relationships that interact with both preferences and participation; structural constraints intervene "between leisure preference and

participation” (p. 124). They also indicated that constraints affect participation, nonparticipation, and preferences as well; and that intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints can affect preferences in different ways other than the structural constraints intervening between preferences and participation. According to Crawford and Godbey’s statement, intrapersonal constraints, as individual psychological level barriers, (e.g., stress, depression, and anxiety) impact preference directly but influence participation indirectly by changing preference; while interpersonal constraints can interact with both preference and participation because they are either a result of intrapersonal barriers that influence preference, or are the product of interpersonal interaction that impacts participation; however, structural constraints (e.g., financial issues, time schedules, and weather) always intervene between preference and participation. Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) then developed a hierarchical model in which constraints were supposed to be experienced and negotiated sequentially. They emphasized the importance of intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints in shaping leisure behavior. It is interesting then, that most research has been done on structural constraints.

In Scott’s study of contract bridge in 1991, the conception “negotiation” was introduced into leisure constraints literature (Jackson, 2005). In the leisure constraints model, which has been employed in exploring the nature of nonparticipation in leisure activities, leisure constraints negotiation means the actions people take to participate in leisure despite the constraints they face (Samdahl, 2005). According to Samdahl’s analysis, the meaning of negotiation in leisure constraints studies is different from the

one used in the broad context of social science where negotiation normally implies two parties or people, which requires more than one party to interact and accomplish the action in a reshaped way by arrangement. Scott (1991) first showed leisure negotiation in his research of group-related constraints in contract bridge. The result indicated that although people faced different constraints in their participation in contract bridge, for example decreased interest, scheduling conflict, and individual differences, they were still found to negotiate these constraints in order to insist on their leisure participation in various ways. For example, some bridge clubs facilitated the game by providing information about the presence of bridge groups to newcomers; clubs applied the recruitment of substitute players to take the place of the absent players instead of cancellation to make sure the games were played on time; many bridge clubs developed the regulation of banning smoking in their clubs because of different preferences among players.

However, in leisure research, interactive negotiation is understood to strongly influence constraints in ways that are different from ‘negotiation’ as the word is typically used. As Jackson et al. (1993) stated in the first proposition of negotiation, “participation is dependent not on the absence of constraints (although this may be true for some people) but on negotiation through them. Such negotiation may modify rather than foreclose participation” (p. 4). They analyzed two related studies of leisure constraints negotiation, one is Scott’s (1991) and the other one was conducted by Kay and Jackson (1991) in Britain, to support their proposition and provided three characteristics of negotiation: 1)

leisure constraints can be negotiated in various ways; 2) constraints do not always lead to nonparticipation; 3) participation without constraints is different from participation with negotiation. Thus, their first proposition well demonstrates the important role that constraints negotiation plays in leisure participation. Negotiation can be a useful buffer where constraints happen and make it possible for people to engage in leisure activities even with constraints. In Jackson and Rucks' (1995) exploratory study on leisure constraints encountered and negotiation strategies applied by adolescents, they categorized general negotiation strategies in this population as cognitive strategies and behavioral strategies. Most strategies were behavioral, such as time modification, skills acquisition, changing interpersonal relations, finances improvement, using physical therapy, and changing leisure aspirations. Their findings suggest subsequent research to shed light on leisure constraints negotiation, which requires further examination and investigation of the relationships between the encountered constraints and adopted strategies.

Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey (1993) further emphasized the notion of negotiation in leisure constraints and developed a flow-diagram model (see Figure 1), which explains how three types of constraints influence preferences and participation. As well, the model describes the relationships among preferences, motivations, constraints and participation negotiation; and addresses the operation of negotiation. Building on their previous model (1991), which was very simple, Jackson and his colleagues considered the role of motivations or attractions and how they influence leisure

preferences and the level of participation. In their new model, motivations or attractions can influence preferences, negotiation, and participation directly, just like the three types of constraints working in the same process. It is stated that leisure participation is the product of a balance between constraints and motivations. “Both the initiation and outcome of the negotiation process are dependent on the relative strength of, and interactions between, constraints on participating in an activity and motivations for such participation” (p. 9).

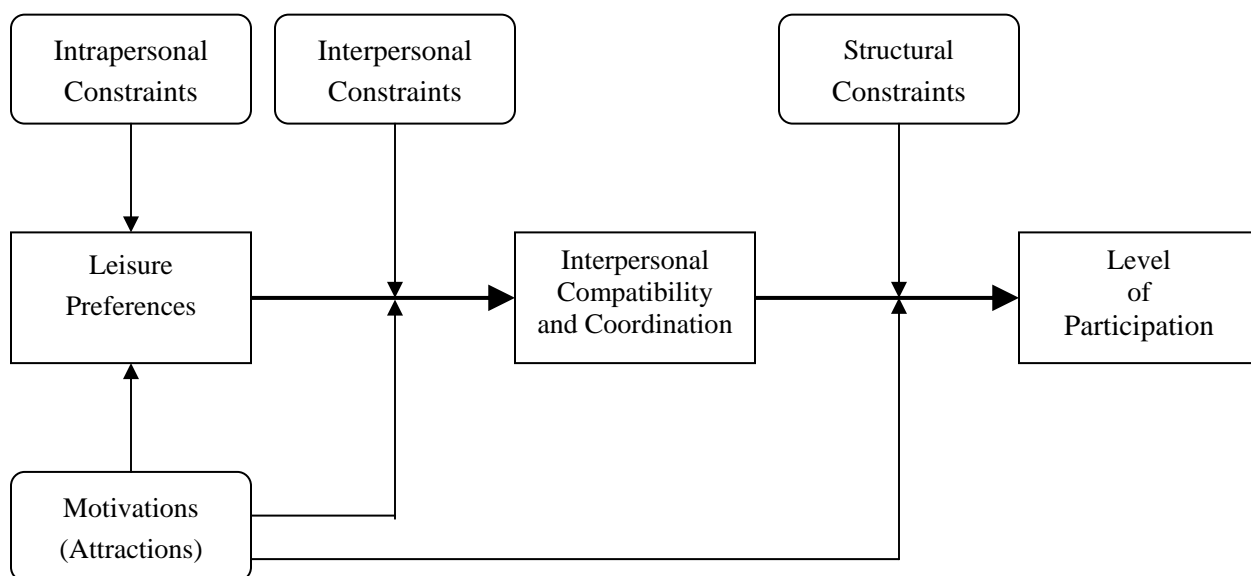


Figure 1. Leisure participation as the product of a balance between constraints and motivations (Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey, 1993, p. 9).

Jackson and his colleagues (1993, p. 8) also subdivided people into three categories according to their responses to constraints:

- (1) people who do not participate in their desired activity (reactive response);
- (2) people who, despite experiencing a constraint, do not reduce or otherwise

change their participation at all (successful proactive response); and (3) people who participate but in an altered manner (partly successful proactive response).

In their view, proactive responders (the second and third categories) have successfully negotiated the constraints they faced. Furthermore, more research has followed focusing on different populations within different contexts to explore how constraints and negotiation influence leisure behavior based on the flow-diagram model and the constraint negotiation propositions developed by Jackson et al. (1993). Hubbard and Mannell (2001) proposed and tested four competing models (independence model, negotiation-buffer model, constraint-effects-mitigation model, and perceived-constraint-reduction model) in their recent research to investigate the interrelations among motivation, constraints, negotiation, and participation. According to the results, the constraint-effect-mitigation model (see Figure 2) clarifies the role of negotiation in the constraint negotiation process and the interaction among those factors in the model. It is hypothesized that constraint and negotiation, respectively, have negative and positive influence on participation directly and separately, and they also have a direct relation between them. It is supposed that constraints do not always relate to participation strongly and directly, but trigger negotiation strategies to reduce the negative effects of constraints directly and positively, even though it might reduce the participation level or the performance. Negotiation resources can modify the negative impact caused by constraints and facilitate leisure participation. It is also clear in this

model that motivation has both direct and indirect positive impact on participation and is an important factor as it can encourage people to apply more negotiation strategies in order to maintain and fulfill leisure participation.

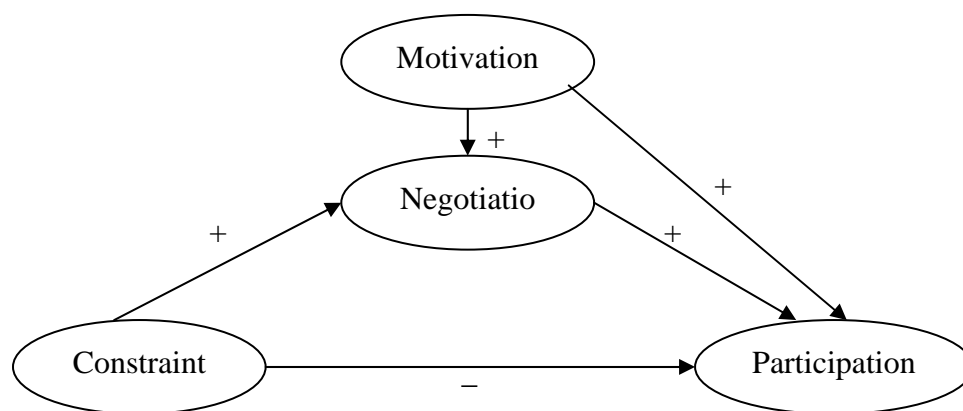


Figure 2. Constraint-Effects-Mitigation Model (Hubbard and Mannell, 2001, p. 148)

Research to date has recognized that constraints do not necessarily lead to nonparticipation because people can use negotiation resources and employ negotiation strategies to overcome constraints and pursue their leisure fulfillment (Li & Stodolska, 2007). As mentioned above, Jackson and Rucks (1995) conducted a study to explore the encountered constraints and negotiation strategies of high-school students. The result confirms the proposition of Jackson et al. (1993) that some people negotiate constraints to participate in leisure no matter what constraints they experience. For example, high school students modified their use of time when they faced schedule problems; they did practice or took lessons when they were lacking skills; they also tried to change their interpersonal relations and improve finances to achieve their leisure participation. Jackson and Rucks insist that “constraints on leisure should not be viewed as necessarily

insurmountable obstacles to participation” (p. 85). In their study, Samdahl and Jekubovich (1997) depicted that people are not passive in their lives but creative for leisure participation. For instance, people change their working schedules and routines to achieve their leisure goals; they coordinate time with others to participate in leisure; they adjust their activities to being together with their partners; they were also found to share leisure with others instead of engaging in private participation. The result of that research indicates that people actively interact in their leisure activities and overcome those intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints by using different negotiation strategies. However, in recent research on leisure constraints and negotiation of Chinese international students, Li and Stodolska (2007) found that when students perceived leisure constraints in their lives, most of them modified their leisure rather than their non-leisure to accommodate the needs for leisure at both behavioral and cognitive levels.

However, the theory of leisure constraints is developed based on an assumption that leisure is always good for everyone and it plays a positive role in people’s everyday life no matter how much leisure they have. Therefore maintaining or increasing leisure is seen to be good for everyone, that is, of value. As Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey (1993) described, “people who, despite experiencing a constraint, do not reduce or otherwise change their participation at all” (p. 8) as ‘successful’: people cannot have success in leisure if they give up because of constraints. It seems that the theory assumes that it is positive to encourage people to achieve leisure participation in any case. But the fact is that this assumption may not always hold in some contexts. It may be maladaptive to

manage constraints. For example, leisure participation may not be positive if a student skips classes to achieve his or her leisure participation.

In Chinese culture, Chinese people have been encouraged to think that work is the most important thing in their lives. As a result, Chinese people have been work oriented throughout time. There are some famous old sayings in Chinese showing the importance of hard work and the insignificance of recreation or leisure, e.g., “Achievements are reached by hard work rather than recreation”, which means that success is always based on hard work but wasting time in having fun must lead to failure; “One will lose ambition while being immersed in interests”, which means people who are immersed in seeking pleasure will sap their enthusiasm to achieve success. Although these phrases have historical limitations, they have become a part of the Chinese value system. People use these phrases to educate their children to remember the importance of work and remind them to work harder and harder. Chinese people have started to realize the value of leisure due to dramatically different perspectives arising from recent economic developments and western influence, but the extension and demands of leisure in their lives are still limited. Chinese people may not feel frustrated if they lose the chance of having leisure in their lives because the achievements from work make them much more satisfied. When leisure researchers use leisure constraints theory to study Chinese people’s leisure experience, they have to keep this cultural factor in their minds.

As revealed in Dong and Chick’s (2005) study of culture constraints on leisure in a cross-cultural context, culture was found to be an important constraint factor in leisure

research in addition to the three typical leisure constraints that were defined earlier. In their study, the informants not only expressed the three leisure constraints in their leisure experiences but also showed how culture or tradition influenced their leisure participation or nonparticipation. The result verified that culture can both prescribe and proscribe intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors in leisure, and even influence some structural constraints. They even worked out a new “Refined Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints” (p. 4), which added culture as a factor and put it on the top of intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, based on Crawford, Jackson and Godbey’s (1991) hierarchical model of leisure constraints. Thus, culture’s influence must be considered in the research of leisure constraints, especially in a cross-cultural or multicultural context.

A Different View of Leisure Constraints

According to Shogan (2002), leisure constraints do not always mean preventing or limiting leisure participation. In characterizing leisure constraints based on Foucault’s social constraints theory (Foucault, 1980), constraints are not considered as restrictions, as they are in most research on leisure constraints, but are also enabling in leisure activities. Constraints can positively influence participation. In ecological theory, these might be referred to as ‘affordances’, factors that ‘afford’ or facilitate and encourage certain behaviors (Kleiber, Wade, & Loucks-Atkinson, 2005). Shogan explicated the enabling effects of constraints by analyzing constraints of structure, constraints of skills, and constraints of identity. Structural constraints, such as the rules of games, which

include prescriptive, proscriptive, and descriptive constraints, can be enabling of certain kinds of participation. Prescriptive constraints create the experiences for participants to engage although they might eliminate some actions. Proscriptive constraints may also limit some actions, but they ensure other actions to be possible. Descriptive constraints are those restricting factors related to physical boundaries and social context and they also enable some leisure experiences while prohibiting other participation opportunities. For example, a prescriptive constraint in one activity such as soccer may allow for 11 participants on each 'side', while the same constraint in badminton may facilitate the participation of only two people. In informal sport activities such constraints can be 'negotiated' by a group of people who want to participate in the sport through increasing or decreasing the number of people per team, or by introducing more balls to facilitate the inclusion of more people.

In skill constraints, participants may acquire skills for leisure pursuits by undergoing special and temporary constraints, which control time, space, and movement. Skilled participants always accept constraints that can ensure the harmony between "the parts of the body to be used and the object to be manipulated" (Shogan, 2002, p. 34), such as riders with their bicycles, guitar players with their guitars; or even runners who articulate with a running surface. Regarding identity constraints, gender, race, class, age and disability related constraints are not completely associated with restricting leisure participation because sometimes they also provide chances for people to engage in leisure by accepting those temporal constraints. For example, people who have the same

cultural background or share the same gender may have the same interest in participating in a leisure activity; their category of identification is also produced by constraints that restrict the participation of the same identity group. Thus, it is not reasonable to ensure leisure participation by merely removing these constraints but by replacing with enabling constraints to make participation possible.

Theoretical differences in the understanding of 'constraints' and 'negotiation' by leisure researchers, as evidenced by the theorists above, provide richness to our understanding of the factors that can enable or restrict individuals' leisure choices, and may help practice by furthering our understanding of how individuals negotiate their leisure experiences. This study will use these theoretical positions to interpret the conversations undertaken with Chinese International students.

CHAPTER III: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature provides considerable insight into the situation of Chinese international students in their leisure and the influence of Chinese culture on leisure preferences and participation. In this thesis, the review focuses on three identifiable strands in the literature: international students and their leisure in Canada; Chinese culture and leisure; and leisure participation of Chinese international students in North America.

International Students and Their Leisure in Canada

Canada has been an ideal destination for study in the world (Statistics Canada [SC], 1996). Every year, more than 130,000 international students come to Canada (CIC, 2008) for international education. They bring both cultural and financial benefits to this country though their status is temporary (SC, 1996). Their influence often extends for a long period even after their graduation and it also can enhance the connection between Canada and their own countries. Although international students are enrolled in all levels of education institutions, most of them are in universities and colleges. Thus, international students form a substantial population in Canadian universities.

In terms of their importance in Canadian society, more attention is paid to their recruitment, opportunities for promotion, and service delivery (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], 2002). The federal government has issued many new policies to attract more international students. For example, it has allowed full-time international students to work part-time off-campus during the school term and work

full-time during holidays. It has set up an immigration application approach – the Canadian Experience Class – for graduated international students and foreign workers. In the universities, international students can get academic and non-academic information easily, but most of the non-academic information is about housing, banking, and other daily living issues. Only limited leisure opportunities are offered to international students and these are rarely marketed particularly for them. Students have the chance to access leisure services, but the service providers may not have taken their unique cultures into account when they design and promote the services. Therefore, international students may face constraints in participating in leisure activities that are different from those they had in their countries of origin.

Little research has been done on the Chinese minority group in Canada. Some research exists on Asian international students, which mostly relates to their education and academic performance in the U. S. (as cited in Li & Stodolska, 2007, p. 112). This may be useful in the research about Chinese international students in Canada. According to the education literature in the U. S., Asian international students are more highly motivated for academic achievement and success in their studies than American students on average. Because of cultural differences and traditional values, Asian international students prefer to seek emotional support for psychological problems from those who share their background, but avoid using professional counseling services on campus (Heggins & Jackson, 2003). They usually participate in social activities within their own cultures, speaking their own languages, and celebrating their own festivals. They also

have more connection to other Asian communities or international students to share experiences. They have positive attitudes even though they sometimes face difficulties or barriers. As a rapidly growing minority in Canada, international students' voices should be heard in relation to their leisure experiences. Research on their leisure will improve our understanding of their experiences and needs in Canada.

Chinese Culture and Leisure

When we discuss leisure behavior of Chinese international students, it is necessary to review the influence of Chinese culture on leisure. China is an old and diverse country, geographically and culturally (Wang, 2005). Historically speaking, leisure is a very important component of traditional Chinese culture, closely related to its philosophy, aesthetics, literature, arts, and practices in health and wellness (Gong, 1998). Liu (et al., 2008) explored the meaning of leisure from a Chinese perspective by analyzing the etymological origin of leisure in China and the influence of Taoism and Confucianism on Chinese leisure. Their exploration indicates that the conception of leisure existed 5,000 years ago in China and has played an important role in Chinese culture. Leisure to Chinese is strongly related to nature because of the influence of the two major and significant philosophy schools – Taoism and Confucianism, which both highly valued leisure and promoted leisurely lifestyle. They also insisted that “leisure is a concern with no cultural boundaries” (p. 488); however, the ideas or meaning of leisure may be different cross-culturally in different contexts.

Wang and Stringer (2000) discussed how Taoism is an essential part of Chinese

culture, and how it strongly influences Chinese people's lives, including their involvement in leisure. According to their studies, Taoism, as the native original religion of China (Thompson, 1996), is a valuable part of Chinese culture that guides and governs people's behavior, including their leisure participation. Taoism emphasizes the harmony between nature and the human body, and requires that people concentrate on inner spiritual matters and put aside concerns with external rewards, such as money, fame and power. The influence of Taoist principles and practices is observable in their close connection to nature, holistic wellness, traditional and martial arts, literature, painting, poetry, cultural celebrations, and tourism.

Yu and Berryman (1996) summarized four characteristics of leisure in traditional Chinese society. First, little strenuous physical exertion is included in recreation for the Chinese. They usually prefer passive activities rather than those that are physically active, and are typically the spectators, but not the participants, in leisure activities. For example, they enjoy spending tranquil moments outdoors and appreciating the surrounding beauty of nature rather than taking part in hiking, rock climbing, or canoeing as Canadians or Western people typically do (Wang & Stringer, 2000). Second, Chinese people are more work-oriented. They spend more time on their work rather than on recreation. Third, the Chinese are less involved in outdoor recreation. Most of them enjoy reading, watching television, or talking to friends at home, but not going outside with families (Wang & Stringer, 2000). Fourth, leisure activities for Chinese people are more individualistic and solitary. Team work is not usually involved in Chinese leisure activities. All of these

characteristics are impacted by Taoism and shape Chinese leisure styles and preferences. Even though the influence of Taoism is profound and lasting, leisure to individuals may be negotiated in various ways.

However, the meaning of leisure for the Chinese is not totally different from that for Canadians or North Americans. Walker and Wang (2009) examined the meanings of leisure for Chinese/Canadians in their recent cross-cultural study. They compared the results with previous research (Shaw, 1984), which focused on the meaning of leisure for Euro-North Americans. The results reveal that meanings to Chinese people are both different from and similar to European North Americans. Their research discovered both “...evolutionary-based similarities and culturally-based differences in leisure meanings” (p. 15). This result also suggests that leisure is universal (Chick, 1998) and different people share the same meanings of leisure but with distinct cultural influences. Therefore, culture is an important factor in cross-cultural leisure research, which is also applicable in this study.

Leisure Participation of Chinese International Students in North America

Although Chinese students make up the largest group among international students in Canada, little attention has been paid by leisure researchers to their status and leisure experiences. Li and Stodolska (2006; 2007) investigated leisure experiences of Chinese graduate students in the United States. They conducted two qualitative studies: the first identified the relationship between transnational status and leisure experiences of Chinese international students; the second examined the meaning of leisure constraints to

Chinese students and the negotiation strategies they applied. In their first study (2006), the theory of transnationalism, which supposes that transmigrants maintain economic, political, and cultural connections to their countries of origin, was employed as the theoretical framework. Findings from that study show that Chinese students tend to find meaning in leisure through relaxation and learning. The research indicates that Chinese students do perceive the importance of leisure in their lives, but their leisure participation or performance is constrained by their temporary status, which obligates them to work and study hard but give up some leisure opportunities. Their leisure experience is also impacted by their emotional status and legal status that require them to make some changes to their leisure activities. For example, some of the students are not satisfied with their leisure practices or even the quality of their life because of time constraints and work-related pressures. They all miss colorful leisure activities in their home country but feel it is difficult to enjoy similar activities in the U. S. The transnational status of Chinese international students also restricts their travel behavior even for their trip back to China for family visiting. They usually choose places where their family members, friends, or school alumni resided as their travel destinations within the U. S. or invite their family members and friends from China to the U. S. because of visa restrictions.

In the other study (Li & Stodolska, 2007), the results show that Chinese students have different attitudes toward leisure in general and leisure in their everyday lives. They appreciate the importance of leisure but cannot afford leisure as free time activities or enjoy leisure when they study abroad. Chinese students experience structural,

intrapersonal, and interpersonal constraints in their leisure activities, the most prominent ones of which are lack of time, language barriers and cultural differences, lack of friends, and feelings of lack of entitlement to pursue leisure. For example, a lot of students in the U.S. indicated “lack of time” for leisure but give priority to their study and work. They are constrained in participating in leisure activities with mainstream Americans because of language and cultural barriers; limited social networks make them have fewer chances to find partners to share in leisure activities. Most of the students do not view leisure as the right thing to do in the current situation even though they all regard leisure as valuable. They feel they lose entitlement to leisure in their lives as students. However, they still adopt some negotiation strategies to overcome those constraints to construct their own leisure experiences. At the behavioral level, they save time for simple leisure activities; transform ordinary activities such as shopping and doing laundry into relaxation time; and connect with friends and families from their home culture to get emotional support. At the cognitive level, they believe that the current situation in their life is only temporary and they choose to focus on the future when they will have more leisure opportunities. Thus, the leisure experience of Chinese international students is related to their temporary status and their culture. Chinese students in Canada may share the same experiences with those in the U. S., but research on this group will offer a chance for them to offer their options and may show us a different picture of their leisure lives.

Besides research on Chinese international students in the U.S., some research on

cross-cultural comparisons of culture and leisure constraints between Canadian students and students from mainland China has been done by Walker and his colleagues (Jackson & Walker, 2006; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2008) in Canada. In the study of culture and leisure constraints, Chinese students were found to be more intrapersonally and interpersonally constrained, but Canadian students were more structurally constrained in leisure. For example, most Chinese students engaged in leisure by themselves so their needs for autonomy or personal choice become more constrained than those who engaged in leisure for social reasons; while Canadian students were more active in social recreation activities, making them more constrained by structural constraints in leisure.

The results support the applicability of the hierarchical leisure constraints model in both cultures, which has important implications for cross-cultural research in the future. Both Chinese and Canadian students were reported to experience intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints in their leisure; all three types of constraints have impacts on leisure participation but influence the result differently; negotiation is applied during this process towards the achievement of participation in leisure. This study supported the validity of the hierarchical leisure constraints model on the basis of cross-cultural comparative research as modified by Chick and Dong (2003). They concluded that culture is also a constraint category in the model and it is necessary to refine the constraint categories based on cross-cultural research because constraint categories differ in different societies. In Jackson and Walker's (2006) comparative

cross-cultural study, it was found that passive leisure activities were most frequent and enjoyable for 84% of mainland Chinese university students whereas active leisure activities were most enjoyable for 64% of Canadian students. Although these studies focused on students from mainland China, their cultural influence on leisure can enlighten research on Chinese international students in Canada.

CHAPTER IV: SELF-REFLECTION

As a Chinese international student, I have had experience of constraints to leisure as well. On reflection I realize that I have encountered all intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural constraints, and culture related constraints in my leisure participation. To overcome those constraints, I have also applied some negotiation strategies in leisure participation.

I was only interested in quiet activities, such as visiting galleries and museums and those with low strenuous physical exertion because I was not very physically active even when I was in China and I was not encouraged to be active in my life. The motivation of my leisure participation was to be relaxed and to enjoy my free time. I would feel satisfied and comfortable if I could get rid of the stress in my life and escape the daily routine but try some new things in leisure. I preferred jogging in the evening but not playing tennis or bicycling. I enjoyed fishing beside the river but not hiking on a trail in summer. I liked watching free ballet in the park but not to dance in a club. After years of living in Canada, because of the influence of local lifestyle and some concerns of health, I tried to be more active in my life. I spent more time in the gym and worked out hard to raise a sweat. However, I never worried about my health in the past, when I was in my twenties. I did agree that physical activities were important but never spent a lot of time on them. When I started my graduate studies in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, I learnt why people should be physically active and what benefits we could get from being active in our lives. People around me, not matter what

ages they were, all tried to be active and get involved in any kinds of physical activities. My schoolmates went to the gym everyday and my friends who were in their sixties rode bicycles in summer for exercise. I realized the importance of being physically active when I get older, especially after I had a child. I paid more attention to my health and my family's health as well. Even though it was hard to get much time for my own exercise, I tried to get the whole family involved. We went to walk for at least half an hour after dinner except in winter, we went to the swimming pool for family fun once a week, and we went to the parks in summer to fly a kite and play on the grounds with our child.

As interpersonal constraints, I experienced the lack of partners for leisure participation since I was not comfortable to participate in leisure on my own. At first I only knew a couple of students who were from China, so I spent most of my free time with my Chinese friends. I always asked my friends to participate in activities with me. For example, we went to visit the tourist spots in the city and sometimes went jogging after dinners together. However, sometimes my friends and I had different schedules. As a result, I missed opportunities when my friends were not available or could not try something that attracted me if my friends had no interest. For instance, I had no chance to join a yoga club even though I was interested in it very much because I did not find someone to go with me. My participation in leisure was always influenced by others. After the first year, my network was expanded by knowing more people so I had more options when I needed to find someone to participate in leisure together. I also tried to set up a schedule in advance to make it amenable for both of my friends and myself. If I still

faced the barriers of schedule conflict, I would do something else instead of doing the same thing.

Regarding structural constraints, I had limited choices in leisure because of economic status, transportation, time, and the weather. I had no income for the first year and my main financial source was from my parents so I tried to save money but not spend it on anything for recreation. In the first year, I did not purchase a gym membership because of the expense, even though my roommate asked me to go to the gym for some physical activities or sports. I usually bought used sports equipment when it was necessary, e.g., badminton rackets. Instead of programs with cost, watching online movies, shopping in grocery stores, visiting free recreational sites, e.g., The Forks, and cooking were my preferred leisure activities. I went to shopping malls, only for fun but not to spend money, with my friends who shared the same situation as me. I participated in a winter camp for a very low cost on Christmas holidays by saving money for a couple of months. My friends and I went to the church for free activities and met other international students from different countries.

In the second year and after that, my financial situation improved because I had some income from a part-time job. I bought a gym membership and went there once to twice a week. I tried squash, swimming, jogging, riding on the stationary bicycle, weight training, and playing badminton in the gym, but kept jogging, swimming, riding bicycles and playing badminton after those attempts. The reason was because I did not participate in professional training for learning the skills of squash and weight training. I also

wanted to try aerobic exercise in the gym but never did it because of time conflict. I did not own a car so I could not access the recreational sites unless there was public transportation or my friends gave me a ride. For example, I went to the grocery stores and visited some tourist spots in the downtown area by bus but could go fishing at Lockport only when my friends gave me a ride. In order to learn more about local life and cultures, I also participated in some recreational events organized by International Centre for Students (ICS) on campus since they always offer rides for students. Due to time constraints, when I was busy with my studies, I had to give up some opportunities to participate in leisure. I also had to change my leisure preferences and my leisure participation became more family orientated after I had a child. I had to adjust my schedule to ensure adequate time for housework and I spent most of my free time looking after my child and participated in more family activities, such as going to children's museums and children's festivals instead of going to watch movies or camp in summer. My leisure was constrained by weather as well, especially in winter. I had fewer choices for outdoor recreation in winter because of the extreme cold in Winnipeg but I used some indoor physical activities to keep active. For example, I went to run up and down the stairs in the apartment for exercises; I also did some stretches at home; sometimes I went to skate with my family for fun.

On reflection I feel that I had more structural constraints than intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints to leisure, which is different from the results of Walker and his colleagues' cross-cultural leisure research (Jackson & Walker, 2006; Walker, Jackson &

Deng, 2007; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2008). In their studies, Chinese students from mainland China encountered more intrapersonal and intrapersonal constraints but Canadian students experienced more structural constraints in their leisure. One reason for the difference may be because of my transnational status (Li & Stodolska, 2006) since I was an international student from China but not a local student in China. My life in Canada was impacted by both societies. As my status was temporary and study was my main commitment for my stay in Canada, I experienced more structural constraints in leisure, such as financial status, lack of time, and transportation, similar to the participants in Li and Stodolska's (2006; 2007) studies.

In terms of the influence of culture on leisure, my experience also demonstrates that culture is an important factor of constraint to leisure, just as Chick and Dong (2005) stated in their article. Culture is considered as a constraint to leisure in cross-cultural research since people from different countries found that their leisure participation or nonparticipation was proscribed or prescribed by their cultures. In the case of the researcher, I preferred passive leisure activities and quiet leisure experience because of Chinese culture's impact as discussed in my review of literature. I was not interested in watching those intense sport games, which are popular in North America, such as hockey and football, but preferred peaceful activities, such as ballet and fishing or other games popular in China. I usually celebrated Chinese holidays with friends and family in Canada by having parties and traditional food but I did not care much about local holidays after my first experiences with them. I sacrificed my leisure time for the family

because a woman is expected to do so in my culture. Thus, we can guess that Chinese international students in Canada encounter all three kinds of constraints to leisure, as stated in the current leisure constraints theory, and the cultural constraints as well.

CHAPTER V: RESEARCH METHODS

Research Questions

The three main research questions that have been examined in this study are:

1. What are the leisure activities of Chinese international students in Winnipeg, Manitoba?
2. What constraints to leisure do Chinese international students face?
3. What negotiation strategies do Chinese international students apply in their leisure participation?

Paradigm

Positivism and interpretive paradigms are two dominant paradigms that provide a basis for an approach to social and leisure science research (Henderson, 2006). An interpretive paradigm enables people to express how they define the world from their perspectives and the meanings of their behaviors, while positivism seeks facts or causes of social phenomena with the assumption that truth can be obtained objectively (Henderson, 2006). “The assumptions of the interpretive paradigm are that meanings are important, social behavior can best be understood in its natural environment, reality is the meaning attributed to experiences, and social reality is not the same for all people” (Bullock, 1983 as cited in Henderson, 2006, p. 12). To interpretivist researchers, the meanings that people attach to an event or object are very important (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Numbers and statistics do not show people’s thoughts, but words can provide sufficient and detailed information in interpretive research. Using this approach, “interpretivist researchers try to sort through the experiences of different people as

interpreted through the interviewees' own cultural lenses and then weigh different versions to put together a single explanation" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30).

Li and Stodolska (2006; 2007) in their studies of Chinese international students' leisure experiences in the U. S., which share similar contexts and purposes with the current study, applied an interpretive paradigm. They used qualitative inquiry in which they asked questions about the students' everyday lives, their leisure and obstacles to leisure. They encouraged their participants to talk freely about their everyday leisure experiences and how they dealt with problems participating in leisure. They conducted 16 interviews with Chinese graduate students in an American university to explore their leisure experiences. They got detailed responses and rich information from the students by employing this paradigm. On the other hand, Walker and his colleagues (Jackson & Walker, 2006; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2008) adopted quantitative research methods representing the positivist paradigm. One purpose of their research was to compare the leisure constraints of Chinese students with those of Canadian students in terms of cultural influences on leisure. Thus, while both approaches may be fruitful, an interpretive paradigm is certainly an appropriate research approach to examine the meanings that Chinese international students attach to leisure activities and their leisure experiences.

Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research as a naturalistic approach to reality that empowers the researchers to make the world visible by using interpretive

and material practices. Qualitative approaches “use the natural environment, focus on determining the meaning attached to phenomena, acknowledge the researcher as the instrument in interaction with the phenomena being studied, and use words as the primary symbols for generating grounded theory specific to the context in which the research occurs” (Henderson, 2006, p. 13). Furthermore, qualitative approaches use ‘rich’ descriptions to explain experiences and uncover the complexities of social life (Henderson, 2006), and can help to achieve the following goals in social science research: gain a deeper understanding of the meanings that people attach to their behaviors, events, situations, and experiences; develop a full understanding of the particular context within which the participants act; and identify and explain unanticipated phenomena and influences on the process of the events and actions (Maxwell, 2005). In the current research, a qualitative approach is selected as an appropriate way to examine the perspectives and experiences of Chinese international students in Canada because this is a minority group in Canadian society and little research has been done on their leisure experiences. We hope to gain a better understanding of the enabling and constraining factors of leisure participation, and the negotiation strategies adopted to deal with them.

While most standard qualitative approaches are either atheoretical or designed to build theory, some qualitative researchers begin with a theoretical perspective that is used to ‘shape’ the interview guide and the subsequent analysis of the data (for an example see Watkinson, Dwyer & Nielsen, 2005). In this study, because much work has been done by others using a theory of leisure constraints and negotiations, a theoretical approach

underlies the qualitative work. The interview guide, the data analysis and the discussion are each organized around, and designed to use, this theoretical approach to gain an understanding of the leisure preferences and constraints in this population. The study therefore expands our understanding of this phenomenon and at the same time examines 'the fit' of this theory to the everyday experiences of international students. Put differently, the study 'tests' the constructs of leisure constraints theory to see if these are helpful in explaining the lived experience of these students.

Participant Selection

It is important for a researcher to identify appropriate participants in the process of recruitment. Morse (1994) describes "a good participant [as] one who has the knowledge and experience the research requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study" (p. 228). By their very nature, university students are expected to be articulate and reflective. The participants in this study were selected according to the following criteria: they had to be current registered international students in the University of Manitoba from both undergraduate and graduate programs; they had to self-identify as Chinese from mainland China (not including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao because the statistics always show them separately) and were not immigrants or permanent residents in Canada. I conducted the study at the University of Manitoba which has 27,747 students (March 2011), including 2,354 international students constituting 8.5% of student body (Office of Institutional Analysis [OIA], 2011). Among those international students (not including

students from English programs, such as the English Language Centre and the Intensive English Program), 950 are from China, accounting for 40% of the international student body and ranking as the largest of international student groups. I accessed the participants by posting recruitment posters in the International Centre for Students (ICS) in the University of Manitoba, University Centre on campus, and posted a poster in a Bulletin Board System (BBS), which is for local Chinese students. ICS provides support to international students by offering various services and programs. Chinese international students, as the largest group of international students, are a main service target and visit ICS very often.

Purposeful sampling, a sampling approach showing the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods (Patton, 2002), was employed in this research. The purposeful selection of a small sample is undertaken to obtain a set of information-rich cases for in-depth analysis (Patton, 2002). The sample size depends on the type of research questions, material and time as well as the number of researchers (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002), but usually a small number of participants is selected because qualitative research is designed to explore the deep meanings of people's behaviors and get the rich description of the phenomena experienced by participants (Jackson, 2003). Although no rigid rules exist for the sample size in qualitative research, six to eight data units are often required in most research when the sample consists of a homogeneous group (Kuzel, 1999). Wolcott (1994) insists that in qualitative research, a large sample may impact the research since it can lack the depth and richness of a smaller sample.

Therefore, eight students (four males and four females) who met the recruitment criteria and had the interest to participate in the study were chosen as interviewees. After the posters were posted for two weeks, only two students who met the criteria contacted me directly to show their interest in the interview. When the two students finished their interviews, they were asked to check with their friends, who might be potential interviewees, about their interest. Snowball sampling then was used at this stage to recruit more students into the research.

Snowball sampling is an approach to look for information-rich participants by asking the suitable people to recommend other potential participants (Patton, 2002). By using this approach, the other six students were gathered for interviews during the next two months. The interviewed students were from different faculties in the University of Manitoba; University 1, Economics, City Planning, Engineering, Animal Science, and Architecture; five of them were from undergraduate programs, three were females and two were males; three of them were from graduate programs, one was female and two were males. The length of their stay in Canada ranged from one year to three years. Their ages ranged from 21 to 30 and they were all single. One of the students lived alone and others all shared an apartment with roommates or a girl or boyfriend. When the interviews were conducted, five of the interviewees possessed gym memberships on campus but three (one male and two females) did not obtain a membership for different reasons.

Data Collection

The interview is the most popular form of data collection in qualitative research (Barbour, 2008) and acted as the principal method of data collection for this study. This method provides a space for the participants to tell their own stories and gives the researcher a chance to learn the views of the participants and probe for further information. The qualitative interview “is a uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects’ everyday world. Interviews allow the subjects to convey to others their situation from their own perspective and in their own words” (Kvale, 1996, p. 70). Compared with other qualitative research methods, the interview is more like a “conversation with a purpose” (Kahn & Cannel, 1957, p. 149), but the objectives and the roles of researchers and participants in the interview are very different from ordinary conversation (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003).

In-depth interviews as one of the main methods of data collection are mostly employed in qualitative research (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). In the current study, qualitative data was collected using open-ended, in-depth interviews, which is a traditional style of unstructured interview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) but the question guide was theoretically driven. Compared with structured interviews, it has a flexible structure that allows the researcher to explore and probe sufficient information from the interviewee using open-ended questions. It is also naturally interactive and generates material in the communication between the researcher and the interviewee. Furthermore, it also provides the researcher a chance to use probe methods and techniques to explore

for deeper and fuller understanding and explanation from the interviewee to get insight into their meaning. New knowledge may be created during the interview process, which makes it distinct from a quantitative research method.

For the success of interviews, interviewers should have good listening skills, be skilled in personal interaction, question framing and gentle probing (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Other strategies to reduce potential weaknesses include establishing good rapport between the researcher and participants, and using different methods to develop validity, such as “member checking” and “triangulation” (Richards, 2005). Member checking means that the data from the interviews is checked by members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained; triangulation is referred to as a “method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data” (O’Donoghue & Punch, 2003, p. 78). In this study, the interview transcripts were all sent to the interviewees for review to increase the reliability and credibility of data, as well as the accuracy. Most of the interviewees were fine with the transcripts but two of them sent back their comments after checking. The final transcripts were revised based on feedback and comments from participants.

An interview guide, a basic approach for collecting data in open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990), was employed in the current study in order to ensure interview efficiency, facilitate a more systematic and comprehensive approach to the exploration and analysis, and keep the conversation between the two parties focused on the topics that need to be covered (Hoepfl, 1997). “An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be

explored in the course of an interview” (Patton, 1990, p. 283). No predetermined responses are supposed, though it aims to ensure that each participant responds to the same questions, thus facilitating the cross-comparison of data (Hoepfl, 1997). The interview guide leads all participants to answer the same set of questions and makes the responses more comparable with one another. Interview guides can be modified during the interview because the interviewer has the freedom to probe or explore in more depth within the range of the guide (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The important questions may be emphasized and the less useful ones may be removed. For the interview guide (see Appendix C) in this study, there was a need to begin with a clarification of terms, such as ‘leisure’, ‘recreation’, ‘sport’, etc., and the domain of activities that are understood to be referred by these words. The first question and its probes were designed to establish the vocabulary that was used and understood by the interviewer and the interviewees. Following that, questions were included to elicit discussion of leisure choices, barriers, and negotiation strategies. Attempts were made to discuss frequently-chosen activities or experiences as well as other possible activities or experiences that were preferred but not engaged in. The interviewer adopted as many strategies as needed to elicit a full discussion of the barriers that were faced whether they were overcome or not.

However, interviewing has its limitations (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For example, the interviewer may not get enough or accurate information from the interviewees because of the interaction and cooperation between the interviewer and participants as well as the personal skills of the interviewer. In contrast to quantitative

research, the qualitative researcher “is the instrument” (Patton, 2002, p.14). The personal and professional skills of the interviewer can determine the quality of the data obtained (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). In order to address this, I conducted two pilot interviews to prepare myself for it. The data from the pilot interviews was analyzed to find out the shortcomings of the interview questions and the skills of myself. Some of the interview questions were adjusted and two more questions with probes were added to the question guide after the pilot interviews to ensure that the research goals would be reached.

Seven interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. One student refused to be recorded so field notes were taken to write down the details of the interview. A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews. The advantages of using a digital voice recorder are two: this equipment has the ability to record for a long period of time without interruption, and because it does not require tapes, there is no chance of damaging the quality of sound from rewinding and fast forwarding during transcription. All interview records were downloaded and stored onto my computer after each interview was completed. As this study involved a minority ethnic group as participants, the interview questions were translated into simplified Chinese before the interviews. The interviews were designed to be conducted in English or Chinese (Mandarin) (I can speak both of the two languages) but all interviewees chose to be interviewed in Chinese.

In the transcribing process, I kept the transcripts in Chinese but coded them in

English for further analysis. A research assistant, who was a graduate student in the field of recreation studies and fluent in both languages, was hired during the process of transcribing and coding. The research assistant was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D) before she started to access the interview transcripts to ensure the confidentiality of the data. In order to make sure of the quality and accuracy of data, all of the transcripts and coding were checked by the research assistant before data analysis.

Each interview took place at a time and location of the participant's choosing. All interviews were conducted on campus in various locations, including a catering room, a classroom, Graduate Students' Association (GSA) office, my office, and the student lounge of ICS. Each interview lasted between 60 – 90 minutes, and each participant was interviewed only once. According to the policy of research ethics of the university, each student received the consent form prior to the interview. The Informed Consent Form had been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba (Protocol E2010:069, see Appendix B). In the consent form, the details of the research were explained and the contact information of me and my advisor were provided. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Participants had the right to refuse answering the questions if they did not feel comfortable, and they could cease participation in the study at any time they wanted. All the interviewees agreed to the items listed in the consent form and signed. They also provided their phone numbers and emails to receive the research report about the interpretation of the data. All eight participants finished the

interviews by answering questions and having a discussion with me. Strict confidentiality was maintained. Each participant was identified by a pseudonym and can not be identified personally in the final transcripts and the thesis. The electronic materials were stored in my computer which requires a password. The field notes were stored in a locker at my home. The data is used only for the current study, and the information will be kept in a locked office for a period of five years after publication.

Besides the audio recording, taking field notes is another way to help the researcher record the interviews. It is difficult for the researcher to remember every detail during interviews, but writing field notes can help minimize the loss of data (Morse & Field, 1995). "Fieldnotes are a written account of the things that the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting or reflecting on data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982 as cited in Morse & Field, 1995, p. 112). When the researcher conducts an interview, it is hard to record the physical setting, the ideas popping up in the interviewer's mind, and the nonverbal communication, for example, body language, using only an audio recorder (Morse & Field, 1995). Field notes serve as a necessary supplement to the interview, and thus were used here.

After interviews, each participant had the chance to choose a free gym membership or a wellness program on campus to thank them for their time and contribution to this study. It was also to provide them with a chance to experience some recreation services on campus and keep active in their lives. It could be a good opportunity for the recreation provider at the university to promote their services for

international students and attract more students to participate in recreational and physical activities. Finally, five of them chose a free four-month gym membership, two of them chose a wellness program in the gym, but one of them did not choose any program because he had no time to go. Moreover, all participants received a report of the data and interpretations of the interviews based on their requests to share the findings of the study. It is believed that all the participants benefited from this study by understanding their leisure experiences, discovering the problems and possible negotiation strategies in leisure, and trying out the popular leisure activities on campus.

Data Analysis

The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which is “a systematic method for recording, coding, and analyzing data” (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000, p. 913) was employed in the current study for data analysis. By using the constant comparative method, each piece of data is compared with every other piece of relevant data so that it facilitates the identification of patterns (Morse & Field, 1995). Comparisons are then made across the interviews, and the analysis is considered complete when saturated categories emerge; ‘saturation’ occurs when no new information about the characteristics of a category can be identified. Li and Stodolska (2007) used this technique to analyze the data from the interviews with Chinese graduate students in U. S. universities to study the leisure constraints and negotiation strategies that the students faced in their lives, a study that is similar to the focus of the current study. This study included this kind of analysis but did not seek to discover patterns at

the risk of missing key ideas that are only elicited once. In this way, the ideas that appeared in transcripts even only once, which were categorized as “others”, were listed in the results and analysed to achieve the richness provided by individual interviews.

In the process of data analysis, several steps were applied. The first step was ‘line-by-line coding’ (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 239), which helped indentify the important information for the researcher. Each transcript and the field notes were read carefully line by line and then broken down into different meaning units. Initial codes were labelled according to the meaning of the words, sentences, or paragraphs. After the ‘line-by-line coding’, the codes of the transcripts were listed just beside the original texts and making it easy to refer to the original words. Then the codes were read again and again to group them into different categories.

As the theoretical framework of leisure constraints negotiation (Jackson, 1993) was employed in this study, all the interview questions were designed based on the theory and focused on the three research questions. The framework provides theoretical support for conceptualizing the categories and interpreting the leisure experiences of the students. Thus, in the second step of coding, core categories were generated first according to the research questions: the accessible leisure activities for Chinese students in Canada, the constraints to leisure, and the negotiation strategies they applied in leisure.

All the meaning units were grouped into three core categories based on their similarities – leisure in Canada, constraints to leisure, and negotiation strategies. The meaning units not belonging to the three categories then were classified into other

categories according to the students' descriptions: defining leisure, others, leisure in the future and suggestions for other students.

After identifying the core categories and others, subcategories under the core categories then were identified based on the framework of leisure constraints negotiation. The codes under each core category were analyzed based on their meanings and four types of constraints to leisure (intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural constraints) were labeled as subcategories. The similar meaning units were then categorized into subcategories. In the last step, the subcategories were broken down again and the similar meaning units were classified into different groups under each subcategory. After all the steps of coding and categorizing, all the codes were read again to make sure that no meaning units were missing during this process. As mentioned earlier, the ideas which appeared even once were all identified and listed in the findings of the research.

During the process of coding and categorizing, constant comparison was involved. Each meaning unit was compared with the other one to find out their similarities and differences. Regarding this process, the initial interviews were analysed and codes and concepts were developed. Moreover, writing memos, which are described as "records of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions and directions for further data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110), was another important element of the analysis and helped with the development by reminding the researcher of the need to consider tentative ideas and provisional categories, compare findings, and jot down thoughts on

the research process (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Thus, a journal was used during the whole process of data analysis and the notes in the journal were part of the data in analysis.

In addition, in order to increase the credibility of the data, transcripts were re-read many times to ensure that the meaning of interviews was explored entirely and the interviewees' experiences were represented extensively (Li & Stodolska, 2007). I also asked the research assistant to check the transcripts (in Chinese) and the codes (in English) to make sure of accuracy and integrity between the two. Further revisions and adjustments were made based on the discussion between the assistant and me. When the research report was sent to the participants, they were all asked to review the results of the interviews and provide their feedback if they found anything was misunderstood or missing. However, only one student responded to my email regarding the report. Then I tried to call each student about their feedback and six of them were reached. Most of the students stated that they benefited from the study and some changes happened in their lives. They started to think more about their leisure, including their demands, the quality of their leisure participation, and the possibilities of leisure. They tried to participate in more leisure activities by searching information and accessing more resources available to them. Because of the free gym membership they received from the study, they went to the gym more frequently and knew some new friends there. They were more satisfied about their current leisure participation and became more confident about their leisure in the future.

CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS

Defining Leisure

As leisure is a broad concept and may have different meanings in different cultures, we first discussed the concept and understandings of leisure in the interviews. Of the Chinese students in this study, three thought that leisure means spare time, three thought that it means the state of life and relaxation, one, a female, thought that it means sport including physical activities and recreation, and more than one thought that it means activities not related to study and work. Thus leisure in this study refers to a period of time, a state of relaxation and any activities not related to study and work, which accords with the definitions given by Veblen (1899) and Kelly (1996) as described in Chapter I. All of the students agreed that leisure played a very important role and constituted a big part of their lives. During their stays in Canada, they benefited from leisure in various ways including extending their social networks, keeping fit and healthy, coping with stress, and being refreshed after study.

Leisure in Canada

Among the eight interviewees, five of them obtained memberships to Recreation Services on campus. Going to the gym for exercise and physical activities was a main leisure activity in their daily lives because the gym was convenient for them to access and they had many options there. The activities they participated in include jogging, weight training, playing basketball, playing badminton, and playing table tennis. Only one of them was a member of the badminton club but others played the games with their friends according to their schedules. Some of the students liked going to watch movies in the cinemas but only for famous movies and all of the students watched online movies or TV

dramas at home as their leisure. Other leisure activities they preferred were sleeping for extra hours on weekends, surfing the internet at home, chatting online with their friends in China, dining out with friends for Chinese food (not very often), having dinner or parties with friends on holidays, hanging out in summer (for example, going fishing and having BBQs in parks), skiing in winter, and shopping (sometimes only for fun without spending money). Besides these specific activities, they all expressed that they were trying to acquire relaxation or the state of being free in leisure, for example, through extra hours of sleeping on weekends. They were satisfied with their leisure participation if they could achieve the goal of relaxation.

Compared to the activities the students participated in in China, they did more physical activities and sport in Canada than entertainment and recreation, which played important roles in their lives in China. Most students were students in the high schools or universities before they came to Canada and the main leisure activities for them were dining out with friends, singing in KTVs (Chinese term for Karaoke), shopping, playing soccer or basketball after classes and travelling within the country.

I was in the high school..... I was very busy [in the school] and had little leisure time, but I have more spare time after I came to Canada..... [in China] I could only take a break at lunch time or after school every night..... but I participated in more physical activities here. I liked playing soccer in high school in China but don't play it very often here because most of my friends like playing basketball.

(Guofeng, male, 21-year-old, Interview 7, p. 3)

However, they had limited choices of recreation and entertainment after they came to Canada, because of the high expenses or the quality of the facilities. Shopping and dining

out, or going to KTVs were particularly noted as activities they were no longer able to enjoy.

I liked singing in the KTV in China..... but there are only two KTVs here in Winnipeg and they are both in the restaurants where you have to sing in the dining room and I don't like it because everyone may look at you..... the KTVs here are very expensive and we usually stay there for a whole night to sing songs and have fun so we can't afford it. (Yun, female, 24 year-old, Interview 1, p. 9)

As a result, they had to find other ways to pursue their leisure demands and participation in physical activity became one of the best choices. One student said that he became more physically active in Canada as he went to the gym almost every day and participated in more physical activities. He spent more time on entertainment with his friends in China and the sport facilities in China sometimes were not as good as in Canada, for example the tennis courts.

Constraints to Leisure

All of the students experienced the three types of constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural) to leisure when they studied in the university, as well as the culture related constraints. On average, they mentioned at least ten constraints to leisure. Based on the interviews, the most common constraints they met were *lack of partners*, *high expenses*, *inconvenient transportation*, *poor condition of recreational facilities*, and *cultural differences*. Other constraints that more than half of them met in leisure were weather conditions, limited information resources, the impact of study, conflict of schedules, the availability of recreational facilities, personality, their own laziness, and the influence of others on leisure participation.

Table 1. Constraints to leisure experienced by students and the number of students who experienced the constraints.

Constraints	Number of students experienced (N=8)
Lack of partners	8
high expense	8
Inconvenient transportation	7
Poor condition of recreational facilities	7
Cultural difference	7
Weather	6
Limited information or sources	6
Study load and time conflict for leisure	6
Conflict schedule	5
The availability of the facilities where leisure activities applied	5
Personality (shy, lack of confidence, etc.)	5
Status of laziness	5
Influence of others	5
Limited social networks	4
Safety concerns	4
Less choices of shopping in Canada	3
Personal interests	3
Limited choices of Chinese restaurants in Winnipeg	3
Physical condition (strength): not strong enough; uncomfortable on the air plane	3
Visa issues, e.g., travel to the U.S.	1
Lack of the feeling of belonging	1
Housing problem	1
Skills and experiences	1
Personal status: no plan or doing nothing but sleeping	1

According to characteristics of the three types of leisure constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987), all the constraints experienced by the students are divided into Intrapersonal Constraints, Interpersonal Constraints, and Structural Constraints, as well as

Cultural Constraints.

Intrapersonal Constraints.

Negative impact of personality. One of the big barriers for students in leisure is their personality, or personal characteristics that prevented them from maximizing the opportunities they had. More than half of them mentioned that they were too shy to talk to strangers about playing games together and were hesitant just to do something on their own.

I think that there will be more fun and easier if you learn something with someone you know, including going to classes. You may learn faster if you study and discuss with someone together..... I don't like [making friends]..... I never talked to a stranger on my own initiative, including in classes, they [the students] were White people and local. They would not talk to me first either. I never talked to them if they don't talk to me first so it is hard for me to make friends. (Yun, female, 24-year-old, Interview 1, p. 23)

They felt uncomfortable to play with strangers but preferred to play with their friends or someone they knew. For example, one girl said that she liked skating and she did it a lot in China. But she only went to the skating rink in the university facilities twice and stopped it after that because she felt uncomfortable skating alone.

Lack of confidence. Some of them were not confident enough to pursue their leisure goals. Sometimes they wanted to try or practice something but lacked sufficient confidence to do that. One student liked playing soccer but he did not join a team because he did not feel he had the skill or the confidence to play with the players in the team. Most students stated that they liked staying with Chinese students rather than

communicating with local students or making friends from different countries.

I don't like [talking] to strangers..... I usually stay with my friends, who are my classmates. My social network is not big. Some of my friends like going to the church but I don't [go there]..... because I have no religious belief and I don't want to know too many people..... I also have friends from Arab. I mainly stay with Chinese students but sometimes have dinners (Chinese food) with Arabian students. (Zhe, male, 22-year-old, Interview 8, p.19)

They might lose the chance to learn more about others' leisure and about local opportunities but it is evident that the social-psychological challenge of meeting new people and joining new groups of leisure participants holds students back from participating, despite their interest in the activity itself.

Lack of motivation. Lack of personal motivation could also constrain students' participation in leisure. More than half of the students mentioned that sometimes they just did not want to do anything because they felt lazy and had no motivation to be active. They killed the time sleeping or surfing the internet without any specific purpose. Chen, a 24-year-old undergraduate student in Economics, described her daily life and how she spent her spare time:

..... I go to class after I wake up and come back home for sleeping after school. I have to sleep for 10 hours a day, otherwise I will feel tired..... My favorite things are surfing the internet and sleeping..... (Interview 5, p. 6)

Interpersonal Constraints.

Lack of partners. Every student mentioned having trouble finding partners to participate in leisure together. For example, some of the students liked playing table

tennis or tennis, but they could not do it without a partner.

I have never played [table-tennis in the gym]..... not because of the quality of the tables but I couldn't find a partner [to play with me] because I always went there alone..... I saw someone were playing there but I didn't have a bat with me; even though I had a bat, I wouldn't ask to play with them together because I didn't know them..... [I'd like to play with people I know]. (Lin, male, 30-year-old, Interview 3, p.3).

Sometimes their partners had no time to go with them so they could not go either. Some of the students who liked playing basketball said that they did not like playing with strangers so they could not go to play if their friends were busy or had something else to do. When their schedules did not match their friends', they might stop doing what they wanted to do or do something else. Even though they were interested in some leisure activities in Canada, such as fishing or skiing, they did not try to participate because they did not find someone to go with them. For example, one of the students said that he quit watching baseball games when his friends moved to other cities whereas he went to watch the games very often earlier when they were available to do it with him. One student also said that she was interested in swimming but had never been to a swimming pool because she had no friend to go with her and she felt uncomfortable if she went alone.

Influence of others. Some students mentioned that their leisure participation was influenced by their friends or boy and girl friends. For example, one student was interested in camping in summer but had no chance to try because her friends had no interest in it and she could not go alone. Another student said that he went shopping on

Sundays because his girlfriend asked him to but he did not enjoy it at all. Two students also gave an example that they had liked playing soccer since high school but they had to change to playing basketball in Canada because their friends all preferred to play basketball here and they had no partners to play soccer again.

I played soccer a lot in China but seldom play it in Canada..... very infrequently.....because I found that most friends here [in Canada] like playing basketball rather than soccer because you could play basketball with two but you could only play soccer with at least three players in each team..... I don't do it because I can't find partners. (Zhe, male, 22-year-old, Interview 8, p. 4)

Structural Constraints.

High expenses. All of the students expressed concern about the high expenses of leisure participation. They might have had an interest in some activities but had no chance to try it because of the high expense, which they could not afford.

[For the activities in Canada], I am interested in skiing in winter but only can do it once a year because it is a little bit expensive for me. (Peng, male, 25-year-old, Interview 4, p. 3)

For international students, their main financial resource is their parents. They can not spend much money for non-study purposes otherwise they will feel guilty. Their status is 'student' and they are supposed to spend money related to their studies but not having fun. The costs associated with joining a wellness training class or traveling were seen to be too high: they had concerns about the expense. One of the students said that she had been saving money to buy equipment for camping for two years and she never spent money on purchasing clothing or deluxe stuff in Canada. She only went shopping in China because

of the lower expenses. Another student said that she liked skiing and would like to train in skiing but did not do so because of the high expense; however she participated in different training programs to learn the skills in China since the expenses were much lower. Some of the students mentioned that they tried to reduce the times of dining out with their friends to save money; however, dining out was very easy and they did it often when they were in China.

I almost went to have dinners with my classmates everyday because the meals in our university were not that good so we dined out everyday. (Zhe, male, 22-year-old, Interview 8, p. 8)

They might have fewer concerns about spending money on leisure if they could earn money themselves but most of the students were not working when the interviews were conducted. They did not want to jeopardize their studies by spending time on work.

Inconvenient transportation. Among the eight students, only one of them owned a car but others did not have access to this mode of transportation. According to their experience, inconvenient transportation was a big barrier for them to achieve their leisure goals. It actually restricted their leisure participation. They all said that they could not access recreational facilities if public transportation was not available. They had limited options for leisure because they did not have a car to reach the sites. For example, in summer, they could not go fishing or swimming in the lakes, and in winter, they could not go skiing because no public transportation was available to the skiing sites. Even though their friends could provide rides for them, they were not comfortable to do that all the time. They were all constrained by transportation and missed some opportunities because of this.

(Question: Is there anything that you are interested in but have no chance to try or you tried for a couple of times and then quit?) Yes, there is. It's mainly because of the transportation and [conflicting] time..... sometimes I wanted to go with my friends but I didn't go because they all have cars except me Like going to the park or travelling..... I didn't have the chance. (Xiao, female, 21-year-old, Interview 2, p. 15)

My life is boring here..... the biggest barrier for me is the transportation and that's why I don't go outside [in my spare time]..... On the weekends, Saturday and Sunday, there is no public transportation [close to my house where I live]. I don't do anything out of the house unless my friends give me a ride and pick me up for dinner and then I just go home, nothing else. (Chen, female, 24-year-old, Interview 5, p. 8)

As students, most of them used buses as their main transportation tool and some of them rode bicycles in summer instead of taking a bus. As a result, their leisure activities were restricted to the ones on campus or those that can be reached by public transportation, e.g., going to the gym or playing pool in the university centre.

On weekends or holidays, they had fewer options than usual because of the reduced frequency of public transportation. Xiao, a third year undergraduate student, explained how transportation constrained her leisure participation on weekends:

On Sundays, I have to stay in the house [of my homestay] because there is no public transportation [available]. If I choose to walk outside, it will take me more than twenty minutes [to access the sites] and I don't think it is worth it to do that.

So I chose to stay in the house. My homestay [family] doesn't have a car but her daughter has a car. If her daughter comes, she will give me a ride to Safeway or Superstore [for shopping]. Sometimes I would go with them for grocery shopping, but it is not fun. I'd rather stay in the house..... [as a result] I spent most of my time on study and finishing assignment on Sunday. (Xiao, female, 21-year-old, Interview 2, p. 9)

Poor condition of recreational facilities. Almost every student said that their leisure participation was constrained by the poor condition of recreational facilities, such as the gym on campus and KTVs in Winnipeg. One of the students who cared much about the physical condition of recreational sites said that she went to the gym only once but would not go there again because of the poor air quality in the underground indoor track. She also shared another reason why she did not want to swim in the swimming pool in the gym:

I didn't want to go swimming in the pool in the gym anymore after I saw some girls who were wearing false eyelashes and had make-up on their faces..... they were in the water with foundation make-up all over their faces and the false eyelashes..... I didn't want to go there again. (Wen, female, 26-year-old, Interview 6, p. 13)

More than half of the students showed their interests in playing table tennis but could not do that in the gym because of the poor condition of the tables on the first floor. Singing in KTV is popular entertainment for young people in China. All of the eight students said that they went to KTVs with their friends very often in China but could not do that in Winnipeg since there are limited options for them and the songs in KTVs were

very out of date.

The facilities in KTV here are too out of date. The price is OK. If we go there in a group with many people, the expense for each person is fine but the facilities are quite out of date and the songs are too old. There are always the same songs for us to sing every time we went there. (Chen, female, 24-year-old, Interview 5, p. 3)

They indicated that they would participate in more leisure activities if the conditions could be improved in the future.

Weather conditions. For weather, most students complained of the cold in winter and mosquitoes in summer, which stopped them from participating in leisure. In winter, they did not want to go outside because it was too cold to walk outdoors and the snow increased the difficulties in accessing the recreational sites. As a result, they participated in fewer activities in winter due to the cold but stayed at home for most of their spare time. In summer, mosquitoes might stop them going outside again because they might get into trouble because of allergic reactions caused by the bites. These are the two big concerns regarding weather.

The winter here is pretty cold. It'd too cold to go outside. If you want to go to the gym but when you look at the snow outside of the window, you just give up. (Wen, female, 26-year-old, Interview 6, p. 9)

Impact of study. There is another big issue when students talked about their leisure participation - the impact of their study on leisure. They wanted to try or go to participate in some activities, but they were too busy to do that because of their study load or the full schedule. For example, sometimes, their schedules were in conflict with the ones of the exercise classes they were interested in, so they lost the chance.

Sometimes they could not go to an activity because they had to work on their assignment or prepare exams. They had no choice as students since study had the priority in their lives.

Limited information. During the interviews, more than half of the students revealed that they had limited access to information related to leisure. They did not care much about the local news but read news from China on internet. They had limited communication with local students and did not try to access the resources they could use in the university. For example, International Centre for Students (ICS) in the university organized a series of recreational events through the year for international students, for example a ski or snowboarding trip in winter, a day trip to Gimli and Winnipeg beach in the summer, and an art gallery tour. However, only a few students participated in those events. For those who did not, the reason was that they did not get the information. One student said “I don’t know what’s this place for..... I’ve never been here for services.” (Zhe, Interview 8, p. 14). Thus, they missed these opportunities.

Conflict of schedule. Students could not match their schedules with the clubs or training classes so they did not join those groups. They preferred to participate in leisure activities with their friends when they were available but not to join a club and to be restricted by schedules. As a result they may have lost the chance to learn the skills or have professional instruction.

Limited social networks. Half of the students also had concerns about their limited social networks in their leisure. They came to Canada only for a couple of years and had no families or local friends, and thus their networks were very limited. They stayed in the circles of other Chinese international students and had limited

communications with local students. They did not have a lot of resources to use except those for their studies.

We only have common topics when we talk about our study but nothing else in our lives..... [Sometimes] I communicated with my [Canadian] friends on Facebook but only saying 'how are you?', 'I am fine', 'How about you?', 'I am good. Long time no see' and so on. Or left a message of 'Happy birthday' when it is someone's birthday. (Wen, female, 26-year-old, Interview 6, p.9)

Safety in leisure. During interviews, some of them also showed their concerns of safety in leisure. For example, two students said that they never went skiing in winter because it was too dangerous and they could get hurt. Another student said that she never rode a bicycle on the road because there were no special lanes for bicycles and she felt unsafe to ride close to the cars. She could only ride a bicycle on the trail or in a park.

Cultural Constraints.

Cultural differences. This was another common constraint for all of the students in their leisure. They all experienced cultural differences when they came to Canada, not only in their studies and lives but also their leisure. For example, none of the students thought that riding bicycles was a way of doing physical activity or recreation for them but that is a popular physical activity in summer for local people. Bicycles were only a tool of transportation for them. Only two of the eight students watched hockey or baseball games, which are very popular sport games in Canada, but others did not enjoy watching the games or had no interest because they did not know the rules. They did not even want to learn the rules but only kept watching the games they knew well, such as soccer, basketball and table tennis. One student gave an example of the fishing rules. She

went fishing with her friends in summer and they caught a big fish, which almost exceeded the maximum length according to fishing regulations. They were asked to measure the length of the fish before they took it home because they did not know the regulation. Some students also said that they had limited communications with local students because they did not know much of their traditions and the only common topics for them were related to study. They preferred to stay with other Chinese students in their leisure time. Wen, a 26-year-old graduate student, provided an example about cultural differences that she experienced:

..... Every semester, we went to a city for field work. I had been to Prince Edward Island, Ottawa, and Montreal. I always went for the trips with local students and I was the only Chinese student in that group that made me feel uncomfortable..... at least the diet habit. I didn't have rice for a week, which I could not get used to. I went to China Town for meals on the last day of the trip..... We went to the pub at night and they were all laughing there but I could not understand that. I was just sitting there and did not have any drinks but only iced water. They all gave tips when we left but I didn't because I only had water but nothing else..... They were all strong when we had a meeting in Ottawa, we rented bikes to get the site but I couldn't catch up them because they were much stronger than me and too fast. I was almost late for the meeting.

(Interview 6, p. 12)

Others

In addition, some leisure constraints and ideas that came up in the interviews were only mentioned by one student, but they may be an important part of the whole picture of

Chinese students' leisure in Canada. One student said that he was interested in traveling in the U.S. but never went there because it was too complicated to get the visa as a student. He said he would apply for the visa after he graduates and go to see beaches in the U.S. Another student showed an interesting point of his leisure in Canada. He thought that looking for an apartment or a house was his leisure, especially when he first came to Canada. He spent a lot of time on it but it was very hard to find a proper place to stay. He thought that the search for housing was related to his spare time and he considered that was a constraint to his leisure because it could influence the quality of his leisure experience. Another student did not like taking air planes for travelling because he did not like sitting on the plane. He felt "nervous and uncomfortable" (Interview 8, p. 9) on the plane. He thought that he was too tall and his legs had to be folded on the plane so he felt very tired. He had not gone back to China for holidays since he came to Canada because of this problem. He usually preferred to drive for travel.

There is also an interesting point mentioned about the definition of leisure by Wen, a graduate student in Architecture. She thought that leisure was a concept of "luxury leisure life" (Interview 6, p. 2) and leisure was always related to high expenses. As a student, she thought that leisure was something beyond her status. Although she agreed that leisure means relaxation in her life and it was very important, she did not count those casual activities to be "real leisure" (p. 2). To her, leisure should be planned and was always systematic. She even classified leisure into different levels and the level she was in as a student was only the basic level. However, she was confident that she would be eligible to pursue higher level leisure and enjoy the luxury life in the future when she finishes her studies. Then, the definition of leisure for her would be different from now.

Negotiation Strategies

Despite the constraints in leisure participation, students applied various strategies to negotiate the constraints. One student joined a badminton club to solve the problem of lack of partners. Some tried to encourage their friends to participate in physical activities they were interested in so they would have less trouble finding a partner. If their friends were all busy, some of them just did something else instead of the activity they planned to do. Most students saved their money to solve financial problems by spending less money on shopping and dining out or planned to find a part-time job. To minimize the impact of study on leisure, one student used time management to deal with the difficulty. She designed her own schedule to make sure that she had enough time to participate in leisure activities. For transportation problems, two participants were planning to buy cars in the near future and they believed that they would have more opportunities in leisure after they have cars. For limited information and social networks, they all expressed that they would explore more resources for information either on-campus (ICS, orientation, etc.) or off-campus (local news and newspaper) and participate in more social events to know more people from different cultures. For those who cared much about the physical condition of recreational sites, they would go for physical activities if the conditions could be improved in the future or go to a place with better conditions. Even though the constraints were still there in their leisure participation, they tried to get a chance to enjoy leisure time in their lives. However, some of the constraints, such as the impact of study on leisure and the influence of the weather could not be negotiated.

Leisure in the Future

According to their statements, most of the students were satisfied with the amount

of their leisure time but not the quality. They might have had enough spare time but only had limited choices in leisure. Their leisure lives became less colorful when they came to Canada because of the change of life styles and cultures. But they had the interest and willingness to try different activities if they had the opportunity.

If I have time, I would organize a group for people to spend their spare time together. Then we can participate in the activities and have fun together. We can play table-tennis together. (Lin, male, 30-year-old, Interview 3, p. 15)

All of them had the confidence for leisure in the future. When they finished their studies, they will have better plans for leisure: more leisure time, more options, higher quality, and fewer concerns regarding expenses, time conflict, and study. They will keep active in the future since they all agreed that leisure is an important part of their lives. One student said that leisure would improve his life quality in the future. He believed that the cost would not bother him anymore in the future when he works and his network would be expanded. As a result, his leisure participation opportunities would be increased.

Suggestions for Other Chinese Students

Some students also shared their experiences as international students and gave suggestions for other Chinese students. Although it was not a problem for interviewees in the current research, one student mentioned that language could be a big barrier for international students to participate in leisure so they should be prepared well before they come to Canada. Otherwise, they may miss a lot of opportunities. One student also suggested that international students should learn more living skills, such as cooking. Then they will not be disappointed and have more fun when they live independently. Another student suggested that obtaining a gym membership (an Active Living

Membership) is very important for students because they have many options in the gym and could achieve them all on one site, which is easier for them, especially for newcomers. More than one student expressed their hopes for improvement of the physical condition of the gym in the future to serve students much better. More students may go to the gym and become more active after the construction of the new Active Living Centre.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

Understanding of Leisure

An important step in the discussion and interpretation of international students' experience in leisure is to come to a common understanding of what the word 'leisure' means to people. At the beginning of each interview, students were asked to provide their understandings and their definitions of leisure. According to some descriptions, leisure was considered to be spare time without any duties and not related to study or work. For many of the interviewees, 'leisure' is a state of life that is full of relaxation without any pressure. For some it refers to some specific activities, such as sports, physical activities, or travel, or it is a kind of experience or life style. Sport, physical activity, recreation, and entertainment are all included in these students' perceptions of leisure. Although most students talked about the activities they did in their leisure time, they all agreed that leisure is a state or experience of relaxation in their lives. What they pursued in leisure were freedom, being relaxed, and coping with the stress caused by their study and daily life. Their understanding of leisure is accordant with the concept of leisure provided by other researchers (Kelly, 1996; Liu, Yeh, Chick & Zinn, 2008) either from a Western perspective or a Chinese perspective.

The students understood that it is the experience or feelings that constitute leisure, rather than the activities in which they were engaged. They demonstrated this understanding through their comments about the change in leisure behavior that might accompany a change in life stage or context. For example, in this study, a female graduate student said that she liked hanging out in pubs or bars with her friends in China, and they always had a lot of fun there. After she came to Canada, she went to some pubs

in Winnipeg but could not have fun at all. She did not like the music, the out-dated facilities, and could not even understand other's jokes. She just quit going to pubs: having fun in pubs was not leisure to her anymore. Thus, we can not expect that people maintain the same leisure activities for their whole lives, but they do have a stable understanding of the 'experience' of leisure even as the activities they do change according to context.

Theoretical Findings

According to Dong and Chick's (2005) study of culture constraints on leisure, culture must be considered as an important factor in leisure research. While most studies of leisure constraints have been conducted in North America (Dong and Chick, 2005) and the theory has been rooted in Western academia, culture should be included in the studies of leisure constraints, especially when cross-cultural comparisons are central to the study. In the current study, culture was found to be an important constraint for international students in their leisure when they study in another country. Cultural constraint factors could either prescribe or proscribe their leisure behavior. In this way, and consistent with Shogan's (2002) conception of 'constraints', identity as a Chinese international student actually afforded them access to a range of cultural activities that may not have been available to others. For example, students always celebrated Chinese festivals by preparing traditional food and having parties with their friends in Canada but they did not care much about traditional Canadian holidays and did not even know the meanings of the holidays. Similarly they had no interest in watching some popular sports such as hockey and football, and never wanted to try those activities. In Chinese culture, people do not typically like activities that involve too much body play and scramble. They prefer

skills and techniques to power and strength in sports. Thus, the “Refined Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints” (p. 4) from Dong and Chick’s study is also supported in this study in addition to the previous flow-diagram model: culture may be an over-arching factor in the hierarchy.

The findings of this study illustrate the applicability of the theory of leisure constraints and negotiation in leisure research, especially for neglected minority groups. Their leisure behaviors and experiences show us how leisure constraints impact their leisure participation and how negotiation strategies help them achieve their leisure participation with modifications. According to Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) statement, leisure constraints were classified into three types – intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints. In this study, all three kinds of constraints were found in students’ leisure experience. Intrapersonal constraints mainly refer to students’ mood, status, and their personalities, such as being tired or lazy, lack of motivation and personal interest, and lack of confidence. This kind of constraint impacted their leisure preference and motivation directly and negatively. They might quit their leisure participation or even not participate in leisure when they had no interest or felt too lazy to do anything. Interpersonal constraints to the students meant the constraints caused by interactions with others, such as lack of partners and others’ influence on their leisure preference and participation. This matches Crawford and Godbey’s description of interpersonal constraints. Structural constraints to leisure were the main constraints that students met in their lives, which refer to factors other than intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, such as high expenses, inconvenient transportation, poor condition of recreational facilities, weather conditions, the impact of study, and conflicting schedules. These

factors not only affected their leisure preferences but also constrained their leisure participation even though they might have the motivation or interest to try something. They had to give up some leisure choices because of these objective factors.

However, when students faced constraints in leisure participation, they usually did not give up but applied negotiation strategies to overcome the constraints, such as saving money or finding a job to earn money for leisure, taking part in alternate activities instead of the ones they could not do, and planning to buy cars to solve the transportation problems. These negotiation strategies could modify their leisure participation by changing the activities and the degree of involvement but still ensure their leisure fulfillment in the end.

Comparison with Other Studies

Findings in this study show that Chinese students were not only interested in passive activities but were also active in sports and physical activities. Although their leisure might be influenced by Chinese culture, it does not limit them to participate in leisure activities with physical exertion, such as playing basketball, soccer, and table-tennis. This is not entirely congruent with the primary characteristics of leisure in traditional Chinese leisure society summarized by Yu and Berryman in 1996. The development and modernization of Chinese society and the influence of Western culture over the last two decades have likely influenced this aspect of traditional Chinese 'leisure'. Especially for young people, Western sports are accepted and adopted quickly and easily. These sports have become more and more popular in China, and all around the world. Chinese students spend more time learning and practicing the skills associated with these sports from the time they are in middle school or earlier. In this study, among

the eight interviewed students, five of them held gym memberships on campus and were active in their daily lives by doing sports and physical activities in the gym. Going to the gym became a part of their lives in Canada. For the other three students, one had a membership but just quit it for a couple of months because he was too busy to go there frequently. He was still trying to keep playing tennis, golf, and going for short trips when he was available.

No matter whether they were active or not, all of the students recognized the importance of leisure and the benefits they achieved in leisure. Leisure could help them get rid of the pressure in their lives, keep their health, become renewed to pursue their studies, and improve the quality of their lives. Compared with three other characteristics of Chinese leisure, students were found to participate in more outdoor recreation and preferred team work in leisure, different from Yu and Berryman's (1996) findings. For example, students were interested in fishing, barbequing in parks, travelling and camping in summer and skiing in winter. They always stayed with their Chinese friends in leisure participation but preferred not to do it alone. They also took part in a lot of team games or activities, such as playing basketball, soccer, tennis, and dining out with friends. Thus, we can see that the style of leisure for Chinese people might change for different generations as time moves on. Although Chinese culture is old and plays a significant role in society, China is still a developing country, which may be influenced by other cultures or developed countries through exchanges. Chinese people's leisure preferences might be changed as well, which should be kept in mind when we consider the influence of Chinese culture on leisure.

In summary, some students described preferences for active leisure, not passive,

and most preferred group as opposed to individual, leisure activities, many of which were done outdoors. However, consistent with the second characteristic of traditional Chinese leisure, students in this study were found to be study-oriented in their lives and thus the impact of study was a constraint, which could not be easily negotiated in their leisure participation.

According to Li and Stodolska's first study (2006), graduate students in the U. S. were constrained by their temporary visa status in leisure and they could not afford much time on leisure when they studied in the U. S. In their second study (2007), they indicated that Chinese graduate students actually lost the feeling of entitlement to enjoy leisure. But in this study, students did not show much concern about their visa status in Canada and they maintained a belief that they deserved some leisure time. However, in all three studies, it was clear that students all missed their leisure lives in China. Students in Canada especially missed activities such as singing in KTVs and shopping with more choices and low price. Students from the U.S. showed their concerns about language in leisure but in this study, students did not think that language was a problem for them. Moreover, students from the U.S. also felt that they lost the entitlement to leisure in their lives as students but students in this study all expressed their high demands in leisure even though their status is still student. Most of them were satisfied with the amount of their leisure time but not the quality. They hoped to try the leisure activities they were interested in and might access more information and resources about leisure. They also placed their hopes for leisure on the future when they finish their study. They agreed that more leisure time in the future would improve their life quality. It seems that international students in Canada have more comfortable educational environments with less pressure

and more flexible schedules than the U.S. They were working hard on their studies but also demanded access to leisure in their lives.

Another interesting finding is the comparison of leisure constraints of mainland Chinese students (those actually studying in China) and the ones in this study. Chinese students in earlier studies (Jackson & Walker, 2006; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2008) were found to experience more intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints in leisure while Canadian students were more structurally constrained. In this regard, international students (studying in Canada) were much like their Canadian cohorts. We did not compare the experience of Chinese students with local students in this study so we can not know the difference but we can say that the structural constraints they met in their leisure were mostly caused by their status as international students. For example, they could not afford expensive leisure activities because they had to pay much higher tuition than local students. They did not have cars to access the recreational sites and they lacked social networks and could not receive sufficient information. Their temporary and short-term stay in Canada did impact their leisure performance in their lives even though they did not express this concern during interviews. Thus, Chinese international students in Canada do not share the same leisure experience with those in Chinese universities because they live in different contexts.

Reflections of the Researcher on the Research Findings

When we review the findings of this study, some questions about international students' engagement in the university came up. First, what is the university's role in students' engagement, especially for international students? Second, what are the international students' demands besides those related to their studies? Third, how can we

involve international students in community development and what benefit will they receive? Fourth, how can we help international students achieve success not only in their studies but also their lives in Canada and in the future through leisure?

Here are some suggestions that would help improve the quality of campus services for international students and encourage them to become active in their lives. First, I want to discuss the university's role. In this year's Senate President's Report (SPR, 2011) of the University of Manitoba, Student Experience, "Encouragement of student engagement outside of the classroom" (p. 27), was addressed as one of the priorities in the university's planning. Student engagement is emphasized by the university and the engagement of international students is a part of this. Thus student affairs and student services on campus should put this into action when they design services since international students are a minority group on campus. They come to Canada not only for a better education but also for better life quality. Some special programs, which meet international students' needs, should be designed for this group and more programs aimed at community development and integration should be established. Those programs should provide the students the chance to exchange with local students not only in academic study but also with respect to their cultures and other aspects of their lives.

Recreation Services on campus should also pay more attention to this group in the university since they have different needs from local students. To attract more international students to join on-campus recreation activities and encourage them to be active, their favorite leisure or physical activities should be available for them. Thus, some special programs and new clubs may be set up for this group. Recreation Services should also provide the opportunities for international students to learn or even try the

popular leisure activities in Canada and North America, such as hockey, football, and baseball. Free admissions and lower rates may be considered as a strategy to get more international students involved. Some programs like Summer Active, the annual recreational event organized by Recreation Services aims to promote active living and quality of life for university staff on campus, may be designed for international students to introduce some recreational activities and encourage them to get active in their lives. Since ICS is the key department that provides services on campus for international students, Recreation Services should work with them to promote on-campus leisure programs to the students, especially for the newcomers. This kind of promotion may be conducted at orientation in every new semester and the materials should be printed into different languages for students from non-English speaking countries. While ICS is supportive of new international students on issues involving visas, registrations, bank information, and so on, there is inadequate availability of information (especially in their language) about Recreation Services, and other leisure options.

For the students' concerns about the quality of service and facilities in the gym, service providers should consider improving the quality when the new Active Living Centre is completed. We are sure that more international students will participate in the activities there then because of the attractiveness of new facilities and also the visibility of the active spaces. Currently, one must have a membership to even see the facilities. If the university and its departments, including Recreations Services, truly want to engage international students, these students should have deliberate representation on strategic planning committees that aim to increase student engagement (Citation in Internationalization, 2011).

Another suggestion that may help improve international students' leisure experience is to bring students' associations and unions into play. There are a lot of students' associations and unions for different countries and they usually organize the students from their own countries to participate in leisure based on their own interests. However, little cooperation happens among different students' associations on campus. This should be a perfect network for international students to communicate and exchange about their cultures and lives. University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU) and Graduate Students' Association (GSA) may be the leaders who can put the students' unions on-campus work together to improve international students' leisure experience. By doing this, it will also be helpful for community development in the university and enhance student engagement, which meets the university's planning goals.

A key finding of this study is that Chinese international students tend to spend leisure time with each other rather than with Canadian students or those from other countries. Furthermore, some students avoid leisure activities because they feel alone or isolated. As most international students are young, the isolation is not good for their studies or their growth because they come here not only for education but also to increase their experiences and plan their futures. They will not gain much international experience or meaningful exchange with others if they just stay in their own circles. This is a major problem for student engagement, and indeed for Student Services in the university. It deserves special attention in leisure research, and in University Strategic Planning.

International students, on the other hand, are a resource for local students to have cultural exchanges without going abroad. Many students studying in the University of Manitoba are from Winnipeg and Manitoba. The stories they heard about other countries

or cultures are mainly from the media, which does not always tell the truth and may not provide the whole picture. But when they look around in the classroom or in the university, they will find out that their international peers are from all over the world. International students are an untapped resource on campus for growth of students from Canada who have few opportunities to travel. They could gain more knowledge and learn from the vivid stories of their cohort by talking to them and playing with them. If some programs or leisure activities, which meet international students' special needs, could be set up by Recreation Services or student unions on campus, Canadian students may also participate in these activities to learn the skills and learn about others' cultures. This will be much easier for them to increase their international experience. For international students, they could achieve their leisure goals by taking part in the activities and also have cultural exchange with Canadian students. For recreation and kinesiology students in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, deliberate and planned exposure to, and interaction with, leisure participants from other countries will expand their professional knowledge as well as personal attitudes. This will also be beneficial for their future careers.

CHAPTER VIII: LIMITATIONS

A limitation was found with this project. As mentioned above, all of the interviews were conducted in Chinese. As such, I had to translate the interview questions into Chinese before conducting the interviews, and then code the transcripts from Chinese into English for analysis. Minor misunderstandings and cultural differences were unavoidable in this process because of the differences and dissimilar comprehension between translations in the two languages and cultures, even though member checking was employed after data collection.

CHAPTER IX: FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should focus on the differences between Chinese international and Canadian students' experiences to understand their special needs in leisure. Since most cross-cultural leisure studies compared Chinese university students and Canadian university students (Jackson & Walker, 2006; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2008), future research may compare the leisure preferences and constraints between Chinese international students and Canadian students in Canadian universities. They live in the same context but may experience different leisure constraints and apply different negotiation strategies. They have different leisure preferences and interests but may have the same meanings of leisure. Understanding these differences could help leisure researchers identify common problems and distinct needs in leisure, and provide an evidential basis for leisure service providers to design and develop proper programs for both groups to serve them better.

Secondly, other international student groups in Canadian universities may be included in future studies, such as South Korean students, American students, Indian students, and French students. These are the five largest international student groups in Canada after Chinese students (CIC, 2010). They have their distinct cultural backgrounds and may have special needs and experiences in leisure. They may share some common leisure constraints with Chinese students but must have their own stories about their lives in Canada. Research on different international student groups may provide information for both leisure researchers and leisure service providers about the diversity of leisure

preferences and constraints in both research and practice. This kind of study will call more attention to minority groups in Canada in leisure research and may contribute to the development of theories and communities.

Third, future research about international students' leisure experience may be designed not only focusing on their preferences and constraints but also their motivations and demands in leisure. Studies about their motivations could help us understand their leisure behaviours better and give us the clues to find effective ways to encourage them to participate in leisure and become active in their lives. Their demands may help leisure service providers learn about their special needs and design their preferred programs.

Finally, research on the role of leisure in 'student engagement' among international students could provide strategic detection to universities. Leisure may be at the heart of student engagement (Angus, 2011) in university campuses and students may want significant investments. According to Angus's recent study on the role of campus recreation in student engagement, on campus recreation activities could encourage students to have a positive view of the university, increase their sense of pride and belonging to the community, and play an active role in recruitment. Thus, how to enhance student engagement especially for international students through on campus recreation activities should be considered in the future.

CHAPTER X: CONCLUSION

Leisure is a significant element of life and everyone should have the opportunity to experience, develop and benefit from it (Kelly, 1996). Everyone has the right to enjoy leisure even though some people also experience cultural transition or social change. Leisure researchers cannot ignore minority groups in mainstream society when studying leisure issues because everyone should have the right to voice their ideas. Further, more attention must be paid to understanding these groups in order to discover valuable information that will inform leisure practice. The experiences of minority groups are an important component in leisure research and there are still numerous gaps in this field.

The findings of this study add important information to our understanding of the constraints to leisure participation of Chinese international students in Canada and the negotiation strategies that they apply to overcome those constraints in their lives. The results of this study not only contribute to the leisure research on Chinese international students or even other international student groups in Canada, but can also benefit this student group to help them understand their leisure demands and the barriers to their leisure participation. The findings could help them rethink their leisure lives in Canada and inspire them to seek more opportunities to be active in leisure. This study demonstrated that students faced all intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural constraints to leisure while they studied in the Canadian university. Their leisure preferences were impacted by their status as students but they all tried to pursue some leisure in their lives by negotiating the constraints. They appreciated the value of leisure

and showed their willingness to be more active in their lives, especially after they finish their studies. Some of these constraints and negotiation strategies are distinctive to this population according to the existing literature.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT POSTER

你是中国留学生吗?

你知道 **LEISURE** 的含义吗?

LEISURE 是你生活的一部分吗?

你想分享你的 **LEISURE** 经历吗?

如果你的回答都是“YES”，

那你就应该参加这个研究项目，讲讲你的 **LEISURE** 故事!



该研究项目由 **Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management** 资助，研究者为在读硕士研究生，而该项目的数据将用于其研究生论文。该研究的目的是了解生活在加拿大的中国留学生的 leisure 生活体验，发现其中的困难和解决方法，从而引发 leisure 服务提供者的思考，为来自不同文化的学生提供更多参与机会。作为参与者，你将受邀参加一次为时 60-90 分钟的采访，交流关于你在加拿大的 leisure 生活和经历。该研究已获得 Education Nursing Research Ethics Board 的批准。

如果你有兴趣参加，请联系孙淼，发邮件至: xxxxxxx@cc.umanitoba.ca 或致电:

(204)xxx-xxxx 索取详细信息。

感谢您的关注!



(Translation of the Chinese poster)

Are you a Chinese International Student?

Do you understand the meaning of LEISURE?

Is LEISURE a part of your life?

Do you want to share your LEISURE experiences?

If all of your answers are “YES”,

you should take part in this study to tell your LEISURE stories!

This study is supported by the **Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management**. The researcher is a current Master’s student in the Faculty and the data collected from this study will be used in her thesis. This study aims to explore the leisure experiences of Chinese international students in Canadian universities, reveal the constraints they face and the negotiation strategies they use to overcome those constraints in leisure. Furthermore, the findings of the study may inform the leisure service providers about more opportunities for international students from different cultures. As a participant, you will be invited to attend an interview, which will last 60 to 90 minutes, conducted by the researcher. You will share your leisure experiences in Canada. This study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in being a participant of this study, please contact Miao Sun at (204) xxx-xxxx or by email: xxxxxxx@cc.umanitoba.ca

Your interest is highly appreciated!

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: Perceived constraints and negotiation strategies to leisure participation among Chinese international students in Canadian universities

Researcher: Miao Sun

Sponsor: Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to examine the types of leisure activities including recreation and sports that Chinese international students believe are available to them, the types of recreational activities and sports in which Chinese international students are actively involved in Winnipeg, and what constraints they face to their participation. In addition, the study will also explore the strategies students adopt to engage in leisure. Research that is designed to advance our understanding of the needs, constraints, and negotiation strategies of this group could help recreation planners in the provision of programs and recreational facilities for the Chinese international student community.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to attend an interview, which will last 60 – 90 minutes, conducted by the researcher. During the interview, the

researcher will ask for your personal information and some questions about your leisure experiences in Canada. You will be asked to answer the questions and talk about your leisure preferences and participation, constraints or barriers you face in your leisure life, and negotiation strategies you applied in leisure participation.

There is no risk to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and you may quit the interview at any time you want. Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Your name will not appear in the interview transcript, the data or even the thesis. A pseudonym will be used. You will not be personally identified by your conversation with the researcher or by any words you say.

In order to record the content of the interview completely, the researcher will audio record the interview in Mandarin using a digital voice recorder. If you do not want to be audio recorded, you can inform the researcher before the interview. There is no prejudice or harm for doing this. The record of the interview will be transcribed by the researcher into English and the transcript will be developed after that. After the transcription, you will get the record of your interview for review. The final transcript will be modified based on your feedback and comments.

The data obtained will be only used in this study. The information gathered in this study will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office at the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management for five years after the publication and all materials will be destroyed after that period.

To thank you for your time and your contribution to this study, you will get a T-shirt and a free pass to a recreational program on campus after the interview. You can choose the program based on your interest.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a

subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Miao Sun at XXXXXXXX or by email: [XXXXXXX](#). You also can contact the researcher's advisor – Dr. Jane Watkinson at 474-8764 or by email: watkinsj@cc.umanitoba.ca.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings, please indicate this and provide a contact address.

I would like to receive a summary of the findings:

_____ yes _____ no

My name and the email address I would like it send to is:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Interview Question Guide

I. Personal information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
3. You live with:

Alone _____ Families _____ Roommates _____ Others _____
4. Which program are you in?

Undergraduate _____ Graduate _____
5. How long have you been in Canada?

_____ years _____ months

II. Interview question guide

1. What do you think of '**leisure**'? How do you understand it? What terms do you use when you talk about your leisure (about what you do when you have spare time, when you are not working, when you do not have other responsibilities to fulfill) and how broad those terms are, what do they apply to? What does **leisure** mean to you?
 - 1.1 Do you think sport or physical activities are included in leisure? Recreation? Entertainment? Do you think leisure is important in your life?
2. What are your favorite leisure activities? (Probe: activities in China and Canada? Are they different? why?)
3. What does your typical workday look like? (Li & Stodolska, 2007, p. 114)
4. What does your typical weekend look like? (Li & Stodolska, 2007, p. 114)
5. What do you usually do when you have spare time or finish your work and study?

6. What leisure activities do you participate in mostly in Canada? (Probe: Did you do this before in China? What did you do mostly before you came to Canada?)
 - 6.1 What are the difficulties/barriers that influence your participation in these activities?
Are there circumstances that make it easy for you to participate?
7. Are you satisfied with the amount of leisure time you have and what you get to do during that time? Why?
8. Is it difficult for you to find time to engage in your favorite leisure activities? What are the difficulties/barriers that influence your participation? Are there circumstances that make it easy for you to participate? (Probe: For instance does your whole family go? Is the activity right after Church so you are already there?)
 - 8.1 Are there any other leisure activities that you are interested in but have not a chance to try or gave up? What are the barriers?
9. What strategies have you used to deal with those problems in leisure participation? (Probe: Did you do anything to overcome the barriers you face in leisure participation, e.g. change your schedule, find someone who has the same interest to accompany you, reduce living expense to save money to support your participation, take courses to gain more skills, etc.? You say you like to play basketball but you only get to do it once a week. Would you like to do it more? Why can't you do it more? What stops you? Are there things you do to make sure that you don't miss the opportunity to do it once a week?)
10. What are the strategies you may apply to overcome the barriers in participating in those possible leisure activities?
11. If there are some things that can improve your leisure participation or increase it, what do you think the factors are?
12. Would more leisure time improve your life here? If so, how? What can you do to have more leisure? (If it does not work now, will it happen in the future? Why?)

**APPENDIX D: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT
FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANT**



Confidentiality Agreement for Research Assistants (for transcription work)

Project title: **Leisure experience of Chinese international students**

Principal Investigators: **Miao Sun**

[] I understand that all the material I will be asked to record and/or transcribe is confidential

[] I understand that the contents of the consent forms, interview records, sound files or interview notes can only be discussed with the researcher.

[] I will not keep any copies of the information nor allow third parties to access them.

[] I will delete all interview and other relevant files from my computer after transcription.

Research Assistant's signature: _____

Research Assistant's name: _____

Date: _____

Signature of PI: _____

Name of PI: _____

Note: The Research Assistant will be given a copy of this form to retain for her records