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What impact does pre-sojourn preparation have on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students? A case-study of a SINO-UK Joint Programme

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Abstract

It is widely known that sojourning students experience a major, stressful life event (Savicki & Adams, 2007) as they adjust to the host-culture, which can deleteriously affect their experience and academic achievement. Therefore, this longitudinal study evaluates the impact of internationalisation at home preparation on the adjustment of one cohort of sojourning Chinese students to the host-social and academic cultures of a UK university.

Undertaken primarily in a post-1992 UK university, it uses a mixed methods explanatory sequential design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003), conducted in two connected phases, a quantitative followed by a qualitative stage, with the emphasis being on the qualitative phase. An initial pre-sojourn questionnaire gathered background data, demographic information and assisted sampling. Following arrival in the UK, and involving 7 participants, qualitative data were collected through diaries, semi-structured interviews at three points during the year, and other artefacts such as photographs and videos. Within the context of internationalisation of education, specifically transnational education and internationalisation at home, the data were analysed against the conceptual framework of cultural background including intercultural competence, cultural adjustment and autonomy, linked with agency and transformative learning theory.

The findings demonstrate that the students adjusted well, having been successfully prepared by the internationalisation at home preparation, the summer camp and sojourning as a group. Individual factors such as personality, motivation for sojourning and parental influence were also important. These results may assist policymakers and practitioners in the field to facilitate a smoother University transition for their students, in particular through the development of deep transnational partnerships.

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Abbreviations

AU-RU American University-Ritsumeikan University

BERA   British Educational Research Association

BOS   Bristol Online Surveys

EAIE   European Association of International Education

HE   Higher education

HEI   Higher education institution

I@H   Internationalisation at home

IELTS   International English Language Testing System

IPPM   International Programme and Provider Mobility Framework

MCQ   Multiple choice questions

MOE   Chinese. Ministry of Education

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

QLD   Qualifying Law Degree

STEM   Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

TNE   Transnational Education

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Identifying the problem

This thesis evaluates the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on one cohort of sojourning students' adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures. This introductory chapter begins by identifying the problem and its importance to the current internationalisation of education (hereafter 'internationalisation') field, sets out the research questions and context for the study, and examines my background as the researcher.   Next, a brief examination of internationalisation and the conceptual framework is followed by an introduction to the methodology adopted and significance of the study.

Globalisation profoundly impacted on higher education (hereafter HE) and continues to do so. Knight (2003, p. 3) felt that '…internationalization is changing the world of education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization'. Indeed, its 'pervasive force' led to the development of 'internationalisation strategies, programs and policies within universities' (Knight, 2012, p. 27). Internationalisation of education takes many forms, its least-favoured form is simply the recruitment of international students, usually for income-generation. More favourably, it can occur in a broad range of contexts and can apply at national or institutional level. Knight (2003) proposed a new working definition of internationalisation which is that

> *Internationalization at the national, sector and institutional levels is defined*
> *as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global*
> *dimension into the purposes, functions or delivery of postsecondary*
> *education. (p. 2)*

Whether perceived as 'cash cows' to be milked (Garson, 2016), a market to be exploited (Scott, 1998) or as part of a strong, transformative approach (Appadurai, 2001, as cited in Hyland, Trahar, Anderson, & Dickens, 2010) which engages students, academic staff and the institutions involved in a transformative educational experience, it is clear the presence of international students on campus is often one of the most visible signs of a university's internationalisation strategy (Altbach, 1991). Statistics evidence this demonstrating that in 2016, 5 million foreign students were involved in tertiary education programmes worldwide (OECD, 2018). In the UK during 2017/18, 2.34 million students studied at UK HE institutions, 319,340 of whom were from non-EU countries. Of those, 106,530 were from China. Additionally, 612,715 students were studying UK HE programmes offshore. Generally, Asian students are the most mobile; therefore the Asian market is particularly important (Scott, 1998) accounting for 55% of all international

students in 2016 (OECD, 2018). In general, larger percentages of international students were enrolled on Masters and Doctoral programmes, than on undergraduate programmes; with many of the enrolments being in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) (OECD, 2018).

It is recognised that those studying abroad, such as international students studying in the UK, experience a major, stressful life event (Savicki & Adams, 2007), the effects of which can impact on their experience, academic achievement, and cause mental and physical distress. Although they undergo a period of adjustment during which they learn to function in the new environment (Bochner, 2003), this takes time. For some progression pathways, the first contact the sojourning student has with the host university (application process aside) is upon arrival. Much has been written on the international student experience from a number of perspectives, however work focusing on the transition from the home, to host university, is a developing, but relatively limited area ((QAA), 2015b).

This study aims to evaluate the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on one cohort of sojourning Chinese students. Unlike other studies in the field, their innovative degree programme involves contact with the host-university for three years before the sojourn. Furthermore, their potential adjustment problems are magnified because, as a non-STEM subject, Law requires greater English language proficiency and the subject-specific terminology and sociocultural perspective of the subject can cause problems for sojourners (Heng, 2019). As part of the course-design team, and responsible for its day to day management, my role included facilitating host-culture adjustment and improvements by implementing additional measures arising from students' experiences. This study aimed to contribute to the field by evaluating the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on their adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures.

1.2 Aims of the Research

To achieve these aims, a main research question was developed, and was supplemented by 5 sub-research questions, each exploring different aspects of the adjustment process. The concepts involving adjustment emanated to some extent from the literature review, but the concepts concerning cultural background and autonomy emerged from the findings.

The aims were to:

- explore the issues affecting students before and during their sojourn;
- identify strategies they employed to resolve these issues; and to

- improve the sojourning experience for the current students, future cohorts and contribute to the field in general.

These aims were realised through the main research question which examined:

> What impact does pre-sojourn preparation have on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students?

To answer this overarching question, the 5 sub-research questions were:

1. What key issues face students transitioning to an overseas university?
2. How does prior exposure to a western educational style via 'internationalisation at home' (I@H) impact on host-culture adjustment?
3. What key issues do students identify during their UK sojourn?
4. How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before and during the sojourn?
5. Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

1.3 Origins of the Research

1.3.1 The SINO-UK Programme

Outlining the backdrop against which this study occurred is crucial for understanding why the students' experience may differ from others and was worth exploring. Moreover, it will demonstrate why it is difficult to fit the SINO-UK Joint Programme (hereafter 'the Programme') under study within the recognised categories of international education. As Mestenhauser (2012) explains, in education research context is crucial and often neglected.

The Programme exists under a co-operation agreement in which the partner universities teach on and administer the course. Although income-generation and brand-building potential (Haigh, 2015) were clearly attractive elements, the motivation for the relationship was wider and deeper. There was a desire for collaboration and sharing good practice in many spheres; and to educate students in ways that led them to become highly functioning global citizens.

The Programme involves a post-1992 UK top 20 university (The Guardian, 2019) and a Chinese University ranked in the top 10. To preserve anonymity, they will be referred to throughout this study as UK-U and SINO-U respectively. Initially approved for its first five years by the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE), this Programme successfully passed its first revalidation and was

granted Role Model status to shine as a beacon for others to follow its approach. Initially given permission to recruit 100 students per year, it has successfully recruited the full complement every year. The impetus to engage in internationalisation of education was evident in other spheres of Chinese HE at the time the Programme under study was devised, for example, Wang, Deardorff and Kulich (2017) wrote of the MOE's mandate for language and culture teaching as part of the drive to keep pace with globalisation.

The MOE required that students receive a 'western educational experience', this is particularly important when considering whether it is desirable to impose western pedagogical approaches on students and whether western notions of autonomy are appropriate for them. This blend of experiences was an attractive feature of the course for students and one of the reasons for its strong recruitment, along with the innovative approach to delivery and the educational experience it gives. This demanding programme requires them to study for two degrees simultaneously during their time at SINO-U. They study for a Chinese law degree taught in Chinese, by local Chinese academics; and an English law degree, taught in English by a combination of UK-U staff permanently based at SINO-U, and a team of UK-U staff delivering modules on a blended-learning basis, flying out to deliver teaching in intensive bursts. The English law degree accounts for 30% of the Programme at SINO-U. At the end of their third year, the students have the option to continue for their final year at SINO-U and leave only with their Chinese law degree; or to sojourn for one year at UK-U and be awarded both their Chinese and English law degrees.

The structure of the English law degree programme was designed specifically for this course and reflects that studied by full-time students at UK-U, but with specific features to increase its relevance for the Programme's students. The description of the Programme which follows explains how it was studied by the participants, although there have since been minor amendments. When the Programme started, to qualify as either a Solicitor or Barrister in England and Wales, UK-U students needed a Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) to take the most cost-effective, shorter, route to qualification (Joint Academic Stage Board, 2008). A QLD required students to successfully complete specific subjects, not all of which were relevant for the Programme's students. As international students who may qualify as lawyers in China, an alternative qualification route existed, which provided more freedom to design a programme better suited to their needs. The English law degree part of the Programme focuses on Commercial Law, which fits better with the Chinese law degree at SINO-U and allowed space for delivering targeted English language teaching and support.

In the participants' first year at SINO-U, the China-based UK-U staff delivered English Language and English for Academic Purposes classes. These improved the ability to communicate in English, and introduced the students to the terminology, subject-specific language and skills needed to successfully complete the English law degree. Advantageously, these classes were taught by native English speakers, whereas 'College English' classes at SINO-U were usually taught by Chinese academics. For all language classes the students were taught by specialist UK-U academics and the focus on western pedagogical methods began immediately. In the second and third years at SINO-U, the substantive English law modules were delivered, with continuing support from the language classes. Beyond the classroom, other initiatives were developed bringing an international dimension to SINO-U and developing the students' cultural awareness of British culture for example, establishing a mentor scheme, and a SINO-U English-speaking radio station operated by one of the China-based UK-U staff. Additionally, SINO-U authorised UK-U to paint the Programme's classrooms differently, decorate them with displays of British social and legal culture and alter classroom layouts. Instead of individual study desks arranged in rows, SINO-U allowed UK-U staff to use cluster-based layouts facilitating group-working; an approach the students were not accustomed to.

To sojourn for their final year at UK-U, the students, including this study's participants, must successfully complete all English law modules with a pre-set module average throughout their SINO-U study, and achieve a pre-set English language proficiency score as evidenced by IELTS (or equivalent) test results.

This study focuses on the experience of the first sojourning cohort of students at UK-U, 39 students met the entry conditions and arrived in September 2017. This study analyses the impact of their pre-sojourn preparation during the preceding three years on their adjustment to the new social and academic cultures.

Part of the pre-sojourn preparations included the option, during the first year, to participate in a two-week summer school hosted at UK-U; the trip (now operating as a winter camp to enhance its usefulness), hosts approximately 20 students per year. It included classes delivered in English by the UK-U tutors who would fly out to deliver English law modules over the following two years; as well as cultural trips and experiences. Participants were required to deliver presentations in English at the end of the Summer School and had the opportunity to briefly experience life at UK-U and in its city.

In return, each year approximately 20 UK-U students visit SINO-U for around two weeks. They also experience cultural visits, but the main purpose of the trip is to spend time with the SINO-

U students to build friendships and practice their written and spoken English with native speakers. As the study will demonstrate, these Summer Schools played an important role for some participants in their cultural adjustment.

With regard to my background as the researcher, having qualified as a Solicitor, I left practice in 1996 to begin teaching in higher education and developed a passionate interest in the student experience. My interest and involvement in the Programme began when, at the end of 2013, I was promoted into management and became the managerial lead for all matters related to maintaining and improving the excellence of the student experience within the Law School. Shortly after that, I was promoted again, and part of my role included responsibility for the Internationalisation agenda within the School. This meant I had overall responsibility for the Programme, liaising with the Course Director responsible for its day-to-day running and co-ordination, the Deanery within the Faculty, the Internationalisation Office who assist with the logistical aspects of servicing the course, and the Academic Partnership Unit who assist with the relationship management between SINO-U and UK-U and the MOE. Therefore, between January 2014 and October 2017, I took management responsibility for the Programme's design and operation; from October 2017 to February 2019, I was also responsible for its day-to-day management.

This involvement with, and responsibility for, the Programme triggered my interest in internationalisation and the international student experience. Consequently, as an insider researcher, I was sufficiently closely involved with the Programme to understand and evaluate it; while for most of the time, I was sufficiently distanced from the students to avoid some of the objectivity concerns and ethical issues that might be raised. Although, when circumstances meant I took day-to-day management of the Course in 2017, I was more closely involved with the Programme and had to consider the effect that might have on the participants.

1.3.2 Situating the Programme within the internationalisation field

Internationalisation is a crowded field; it is developing rapidly and has proved fertile ground for research, particularly in the last 20 years. In an area which is so well-researched, it can be difficult to contribute something new, this Programme offered an opportunity to study a course that is regarded as innovative and therefore, offers a unique perspective to a field about which much has already been written.

There are a range of ways in which students and universities experience internationalisation. This could be through student or staff mobility, or through internationalisation at home (I@H) via distance learning, branch campuses, or collaborations between universities from different

countries. The internationally mobile may participate in short term visits or study abroad for the entirety of their programme. For staff, it could be shorter term visiting professorships, research visits or permanent relocation (Scott, 1998) or flying faculty teaching. The Programme includes many of these elements, the students experience I@H through a collaborative partnership, this includes teaching from international tutors who either relocate permanently or undertake flying faculty teaching as part of a blended learning approach. Students may be internationally mobile for a short period or sojourn for a year; they may also interact with UK-based students who participate in short-term international mobility experiences. Recent reports highlight a decline in international student recruitment in some areas e.g. USA (Redden, 2019), a message echoed by Altbach and de Wit (2018, para. 3), who feel the increased focus on I@H may be linked to this and suggest that we are witnessing 'a fundamental shift in higher education internationalisation' from that which characterised the period between 1990 and 2015.

In the 2017/18 (HESA, 2019) academic year, 2.34 million students studied at UK HE institutions of which 319,340 were from non-EU countries; over 8,000 international students studied at UK-U that year. The single largest country from which non-EU students came was China, with 106,530 students at UK HE institutions. Only the sojourning students in the present study were included in that number; the remaining approximately 360 students were being taught at SINO-U. In the same publication, HESA also published data for students studying overseas without coming to the UK, and these statistics included the students at SINO-U. Although these numbers had seen a 2% decrease over the previous year, with 612,715 students studying for a UK university award; the numbers recruited to the Programme remained stable with the cohort again recruiting fully for that year.

Transnational education (TNE) of this kind is of great importance to UK universities. It is defined as 'education delivered in a country other than the country in which the awarding institution is based' (Universities UK, 2019). In 2016/17 the number of students educated by TNE from UK universities was 1.6 times higher than international students enrolled at universities in the UK (Universities UK, 2018, p. 2). However, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, it is unlikely that this Programme fits neatly within any of the recognised TNE categories. TNE was a growing trend with Universities UK stating the period between 2012-13 and 2015-16 saw a 17% increase; with this 'strategically important' business being valued at £550 million per annum in 2014-15 alone. Reasons cited for the popularity of UK courses and the implementation of which were fundamental elements of the Programme, were quality assurance, curriculum development,

and assessment; additionally, the Programme also introduced western pedagogical approaches to SINO-U.

1.4 Introduction to theoretical/conceptual framework

This study examines the students' sojourn through a number of contexts. Set within the context of internationalisation, specifically I@H, it firstly addresses the students' background through the concept of cultural background and how that might change throughout the sojourn. During the sojourn, the concept of cultural adjustment is employed to examine their adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures. Finally, the concept of autonomy explores the self-development occurring as a consequence of the adjustment process.

The ontological position was a nominalist approach based on naturalistic inquiry. Understanding the students' experience was crucial to this study and the qualitative methods employed facilitated the telling of the student's sojourn stories through their own words, whether spoken in interviews, or written in their diaries.

1.5 Introduction to methodology

The methodology adopted was that of embedded mixed methods. A questionnaire assisted with sampling and collected background data. This longitudinal study aimed to capture the students' experiences at key points throughout the sojourn, within the first two weeks of arrival; at the mid-point, within the first two weeks of the second semester; and after the final examinations before their return to China. Supplementing the interviews, some students provided other artefacts such as photographs and videos of their lives in China and their sojourn, and diaries in which they were invited to record their experiences and feelings during the sojourn.

The study involved 7 students - 5 females and 2 males. Data from the interviews and diaries were analysed using open, axial and selective coding to establish emergent findings and identify themes and linkages between them. The methodology will be explained further in Chapter 3.

1.6 Significance of the study

As illustrated by the OECD (2018) most international students enrol on Masters and Doctoral programmes, therefore this study offers an opportunity to study the adjustment of undergraduate students to the host-culture. In particular, it will examine the impact of pre-sojourn preparation to evaluate the impact that might have on the adjustment problems that sojourning usually causes. Additionally, the OECD highlights that higher numbers of students enrol on STEM subjects and suggest this may be due to the lower language proficiency needed.

However, Law relies on strong language proficiency to succeed; additionally, English law degrees are jurisdictional in nature, requiring understanding of different legal systems and rules.

The qualitative data obtained from this longitudinal case study will provide a deeper understanding of the specific context in which it is situated, specifically, the students' adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures. The study's findings could potentially impact on other similar programmes or those considering the transition to university life; particularly for students who do not benefit from preparatory activities.

1.7 Overview of the thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 examines the concepts of Cultural Background & Intercultural Competence, Cultural Adjustment and Autonomy, including agency and transformative learning theory. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and rationale for the methods used for collecting and interpreting the data. Chapters 4, 5 & 6 report and discuss the findings. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the thesis, draws conclusions and considers the implications of the study for the field.

Chapter 2 – Conceptual Framework

This chapter sets out and defines the key concepts relevant for the study; each concept identified is explored in depth to contextualise the research questions. In so doing, the current study will be related to research already conducted in the field and will provide a platform for my position to be established.

This study focuses on adjustment to a new social and academic culture, specifically, the transition and acculturation experience of students studying abroad. Described by Oberg (1960, p. 145) as 'the interrelation of cultural forms' it studies the impact of culture 'upon the individual under special conditions'. It will involve 'culture contact' (also known as cross-culture contact or interaction), a term referring to the 'meeting of individuals and groups who differ in their cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds' (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2002, p. 1). Students studying abroad, referred to in the literature as 'sojourners', often experience psychological and sociocultural issues which impact upon them; including upon their social and academic experience. Within the context of internationalisation, sojourning students frequently experience culture shock and undergo a period of cultural adjustment which can impact upon their academic performance (Chen & Bennett, 2012; Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009).

Many courses, especially language courses, and much literature (e.g. (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; J. Jackson, 2010; Montgomery, 2010) focus on the measurement and development of intercultural competence. Although that was not the primary approach adopted for the Programme in the current study, intercultural competence could offer a useful perspective on the cultural adjustment of the sojourners in the current study, particularly with regard to their intercultural experience while in the UK. The primary function of this Programme was to promote the joint education of Law students, developing international legal knowledge and skills, and to assist them with functioning in an international legal market. To assist the students with their I@H study and adjustment to the year abroad (for those choosing to sojourn), they were immersed, as far as possible, in a UK academic environment during their I@H phase. It is the impact of this preparation, along with related activities such as the Summer Schools, which are the subject of this study. Rather than abandoning or undermining their home social and academic cultural experiences, the Programme aimed to enable the students to thrive academically in both cultures simultaneously during the I@H stage, and in the UK academic and social cultures during the sojourn.

This study involves various concepts within the context of HE internationalisation. These include transnational education (TNE) and I@H, autonomy, and culture which manifests through the

culture shock which may be experienced and the process of adjustment to the academic and social cultures of the host-country. Figure 1 demonstrates the relationship between the main concepts and the challenges students face through their exposure to internationalisation.

Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework
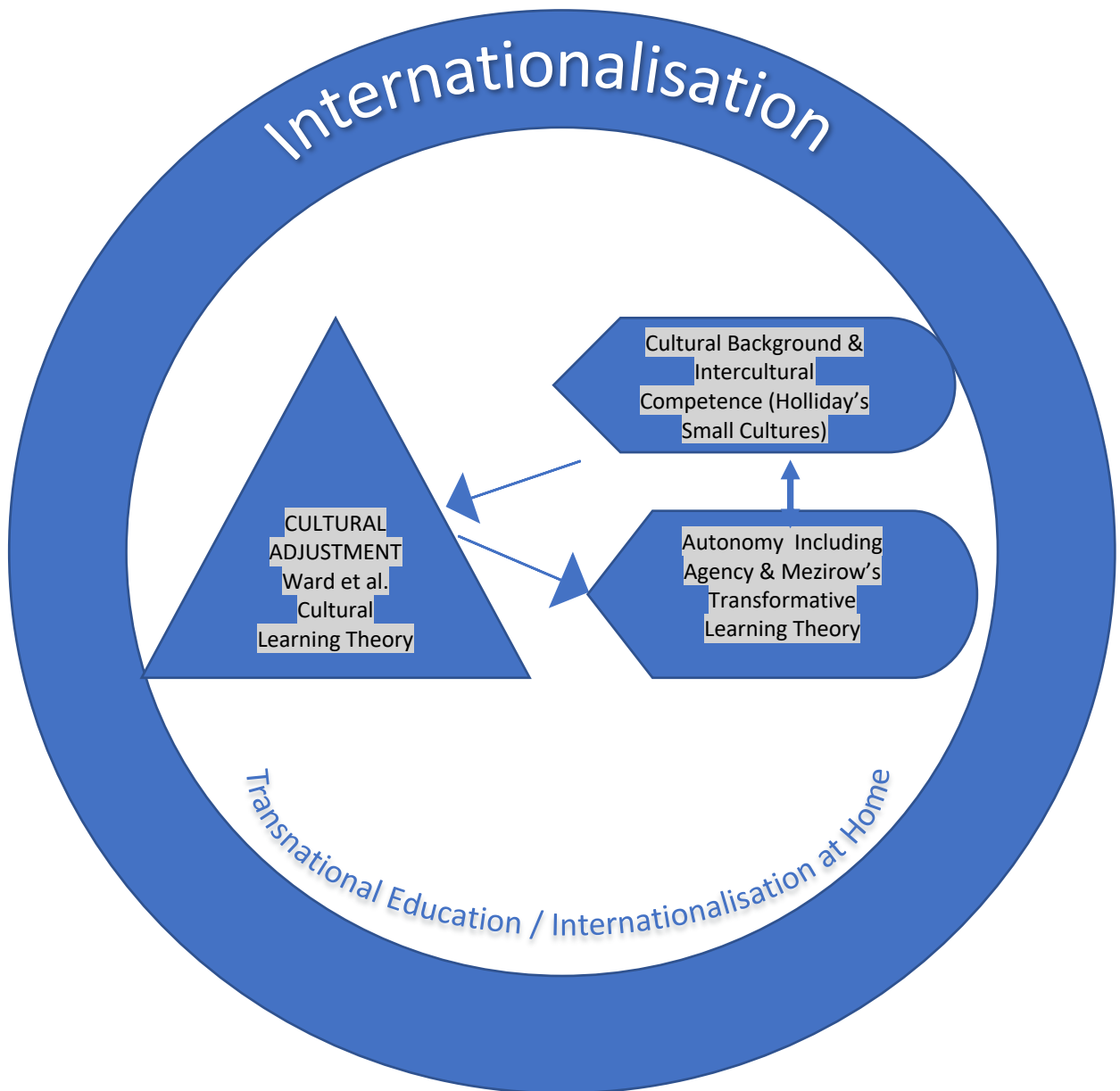
The diagram reflects the relationship between the key concepts and theoretical models within which this study is framed. As the framework shows, this study is set within the context of internationalisation. Specifically, the categorisation of the Programme under study within the definitions of Transnational Education (TNE) and I@H to establish the nature of the Programme and analyse the preparation for the sojourn provided by the I@H period. This analysis will be

informed by examining the starting point for the sojourn, the cultural backgrounds of the students and the development of intercultural competence. Useful theories to explore in this regard will be Holliday's (1999) small cultures and Deardorff's (2008) Intercultural Competence. The influence of these factors will be applied in relation to the cultural adjustment of the sojourners during their UK-U sojourn. Ward et al.'s (2002) Culture Learning Theory will be applied to this phase. An outcome of the sojourn may be the development of autonomy, which may then impact on the cultural identity of the sojourning students. The concepts of Autonomy, including its relationship with agency, and Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory will be applied to examine the potential development of autonomy of the sojourning students.

Establishing the findings of authors in these fields developed my understanding of the issues emerging from the participants' experiences; and provided a means of establishing the impact of the pre-sojourn preparation undertaken at SINO-U. This chapter will explore each of the concepts in detail.

2.1 Internationalisation of education

The programme under study falls within the field of internationalisation of education, specifically TNE and I@H, thus, this broader context merits consideration. Internationalisation is regarded as a reaction to globalisation (Monk, McDonald, Pasfield-Neofitou, & Lindgren, 2015; Rumbley, Altbach, & Reisberg, 2012) and the way in which globalisation plays out in specific contexts (Webb, 2005). Despite the centuries-old practice of travelling scholars from some universities (Scott, 1998), internationalisation is said to have been born out of globalisation (E. Jackson & Huddart, 2010). Nevertheless, the two terms should not be used synonymously (E. Jackson & Huddart, 2010; Thomas, 2006), and internationalisation can be seen as a driver of change in its own right (Rumbley et al., 2012). It is indisputable that internationalisation is a key feature of HE in the twenty-first century (Larsen, 2015), and often features as part of national trade policies (Zakaria, Janjua, & Fida, 2016). The globalised world means that universities no longer, if they ever did, operate in cultural isolation. As such, it fosters the creation of international links between HE institutions and the people within them, and also encourages these institutions to engage with the wider world (Brewer & Leask, 2012).

2.1.1 Definition

Internationalisation is a broad term which can encompass many activities; consequently, defining it is not easy (Yang, 2014). Its meaning is ambiguous, meaning different things to different people (Knight, 2012; Caruana, 2008, as cited in Shiel, 2009); many suggest there is no clear or standard definition of the term (e.g. E. Jackson & Huddart, 2010; Knight & de Wit, 1995;

Thomas, 2006). This is perhaps surprising for something which has been described as 'one of the most powerful and pervasive forces at work within higher education around the world during the last two decades' (Rumbley et al., 2012, p. 3).

The definition of internationalisation with regard to HE has evolved over time. Knight (1993, p. 21) developed the definition of internationalisation most commonly cited in research papers, stating that internationalisation of higher education "is the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution".

Reflecting on the changing drivers and methods of implementing internationalisation, she proposed an updated definition, taking account of the broad range of contexts and countries in which it occurs. It also reflects her view that internationalisation occurs on a national level, in a top-down fashion; and on a local, institutional level in a bottom-up approach. In fact, her view is that it is this bottom-up approach which is where most internationalisation occurs (Knight, 2004) and demonstrates what internationalisation actually looks like in practice. This top-down/bottom-up distinction also occurs within institutions themselves, with the university setting its agenda and metrics to be achieved; and the implementation of this and enthusiasm and motivation to internationalise education being driven by the teachers themselves (Webb, 2005); indeed the perception of what amounts to internationalisation within an institution may vary depending on whether it is being discussed by managers, academics or educational developers (Haigh, 2014). Knight's (2003) new working definition provides

Internationalization at the national, sector and institutional levels is defined
as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global
dimension into the purposes, functions or delivery of postsecondary
education. (p. 2)

In 2015, de Wit et al. (2015) adapted Knight's 2003 version of the definition

the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or
global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary
education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all
students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (p. 29)

Knight's definition appears to be broader in scope, and less likely to be interpreted as applying at institutional level only. However, the adaptation proposed by de Wit et al. brings the notion of making a meaningful societal contribution into the scope of the definition; the extent to which this falls within internationalisation will be examined in 2.1.2.

As demonstrated therefore, defining internationalisation is not simple and there is often confusion at institutional level as to what internationalisation means (Bennet & Kane, 2011, as cited in Yang, 2014).

2.1.2 Rationale for Internationalisation

Regardless of the precise meaning of internationalisation, it is unquestionably an important issue for HE providers, motivated by what are, sometimes, controversial drivers. In the past, these were grouped into four categories (Knight & de Wit, 1999):

- Socio-cultural
- Political
- Academic
- Economic

However in this fast-moving and developing field, these groupings have changed with time (Altbach & Knight, 2006).

At an institutional level, motivating factors could demonstrate either a deep approach to internationalisation or a shallow approach (Appadurai, 2001, as cited in Hyland et al., 2010); and the institution's internationalisation agenda should ideally be holistic (Thomas, 2006), pervade the strategy and not be regarded as a 'bolt-on' activity. Consequently, it should inform the education and pedagogical strategy, the research agenda, encourage collaboration between staff and students from other institutions, and the staff/student experience through opportunities for travel or I@H activities. Included in the reasons for pursuing internationalisation agendas are financial motives, primarily international student recruitment (e.g. Rumbley et al., 2012); to develop global citizens (e.g. Garson, 2016; Monk et al., 2015); enhancement of the student experience and graduate employment (Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Lumby & Foskett, 2015); and the promotion of academic, cultural, social and political ties between countries (OECD, 2015). This section will explore these drivers for internationalisation in more depth.

Both Kelly and Moogan (2012) and Lumby and Foskett (2015) suggest there are two key drivers for internationalisation; either one which adds value to the educational experience of home and international students; or alternatively an economic driver which sees internationalisation as a business opportunity and a potential source of income. When viewed as purely a money-making exercise it is realised through international student recruitment and the high fees international students pay. This gives rise to the claim that it should be more accurately referred to as the

'international trade in education' (Thomas, 2006, p. 115) and is related to the impact of neoliberalism and the marketisation of higher education (Brown & Carasso, 2013).

When used to add value to the educational experience, it tends to involve those universities which demonstrate a commitment to aligning their activities with their strategic goals. In relation to specific programmes, such as that in the present study, an institutional commitment to provide adequate resources and support are important (Carroll, 2015). There are examples of internationalisation being engaged with well, Thomas (2006, p. 118) cites some as:

- interdisciplinary courses
- online exchanges between students in different countries
- deployment of western academics to teach in offshore courses
- employment of academics from outside the host country

The Programme's utilisation of flying-faculty teaching supported by remote tutor availability, UK-U staff based permanently in China delivering some aspects of the Programme, and short and long-term student mobility demonstrate some of these examples of strong alignment.

2.1.2.1 Global Citizenship

One benefit derived from deep, transformative internationalisation is the widely recognised role of universities in developing global citizens and professionals (Garson, 2016) (hereafter global citizens); in fact both of these concepts are regarded as 'buzzwords' in education (Monk et al., 2015). Developing graduates as global citizens aims to equip them to contribute to society and operate effectively in a global work environment (Bernstein & Osman, 2012). The ability to successfully negotiate a new culture being seen as a prerequisite of university success (McLean & Ransom, 2005). This ability gives rise to inclusiveness and the flexibility to adapt to different cultural situations, implying the development of some degree of intercultural competence. It involves respecting that different people think in different ways, requiring empathy, patience and respect for the different ideas encountered (Paracka & Pynn, 2017).

Graduates of an internationalised university should be able to successfully undertake their role as a future thinker, influencer and decision-maker on an international level. Therefore, these skills and attitudes must be developed throughout their undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses. Haigh (2014, p. 72) highlighted the importance of global citizenship explaining that "As the world of work becomes more global and business more cosmopolitan, local learners need to be enabled to operate effectively in the intercultural situations they will have to handle".

Global citizens 'need to be knowledgeable about and open to views that differ from their own' (Webb, 2005, p. 110). This requires tolerance of different cultures; openness and culturally inclusive behaviour (Webb); it is a process of building intercultural competencies (McLean & Ransom, 2005). In so doing, students and graduates can think more broadly, and apply a global perspective to problem-solving on a local and international level. They are also able to understand what makes a culture unique (to the extent that there is such a thing as a distinct culture) and the similarities that people share (Paracka & Pynn, 2017).

Generally, it is recognised that universities are in a privileged and powerful position, playing an important role in their national economies, are part of the political and social infrastructure (Webb, 2005, p. 109), and, in educating their students, play a crucial role in developing the world's future thinkers. Therefore, internationalisation can meet the requirement to develop students as 'global citizens'; equipping them with the skills and attitudes needed to operate successfully in a globalised world. However, global citizenship is not without its critics, it can be hard to define (Monk et al., 2015), and viewed as an optimistic aim not grounded in the reality of students (Garson, 2016).

Haigh (2008) talks of 'education for planetary consciousness' which means that "internationalisation involves awakening the global consciousness of learners, fostering the creative realisation of their greater self and of their role in the commonwealth of nature and humanity" (2014, pp. 16–17). Viewing internationalisation from this perspective, it is easy to see why those who focus purely on income-generation from recruiting international students are criticised. Haigh's view therefore, is that "internationalisation is about helping learners understand they are citizens of the world" (2014, p. 14).

Assuming that sojourners return to their home countries, they can make a valuable contribution to their home country on their return. Some claim that when students stay abroad after graduation, the benefits for their home country may be lost; and if that country is still developing, will hinder its progress (OECD, 2018). However, this may not necessarily be the case, as those graduates may still play a valuable role in fostering links between their own country and other nations; and may make a valuable contribution beyond the national level, contributing on the global stage.

2.1.2.2 Student Experience and Employability

Other key drivers for internationalisation include enhancing students' experiences and employability; with the OECD stating that "[s]tudying abroad is also seen as a way to improve employability in increasingly globalised labour markets" (OECD, 2018, p. 218). If done well,

internationalisation has a tremendous impact on the student experience; although it should be recognised that some believe the student voice is often marginalised in papers looking at internationalisation (Larsen, 2015).

Nevertheless, where internationalisation is done well, there are clear benefits for the institutions involved, their students and ultimately for the industries and societies within which they live and work.   As Bill Rammell, the former Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said (2007, cited in E. Jackson & Huddart, 2010, p.83/4)

> *In an increasingly globalised world there is widespread acceptance of the importance of internationalising higher education and giving students the skills to enable them to operate effectively across boundaries.*

Clearly, the OECD view internationalisation as a transformative exercise in the students' experience of both domestic and international HE. Their documentation does not define the word 'transformative' in terms of the specific meaning given to it in education research (e.g. in respect of Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory), instead it is used more generally to discuss the power to change. Tertiary education in general is viewed as an expansive experience which broadens the mind and is becoming more international in nature. In so doing, it provides opportunities to study abroad, learn languages, develop intercultural competencies, and develops more globally employable graduates (OECD, 2015).

2.1.3 Categorising Internationalisation of Education

Universities, especially in English-speaking countries '…now contain a more socially and culturally diverse population than ever before, including increasing numbers of international students' (Ryan & Carroll, 2005, p. 3).   They define international students as '…those who have chosen to travel to another country for tertiary study' (Ryan & Carroll, 2005, p. 3) whether or not they have done preparatory study in their own country – in the present study this includes the sojourning SINO-U students. However, as seen internationalisation is more than simply the presence of international students on campus; indeed, it can occur in a variety of ways. International students could be received in the host-country alongside home students (as are the year 4 SINO-U students), when that occurs, they are frequently referred to as sojourners. International students could also be educated by an overseas university in their own country (which applies to the first three years of the Programme), the appropriate term for which will be explored below.

Categorising internationalisation is fraught with difficulty; there are numerous terms used to describe the way in which it is operationalised, some of which are used interchangeably and cause misunderstandings (Knight, 2007), for example, being educated by an overseas university in the students' own country has been termed 'off-shore education' (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). However, the different ways in which such education can be delivered are more nuanced than that and for the purposes of this study, I will focus on Transnational Education (TNE) including joint and collaborative programmes, and Internationalisation at Home (I@H), to situate the Programme within the field. These help to internationalise the student experience where the numbers of mobile students are low (Knight, 2012).

2.1.3.1 Transnational education (TNE)

Definitions of TNE vary making it difficult to categorise (Healey, 2015), it is 'a dynamic and increasingly complex part of higher education' (Knight, 2016, p. 35). However, one widely cited is that given by the OECD (2001, as cited in QAA, 2019) who state that TNE refers to:

> *…all types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based (p. 1)*

Universities UK (n.d.) go further, relating this specifically to the UK HE context by saying that it 'refers to UK degree programmes delivered outside of the UK'. It is clear that it includes situations where students remain in their home country, but study with a foreign university (Burgess & Berquist, 2012). Furthermore, it should be distinguished from the movement of students, and instead relates to 'the movement of academic programs and providers between countries' (Knight, 2016, p. 36).

TNE occurs in a variety of ways (Healey, 2015; "What is UK HE TNE?," n.d.) including:

- Online/distance learning – either with or without local support from a partner
- Local delivery partnerships – e.g. franchised delivery, joint and dual degrees, twinning, validation or quality arrangements.
- Through a UK institution's physical presence in another country – e.g. through a branch campus, study centre or flying faculty teaching.

Moreover, the OECD definition (above) only relates to situations where the overseas provider delivers some or all of the programme or education services of the awarding institution (Burgess & Berquist, 2012).

These definitions and categories are problematic for the Programme, during the first three years of which, while in China, all students are potentially studying for a UK degree outside of the UK. However, those students who remain in China for the full four years, do not graduate with the UK degree; those who sojourn in the UK for their final year, do not graduate in a different country to that of the awarding body. Support from the local partner is provided in terms of providing teaching and office facilities and administrative support, but not in terms of teaching. Therefore, TNE does not fully capture the complexity of the Programme.

Furthermore, although the Programme is known as a 'SINO-foreign joint programme' it is not constructed in the manner captured by the definition of joint programmes above.   In this context, the term 'joint programme' has a specific meaning and is defined as follows:

A joint degree program awards one joint qualification upon completion of
the collaborative program requirements established by the partner
institutions (Knight, 2008, p. 15)

The potential to award two degrees at the end of the course does not fall within the definition of a dual or double (joint) degree. Additionally, such awards involve gaining a degree from each partner institution for successfully completing the same workload and learning outcomes (Knight, 2008), which is not the case for the Programme under study. Healey (2015, p. 3) refers to these as 'institutionalised forms of international student exchange' in which students may study at the UK partner for short or long periods of time upon fulfilling the specified conditions. They bridge existing courses in both providers, which the Programme in the present study does not; it was created afresh and jointly developed by both collaborating partners potentially leading to the award of two degrees.

An example of such a course is that written of by Kling (2018) in her article making the case for evolving from dual to joint degrees. Kling's article discussed a new joint programme between American University (AU) and Ritsumeikan University (RU), (the AU-RU programme), that had yet to enrol its first students. At the time of Kling's article, the Programme in the present study had already been operating for four years, and had entered steady-state recruitment; therefore, it would be more appropriate to judge its novelty at the time of course-design. Kling explained that the AU-RU programme shared the benefits of joint programmes. Namely, that it would provide 'an exceptionally rich experience for the students' (Kling, 2018, para. 2), robust programmes for the partners, a shorter duration than dual degrees (commonly 4 years rather than 5), and many benefits for the students. Citing in particular, 'the first-hand international

experience and new perspectives', improvement of foreign language and cross-cultural skills, and the global citizenship outcomes of such programmes (Kling, 2018, para. 18).

There were similarities between the Programme under study and the AU-RU programme, for example, both were undergraduate, rather than graduate programmes, and both feature non-STEM subjects (Law and International Relations respectively). However, examining the details of the AU-RU course in more depth (regarded as unique in its own right), only serves to highlight the innovative nature of the Programme under study.

In the AU-RU programme, students are simultaneously enrolled at both universities, whereas on the SINO-UK programme, students are enrolled only at SINO-U for the first three years and then either at SINO-U and UK-U, or just SINO-U for year 4. The AU-RU students share one curriculum which was jointly designed, some of which is studied at AU and some at RU. The SINO-U students study (potentially) for two degrees simultaneously, the Chinese law degree content is designed and delivered solely by SINO-U academics; the UK law degree is designed and delivered solely by UK-U academics. The teaching is delivered solely at SINO-U for the first three years, then either at UK-U or SINO-U in year 4. Although the LLB Commercial Law programme has a common set of requirements, the SINO-U and UK-U parts of the programme adopt the pedagogical approaches and regulations at the respective institutions as far as possible, even when the students are solely registered at SINO-U.

Although termed a SINO-U Joint Programme, it actually shares the features of a dual degree in that it potentially leads to the awarding of two degrees, but only if the student studies the final year at UK-U. Otherwise, students remaining in China for year 4 only graduate with the Chinese law degree. Therefore, this does not fit within Kling's description of a dual degree. Similarly, the Programme is offered collaboratively by both partners, which Kling associates more with joint degrees. Therefore, it appears that the description of this, as a novel programme, appears to be appropriate.

2.1.3.1.1 The International Programme and Provider Mobility Framework (IPPM)

Subsequent to the design of the Programme under study, Knight and McNamara (2017) published their classification framework for International Programme and Provider Mobility (IPPM) for the British Council and German Academic Exchange Service. It aimed to clarify and standardise the terminology used to describe programmes involved in TNE provision. This framework was elaborated upon in an article by Knight (2016). They defined TNE as 'the mobility of programmes and institutions/providers across international borders' (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 2) and therefore, is potentially relevant for this study. A deeper

examination of the framework will reveal whether the programme falls within the framework categories.

Typically programmes falling within the IPPM framework involve a host-country (in this study that is SINO-U for the I@H stage) as the recipient or collaborating partner, and a foreign-sending HEI/provider offering programmes in the host-country (to the extent this framework is relevant, that would be UK-U for the I@H stage). This framework may not apply to the UK-U or SINO-U year 4 stage. This latter stage only involves the movement of students, whereas the IPPM relates only to 'academic programmes and providers moving to the students and not the students moving to the country of the HEI/provider' (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 6). The framework envisages that some students may have some study abroad experiences, although it is unclear whether that would apply to a full year of study and not just short-term mobility such as field trips or summer schools. When viewed holistically, this entire four-year programme, for those sojourning in the UK, involves both provider and student mobility. For those programmes falling within the framework, IPPM's recognised benefits included enabling students to experience a 'foreign based curriculum, pedagogy and qualification' (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 14) without having to study abroad. However, the current Programme would not offer a foreign qualification unless the student successfully completed year 4 study at UK-U.

The framework divided TNE into two approaches for TNE provision:

- independent – including franchise programmes, branch campuses and self-study distance education; and
- collaborative – including partnership programmes (joint/double/multiple degrees and twinning programmes), joint entities and distance education with a local academic partner.

Independent provision is defined as a programme where '[t]he foreign sending HEI/provider is primarily responsible for the design, delivery and external quality assurance of their academic programmes and qualifications being offered in another country' (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 16). Although UK-U is primarily responsible for designing and delivering its 30% of the Programme, that is not true for the Programme as a whole. Both partners exclusively design and deliver their respective course content within the broader course structure. Furthermore, the Programme's quality assurance is complex. It is evaluated and accredited by the Chinese MOE; year 4 at UK-U is a linked, but standalone UK programme importing some modules studied

at SINO-U as academic credits. The UK-U year 4 programme is designed and delivered by UK-U for a UK-U award and governed by UK quality assurance. During the three year, I@H period, the Chinese MOE, keen to evaluate QAA approaches from other areas of the world, encouraged UK-U to apply their own quality assurance systems, as far as that is compatible with the students' registration as SINO-U students. This also serves as an important part of the I@H preparation as it embeds the UK-U academic culture into the 30% of the Programme delivered at SINO-U.

Furthermore, this could not be described as a branch campus. Nevertheless, UK-U has its own area in a SINO-U teaching building, decorated differently to the rest of SINO-U and with the classrooms set out to facilitate interactive teaching and group discussion, in contrast to the other classroom layouts there. Moreover, the UK-U part of the Programme does incorporate some element of self-study distance learning with remote tutor support for the flying faculty modules. However, this is not a distance learning programme. The self-study element is part of the 4-2-4 pedagogic model, intended to ameliorate the harsh effects of the two-week intensive flying faculty teaching periods. The SINO-U delivery on their part of the Programme is entirely face-to-face teaching.

As this does not appear to fall into the 'independent TNE' category, collaborative TNE must be examined and applied to the Programme. Collaborative provision is defined as 'A foreign sending HEI provider and host country provider working together on the design, delivery and/or external quality assurance of the academic programmes' (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 14). Furthermore, '[t]he qualification(s) can be awarded by either or both host and sending country HEIs in the form of single, joint or double/multiple degrees' (2017, p. 16). Of the types of collaborative programme, it would appear to be more closely aligned with 'partnership programmes' based on the collaboration between the host country HEI (SINO-U) and the sending country HEI (UK-U); particularly in terms of the administrative support and provision of office/teaching space for UK-U staff by SINO-U. However, the students are solely registered at SINO-U throughout the I@H phase, although they are subject to UK-U quality assurance procedures, marking criteria and grading for the UK-U part of the Programme. This builds familiarity with the different grading methods that would be encountered, particularly if they choose to sojourn at UK-U for their final year. However, the grades are then converted to SINO-U's grading structure for entry into their student record system,

In her related article, Knight (2016) describes another form of collaborative programme, twinning programmes, as an example of the import/export model of TNE. These are programmes whereby the curriculum, qualifications and academic oversight are primarily the

responsibility of the foreign sending HEI. This is partly true for the 30% of the Programme provided by UK-U. There is academic oversight from UK-U in the UK and the UK-U staff in China. UK-U staff determine the curriculum, although the UK-U qualification is only awarded if students successfully complete their final year as a registered student of UK-U in the UK. The role of the local host in such programmes is only to provide the space, students, support services and programme advertising. While the foregoing is true to some extent for the 30% provided by UK-U, this is not true for the 70% provided by SINO-U. Furthermore, UK-U take an active part in Programme promotion and recruitment in China.

To determine whether a programme falls within this category the authors set out three questions to be addressed for each kind of collaborative programme. The questions, along with their response for each type of programme are listed in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1 - Characteristics of Collaborative Programmes

	Double/Multiple		Joint	
	IPPM	UK-U	IPPM	UK-U
Who awards the qualification?	Each partner issues their own separate diploma	Only if students study year 4 at UK-U. Otherwise, SINO-U only	Both partners on a single diploma	Two separate degrees awarded if year 4 studied at UK-U. To some extent it could be regarded as a joint degree whereby the credits completed for the award of one programme lead to the award of two or more qualifications. However, to gain the UK-U degree, only the modules from the UK-U modules at SINO-U achieve credit and the year 4 UK-U modules must be passed.
Who has primary responsibility for external quality assurance	All partners from respective quality assurance agency	SINO-U for I@H stage. UK-U only for year 4 at UK-U	All partners from respective quality assurance and accreditation agency	The UK QAA agency is only involved for the year 4 programme at UK-U. MOE only for I@H stage.
Who has primary responsibility for design of the academic programme/curriculum	All partners	Each partner designs their own respective parts of the programme. UK-U part subject to approval from MOE and in consultation with partner. There is no jointly delivered curriculum.	Both partners	Each partner designs their own respective parts of the programme. UK-U part subject to approval from MOE and in consultation with partner. There is no jointly delivered curriculum.

As the table demonstrates, this study does not fit neatly into the categories of either double/multiple or joint programmes.

Nor is this a top-up or 3+1 degree which the framework describes as those whereby 'the student in the host country studies three years towards a local programme after which they can articulate/transfer to the final year of a sending country programme' (2017, p. 36). Indeed at the design stage, both partners and the MOE were adamant that the Programme must not fall into this category; instead the SINO-U and UK-U parts (including year 4 at UK-U) must amount to a bespoke programme for the Programme's students in which they progress through the four years in a logical and coherent manner. This Programme was regarded by all involved as the first step to forming a deeper relationship, which has since developed to include a joint research centre.

The Programme in the current study shares more features of a collaborative programme, but blends some features of an independent programme, particularly in terms of design and delivery of the UK-U modules, importation of UK-U quality assurance and the lack of shared teaching or delivery of modules. However, it is evident that, again, the IPPM framework categories do not wholly describe the Programme under study.

Consequently, as demonstrated by the foregoing, a different category to the examples of TNE previously discussed may be more appropriate for the Programme under study, and it may fall within Healey's (2015, p. 9) proposed TNE classification of a 'deep transnational partnership'. Whether it fits within an existing category at all is doubtful and reflects Healey's (2015, p. 13) contention that '…the current typology fails to do justice to the richness, diversity and complexity of many TNE partnerships'.

2.1.3.2 Internationalisation at Home

If this Programme does not fit neatly within the category of TNE, then I@H may be more appropriate. I@H rose to prominence in a position paper published by the European Association of International Education (EAIE) (Crowther et al., 2000). Its purpose was to 'make students interculturally and internationally competent without leaving their own city for study-related purposes' (Beelen, 2011, p. 251). Intercultural aspects of the teaching and learning process are important for achieving this, such as a diverse student body, internationalisation of the curriculum and culturally sensitive pedagogy (Crowther et al., 2000). Additionally, mentor schemes or social activities (Harrison, 2015), extracurricular activities and cultural liaisons can benefit the students directly; whereas international research and scholarly activity can have less

obvious benefits, but nevertheless, impact positively on their student experience (Crowther et al., 2000).

A response to the criticism that student mobility only benefits more affluent students, I@H focuses on those studying at their home university. It is relevant for students on the first three years of the Programme under study; and for the entire course of study for those not sojourning in the UK. The EAIE paper credited as launching this concept defined I@H as being

Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility. (Crowther et al., 2000, p. 5).

This broad definition was reformulated by Beelen and Jones (2015) who claimed it is

…the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments. (p. 69)

The benefits include '…*inter alia*, to provide home students with a portfolio of globally-relevant skills and knowledge without them leaving their home country' (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 878) with the intention that '…shared spaces can lead to improved intercultural skills and understanding' (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 897). However, this rationale, based on the assumption that home students share the same characteristics, should be treated with caution (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). The term 'home students' is widely used in the literature to distinguish 'home' and 'international' students; home students are generally those who attend university in the same country as the one where they received their secondary school or other prior education. However, in many countries, cohorts of students are rarely homogenous in nature and may comprise students from many ethnic backgrounds or different nationalities. For that reason, Carroll (2015) uses the term 'diverse' to refer to the student body rather than labelling them as home or international. This encompasses the various factors that might be found within the student body, such as their educational mobility (those who move across national boundaries), pedagogic variation in the style of teaching and learning they are accustomed to, and whether learning in English is conducted while still developing their language proficiency. Therefore, such students may already be gaining an internationalised experience simply through being enrolled at their home university. Consequently, in referring to interaction between the sojourning students' and students at UK-U, the term 'UK-based students' will be used to more accurately represent the 'home' student body. Conversely, in

some universities there may be little diversity among the students in the cohort, whether that applies to the SINO-U students will be explored in Chapter 4.

Although not a replacement for international travel, Harrison (2015, p. 414) suggests that I@H 'exists against the backdrop that home students are able to receive (and should be entitled to expect) an international HE experience despite their own lack of mobility'. In so doing he echoed the EAIE Special Interest Group's position which, as the original proponents of I@H, outlined its key features. Their view was that it is:

- pervasive throughout the programme, not only in specialist or elective modules;
- achieved through internationalisation of the curriculum; working in collaboration with other universities online internationally and engaging with students from diverse backgrounds in the classroom and via extra-curricular activities; and
- involves everybody in the university, not only academic staff.

With regard to the Programme, the pervasiveness of internationalisation is inescapable, studying laws from two jurisdictions, in diverse educational systems, being taught by staff from two collaborating universities based in different countries, mark this out as fulfilling the first two criteria to a large extent. Visiting, and China-based UK-U staff, their teaching, and extra-curricular activities, bring an international perspective to the whole campus; along with the collaboration between professional services and academic staff from both institutions. Providing opportunities to engage with students from diverse backgrounds is one of the most challenging parts of the first three years' study, nevertheless this is achieved to some extent through the annual Summer Schools. This challenge is not limited to the present study, indeed Harrison and Peacock (2010) cite a number of studies (including Teekens, 2007) demonstrating that mixing international and home students on campus is one of the most challenging aspects of I@H.

Students who stay at home and engage on transnational programmes or those such as the Programme in this study, suffer the shock and anxiety associated with encountering a different academic culture similar to that studied when sojourning abroad (Carroll, 2015). Some suggest that adapting to a new academic culture can be more acute than to a new sociocultural environment (Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010). This applies to all students during the I@H stage of the Programme in the present study, whether their final year is spent in China or the UK. As the issues faced can be similar to those experienced by any student enrolling on a university course for the first time (Jones, 2017), the I@H stage focused on developing the skills needed

to build familiarity with, and thrive in, the UK-U academic culture. This included academic writing skills, researching in law, good academic practice with citing legal sources and the works of others, and the skills associated with writing courseworks rather than examinations.

Consequently, the Programme's students 'develop intercultural communication skills' in some of the respects highlighted by Harrison and Peacock (2010) through an approach to pedagogy and university regulations quite different to those encountered on the Chinese part of their degree at SINO-U. Carroll's (2015) work relating to international students is helpful to identify the issues affecting sojourners; for the purposes of this study, it can be applied to the pre-sojourn activities and UK-U educational experience at SINO-U. The I@H preparation aimed to meet many of the concerns which Carroll identified as affecting students, such as understanding new academic assumptions and expectations, particularly with regard to marking standards/criteria, the educational context, language issues, participating in lectures and seminars, support and guidance, and the usefulness of the award for their future professional lives. Furthermore, it aimed to counter some of the teachers' commonly cited reactions to international students such as believing the students are deficient in essential skills/educational practices, that adjustment is for the student to make and that the teacher/institution had little to learn from this cross-cultural engagement. Although it was important that the students were prepared for the sojourn and the academic culture encountered during the I@H stage, this was a two-way process in which UK-U, as an institution, also learned much which was fed back to the experience of the UK-U student experience as a whole. In the innovative 4-2-4 pedagogical model using a VLE for the 4 weeks online pre-study and 4 weeks online post-study support they also use 'information technology to transcend international boundaries' (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 878). The totality of this experience fosters 'a sense of global citizenship, agency and responsibility among students and staff'. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the discussions on culture and cultural distance, it does bring with it some anxiety when negotiating the intercultural experience.

The activities occurring at SINO-U form the I@H aspect of the study; consequently, I@H literature is relevant to determine the extent to which pre-sojourn activities may prepare the sojourning students for their time in the UK. Furthermore, those who thrive in their international education experience may create a 'third space' in which they draw on the most useful aspects of both learning environments (Ryan and Viete, 2009, as cited in Carroll, 2015) whether at SINO-U or UK-U in this study.

Although I@H provides a vehicle through which students can acquire a measure of intercultural and international competencies, it should not be viewed as independent; rather, internationalisation and I@H should be regarded as interdependent. This is one of the Programme's hallmarks for its students, especially those undertaking short or longer-term travel for study purposes. Although the Programme aimed to equip the students with the skills needed for their sojourn and to build familiarity with interacting with host-culture nationals, it should be clear that it was not a formal sociocultural preparation or evaluation programme, although as a result of research undertaken for this study that may be an element that would be introduced in the future.

I@H and TNE (to the extent that the Programme can be classified as such) provide opportunities for students to benefit from an internationalised education. It is a concept which Altbach and de Wit (2018, para. 6) argue should be emphasised more strongly and has 'entered the vocabulary of higher education around the world'. For the purposes of the present study, this experience prepares the students for their UK sojourn, and generates a course identity (Carroll, 2015). It aims to avoid the unhelpful 'sink or swim' experience that some students experience when immersed in the host-culture during the sojourn (Savicki, 2008). Instead, in line with Savicki's recommendations, the I@H period brings the students into contact with host-culture tutors and students who are supportive of multicultural values. The intention being to develop their cultural knowledge of the host- academic and social cultures and thereby assist their adjustment during the sojourn. The impact on their adjustment to the academic and social culture in the UK is the focus of this study and will be explored in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

2.2 Cultural Background

The concept of culture is not a simple issue; it requires the unpacking of many component parts. It is clear from the literature that international students undergo a period of culture shock and adjustment to the new culture. In light of this, before examining the position of ingroups; outgroups; the distance between them; and the adjustment that sojourners undergo, it is important to define the term 'culture' to understand what the students are adjusting to. Once defined and explained, how groups may be divided into ingroups, outgroups and possibly also between groups, should be considered. The effect these distinctions can have, such as giving rise to ingroup bias, can exacerbate cultural distance between groups and, consequently, the culture shock that individuals can experience when studying in a different culture. This is particularly evident among those travelling between societies tending to uphold the ideals of collectivist and individualistic cultures (e.g. China to UK).

At a macro level, culture is a 'contested concept' which can be difficult to define (Floyd & Morrison, 2014) and the continued relevance of which is subject to question. Harrison and Peacock (2010) conducted a review of the literature related to the concept and noted that some view it as outdated, especially when considering the effects of globalisation, migration and multiculturalism in society. Furthermore, J. Jackson (2010) argues that globalisation can lead to 'cultural hybridity'. The extent to which these effects are felt across China may be difficult to gauge and it will be interesting to see whether the students comment on it.

When grouping individuals together under a cultural label, a stereotype is formed (Floyd & Morrison, 2014); however, each person does not necessarily conform to it (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Nevertheless, bearing those caveats in mind, there is still evidence of the concept's validity for identifiable and meaningful between-group differences (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Heng, 2019). Similarly, and importantly for this study, it should be recognised that, when referring to a society's identification with collectivist or individualist ideals, these historical terms oversimplify the nature of life within society. They do not necessarily represent the more nuanced cultural milieu existing within the society (Montgomery, 2010; Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2012) or the cultural dilution that may result from globalisation (Holliday, 1999).

2.2.1 Small Cultures

Holliday (1999, p. 237/8) is one scholar who contests the continuing relevance of culture at the macro level, preferring instead to divide cultures into 'large' and 'small' cultures. He believes the 'large culture' approach overgeneralises and gives rise to 'otherization of foreign educators, students and societies'. His theory was written within the context of language education, but he suggested that the distinction is not related to linguistics alone. With this in mind, this section considers whether it is appropriate to adopt Holliday's distinction for this study.

In this formulation of the concept, large culture is that which relates to 'ethnic', 'national', or 'international' labelling and, as previously seen, can tend to overgeneralise. Small cultures are more wide-ranging and the term 'signifies any small grouping' (Holliday, 1999, p. 237). Holliday suggests that this has relevance for educational research as it can encompass any grouping e.g. a particular class of students or 'the composite of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping' (Holliday, 1999, p. 247), but without focusing on the features generally attributed to international students for example.

While this may be appropriate in one sense and allows the individual nature of the sojourn experience to be examined, to some extent the large culture position should also be considered; but not to the extent that all participants are regarded as having the same characteristics. The

present study does not involve a group of international students from various countries, instead all participants are Chinese and will share some common knowledge and understandings from their backgrounds; in the same way that the students researched in the papers in Savicki's (2008) 'Developing Intercultural Competence and Transformation' were American and shared similarities from their backgrounds. These commonalities expressed by the students, Holliday suggests do not represent a large culture as such but 'how they socially construct their image of their own culture' and understand their own behaviour (Holliday, 1999, p. 253). Nevertheless, the commonalities do indeed demonstrate a wider, shared knowledge and understanding. J. Jackson (2010, p. 23) believes that

> [t]his set of collective meanings and understandings (e.g. learned ways of thinking, expressing emotions) is believed to provide a common frame of reference to help members of a culture adapt to their environment, make sense of their world co-ordinate their activities and construct their cultural identities.

Therefore, such large culture characteristics can be useful as a starting point to establish a frame of reference for the issues experienced by the participants in the present study. Furthermore, some suggest they are necessary for communities to maintain their identity in the face of globalisation (Paracka & Pynn, 2017). However, these characteristics should only be seen as a starting point, otherwise the individuality of the sojourn experience will be lost (Moon, 2008, as cited in J. Jackson, 2010; Montgomery, 2010).

Holliday (1999, p. 248) defined small culture as 'a dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningfully within those circumstances'. Therefore, the sojourning students in the present study could be regarded as a small cultural group. Indeed, each group may be comprised of a number of linked, small cultural groups, e.g. the students who share a flat at SINO-U and/or UK-U each share their own cultural unit, and those who participate (with other students) in the various UK-U internships. This relates to Holliday's argument that culture may be 'multi-layered' or 'laminated' consisting of groups within groups (Rogerson-Revell, 1997, as cited in Holliday, 1999). He regards culture therefore as relating more to the activities that the group undertakes, than to group composition. In conclusion, the small culture model may be useful for considering the closed group(s) to which the participants belong, but the importance of wider cultural understandings should not be ignored.

2.2.2 Definitions of culture

Whether the cultural group to which the participants belong is large or small, it is important to understand what the term 'culture' means. Therefore, definitions of culture are a useful starting point for understanding what it includes. Ruben (2015) suggested that it includes

…the symbols, images, principles and practices that social collectives share
as a consequence of communication (p. 23)

which give rise to distinctive cultures.

Harrison and Peacock (2010) define culture as

…the collection of socially-learned rules, norms, values and shared
meanings that influence individuals' behaviour within a population.

and that it

…can be seen as the creative product of individuals whose thoughts and
behaviour are in constant flux. (p. 881)

Lumby and Foskett (2015), for the purposes of their article which considered culture within universities, defined it as follows

culture is seen as the patterns of values, beliefs, behaviour and symbolic
artefacts, which together characterize one group as distinctive from
another and underpin the usually unspoken assumptions that guide
thought and action within an organization (p. 4)

Deaux (1993) highlighted that, when considering culture, context is important. Albeit a non-exhaustive list, aspects of culture can include strength of social hierarchies, levels of ethnocentrism, the role of family, politeness and 'face', attitudes to uncertainty and attitudes to time (Harrison & Peacock, 2010); ethnicity, race and gender (Deaux, 1993); religion, social class, family heritage, life experiences, internet usage and consumer choices (Harrison, 2015). It is noticeable that internet usage and consumer choices are playing an active role in changing the dominant culture in China.

Notwithstanding the individual differences between people, certain features demonstrate a dominant culture within a nation. Hofstede (2011) felt that culture is inherited rather than learned and summarises the areas in which cultures vary as typified by:

- Attitudes to power distance

- Individualist or collective society
- Attitudes towards masculinity and femininity
- Uncertainty avoidance

Hofstede's categorisation has been criticised in recent years as it can lead to stereotyping and labelling (Holliday, 1997, as cited in Montgomery, 2010). Although Montgomery suggests the non-essentialist view of culture espoused by Holliday's small culture concept is preferred, the large culture position can provide a good starting point, indeed many studies referred to in this research begin from such a point and the student participants use such broad categories to describe themselves.

Lumby and Foskett (2015) emphasised the importance of the concept of culture in HE. Citing Jenks' (1993) 'typology of culture' they identified at least four ways of observing culture:

- As an outcome of the cognitive activity of the individual
- As the collective product of a group (e.g. the culture of a university)
- As an artistic category embodied in concrete artefacts and ideas
- As a way of life of a large social group (e.g. the culture of nations)

Each of these categories is important in this study. The cognitive activity of the students will be shaped by their cultural background, whether that is from a single culture or multi-dimensional based on their experiences during the course. They will be exposed to the differing university cultures through simultaneously being students of two universities from different countries. Their ideas will be shaped by the culture and legal tradition of the country in which they spent their childhoods; although during this time, via social media, they may have been exposed to the cultural traditions of other nations. Nevertheless, during their year abroad they will be surrounded by a different cultural background.

Consequently, the background culture of the sojourning students was considered. Their social nature will have been formed by their upbringing in Chinese society as a whole, and the specific area of China in which they lived; as well as within Chinese academic environments (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, as cited in Floyd & Morrison, 2014).

It is also important to consider whether an individual's cultural identity is fixed or whether it can change over time. Ryan (2000) felt that we are continuously being constructed by our culture and that this is a continuous process. Similarly, Harrison (2015, p. 413) suggests that an individual's cultural identity is fluid over the course of their lives; or even that they have

'multiple cultural identities that are activated within different circumstances'. The notion of 'multiple, ever-changing individual identities' is also supported by Floyd and Morrison (2014) and J. Jackson (2010) who sees it resulting from increased contact between cultures and regards it as dynamic and will change to adapt to the environment.

During their sojourn and the preceding three years, the sojourning students' identities may have been challenged on two fronts; society in general, and the UK academic environment. The course upon which they were enrolled is designed to assist them with both aspects, although their SINO-U preparation may have prepared them more for the new academic cultural milieu; this will be examined in Chapter 5.

The Programme under study may facilitate the creation of multiple cultural identities within the students, particularly those who sojourn in the UK. These identities may change throughout the Programme after being exposed to western educational and social experiences (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Students may have challenged their idea of themselves and initiated change in their social identity. In a US study, Deaux (1993) identified the transition to college as an important point for changes in identity. Such changes may be magnified in cohorts such as the one studied here due to the added dimension of being exposed to two different academic cultures.

When writing about identity and culture in the caring professions (e.g. nursing and teaching) Floyd and Morrison (2014, p. 46) contended that "an individual's professional and personal identities are heavily interlinked". This can also be true for students. Situating the study within the context of the students' culture provides a useful starting point for considering the issues that may affect them and the changes they may experience. However, there is also an inherent danger which must be acknowledged – considering culture, especially in terms of nationality, can lead to stereotyping and ignore the personal characteristics of each individual. The SINO-UK students shared a common university education; however, their social and linguistic backgrounds may differ as they came from a variety of locations in China. This aligns with the culture shock literature, which highlights that personality characteristics are important factors in adjustment to a new culture. Deaux (1993, p. 4) also considers "how individual motivations and experiences combine with social norms and situations to influence self-definition".

The notion of self-definition also highlights the danger of classifying students as either 'home' or 'international' and, even with the SINO-UK students, viewing the cohort as all sharing the same characteristics. A broad category such as 'UK' or 'Chinese' students are unlikely to be a homogenous group. They may share a country of origin; however, this is a broad stereotype

which conceals the many differences between individuals in that group (Jones, 2017). As seen when discussing internationalisation, universities accommodate a diverse population, within the UK-U Law School cohort, approximately 29% are 'international' students; 71% are home students. However, those classified as home students, may come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and may not have been born in the UK; demonstrating that students come from a range of socio-cultural backgrounds. To some degree, all students must adjust to a new environment when entering a university in their home country or in another country (Carroll, 2015; Jones, 2017).

It is important to consider the students' cultural backgrounds because of the differences between UK-based students and those based in China for the first three years of their studies. Especially due to the cultural distance that may exist between them, the higher level of anxiety that this may give rise to between those from the society upholding individualist ideals (UK) and that upholding collectivist ideals (China), and the recognition in the literature that a bigger cultural distance exacerbates the culture shock experienced (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2015). The cultural dissimilarity between both groups means the group members have 'fewer shared reference points and conflicting perspectives' (Harrison, 2015, p. 414) which increases the strain and challenges experienced when interacting with each other. Consequently, students may find it difficult to mix and interact across cultures (Carroll, 2015). Minimising the effects of cultural distance and increasing intercultural interaction are important aspects of this course; it will be interesting to examine the impact on adjustment to the sojourners' host-culture.

Cultural distance is important to individuals, as those from the same culture share similar values and certain ways of behaving. When individuals from different cultures are placed together, there can be a tendency to interact with those sharing their own cultural background; their own ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is less stressful to do so and can lead to the existence of 'ingroup bias', a tendency to overestimate the similarities within the ingroup and the differences with the outgroup; especially where the cultural difference is greater, i.e. between those from societies tending to be closer to individualist and collectivist backgrounds (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Savicki, Adams, & Binder, 2008). In this study, this would be evident between the UK-based students and those initially based in China. It could be harmful to the sojourners' cultural adjustment as it could result in competition rather than co-operation between the two groups. Measures have been taken in the design of the course to reduce this and the extent to which these are successful may influence the sojourners' adjustment to the host-culture. These measures include attempting to facilitate contact between the two student groups during the

first three years of study; and mixing UK-U and SINO-U students as far as possible during the sojourn year.

2.3 Sojourners

Whichever driver for internationalisation is key, one of the most visible signs of a university's internationalisation agenda can be the presence of international students (Altbach, 1991) and recruiting international students brings challenges. These students are known as sojourners; in research literature they are a group of individuals spending either a short or longer period of time abroad (e.g. Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2002; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008), referred to as a 'sojourn'. Sojourners are a category of individuals who experience cross-cultural contact, and their unifying feature is that their stay is generally temporary in nature, with an intention to return to their home country when the sojourn ends.

There could be various reasons for a sojourn, some of which are very brief such as sojourns associated with tourism; some are longer, such as those most frequently occurring in research literature associated with studying or working abroad temporarily. Students are recognised as a distinct group of temporary sojourners (Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012) and there is a wealth of research material available on them. Temporary sojourners should be distinguished from cross-cultural contact associated with moving abroad permanently as an immigrant or refugee to the host-culture; partly because different indices are used to measure adjustment for different types of cross-cultural interaction (Ward et al., 2002).

Sojourns carry with them differing degrees of commitment to their host society. Tourists, by virtue of their sojourn do not need to commit to the host society; those studying or working abroad for a period ranging generally from about 6 months to 5 years demonstrate more commitment, but not as much as those who move permanently to the host-culture (Ward et al., 2002). Any sojourn includes cross-cultural contact, especially with individuals from the host nation, but also potentially with other foreign nationals and is said to involve 'between-society' contact; that is contact between individuals from different cultures. Encounters involving the individual and societal issues faced by migrants or refugees are referred to as 'in-society/in or within culture' contact (Armes & Ward, 1989).

One feature distinguishing sojourners from some migrants or refugees is that generally, sojourners move abroad voluntarily. For students, the purpose is usually to undertake or complete their studies, and then to return home (although some sojourners may ultimately remain in the host-country). Whether sojourning temporarily or moving permanently, the individual can feel caught between two cultures ((QAA), 2015b) and the process of adaptation

(or non-adaptation) to the host culture is the subject of this study. Specifically, the impact of the cultural immersion provided by the I@H stage.

2.3.1 Cultural Adjustment and Intercultural Competence

Linked to the process of adapting to a new culture, referred to as cultural acculturation or cultural adjustment, is the concept of intercultural competence. Arasaratnam-Smith (2017) explains that intercultural competence is a term which is often used interchangeably with acculturation, adaptation and multiculturalism. She surmises that this is due to its origins in cultural acculturation studies. For conceptual clarity therefore, it is important to define the terms and establish how they relate to the present study in which Cultural Adjustment and Cultural Learning Theory will be used to evaluate the students' host-culture adjustment.

Achieving a consensual definition of intercultural competence has proved difficult (Deardorff, 2008). At the time of writing her chapter, Deardorff explained that the definition achieving the most agreement was 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes'.

Most of the alternative definitions considered in Deardorff's study also focused on issues related to communication and behaviour in intercultural situations. Similarly, Montgomery (2010) suggests that the concept emphasises the significance of developing cultural knowledge for both developing language proficiency and enabling the speaker to develop cross-cultural understanding.

Deardorff (2008, p. 40) explained the features of an interculturally competent student are that s/he would be 'curious to learn about other cultures', would regularly look for opportunities to come into contact with them, would accept other cultures without judging them, would value and respect the other culture and show interest in them. Furthermore, s/he would consider how reactions would be viewed by others, adapt responses appropriately and reflect on interactions. Various models can be employed to evaluate intercultural competence; however they are beyond the scope of this study and will not be evaluated here.

Although clearly a part of living in another culture, it is evident that the scope of intercultural competence as defined above is narrower than the experience of adjusting to life in another social and academic culture and from this, it is understandable why intercultural competence has particular relevance for language learners. Nevertheless, it could offer a useful lens to look at the students' life experiences in the UK.

More recently, Gregersen-Hermans (2017, p. 67) suggested that intercultural competence is 'perceived as an important and significant element of global readiness', which supports the links others have made between intercultural competence and global citizenship (e.g. Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Murray-Garcia & Tervalon, 2017), thus highlighting the important role universities play in its development.

Gregersen-Hermans (2017, p. 71) attempted to draw out some themes from the diverse models and definitions relating to intercultural competence, only some of which apply to the present study. The main points of relevance from her list were as follows:

- Applying to both the I@H phase and the sojourn itself, she said that 'intercultural competence builds on the awareness of the self as a cultural being, recognising that one is a member of various cultural collectives simultaneously;

- She highlighted that it 'consists of components in the domains of knowledge, skills, and motivation and attitude. Particularly that intercultural competence development is driven by 'motivational components and attitudes' and confidence is enhanced by 'positive interactions with culturally different others'. It is possible to infer from this the importance of personal characteristics.

- Highlighting its relationship with linguistic competence, she suggested that 'a minimum level of linguistic competence is conditional for culturally competent behaviour'. Presumably, this refers to the fact that intercultural competence is rooted in interpersonal communication.

- Finally, she suggests that intercultural competence can be developed over time and in stages. This highlights the importance of the immersion in the host-academic, and to some extent, social cultures which is a key feature of the I@H stage in the present study.

Cultural mentors, especially in I@H, can play an important role in intercultural competence development (Y. Wang et al., 2017). It will be interesting to see the extent to which that occurs in this case.

Considering the above, Gregersen-Hermans drew on themes from one of her earlier publications and suggested three elements to be considered in the development of intercultural competence, all of which are relevant for the present study:

1. Student's personality, motivation for intercultural contact and communication skills;

2. Student's 'personal biography' including 'living independently from their parents, previous experience abroad, and fluency in the language of instruction' (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017, p. 74); and

3. Quality of contact with culturally different others; although some of the elements identified in this category have little relevance to the present study e.g. friendship potential (the intercultural contact during the I@H stage was almost entirely with UK-U tutors). Furthermore, she refers to specific pedagogical interventions; however, rather than an intercultural competence module or other such intervention, to the extent it was developed in the present study, this was achieved via the design of UK-U's 30% of the Programme.

Intercultural competence is clearly relevant for situations where students sojourn abroad, but its applicability to I@H has also been established. However, Gregersen-Hermans' (2017) discussion of this was linked with internationalisation of the curriculum in diverse classrooms. The extent to which the SINO-U classes could be regarded as diverse is extremely limited as all students here are Chinese nationals from mainland China. However, during the I@H phase, whether intending to sojourn or remain in China, they are all immersed in a UK academic environment and interacting with UK-U academics for 30% of their study; some also interact with UK-based students, along with any other intercultural interactions they may engage in beyond the programme in and outside of SINO-U. Any intercultural competence developed during this time may help the students to function in the globalised world.

Engaging in a process of intercultural competence development as part of a university course is only part of a much longer process. Like language proficiency, it is argued that intercultural competence is a lifelong journey (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). Therefore, it would be wrong to regard those who complete a sojourn or I@H programme as interculturally competent. Paracka and Pynn (2017) argue that this continuing development means an individual's cultural identity will continue to change as a consequence of learning to interact with those from other cultures and argue that empathy is an important characteristic when developing intercultural competence. Once development of intercultural competence has begun, it is argued to be transformative in nature (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017), although it does not happen simply by being exposed to other cultures. The resultant changes to cultural identity can be challenging for students, as was the experience for the Chinese students in Wang et al.'s (2017) study who struggled with balancing showing respect for other cultures, with keeping their own cultural identity.

The foregoing represent the accounts of intercultural competence in operation commonly occurring in recent literature. To add to the conceptual confusion, J. Jackson (2010) cites an older definition of intercultural competence to apply to her studies. This definition does not equate with the currently accepted definitions, but is closer to the circumstances of the present study. This opines that intercultural competence is 'an adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture' (Taylor, 1994, as cited in J. Jackson, 2010, p. 32).

In summary, it is clear that intercultural competence is relevant to some extent for the present study. It is part of adjusting to life in another culture, whether that it is experienced through I@H or by sojourning abroad. Therefore, along with the cultural adjustment literature, it could offer a useful lens through which to explore the students' adjustment.

2.3.2 Issues affecting sojourners

Sojourning students are impacted in various ways, not only do they experience a new academic environment, but they also encounter a new social environment and way of life; this 'skills deficit' caused by encountering such differences is acknowledged to cause anxiety (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). This is regarded as particularly problematic early in the sojourn, for example Carroll (2015, p. 44) states that 'most students find the first weeks tough, and some find it shocking'. This applies not only in terms of adapting to a new social culture, but also the 'learning shock' of studying in a new academic culture, which although they come to value experiencing the new teaching methods, is often 'the greatest and least expected challenge' for them (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015, p. 964). Part of the new academic culture requiring adjustment are new assessment methods, which affected the students in Heng's (2019) study, critical thinking, and plagiarism (Montgomery, 2010). However, arguably the term plagiarism itself could also be regarded as a culturally loaded term, with different pedagogical cultures viewing the use of other people's work differently to a UK academic's view of plagiarism. Adapting to different academic cultural requirements such as language, expected writing styles, critical thinking, learning to use the work of others, and academic conventions were taught and developed during the first year of the I@H phase and continued during the following two years. This level of preparation is not possible for many students choosing to study abroad who enter directly into the first year or later stages of a programme without such intense prior I@H preparation.

Sojourning often includes trying to conduct their daily and academic lives in a language that is not their native tongue. Common themes in the literature show the key issues that students

deal with and expectations they set for themselves; these can be increased by the high expectations of their families and friends, particularly considering the high cost of studying abroad. These include learning to live in the host-culture, shopping, eating and socialising; succeeding in the host environment; and improving their ability to communicate in the host-culture language, acquiring and employing the subject-specific language for their studies (Carroll, 2015; Ryan & Carroll, 2005).

Thus, language proficiency is key for conducting their daily lives, interacting with host-culture students, and academic success (Straker, 2016). Heng (2019) suggested that, for first year students, weaker language proficiency is also linked with a reluctance to speak in class. Arguably, this may also be the case for those entering directly into later years in a programme, where that is their first experience in the country. The differences experienced are commonly a source of stress for students and contribute to the sense of culture shock they experience, especially because they are attempting to cope with these challenges without their normal support systems (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). Difficulties with adjustment can lead to students feeling isolated and lonely (e.g. as exhibited by students in Larsen, 2015) and can hinder progress. However, it is important to understand the context of participants in studies cited in the literature, for example Adams (2008) reported that her students were concerned about their language proficiency, especially at the start of the sojourn. However, in contrast to the students in the present study who had studied in English during the I@H phase and achieved a pre-set level of competency before sojourning; 60% of Adams' students were not proficient in the host-language before starting their sojourn, and received in-country language tuition during their 12 week study abroad period.

The language proficiency of sojourning students can also represent a challenge for academic staff; along with opinions regarding the academic skills or different pedagogical traditions experienced previously by the students (Carroll, 2015). This can often result in a culturally imperialistic approach becoming evident (McLean & Ransom, 2005) and illustrates that even within a university demonstrating an institutional commitment to deep internationalisation, differences in approach can be evident at an individual level. Within my own school, the SINO-UK programme is of key strategic importance, nevertheless there were frequent conversations before the sojourners arrived referencing issues such as inability to think critically; plagiarism among the SINO-UK students, referring this back to their prior educational experience; and, even without any experiences of teaching the students, comments about their English language proficiency. Language proficiency was equated to intellectual ability/deficiency and a concern to 'maintain standards', suggesting that students whose language proficiency was weaker were

somehow less capable of analytical thought. Such discussions support Straker's (2016, p. 300) argument that discussions regarding international students 'plays to a deficit discourse' and often their language proficiency and culture of origin dominate discussions about their participation in the host-culture pedagogic environment.

In light of the above, sojourning in another culture is recognised as a major, stressful life event (Heng, 2019; Savicki & Adams, 2007). Students suffer the usual transition issues faced by home students, in addition to some associated specifically with cross-cultural contact (Sovic, 2008); historically referred to as culture shock. Categorising the sojourning experience as one of 'culture shock' has fallen out of favour in recent years (Searle & Ward, 1990). However, for some, culture shock is still relevant as one of the aspects of adaptation (Sovic, 2008) related to the learning of social rules (Savicki & Adams, 2007); and is still frequently referred to in contemporary literature ((QAA), 2015b; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Guan & Jones, 2011; Tang, 2009).

However disorientating it may be to sojourn in a foreign culture; the new societal rules can be learned over time. Oberg (1960) maintained that rather than being born with culture, individuals learn it. He believed '…the environment does not change. What has changed is your attitude towards it' (1960, p. 144) and, is a process which occurs over time (Brown, 2016; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Coming to terms with these cultural differences is said to bring feelings of mastery and excitement, appreciation of the host culture and a clearer understanding of one's own culture; this process being the foundation for intercultural development (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008).

It is clear that during this transitory period, the approaches learned in the home educational system will continue to impact on the sojourner (Kelly & Moogan, 2012); more heavily at the beginning when transition issues are most difficult (Savicki & Adams, 2007). The learner will have to reconcile the ideas and approaches which conflict with those they already hold (Carroll, 2015).

Savicki et al. (2008) suggest that adjustment is most difficult in the sojourn's early stages and plateaus after 4 – 6 months; this is regarded as being a reasonably predictable learning curve (Ward et al., 2002). The SINO-U students sojourned for one academic year. Furthermore, those starting later in a course demonstrate more adjustment problems ((QAA), 2015b); the SINO-U students entered into the third year of the UK LLB programme where the students had already established friendship groups. It will be interesting to see whether this made socialising with UK-based students more difficult.

Moreover, navigating everyday life is recognised as a stressful transitory phase, as it brings sojourners into direct contact with the host-culture ((QAA), 2015b; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). Indeed, Adams (2008) regarded the experience at this stage as overwhelming. Adjustment is felt to occur through sojourners meeting challenges and resolving between-culture encounters (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). Student sojourners experience stress as they navigate the foreign culture and organise their own lives immediately from their arrival at the host-country airport. Their first experience is often an interview with Border Agency officials; after which they must navigate foreign transport systems to find their way to the host-university town or city (Adams, 2008). Studies have found that their initial feelings are of nervousness, anxiety, depression and stress (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012); any excitement quickly dissipates (Hannigan, 1988; Lysgaard, 1955). Sojourners need to be able to adapt quickly to the new cultural milieu ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Ward et al., 2002); individuals and researchers have described this as a 'sink or swim' experience (Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Savicki & Selby, 2008; Ward et al., 2002; Wu, 2002). To adapt, a process of 'cultural learning' must occur so sojourners can function in the new environment (Bochner, 2003).

Generally, the first few weeks are characterised by feelings often exacerbated by learning in a second language and include stress, uncertainty, self-doubt, and lack of self-esteem (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Classroom environments and pedagogical approaches are unfamiliar (Carroll, 2015; Chang, 2011); especially where the culture gap is widest. Studies frequently cite this applying particularly to Asian sojourners, often coming from China ((QAA), 2015b; Guan & Jones, 2011; Tang, 2009). Unsurprisingly, sojourners struggle with feelings of loneliness and homesickness (Adler, 1975; Brown, 2016; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Searle & Ward, 1990) and feel isolated (Guan & Jones, 2011; Sovic, 2008).

Clearly, cross-cultural contact, including sojourning in an overseas university is a major stressful event (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2002), involving 'complex processes encompassing the interaction of a large number of variables' (Searle & Ward, 1990, p. 459). However, as Oberg suggested, culture can be learned over time.

2.4 Adjustment (Culture Learning Theory)

Leading the move away from the general theory of culture shock, a number of eminent researchers in the field produced a leading book on the issue (Ward et al., 2002). Now in its second edition and ironically titled "The Psychology of Culture Shock", the authors highlight the movement from culture shock towards other models. A movement noted by others, for

example the social learning theory written about by Friedman, Dyke and Murphy (2009). However, as with many areas, terminology often presents issues and culture shock (including Oberg's work) is still referenced in contemporary literature, even where the work of Ward et al. is applied (e.g. Adams, 2008).

The text and other publications by Ward et al., highlight that, in more recent years, studies have focused around three models falling within, what the authors termed, the ABC framework. This focuses on the Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive effects of cross-cultural contact. Rather than the clinical models based on 'stress and coping theories'; the ABC model recognised that contemporary studies preferred to view the sojourning experience more positively. Instead of viewing sojourners as 'passive victims of a trauma stemming from a noxious event' (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 65), they are seen as being involved in a cultural learning experience which involves change (Berry, 2005; Bochner, 1982; Ward et al., 2002). This change of approach led to the development of the 'culture learning theory', resonating with Oberg's view that culture can be learned over time. Similarly, Lysgaard recognised this when describing cross-cultural contact as a process of 'attitude change' which is 'embedded in the complicated process of adjustment and readjustment involved in a person's sojourn in a foreign country and return' (1955, p. 45).

Of particular interest for this study, are the Affective ('stress and coping'-related) and Behavioural (cultural learning-related) aspects of this model. Although the Cognitive aspects have relevance; many of the issues around social identification theory are more relevant for permanent migrants than temporary sojourners.

In contemporary literature, one of the desired outcomes of cross-cultural contact is that sojourners will undergo a process of acculturation to the host-culture (Berry, 2005); however this should not involve them abandoning their home-culture (Bochner, 1982). Acculturation is the strategy most likely to contribute to sojourner health and well-being (Ward et al., 2002) and the desirable outcome of developing a bicultural, or multicultural identity. Indeed, such experiences can lead to encountering multiple perspectives in relation to the same issue (Carroll, 2015).

Couched in the language of a 'skills deficit', the adjustment process involves the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills (Savicki & Adams, 2007). For student sojourners this also involves adaptation to a new 'culture of learning' (Carroll, 2015; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). Seen as a process of continuous progress until 'mastery' of the new culture is achieved (Friedman et al., 2009), it also demonstrates the link between time and adjustment (Brown & Holloway, 2008). It assumes that sojourners 'lack culture-specific skills that are required to negotiate the new cultural milieu'

(Ward et al., 2002, p. 413). Culture shock being the stimulus for skills acquisition (Zhou et al., 2008), it remains relevant in contemporary research. Some suggest that where culture shock occurs, adjustment dips and then recovers during the sojourn (Pedersen, 1995, as cited in Savicki, Binder, & Heller, 2008).

Although it is possible to generalise and identify some frequently occurring issues, it should be recognised that each sojourn experience will be an individual one, with individual personality characteristics influencing the extent to which sojourners thrive or are susceptible to stress (Armes & Ward, 1989; Berry, 2005; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Friedman et al., 2009; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002; Zhou et al., 2008). Along with individual characteristics, attitudes towards, and motivation for sojourning will also play an important role (Carroll, 2015). Consequently, although convenient, care should be taken when grouping students into classes of those with similar characteristics for instance, assuming that all sojourning Chinese students will react in the same way (Heng, 2019; Sovic, 2008). Indeed, it would be wrong to treat all students alike (Savicki & Selby, 2008) or that all international students, or in the context of this study, Chinese students face the same issues. Heng (2019, p. 608) studied the experiences of 18 students over the course of a year who were studying a variety of subjects in US universities and said '[e]xisting studies tend to explore the heterogeneity of individuals' experiences via broad categories like nationality or ethnic group with few disaggregating students' differential experiences within a category'. Therefore, it is clear that a variety of factors are likely to influence adjustment (Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, researchers stress that some sojourners experience a greater gap between their home- and host-culture which leads to greater adjustment difficulties (Dunbar, 1992; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2002; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Zhou et al., 2008). Notably, it is recognised that Asian student sojourners in Western cultures experience the greatest culture gap, due to the marked cultural differences (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011) between societies tending to uphold certain values, for example the western, individualist and Asian (specifically, for this study, Chinese) collectivist cultures (Phillips, 2002). However, the continued impact of globalisation may call the validity of this distinction into question. Regional differences from the country of origin may also be relevant to acculturation, depending on the area of China in which they were raised, some SINO-U students may have been more exposed to western culture than others, a further demonstration of the potential lack of homogeneity between Chinese learners (Heng, 2019). Furthermore, increased international travel with parents for holidays and for educational opportunities such

as field trips or summer schools, may mean that younger generations have greater access to inter-cultural experiences.

This culture gap can create a barrier to interpersonal communication (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002), thereby leading to lower levels of interaction between host-country students and sojourners (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). Indeed some suggest that, '[t]he answer is to get to know the people of the host country' (Oberg, 1960, p. 145); to do this the individual must know the language. Lack of (or low confidence in) host-culture language proficiency can affect contact with host-culture nationals, leading to isolation and loneliness, a problem often reported by sojourners ((QAA), 2015b; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Lysgaard, 1955) and a tendency to socialise only or predominantly with compatriots (Chang, 2011; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960). Indeed, even when not referencing language proficiency, studies have noted the tendency of sojourners to rely on their compatriots (Ward et al., 2002), or other international students rather than host-nationals for support; with host-national friendships forming only at a superficial level (Montgomery, 2010). However, having a strong compatriot network (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015) or networking with other international students (Montgomery, 2010) has been shown to enable some students to settle into an unfamiliar environment and act as a source of support.

This contrasts with the view that contact with host-nationals is viewed as crucial to acculturation and impacts on adaptation to the host-culture (Bochner, Lin, & McLeod, 1979; Friedman et al., 2009; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Lysgaard, 1955; Ward et al., 2002; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). It helps to alleviate homesickness, an understandable aspect of sojourning (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Hannigan, 1988; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). However, contact with family and friends at home is also important and social media has made this important source of support more readily available (Montgomery, 2010). Irrespective of the claimed benefits of contact with host-nationals, there is a generally noted tendency for students to prefer mixing with their co-nationals (Carroll, 2015; Chambers & Chambers, 2008; Savicki, 2008). This was true for Heng's (2019) participants, who found it challenging as Chinese learners tend to make friends with host-culture nationals; but reported greater success with forging strong friendships when they travelled together with host-nationals on semester-long sojourns and worked together in class. Furthermore, they reported prioritising learning over socialising with host-culture nationals.

Faced with these problems, sojourners can become isolated, suffer high stress levels (Heng, 2019) and avoid seeking help for adjustment problems. Some see this as a maladjusted coping strategy ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011); whereas first-hand accounts describe this as culturally-appropriate behaviour (Chang, 2011; Wu, 2002).

Research supports the link between language proficiency and cultural understanding (Friedman et al., 2009); and the effect it can have on building social networks with host-culture students. Rather than viewing them in isolation, taking an holistic view of the various challenges faced by sojourners is recommended to ameliorate the potential impact on cross-cultural adjustment and academic performance ((QAA), 2015b). This is especially important as social support and the 'buffer' it can offer against the effects of sojourning should be recognised (Searle & Ward, 1990). Consequently, this study aims to assess the extent to which the pre-sojourn stage of the Programme prepared the students for their sojourn; aligning with research emphasising that adjustment begins prior to, and continues after, arrival and that cross-cultural training is important (Friedman et al., 2009).

2.5 Autonomy

Interlinked with the concepts of cultural background and cultural adjustment, is the notion of autonomy. Much of the literature on this concept focuses on language learners, although its scope is much wider (Benson, 2010), it is 'multidimensional and takes different forms in different contexts of learning' (Benson, 2011, p. 1). Its relevance to education is said to originate in the field of political philosophy 'where it primarily refers to the self-determination of the affairs of individuals, groups and politics' (Benson, 2010, p. 78); particularly how individuals 'chart the course of their own lives' (Benson, 2010, p. 79).

In line with the foregoing, Ding (2017) employed the concept to evaluate the school-to-university transition for a group of students from mainland China who studied in Hong Kong. Autonomy was related to their cultural identity, cultural development and personal development. Similarly, in the present study, autonomy will be applied to consider the students' independence and self-development with regard to their studies, managing their daily lives and adjustment to the new culture(s).

In education, the concept stems from the trend for adult self-directed learning, including the development of 'the individual's freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives' (Benson, 2010, p. 10). This resonates with the global citizenship goals highlighted in the aims of internationalisation. Furthermore, Carroll (2015) suggests that this demonstrates the

importance of the students' own efforts, their 'agency' in relation to the sojourn experience; some feel that HE students, whether home or international and including Chinese sojourners, are 'highly agentic', rather than passive (Heng, 2019). Although they will benefit from efforts made by programme designers, it is their own efforts that will see them leave with an award. This highlights the importance of the individual aspects of the sojourn and demonstrates that there is a link between autonomy and agency.

2.5.1 Autonomy and Agency

Before examining the concept of autonomy, the nature of this link should be explored. Explaining that there is a link highlights that the two concepts are different and, although the terms are sometimes used synonymously, should not be viewed as meaning the same thing (Gao, 2013). Agency relates to the capacity to make a rational choice, an accepted definition being that it is 'the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahern, 2001 as cited in Gao, 2013, p. 226). Moreover, it is regarded as a precondition for the development of autonomy (Benson, 2007; Gao, 2013). Tran and Vu (2018, p. 170) on the other hand, define agency as '…an individual or collective capacity to act with "intentionality" or in line with "rational" choices and in response to a given circumstance'.

Linked to reflexivity and reflective thinking, agency is the underlying force that allows autonomy to develop. Students must feel empowered to control events before they can put this into action. Gao adopted Archer's (2000, as cited in Gao, 2013) belief that agency occurs by way of an internal conversation in which the individual, through reflection, understands their 'concerns, desires and visions' and then orders them into priorities to achieve their ideal self. Having gone through this exercise, autonomy is the capacity to take control and take action based on those choices. Gao cites a theme which is common throughout the concepts involved in this study, that although an environment (in the context of this study, an academic environment), can support the development and exercise of autonomy, individual characteristics will be important.

Cross-border mobility is recognised as one of the contexts in which transformation can occur and therefore the link between agency and autonomy may be apparent. Particularly with regard to how sojourners identify the challenges and opportunities presented by the experience and choose to respond (or not to respond) (Tran & Vu, 2018). Tran and Vu (2018) considered four types of agency which may occur in sojourners; needs-response agency, collective agency for contestation, agency as struggle and resistance, and agency for becoming. The third and fourth types being predicated on the basis that sojourning is a challenge.

Needs-response agency relates to the 'international students' intention and action in response to the structural and social context around them to realize specific needs in transnational social spaces' (Tran & Vu, 2018, p. 168), which includes identifying their own learning needs. For the purposes of this study, it would be more appropriate to consider this in terms of the social and academic spaces, in line with the focus of this study's I@H preparation.

Agency for becoming relates to 'international student self-transformation and future aspirations associated with mobility' (Tran & Vu, 2018, p. 168). Specifically, it relates to personal development and the capacity to direct their future path, which could also relate to a desire to effect positive change for others in their own country.

On the other hand, agency for struggle and resistance focuses on how the students 'resist and reconstruct in response to challenging situations in the host country' (Tran & Vu, 2018, p. 168) especially in relation to perceived injustices or inequalities. Similarly, on a group rather than an individual level, 'collective agency for contestation' encompasses the communal spirit and power international students mobilise to fight against unjust or undesirable situations' (Tran & Vu, 2018, p. 168). This could be manifested as working together with others to resolve problems and as a source of support.

2.5.2 Definition of Autonomy

Having established the scope and relevance of autonomy, it is important to define 'autonomy' before examining it in greater depth. Riley (2003, p. 96) highlights that 'we need to keep reminding ourselves that the 'auto' in autonomy means 'self'. Linked to this Benson (2011, p. 13) highlighted the link between individualisation and autonomy through which 'students determine their own needs and act upon them'.

There are many definitions of autonomy, Holec (1981, p. 3) provided one of the earliest in relation to learner autonomy in which he said it is 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning'. For the purposes of researching and evaluating the concept, Benson modified this to the frequently-used definition of 'the capacity to take control of, or responsibility for, one's own learning' (2011, p. 58).

This entails the ability to make 'significant decisions' about the management and organisation of learning (Benson, 2011). Crucial to this is the capacity to take a detached stance and be reflective in order to make decisions and take independent action to further learning (Little, 1991), or if applied more widely to an individual's life, for self-development and independence (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). With that in mind, it should be recognised that autonomy does not

exist in a vacuum, sociocultural factors and individual students' construction of their identity, in particular how their 'individual histories [are] situated in sociocultural contexts' (Toohey & Norton, 2003, p. 58) are important. In the present study, as will be seen in Chapter 6, this was manifested in the interweaving of various factors which influenced self-development. Highlighting the social nature of learning, Toohey and Norton (2003, p. 48) examined studies indicating a link between autonomy and identity and found 'one of the more important themes to emerge from these studies is the extent to which the learner autonomy, personal autonomy and the construction of multilingual identities are interwoven experiences in language learning'.

This resonates with the present study in which the participants are language learners to some extent, in that the Programme includes language learning to further develop target language proficiency. Furthermore, they are constructing multiple cultural identities, developing the ability to thrive and succeed in second social and academic cultures.

Benson (2011), Benson, Chik and Lim (2003) and Riley (2003) highlighted the link between learning (and arguably, other life situations), identity and inter-cultural learning, and the challenges this brings to 'culturally-conditioned conceptions of the self' (Benson, 2011, p. 72). Therefore, the sociocultural context is vital as 'all learning is cultural since it involves interacting with one's context in order to develop meaning' (Palfreyman, 2003, p. 13). Although much of the literature focuses on students learning a second language in their home country, some studies follow individuals who have been 'physically' and 'symbolically' across borders. Of those, Benson, Chik and Lim (2003) is particularly relevant to the present study. It explores the stories of two Asian learners who experienced both environments and examined how their 'Asian cultural backgrounds influence individual learners and how this influence may be modified by their ongoing engagement with target language cultures' (2003, p. 24)

As Palfreyman (2003, p. 13) states '[s]ociocultural approaches provide valuable concepts for understanding how the behaviour, attitudes and motivation of individuals interact with cultural meanings and social interests in particular learning situations'.

2.5.3 Autonomy and culture

A further dimension of the sociocultural considerations of autonomy, is the debate surrounding the extent to which the autonomy concept itself is culture-specific, notably that it focuses on 'western' perceptions of what autonomy means (Smith, 2003), particularly in relation to Chinese learners (Palfreyman, 2003). This concept is largely discussed by western academics, causing some to question its relevance for some cultures e.g. China and Japan (Benson et al., 2003; Ho & Crookall, 1995; Little, 1991; Palfreyman, 2003; Smith, 2003; H. Wang, 2008). The literature

on culture highlighted the danger of generalising and ignoring the individuals' differences, similar arguments apply to autonomy.

Considering the extent to which autonomy is ethnocentric invites an examination of the factors important in particular pedagogical settings (Smith, 2003), and the possibility that views of autonomy could differ where cohorts consist solely of students from one nationality (Palfreyman, 2003; Riley, 2003). In relation to the present study, this presents an interesting dimension in which the students' cultural identities may have been challenged; their I@H experience required them to suspend their Chinese identity and adopt the mantle of a western learner while in their UK-U classes. For the remainder of their learning week, they were expected to behave as Chinese learners. With that in mind, consideration of the literature on autonomy and Chinese learners will highlight the potential impact on the participants and cultural challenges encountered.

Benson (2011, p. 22) examined the impact on second language learners' cultural identities; he found '[e]ngagement with a second language inevitably destabilises first language identities and provokes reconstruction of the individual's self to accommodate the fact of learning and using a second language'. In the present study, we can add the destabilising effect of being partly or fully embedded in the second culture and having to accommodate a completely different legal system, one based on common law rather than civil law.

If the 'western' notion of autonomy is inappropriate for Asian learners, it therefore follows (at the risk of being stereotypical), that there is an accepted view of what constitutes an 'Asian' learner. Studies suggest some common characteristics among Asian learners which influence how they learn and, correspondingly, may affect a western teacher's opinion of whether the students demonstrate autonomy. Corresponding with Hofstede's (2011) dimensions of culture, Wang (2008) identified a number of characteristics, these being a desire for conformity, the influence of the collectivist orientation of Asian societies, attitudes to power and authority, and a desire to avoid uncertainty in knowledge.

2.5.3.1 Desire for conformity and attitudes to power/authority

Wang suggested the desire for conformity can cause problems for autonomy among Asian learners as it disrupts the accepted power-balance in the classroom. Attitudes to power and authority in Asian countries such as China, mean the teacher is regarded as authoritative, giving rise to a high-power distance between teacher and student. This may not be compatible with a pedagogic model focused on autonomy (Ho & Crookall, 1995; Palfreyman, 2003). The teacher-centred approach can mean that Chinese students are generally regarded as passive in class

(Palfreyman, 2003; Tran & Vu, 2018; H. Wang, 2008) and lacking in critical thinking skills (Tran & Vu, 2018).

2.5.3.2 Collectivist Orientation

Rather than focusing primarily on individual identity, it is said that students with a collectivist orientation are encouraged 'to see themselves as an inseparable part of the in-group' (H. Wang, 2008, p. 116). Wang suggests this can represent a barrier to autonomy in the classroom as 'Chinese students have a tendency to form strong cohesive groups that work towards common goals' (2008, p. 116) and within the shelter of the group, the need to participate in wider classroom activities is reduced.

Motivations of students from collectivist backgrounds often link back to what is valued in their home society, noting that Chinese students focus more on effort and the collective than on talent and individual gain; a characteristic which Straker (2016) contrasted with the competitive atmosphere in western classrooms. The extent to which the students in the present study supported that contention will be explored in Chapter 6.

2.5.3.3 Avoidance of uncertainty

Citing the impact of Confucian principles, Wang noted the desire to avoid uncertainty of knowledge; a notion particularly troublesome for UK law students. The tolerance of ambiguity, the notion that there may not be a right or wrong answer, is an integral part of their graduate attributes (QAA, 2015).

Nevertheless, as with cultural stereotypes there is a danger in presuming that all Chinese learners share the same traits, or even those presumed to exist in the cultural group to which they belong; such stereotypes are criticised in the literature (Marginson, 2014; Straker, 2016; Tran & Vu, 2018). H-Y Lim (Benson et al., 2003) was a Korean student learning English, she was motivated by her own desire to learn English but recognised that she needed to achieve high grades to succeed. Although memorisation is viewed as a characteristic of Asian learners, she found it demotivating and reduced her enjoyment of learning the language. Nevertheless, she employed memorisation to ensure she achieved the grades needed. Although such characteristics may be part of the educational system for Asian students it does not mean they all enjoy studying in that way – they may simply be adopting the strategies needed to play the 'educational game' of the society within which they learn. Issues such as group work similarly are valued in western education but often disliked by students. Furthermore, Tran and Vu (2018) believe that employing such stereotypes risks ignoring the influence of personal and

background factors that might mediate the exercise of agency; and that it would be useful to explore such factors further.

In support of this Benson (2011) cites a growing number of studies (e.g. Benson et al., 2003; Riley, 2003) suggesting mixed responses to autonomy but which demonstrate a positive response amongst Asian students to opportunities to develop autonomy. Furthermore, some aspects of autonomy are, arguably, more suited to learners from a collectivist society. Palfreyman (2003, p. 9) suggests 'collectivism may be seen as conducive to interdependent, group-based versions of autonomy'. The extent to which the students in the present study demonstrate the characteristics Wang identified will be interesting to examine.

2.6 Autonomy as a developmental process

As with sojourner adjustment and the evolution of individual identity over time, autonomy too can be viewed as a developmental process (Benson, 2010; Ding, 2017). This is potentially true of all learners from all cultural backgrounds, the word 'potentially' is used because it cannot be a taken-for-granted assumption that all learners will recognise the value of, or grasp the opportunity to develop, autonomy (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015).

This development of individual autonomy in Asian learners was the subject of Benson et al.'s (2003, p. 24) study, in which they believed 'it was important to assess how notions of *individual* autonomy may become relevant to Asian learners as their learning progresses over time'. Benson viewed it as a process of discovery (which might be initiated by the students) and one which students may need to be prepared for if they were 'accustomed to teacher-centred education' (Benson, 2011, p. 12). This highlights the role played by taking elements of the target socio- and academic cultures to SINO-U as part of the I@H preparation.

Nunan (1997, as cited in Benson, 2010) felt that autonomy is not an 'all or nothing concept' but a matter of degree. Therefore, like other aspects of the sojourn, it is likely to be an individual journey and the degree of realisation personal to the individual. A sentiment shared by Little (1991, p. 4) who felt autonomous learners '…can take numerous different forms depending on their age, how far they progressed with their learning, what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be, and so on. Autonomy, in other words, can manifest itself in very different ways'. To this, based on the foregoing, we can also add the education system within which their learning occurs.

Consequently, the extent to which the sojourners were able to take control of their daily and academic lives, perhaps even planning for their future (Heng, 2019) will be important. The

objective of this developmental process being to bring about 'a potential capacity to act in a given situation' (Holec, 1981, p. 3). As learners move away from the strategies and techniques to which they were accustomed, they experience a period of destabilisation (Benson, 2011). Rogoff (1994, as cited in Toohey and Norton, 2003, p. 66) says that participating in the sociocultural activities of the community is key to learning and development. For the purposes of the present study, participating in the sociocultural and academic activities of the target culture was viewed as essential preparation for the sojourn.

It has also been observed that different aspects of autonomy may develop at a different pace. Clydesdale (2007) observed that autonomy in learning may not develop at the same pace as autonomy in life. Ding's (2017) participants noted how they grew up and cared for themselves in terms of their daily lives, cooking their own meals, managing their own study and developing their own opinions. Moreover, autonomy helps to achieve the global citizenship goals inherent in international HE, 'autonomous learners are able to contribute to cultural development and transformation' (Benson, 2011, p. 71).

2.7 Outcomes of autonomy

An unexpected outcome of developing autonomy for some participants is that links to their home-cultural identity can be challenged (Benson et al., 2003; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015), particularly those who sojourn abroad. This in turn can also make their reintegration into the home culture challenging (Pusch & Merrill, 2008). In the aforementioned study, Chik found that, on returning from her USA sojourn, she was labelled as a 'returnee from overseas' and needed to 'readapt to the local culture of using primarily Chinese, pushing English back into my private space, in order to survive and bond with my family and colleagues at school' (Benson et al., 2003, p. 34). This label brought her discomfort, furthermore her students regarded her as Westernised and 'believed (or misbelieved) that I was only capable of being so by renouncing my Chinese heritage' (Benson et al., 2003, p. 34).

She had not foreseen these consequences of engaging with another culture, particularly the different cultural identity which formed and was different to that of her family and friends. Maintaining the new sociocultural identity needed 'constant maintenance, reassurance and public reconciliation' (Benson et al., 2003, p. 35). Some sojourners returning to Hong Kong after sojourning in the UK, felt the need to suppress their desire to speak English in their local communities. Speaking English in their local settings was regarded as 'showing off' due to the specific local connotations associated with doing so (J. Jackson, 2010). The same may not necessarily be true for students returning to mainland China. Similarly, some returning

sojourners have reported that their international awareness means their colleagues treat them differently (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Along with these differences, can also come benefits, Gu and Schweisfurth (2015, p. 949) in their study of 652 Chinese students who had returned at some point in the past, found that increasing numbers highlighted the benefits of studying abroad and returning home. Particularly the 'transnational attitudes, skills and contacts' developed. The sojourners in the present study may face similar challenges and feel similar benefits.

The changes brought about by the sojourn experience may be regarded as transformational in nature, when used in the sense cited in education research, this is often associated with Mezirow's (2000) 'Transformative Learning Theory'. Hunter (2008, p. 94) applied this in the context of international education and defined transformation in this regard as being 'a deep and structural shift in the basic premise of our thoughts, feelings and actions; it represents a permanent evolution in the way we filter, engage in, and interpret the world around us'.

Some suggest this could be applied to the sojourn experience (e.g. Hunter, 2008) as Mezirow explains that a transformative learning experience can be initiated by a disorienting experience such as living in another country or returning from a sojourn abroad. She explained that being abroad can give sojourners the space to explore who they are; although it is not the unintentional change but requires an intention to learn from the experience.

Therefore, the students' willingness to undertake such learning, particularly the ability and willingness to reflect on the experience will be important. In applying this theory to the sojourn experience Hunter cited Mezirow saying that students must engage in 'premise reflection' i.e. they must 'evaluate and explore their long-standing culturally constructed attitudes, values and beliefs in the face of new and unfamiliar experiences' (Mezirow 1991, as cited in Hunter, 2008, p.98/9) Arguably such premise reflection is more likely to occur in those courses which engage students in a structured evaluation of their own cultural awareness, knowledge and attitudes before the sojourn, their attitudes, knowledge and understanding when meeting a new culture during the sojourn and reflection on how that may, or may not change their cultural awareness, knowledge and attitudes as a consequence. Although the students in the present study are not required to formally evaluate the changes that may take place, that does not mean that some degree of transformation may not be evident from their experiences.

2.8 Summary

The foregoing demonstrates that sojourners undergo a period of adjustment when moving to the host-country which could impact on their social and academic experience. However, this is

complicated by the contested notions of culture and the individual factors that can influence the sojourn experience, and that applying one theory alone is unlikely to fully capture the sojourners' adjustment. Instead, it is likely to be affected by a number of interwoven factors, the composition of which may be influenced by the context in which the sojourn occurs (Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008). Concepts of cultural background, in particular small cultures (Holliday, 1999), intercultural competence, cultural adjustment, in particular Cultural Learning Theory (Ward et al., 2002), and Autonomy, including its linkages with Agency and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory will be employed to evaluate the SINO-U students' adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures. The main research question in this study will assess the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on the students' cultural adjustment. The SINO-U students may be particularly vulnerable to these effects as they sojourned for one academic year; research demonstrates that acculturation difficulties are most problematic for those sojourning between 6 and 18 months (Lysgaard, 1955). Moreover, the culture gap between societies tending to uphold individualist and collectivist cultures makes adjustment more difficult; as does entering directly into year 3 of an undergraduate course, where UK-based students have already formed friendship groups.

Consequently, the main research question will evaluate the impact of the pre-sojourn preparation to determine whether it offered a different experience to that commonly encountered by sojourners; the impact of personality and cultural background on host-culture adjustment will be considered. Informed by the foregoing, the sub-research questions will focus on the issues faced when transitioning to the host-university, the impact of I@H preparation, issues faced during the sojourn and strategies developed to alleviate them, and whether pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students assisted with cultural adjustment. Adjustment to the host-culture may facilitate the development of autonomy, and the extent to which that occurs will depend on the extent to which adjustment to the host-culture occurs.

This study will contribute a new perspective to an area in which more research is needed – the evaluation of pre-sojourn preparation through the I@H experience to assess its impact on cultural adjustment for undergraduate students.

Having established the relevant concepts, the next chapter will examine the methodology and methods employed to conduct this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter introduces the study's objectives and explains how it was designed and conducted to address the main research question i.e. to evaluate the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students. In so doing, it explains the ontological and epistemological positions, examines my role as an insider researcher, sets out the methods used and rationale for deciding to conduct the study in this way. Moreover, it sets out the type of study, sample chosen, discusses the methods adopted to analyse data, and examines the ethical issues raised and how they were addressed.

3.1 Paradigm

Historically, there were two paradigms for framing educational research – positivist and interpretive. Stemming from Auguste Comte's approach in the nineteenth century, the modern view of positivism is that genuine knowledge can only be determined by the use of scientific methods and is concerned with seeking an objective truth. Associated with cause and effect, knowledge is seen to exist independently of the individual being studied and is instead, 'hard, objective and tangible' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 6).

Interpretivists reject this view, seeking instead to understand the participant's subjective view of their human experience, recognising the individuality that each participant brings to the research. Thus, seeking to view the world through participant's eyes (to the extent that is possible) (Cohen et al., 2011), recognises that different people view the same or similar situations in different ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), thereby adding a layer of richness to the data that positivist research cannot.

During the 1980s, the controversy as to which of these methods should prevail for social science research, 'the paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989) resulted in a retreat from positivist research in education, with a concomitant increase in interpretive research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Whichever paradigm is adopted, the decision should be rooted in the research itself, based on an evaluation of which method is appropriate for understanding the phenomenon investigated.

Following the paradigm wars, a third approach gained acceptance recognising that in some studies it may be appropriate to mix positivist and interpretive methods. The determination of where the emphasis should lie between the two being dependent on the nature of the study itself (Cohen et al., 2011).

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011) contend that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions which, in turn, drive the methodological

considerations and ways in which data are collected. With this in mind, the following will explain and evaluate the ontological and epistemological considerations which informed the research design in this study.

3.1.1 Ontology

Interpretive research involves a naturalistic approach '…attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 10). Naturalistic methodology involves examining situations through the participants' eyes. Rather than seeking to establish an objective truth, which is the concern of positivists, interpretivists recognise there may be multiple realities and are concerned with discovering 'what people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them' (Erickson, 2018). The main research question in this study focuses on the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on the students' experiences during their year abroad; their experiences will yield important information for evaluating the success of the Programme and how the students were prepared for their sojourn. It is my firm belief that these experiences do not exist independently of the students; the accounts they give are their individual interpretations of this experience, which in turn, I then interpret.

Consequently, the understanding and interpretation of these accounts may vary from one person to another, whether that is the individual student's perception of the same or similar events; or the way one researcher may interpret them against other researchers' possible interpretations. Although the extent to which I can presume to examine the world in the same way as the participants is questionable, such research should aim to examine the world through the participants' eyes as far as possible. Therefore, adopting a realist position using a wholly quantitative approach would have been inappropriate; reducing the student experience to numbers would not 'capture the complexity of the human experience' (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016, p. 17). Each student's experience is personal, subjective and unique; therefore, I needed to engage with a range of participants to discover how they experienced their sojourn. The idea that "…objects of thought are merely words and there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 5) meant the appropriate ontological position was a nominalist approach, based on a foundation of naturalistic inquiry. This would recognise that "[i]ndividuals create their own subjective realities and thus the knower and knowledge are interrelated and interdependent" (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016, p. 46).

3.1.2 Epistemology

Following Hitchcock and Hughes' reasoning, that ontology gives rise to an epistemological approach suitable for acquiring the relevant data and subsequently communicating the knowledge gained to others; an interpretive approach was adopted to understand how and why the students experienced their sojourn in the way they did. This *verstehen* approach required the adoption of appropriate knowledge-gathering techniques.

3.1.2.1 Mixed methods explanatory sequential design

Consequently, this study adopted a mixed methods explanatory sequential design and was conducted in two, connected phases, a quantitative followed by a qualitative stage (Creswell et al., 2003); with the emphasis being on the qualitative phase. Using the Participant Selection model, the first, quantitative stage involved conducting a questionnaire to assist sampling by identifying and purposefully selecting participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The use of quantitative methods (questionnaires) in predominantly qualitative studies for selecting participants who might be approached to participate in interviews, is also noted by Denscombe (2008, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011). After this first phase which elicited demographic information, the second, qualitative phase engaged in in-depth follow-up study of the participants' sojourn experience; the emergent findings being informed by the data from the first phase.

The qualitative methods took an ethnographic approach. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 219) suggest "there is no single blueprint for naturalistic, qualitative or ethnographic research, because there is no single picture of the world."   However, as subjectivists are concerned with 'understanding…the way in which individuals create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 6), this understanding is commonly accessed via ethnographic study, such as diaries, and individual interviews. Those methods were used to gather the majority of data in this study, as they were the most appropriate for this student group. The diaries allowed the students to capture their thoughts and feelings close to the event or experience about which they wrote; and the interviews facilitated conversation, some of which were shaped around the diary entries. This was particularly useful as the students were not communicating in their native language and allowed explanation or clarification of points that the written form would not permit.

In addition to aiding sampling, the quantitative data obtained provided additional information for the qualitative data.

3.2 Type of Study

To access the data, this research was conducted primarily as a case study of one cohort of students sojourning in the UK for one academic year. Initially, a questionnaire was delivered at SINO-U, where the students had studied for the previous three years. However, because the study focused on the impact on the UK sojourn of their preparation during those three years, most of the data-collection was carried out at UK-U. Most studies evaluating the experiences of sojourning students adopted a cross-sectional approach, reflecting on the students' period abroad after the event (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). Few studies adopted a longitudinal approach and this research intended to address this need by undertaking a longitudinal case study of one cohort of SINO-U students.

3.2.1 Case Study

Conducting a case study is an established approach to research such as this, and as Stake (2005) suggests, the term 'case study' applies both to the way in which the research is undertaken and the product of the research. Although it has been said there is little agreement how the term should be defined (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) it is clear it relates to researching in a real-life context (Yin, 2018), and is the study of a singularity (Bassey, 1999); either a single student or a whole class (Stake, 2005). Thus, studying one cohort of students on a single course is appropriate for this kind of study. Furthermore, it refers to a study 'conducted in depth in natural settings' (Bassey, 1999, p. 47). Although, as will be discussed when analysing the study's limitations, the extent to which that was possible in this case must be considered, the study was not conducted by classroom observation but through interviews in the researcher's office, thus limiting the extent to which the setting was a natural, classroom one for the students.

Moreover, the course chosen for the case study does not need to be a typical example, but rather something 'of interest to the researcher or the researcher's sponsor' (Bassey, 1999, p. 75). Again, that resonates with the course under study which is atypical to the way in which joint courses on TNE programmes are normally run due to its pre-sojourn preparation stage. As our flagship international programme, it is a course of significant interest to me in my daily work, my sponsor (employer university,) and our partner university, and can contribute to the literature in the field.

Case studies bring advantages because of 'their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case' (Bassey, 1999, p. 23), nevertheless, in common with other forms of qualitative research, Bassey states they can be regarded with suspicion and hostility.

Supporters of positivist research criticise such methods for their inability to draw generalisations from the results. However, generalisation should not be the aim of case studies (Yin, 2018); the aim should be to represent the case (Stake, 2005). In keeping with the chosen paradigm, this research does not seek to draw generalisations, rather the aim is to represent the case in a trustworthy manner to allow other researchers to determine whether the findings are transferable to their own cases.

3.2.2 Insider Research

As a case study involving a course within my employer university, this research is clearly an example of insider research; an approach common in interpretive studies in education where researchers undertake studies in their own workplace involving colleagues or students. Capable of yielding rich data, it can also pose dangers and requires the open acknowledgement of subjectivity – such reflexivity is the hallmark of qualitative research. Openly addressing the presence of the researcher in the study represents transparency and should allow others to determine the researcher's impact, or otherwise, on the findings (Roth, 2013). Insider research is useful for evaluating long-standing or innovative activities within the researcher's university and therefore, is appropriate for evaluating the activities on the Programme with which I was involved. The findings can yield '…potential beneficial impact on university practices' (Trowler, 2016, p. 7); indeed it was anticipated that the study would impact on my own practice, that of my employer, benefit the Programme's students, and contribute to the field.

Trowler (2016) suggests that insider research gives better access to naturalistic data and to respondents, in addition to enabling researchers to produce 'emic' accounts (ones meaningful to actors), especially using an ethnographic approach. The opportunity to engage with participants on the course and understand their experiences through the accounts they shared, was central to this study. Our mutual knowledge of the Programme and their perspectives enabled me to identify the Programme's strengths and deficiencies in preparing them for the sojourn. Nevertheless, a number of issues need to be borne in mind when considering mutual knowledge. Delamont (2002, as cited in Trowler, 2016) highlighted the difficulty of '…rendering the normal strange', in other words, overlooking important issues due to familiarity with the situation which an outside observer may notice; conversely, insider researchers 'have greater access to the second record' (Trowler, 2016, p. 6). Both of these issues were relevant for my knowledge of the Programme and institutions involved. Being part of the UK-U management team responsible for the Programme and implementing my school's internationalisation strategy brought greater knowledge to the study; but also, I needed to consider that I could not view these with the freshness of an outside perspective. Being explicit about my position in this

respect allows others to reach their own conclusions on such matters. However, with regard to the situation at SINO-U, I was an outsider to their environment and ways of operating.

Although the students and I were involved with the same programme, our perspectives were different. I could not presume to know what it is like to study an English law degree as a Chinese student in either a Chinese or UK university. In this sense it is not the same as studying other academics in my university; there is not necessarily a shared repertoire as may exist in some studies (Floyd & Arthur, 2012). Therefore, there is merit in the suggestion that insider research exists on a continuum, rather than being a distinct position (Trowler, 2016) and my position varies when looking at my relationship to UK-U, SINO-U and the students.

The relationship with the students as an insider researcher was also important for another reason. Although I was in a privileged position as there were no institutional barriers preventing me from contacting them, my involvement with the Programme meant I had to be alert to the potential effects of the 'power differential' between the students and me. Special care was needed to minimise this differential, nevertheless it is important to acknowledge that it may have affected the responses given. Moreover, the students' cultural background may have exacerbated the effects of the power differential and this will be discussed further in 3.7.

Trowler (2016) also identified that students' knowledge of the research may influence the way they answered interview questions – 'interview bias'. From the outset, I was clear there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to questions and this was *their* story. Participants were assured it was their journey and experiences that was of interest and would be valuable for the future. Nevertheless, I was conscious throughout that, at times, they had given the responses they thought I wanted to hear, especially with regard to the running of the course and any perceived benefits or otherwise.

Being an insider researcher offered an opportunity to consider the sampled students' perspectives on their preparation for the sojourn. The construction of the sample will be examined in the next section.

3.3 Sample

The participants were students on the Programme who chose to spend their fourth and final year of study at UK-U. Therefore, the 100 students in the cohort represented a closed group from which the participants could be selected. Of those, 39 decided to sojourn in the UK, only some wanted to participate in the study. Decisions regarding the number of participants rested not only on the number who sojourned in the UK, but also on the amount of data that could be

generated by the interviews, and whether the experiences shared achieved data saturation (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). There was an element of self-selection, in that the sample was drawn from those students who completed the questionnaire, were sojourning in the UK and expressed a willingness to participate in the study.

The first data collection was completed through a questionnaire, delivered using Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) to the students while they were still in China. Initially, the intention was to select participants from those who indicated on the questionnaire that they wished to take part. Although the pool of students were from the same course, this did not necessarily mean they were a homogenous group, they may emanate from different backgrounds and areas of China (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Consequently, although this sample does not claim to be a representative one, various factors were considered, including gender, the students' hometowns, career aspirations and English language ability evidenced by IELTS scores in May 2017. The questionnaire answers revealed this information.

The third-year students at SINO-U were selected to take the questionnaire, all of whom were eligible to be considered for the year abroad at UK-U in the 2017/18 academic year. The original intention was to launch the survey in May or June during a visit that I hoped to make to SINO-U. However, there was a convoluted process to gain ethical consent from SINO-U to conduct the study. To respect the horizontal protocol of business dealings with senior officials in China, a member of the Deanery from UK-U approached the Deanery at SINO-U for consent. This went through various processes and took a long time to obtain, when consent eventually came through, there was insufficient time for me to visit China and introduce the survey personally. The launch and introduction to the survey therefore was done remotely, via emails from me to the students, and via their Chinese personal tutors at SINO-U. The students were only at the University for the first three days of the survey's availability; after that the University closed for the summer and the students had returned home.

Consequently, it was only completed by a small number of students, 8 of whom indicated their willingness to be involved in the study. Sampling through the questionnaire responses aimed to draw on the impact of regional differences, career motivations, English language proficiency (evidenced by IELTS or equivalent test results) and potential differences that gender may reveal. Prior to the completion of the questionnaire, the aim was to select between 6 and 10 participants depending on how diversity in the factors examined could be achieved.

When the 39 students arrived in the UK, 5 of the original 8 maintained contact and arranged the first interview. There was an imbalance of male to female participants and, on their arrival, I

asked the students in a group session if any males wished to participate - 2 volunteered. This brought the total number to 7 participants and the ratio of males to females reflected the gender-balance on the course. I waited until after the first round of interviews were completed to determine whether more students should be recruited, but then realised I had reached data saturation and little more would be gained by doing so.

Although some studies focusing on international students have large sample sizes, this embedded mixed methods study emphasises the qualitative aspects of the students' experience. In keeping with other studies also aimed at understanding the students' experience in great depth such as Montgomery (2010) who focused on 7 students and J. Jackson (2010) focusing on 4 students, a smaller sample size was chosen for this study. It was intended that the smaller sample size would facilitate an in-depth examination of the sojourn experience from the students' perspective over the course of an academic year. Indeed, the depth and richness of the data gathered characterises this study and justifies the small sample size. Although not claiming to be a representative sample, the presence of differing personality traits, language proficiency, background and motivations for study may present results from a more varied set of experiences than some studies e.g. Montgomery whose students were all noted to be confident and sociable.

A summary of the participants is shown in Table 2 - Summary of Participants below, all of whom had adopted an English name they used during their time on the course.

Table 2 - Summary of Participants

Name	Gender	Hometown/*Province*	IELTS	Career Aspiration (questionnaire answer)
Olivia	F	*Hubei*	7.0	Officer
Isabella	F	*Shandong*	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business
Ava	F	*Hunan*	6.0	Lawyer specialising in international business
Sophia	F	Dalian	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business
Mia	F	*Anhui*	7.0	Law consultant in an international company or lawyer
Liam	M	Jinan, *Shandong*	7.5	Lawyer – perhaps in China or abroad
Noah	M	Henan	7	Masters, then perhaps work for international organisation like the United Nations

The names used are pseudonyms by which the students will be known throughout this study. English names related to their gender were chosen for the participants – the main reason for

this being that I did not have sufficient knowledge of Chinese names to ensure I did not cause offence when selecting the pseudonyms.

As Table 2 demonstrates, five participants were female and two were male. No account of age was taken, as all students were of a similar age (21-22). All had gone to study at SINO-U immediately upon leaving school and had just completed their Chinese Law degree. The table shows they came from various locations in China, an important consideration for the study; some gave more information than others, either hometown and province or just hometown or province. An area of interest identified for further exploration was whether the cultural difference between their hometown and SINO-U town would impact on their adjustment to life in the UK. It was interesting talking to the students, as I had formed opinions as to which hometowns would be northern, central or southern Chinese locations by looking at a map. In the interviews the students' perceptions were sometimes, and surprisingly different. Two students (Sophia & Liam) stated they were from northern China, two students (Olivia and Noah) stated they were from the central region; and three students (Isabella, Ava and Mia) stated they were from southern China.

A range of English language ability was demonstrated via the IELTS results from May 2017, ranging from 6.0 to 7.5 overall. This was another factor which I had identified as potentially affecting student adjustment during the sojourn. The questionnaire did not reveal a great variation in terms of career aspirations, most gave relatively generic answers saying they wished to work as a lawyer, or some law-related job for international businesses or companies. This is perhaps not surprising given they were studying for a Commercial Law degree. One student (Olivia) expressed an intention to become an officer, when interviewed it was revealed this meant a government officer. Only one student (Noah) expressed a desire to study for a masters after graduation and then to work for an international organisation, demonstrating a firm desire to remain abroad after his sojourn. As will be seen later, interviews showed the reality of the students' ambitions, here they appeared to be focusing on the ultimate aim; all students actually intended to study for a Masters degree following graduation.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected over a period of eleven months, starting in June 2017 with a questionnaire to assist sampling and provide background data; and continuing with three rounds of interviews. The rounds took place at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the 2017/18 academic year, concluding in May 2018. The students were also encouraged to keep diaries and bring artefacts they had collected to the interviews to help them tell the story of their sojourn.

Three methods of data collection were used in this study: questionnaire, semi-structured interview and diary. Initially, a questionnaire was used to assist with sampling and to provide some background information for the next stage of data collection - semi-structured interviews. These interviews were supported and informed by other ethnographic elements, where the students chose to use them, in the form of a diary and videos or photographs. Each of the data collection methods will be examined in greater depth in the sections which follow.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The first stage of the data collection was an online questionnaire distributed while the students were still in China. It was intended to assist with sampling, enabling selection of the participants before the students left China; and to provide a way of communicating with them so they could select photographs or videos of their lives in China to show during the first interview.

The questionnaire was designed using the BOS software (now known as Online surveys, operated by Jisc). Using BOS was a requirement of the Ethics approval granted by UK-U; it is the only survey software permitted because of its adherence to data protection requirements and the levels of privacy it offers for participants.

Using an online questionnaire was appropriate for this study due to the logistical challenges of conducting a questionnaire in China. Using BOS allowed for conducting a pilot before releasing the questionnaire; moreover, the questionnaire could be left open for a period of time and the results collected remotely. However, remoteness is not always beneficial, being present in China to either distribute a paper questionnaire, or launch the online questionnaire in person, may have enabled me to reach a wider audience and increase the participation rate.

The question design was based on the need to acquire certain information i.e. would the student be coming to UK-U; if so, would s/he be willing to participate in the study? If s/he was not coming to UK-U, what were the reasons for choosing to remain in China? For those students coming to UK-U, the remaining questions focused on information that would assist sampling.

The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A – SINO-U Questionnaire and the results will be analysed in the next chapter. Question 1 sought to confirm the students had read the information provided about the questionnaire and consented to its completion; the ethical implications of this are discussed in 3.7.1. Questions 2 – 6 addressed information that would assist with sampling e.g. gender, IELTs score, hometown, career ambitions, whether the student intended to return to work in China and (if so) whether they intended to work in a company involved in international business, and whether they had chosen to go to UK-U for their final

year of study. Finally, to inform the Programme's future development, the reason for staying in China for year 4 if that was the student's decision. Question 7 then asked the students coming to UK-U whether they wished to participate in the study. This questionnaire therefore fell within the category of a descriptive survey (Oppenheim, 2000).

The participants' routing through the questionnaire varied according to their responses; ensuring they avoided irrelevant questions. A copy of the questionnaire route map can be found in Appendix B – SINO-U Questionnaire Route Map. At the end of the questionnaire, all students returned to the same exit page thanking them for their participation and wishing them good luck with their future studies.

After the questionnaire was drafted, and prior to its release, it was piloted to ensure it would work well for the SINO-U students.

It was not a lengthy or complex questionnaire, as the information sought would allow for basic data-gathering for sampling purposes. Despite its relatively simple nature, it was written in English, the SINO-U students' second language. Therefore, testing was needed to ensure the questions took account of cultural sensitivities and was written in language accessible to the students.

Two main reasons for drafting the questionnaire in English were: firstly, providing clear language was used, English should not present a problem. The students studied their entire English law degree in English and all their communications with UK-U staff were in English, so this was not unusual for them. By the time this questionnaire was launched, they had been using English in the SINO-U setting for three years.

Secondly, the students were asked to write in English, due to the difficulty of translating the survey into Chinese and the responses into English. Additionally, not being a native Chinese speaker, I would not be able to determine whether anything from the students' responses was lost in translation. A limitation of having the students answer in English was they may not be able to fully express their thoughts in English; for that reason, most of the responses were multiple choice questions (MCQs). For some answers, students were given the opportunity to write their own free text where appropriate; either as follow-up questions to the MCQs or as separate, open-ended questions. Answering online questionnaires was familiar to the students, as all modules during their second year contained an element of online assessment.

Piloting occurred before receiving SINO-U permission to release the survey to the students and was between the dates of 13th and 16th June 2017. Following Oppenheim's (2000) advice, every

question and the sequence in which they were delivered was piloted; first with a Chinese national (PILOT1). A graduate of SINO-U, now employed by UK-U, she was in contact with the SINO-U students. Consequently, she appreciated their levels of understanding and had an insight into the answer choices appropriate for them.

The results revealed the questions and associated information were appropriately worded. One suggestion made, based on SINO-U students' previous comments to PILOT1, was to include an additional choice to the reasons why students might choose to remain in China rather than coming to UK-U for their final year. The suggested addition to Question 7 was:

The degree would not be helpful to my future career for example I would like to work in government or for a public authority.

Following this first pilot, the survey was then sent to UK-U staff permanently based at SINO-U for them to test. They were testing to ensure there were no technological issues accessing the BOS website in China; they could access and complete the survey via the various platforms available at SINO-U; to comment on the survey based on their knowledge of the SINO-U students; and to test it from the perspectives of those coming to the UK and those staying in China to ensure the full range of questions were tested. It was initially intended the three members of staff would introduce the questionnaire to the students and answer any questions arising; therefore, having a thorough knowledge of it would be important. However, due to the lengthy ethical approval process mentioned earlier, it was not possible for them to conduct the launch.

The first staff member to test the survey (PILOT2) reported no issues with accessing the questionnaire in China but suggested asking students which countries they intended to work in if staying outside China; I decided to follow this up at the interview stage. He also suggested asking students coming to the UK to indicate their reason for doing so, again, I decided to follow this up during the interview stage.

PILOT3 tried to complete the survey on his mobile phone, a method the students may use, and found some of the drop-down choices were not shown using this method. Therefore, following his feedback, the email announcing the survey to students advised them to use their computer or tablet when completing the survey. He also recommended giving them other choices for not coming to the UK e.g.

"Staying to focus on the Chinese Bar Exam"

Initially, I believed this was covered by the 'staying to start postgraduate study' option. In retrospect, my improved knowledge of the system now means I would include this as a distinct choice.

His other recommendation

"Not meeting the English language requirements"

was incorporated exactly as he suggested.

Following these pilot surveys and permission from SINO-U to release it to students; the questionnaire was launched on 27th June 2017 and remained open until 15th July 2017. The results will be analysed in Chapter 4.

3.4.2 Interviews, diaries and artefacts

Interviews were the main method of data collection, which brought with them advantages and disadvantages. The aim was to interview each participant three times during their sojourn; once at the beginning of the academic year (October 2017); once at the beginning of the second semester (end of January/early February 2018); with the final interview being scheduled when the end of semester 2 examinations were completed (May 2018). This would allow me to capture the students' initial experiences within two weeks of arrival; after they had completed their first semester and, having moved past the initial arrival period, settled into life at UK-U. Then finally, it would allow them to reflect on their second semester and the sojourn as a whole, in addition to discussing their plans for the future.

Brinkman, citing the works of others (e.g. Macoby and Macoby, 1954, as cited in Brinkmann, 2018) defined interviews as a 'face-to-face verbal exchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons' (Brinkmann, 2018, p. 449). This is a rather clinical definition and, it is suggested, implies a distance between those involved in the interview. Indeed, interviews can be conducted in several ways, for example as structured, semi-structured or unstructured conversations; I sought to find an appropriate approach for my participants. Account was taken of the research questions and context, the nature of the participants, and the dynamics of the relationship between me (the interviewer), and the participants before deciding on the appropriate approach.

Keen to ensure the participants felt the interview was about them as much as possible, and was facilitated in a way which empowered them to tell their story (Brinkmann, 2018); a combination of the semi-structured interview and the diary-interview method (Zimmerman & Weider, 1977)

was adopted. This was largely used due to the longitudinal nature of the study and an attempt to break down some of the barriers the power differential may have presented. The study's longitudinal nature meant, without any other aid, students would have had to rely on memory to relate their experiences and the feelings they brought about. It was hoped the diaries and/or artefacts could provide an aide-memoire and record feelings contemporaneously, rather than relying on hindsight.

It was also hoped the diaries and artefacts would inform how, in part, the next interview would proceed; using reference to diary extracts as discussion prompts. The same was true for any videos or photographs the students brought with them. As English was not their first language, it was hoped they would remove as many communication barriers as possible.

Diary-keeping was not intended to be an onerous task and to facilitate this, each student was provided with a notebook at the first interview. Two sheets were inserted into each notebook (Appendix C – Notebook Inserts) providing guidance and contact details in case any questions arose. The intention being that students would write a note when something iconic occurred; an accomplishment, challenge, things which made them happy or sad, or the differences/similarities between life in China and the UK. Students were then asked to send in their diaries two days before the next interview so extracts could be copied and to identify interesting entries for discussion. Some did this, others brought them to the interview and one preferred to simply discuss what he had written.

The diaries were reasonably well used, 4 of the 7 participants either brought them to the second interview or supplied them on the day. Those students had used them well and made numerous entries throughout the first semester. Some did not like keeping the diary and asked permission to abandon it or made their own choice to do so by not bringing entries along to the interview. Rather than lose participants altogether, they were allowed to make their own decision regarding this, especially as it was not intended to be an onerous duty for them. By the third interview, the diaries were not used and none of the students had kept their entries going.

Each interview was conducted in a confidential environment with only the participant and me present. Unfortunately, due to logistical constraints within UK-U, the best place to hold these was in my office; ideally a neutral venue would have been chosen. At the time I had a private office and, separate to the desk area, was a space with comfortable chairs where conversations could be conducted. This provided certain advantages, such as my ability to offer refreshments and the conversation area was near to bookshelves where the audio recorder could be unobtrusively placed. Being a private office, the environment could be controlled to ensure

there were no interruptions; whereas the more social spaces in UK-U were noisy and public. Importantly for the first interview, the students could easily find my room, being new to UK-U this was important for them. However, it must be acknowledged that because interviews took place in my office, reducing the power differential may have been more difficult. Although not ideal, it represented the best, most practical solution given the timetabling constraints and pressure on teaching and meeting rooms.

Brinkmann (2018) views semi-structured interviews as those where the researcher is concerned with <u>how</u> participants experience events, rather than the underlying reasons <u>why</u> they experience them in that way. That was not the case for this study; I was certainly interested in how the students experienced their sojourn, however, I was also keen to understand, as far as possible, what led them to experience events in that way. Such an understanding would contribute to improving the experience for the study's participants, the other members of their sojourning cohort and future students choosing to spend the year at UK-U.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour, some were slightly shorter at around 45 minutes; and some were longer, lasting around 1 hour 30 minutes. The length depended on how long the participants wanted to talk; accordingly, the interviewing approach was adjusted according to the situation and the individual participant (Fontana and Frey, 1994). All interviews were conducted in English and were recorded on an audio-recording device, to which all participants agreed. Interview guides were drafted (Appendix D – Interview Guides), along with some prompt cards. Conscious the students were conversing in a foreign language, I felt they may benefit from prompt cards – these were drafted and cut into individual cards to be used in the interviews if the students found them helpful (Appendix E – Interview Prompt Cards). However, their language skills were strong, and they found my accent clear, therefore the cards were not needed.

Throughout the interview process, I was keen to avoid (as far as possible) the potential for students to give the answers they thought I wanted to hear. It was reiterated at appropriate points, that I was interested in their personal story and there were no right or wrong answers.

Conscious of the power imbalance, the aim was to hand as much control to the participants as possible. Particularly in the early interviews, some participants such as Liam, Olivia and Isabella took greater control of the conversation from the beginning; whereas others relied more on prompts. The first interview began by inviting each participant to tell me a little about themselves so I could get to know them; some were very forthcoming, others found it more

difficult e.g. Noah who tried but then said, 'Beth can you ask me some questions?'. However, by the final interview he was very talkative and led most of the conversation.

Aware of the impact that my biases, background and role in managing and determining the future direction of the students' Programme could have, neutrality in the interviewing process would not be possible. With that in mind the concept of 'empathetic interviewing' presented an approach I felt to be appropriate for this study. It recognises that interviewers 'need to interact as persons with the interviewees and acknowledge that they are doing so…[whereby] the interviewer becomes an advocate and partner…hoping to be able to use the results to advocate social policies and ameliorate the conditions of the interviewee' (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 696); and which '…involves adopting a stance in favour of the persons being studied' (Brinkmann, 2018, p. 592). Although the participants in the present study, did not fall within the groups normally studied using this approach (oppressed groups); empathetic interviewing was helpful to understand their position and seek to improve the experience of current and future students, that being the central concern of this study.

Therefore, how I presented myself in the interviews was important (Brinkmann, 2018). It would be dishonest to attempt to be anything other than involved with the School and management. Consequently, it was crucial to establish my standpoint with the students – as someone genuinely interested in their experiences as human beings; but could also make changes to their Programme if needed. As one of the purposes of the thesis, and Ed.D is to contribute to my own and my organisation's practice, I did not feel any conflict with this, and that aim was reflected in the research questions.

The first interviews were held within the first two weeks of October 2017, only two weeks after the students' arrival in the UK. They focused on the students' backgrounds, initial impressions of life in the UK and UK-U, the photographs/videos they brought from China, their experiences of moving from home to SINO-U and their aspirations for the year ahead and their career. All interviews went well, and all participants attended.

The second interviews were held at the beginning of the second semester, occurring in late January/early February 2018 – the mid-point of the sojourn. All but one student attended, one participant had been injured and her second interview was scheduled for a later time when she was able to move around. This round of interviews focused on the experiences revealed by the diaries; the students' experiences during the first semester; and feedback regarding the ways the Programme, or pre-sojourn preparation, could be improved.

The final interviews took place in May 2018, immediately after the students' completed their final examinations, and shortly before their return to China. One participant could not attend as she joined her family on the day the examinations ended, but all others took part. However, at this set of interviews none shared any diary entries. These interviews focused on the overall impressions of their sojourn, whether the students' expectations had been met, whether their career aspirations had changed, what they thought it would be like to return to China, and the advice they would give both to the universities preparing the students for the sojourn, and to the aspiring sojourners themselves.

It was noticeable during the second interviews that the students talked more, and I had less impact in leading the conversation. It seemed there were two principal reasons for this, firstly the students' language proficiency had improved, having lived and studied in the UK for four months. They seemed to be more confident and had developed their relationship with me. Secondly, my interviewing styled seemed to have developed. Having reflected on the first interviews and the extent to which my voice was present on the transcripts, I was conscious that, where possible, I needed to be less prominent.

Each interview was transcribed as soon as possible after completion to ensure the events were fresh in the memory. This was particularly important as unclear pronunciation, especially in the early interviews, provided more problems for transcription if the gap was longer. Early transcription also meant my reflections on the interview could be recorded, ready for the next set.

Designing the research in this way, ensured the students were prepared for the study before they arrived and followed them throughout their sojourn. This is a strength of the study as the literature indicates that most research in the field focuses on postgraduate students or mixed undergraduate/postgraduate cohorts (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Guan & Jones, 2011) and adopt a retrospective approach with students being interviewed at the end of their sojourn (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The present study aimed to avoid collecting experiences only at the end of the sojourn; instead capturing them closer to the time they occurred.

Focusing on one cohort allowed me to act on the reported experiences to assist the students sojourning at the time, and to aid the transition of future cohorts; also and pragmatically, to work within the time constraints of the Ed.D thesis period to analyse the findings.

3.5 Description of data analysis methods

A detailed account of the data analysis undertaken in this study follows, however before explaining in detail how this was done, some important considerations should be borne in mind. Crucially, data collection and analysis did not occur separately, instead this was an iterative process (Augustine, 2014; Merriam, 2014; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014), in which analysis began with the first interview and continued between interviews in each data collection round, and between the first and second, and second and third interviews. This approach is favoured by Miles and Huberman (1984), and Merriam (2014) suggests it helps to produce trustworthy findings as they remain rooted in the data that participants provide.

Data analysis reduces the rich, detailed data produced by qualitative research to generate clear explanations of the findings and make meaningful connections or identify patterns and themes emerging from the participants' experiences. Furthermore, and relevant for this study, understanding both the individual and group experience, as well as discovering commonalities, differences and similarities, was important for reaching conclusions and making recommendations (Cohen et al., 2011).

Participants were generous with their time and with sharing their experiences, which imposed a responsibility to be faithful to what they shared. Reducing data must be done with care to avoid losing meaning and presented challenges to ensure that, in selecting the data, the range of experiences was accurately portrayed. It is also important to acknowledge the double hermeneutic process involved, in other words, this required me to interpret the students' own interpretations of their experiences (Giddens, 1976, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011).

To establish trustworthiness in the findings, it is important that the data analysis process is rigorous, clear, and appropriate for the study. The process by which meaning was made from the data is explained below.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Analysis

Data from the questionnaires were extracted and, for the students who wished to participate in the study, summarised in Table 2 - Summary of Participants. The response rate was low, around 20%, due to the summer closure of SINO-U and the fact the students were only onsite for the first few days after the survey's release. Although the response rate was lower than desired, the questionnaire still yielded valuable information for 5 of the 7 participants. In addition to assisting with sampling and highlighting where more participant variety would improve the study (e.g. regarding the gender of participants), it also provided valuable background information. This facilitated a more conversational first interview, rather than a more formal

'question and answer approach' which would have been needed to obtain the same information. It also meant the first weeks of the sojourn were not spent recruiting participants, which would have delayed the first interviews. The study was designed so it could continue if permission to conduct the questionnaire was not granted, therefore, the questionnaire data could have been abandoned. However, despite the low participation rate, the information obtained was of value and was included as a result. The relatively small number of responses meant manual data extraction was not problematic.

Of the 100 potential respondents, a total of 23 students completed the questionnaire, and as Table 3 demonstrates, 15 were female and 8 were male.

Table 3 - Questionnaire respondents

The questions which followed related to the biographical data contained in Table 2 and aimed to establish whether the respondents would be sojourning at UK-U. As Table 4 shows, 12 respondents intended to do so.

Table 4 - Students intending to sojourn at UK-U
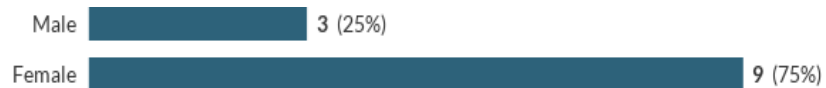
Those intending to sojourn at UK-U were asked whether they were willing to participate in the study, and Table 5 demonstrates that 1 male and 7 female students indicated an early willingness to participate. Although as Table 2 and the explanation of the sampling demonstrate, some ultimately changed their mind.

Table 5 - Respondents willing to participate in the study

An interesting observation from the questionnaire responses, was that, only those who moved to a different town for their Chinese undergraduate programme decided to sojourn.

3.5.2 Interviews and Diaries

Having identified the participants for the study and gathered some biographical information about them, the interviews commenced. As soon as possible after each interview occurred, a

verbatim transcript was produced. These transcripts were then revised to remove false starts, fillers, encouraging noises and hesitations (Roulston, 2013). These were a feature of the first interview in particular, as the students were not speaking in their native language and were relatively inexperienced at speaking in English for a sustained period. Revisions of this kind involved the exercise of judgement to decide whether the gap in speech was due to doubt, uncertainty or whether the student was coping with speaking in a foreign language. Where it was something other than linguistic ability, the relevant part of the speech was left in the transcript and a memo added recording my observations.

Although personally transcribing all 20 interviews was time-consuming, it was beneficial as it brought familiarity with the data and enabled me to make observations incidental to the actual words spoken. These included reflecting on my role as the researcher, and evaluating how the responses were delivered, for example the speed or volume of speech, or emotions which appeared to be demonstrated. These reflections were noted in memos, alongside my observations from the sessions themselves.

Themes began to emerge from the interview data as they occurred, and from the diary data; with each interview informing the ones which followed. This inductive approach required a method to represent the emerging themes, and was achieved by developing categories into which they fell (Merriam, 2014). Reichertz (2014) described this as bringing order to the chaos of data, in this study it was achieved by developing codes as they emerged from the data.

The first stage of coding was open coding, whereby each series of interviews was coded after the interview round was completed. Each answer to a question, or point raised by a participant, was coded on a point by point basis, and an area of text could sustain more than one code. Initially, I had intended to use Nvivo as a tool to code and analyse the data and began by uploading some transcripts to the system. However, during analysis of the first interview round, Nvivo was abandoned in favour of coding on hard-copy transcripts; this was done for two main reasons. The first was a pragmatic reason based on the unavailability of Nvivo off-campus. Working full-time and undertaking the Ed.D part-time meant that off-campus availability was important; new IT equipment supplied by my employer did not support off-campus access to the software. Secondly, and more importantly, I enjoy being close to the data. Although the power of Nvivo to analyse the codes developed was attractive, I felt that I gained more from having hard-copy transcripts before me, and thereby seeing a visual representation of all the data.

To maintain consistency, an index of codes was kept for each interview round, which was also referred to in subsequent rounds and added to as necessary. This ensured the overall coherence of the coding, but allowed the interviews and codes to be developed in an iterative process (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The index formed a guide to future interview rounds but was not determinative of the codes to be used. An example of the constant comparative method, this allowed for the development of new categories as they emerged from the data (Cohen et al., 2011). Although often associated with grounded theory, Merriam (2014) noted it is widely used throughout qualitative research without building a grounded theory.

An example of the iterative process could be seen when analysing the final round of interviews. The powerful influence of the participants' parents became apparent, consequently previous transcripts were revisited to assess the impact of this emergent code. It is evident therefore, in line with Glaser and Strauss' (1967, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011) observations, coding and analysis can occur together.

After the early, open coding, connections began to emerge between groups of codes, referred to as 'axial coding' this stage of 'connecting related nodes' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 562) is a means of demonstrating 'conceptual congruence' (Merriam, 2014). The results of the first two stages of coding can be seen in Appendix F – Coding Table. The nodes were clustered together by concept, and then by research question, an approach which also determined how the results would be presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Initially, it was anticipated that globalisation, internationalisation of education, culture shock and cultural adjustment would be the key themes. Bringing these concepts together with the data analysis demonstrated that globalisation and some aspects of internationalisation retreated to the general context within which the study occurred; and culture shock did not feature as prominently as expected. One of the aspects to emerge strongly from the findings was the notion of self-development and the effect this had on cultural background – to present that within the concepts as initially conceived, would have led to emphasis in the wrong areas and an illogical order when presenting the results. Table 6 - Initial Axial Codes (overleaf) demonstrates the clustering of codes with broad labels relating to the initial concepts and research questions.

Table 6 - Initial Axial Codes

Concept	Code	Question
INTERNATIONALISATION	Preparation	Sub Research Question 1 Sub Research Question 2
	Support	
CULTURAL BACKGROUND	Hometown	
	Family/Parents	
	Personality	
	Transition - Home to SINO-U - SINO-U to UK	
	Goals	
	Expectations (and whether achieved)	
	Self-Development	
(CULTURAL) ADJUSTMENT	Initial Impressions	Main Research Question Sub Research Question 3 Sub Research Question 4 Sub Research Question 5
	Mid-Point Reflections	
	Story of the Sojourn	
	Reverse Culture Shock	
	Academic Adjustment	
	Social Adjustment	
	Language Proficiency	
	Challenges/Low Points - Loneliness/Homesickness	
	Coping Strategies	
	High Points	
	Community/Friends	
	Travel	

With the change of emphasis and emergence of new themes, the concepts of cultural background, TNE (specifically I@H), cultural adjustment and autonomy were more important, as were the linkages between them. This required a return to the literature to explore the autonomy field and analyse how that linked with findings in the present study. A different method of representing the core concepts underpinning the codes was used, as demonstrated in Figure 2 – Concept Map overleaf. This advanced the analysis a stage further, into that of selective coding, in which the core concepts were identified, and moved analysis from description to the drawing of inferences.

Figure 2 – Concept Map
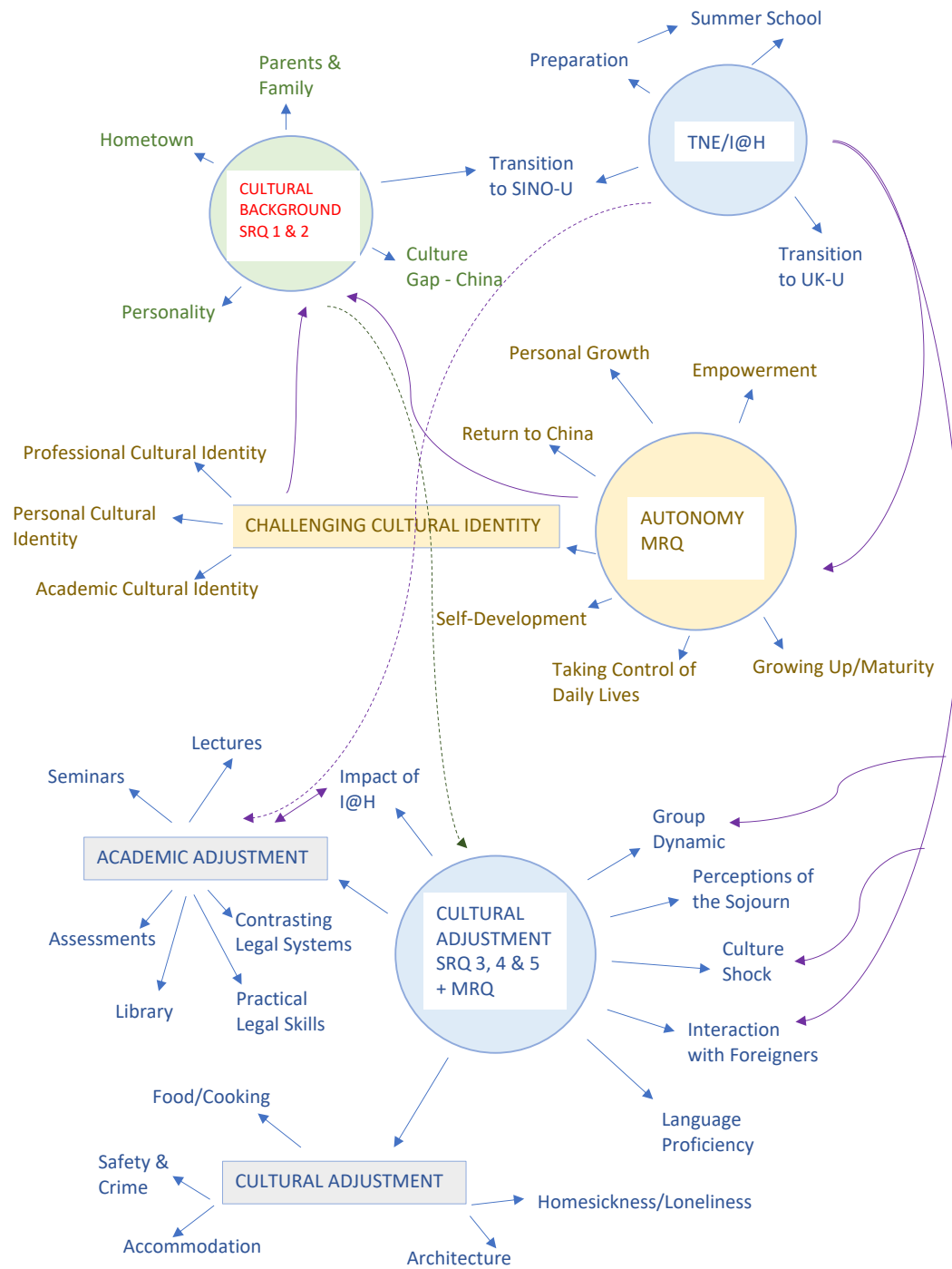
The final stage of the analysis process before writing of the results and discussion chapters, was to extract sections of text from the transcripts and diaries, and related memos containing reflections, new ideas and data linkages. These were grouped together in similar themes on summary sheets.

The task was then to faithfully represent the findings. Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that data can be presented by person, by issue or theme, by case study or by research questions – the latter method 'returns the researcher to the driving themes of the research' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 552). This study involved 7 participants, 20 interviews and 4 diaries. As noted by (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 539) I had to decide 'whether to present data individual by individual and then, if desired, to amalgamate the key issues emerging across the individuals'. I did both to bring out the individual aspects and form a context for the emergent themes. Individual participant biographical data were presented in Chapter 4 to establish their backgrounds and personalities, as these were important for highlighting the individuality of their experiences. Therefore, Chapter 4 focused mainly on the participant's individual stories.

However, to present the remainder of the findings by this method would not have demonstrated the patterns emerging across all participants. Therefore, Chapters 5 and 6 adopted an approach which evaluated the themes and patterns emerging across the data. Those chapters presented a collective answer across all sources, otherwise simply focusing on the individuals would have decontextualised the findings (Cohen et al., 2011).

In writing the results and discussion chapters, verbatim responses were included where appropriate to highlight points of interest, be faithful to the data and illuminate the conclusions reached. Data analysis, code and category generation, and the presentation of findings is an interpretive process (Roulston, 2013) and is reliant on the researcher's perspective. As the researcher, I was responsible for selecting and interpreting the data, generating the codes and drawing inferences from them. The outcome of this process can be seen in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.6 Rigour

This embedded mixed methods study focused mainly on the qualitative approach. Qualitative research must be conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner, but rather than focusing on generalisability, reliability and validity, the aim is to establish trustworthiness in the study to demonstrate the findings can be trusted by others. To avoid claims that such research is 'undisciplined', 'sloppy', or made up of 'merely subjective observations' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 289), the concept of trustworthiness comprises five key aspects – credibility, dependability,

transferability, confirmability and reflexivity. The following will examine each of these aspects as applied to the present study, so readers can determine the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.6.1 Credibility

Establishing credibility involves demonstrating that the results are plausible and confidence 'can be placed in the truth of the research findings' (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), because they are based on participant data which has been interpreted correctly.

Confidence in the credibility of the results can be established in a number of ways, for example prolonged engagement, persistent observation, member checking and triangulation. However, the methods used will vary according to what is appropriate for the study.

Prolonged engagement requires familiarity with the setting and context to build trust, ensure the data are represented accurately, and the researcher is sufficiently aware of potential distortions of the data. In this study, familiarity with the context was demonstrated through my five-year involvement with the Programme and visits to SINO-U. I was alert to the potential the students might want to please the investigator or preserve the 'face' of the universities involved and their tutors by avoiding direct criticism.

Trust was built by reassuring participants that their confidences would not be used in a way that would harm them, and their anonymity would be preserved through the use of pseudonyms. For example, on occasion some participants shared points which they did not want to be included in the study and these were indeed, omitted. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that trust can be built by honouring the respondents' interests and ensuring they have an input to, and influence over, the inquiry process. In this study, the students shared suggestions which would improve their experience, and that of future cohorts, and were able to benefit directly from the implementation of measures related to their suggestions where appropriate. Furthermore, when participants requested to be relieved from diary-keeping, this was permitted. The entries already received corresponded with the interview data, and the second semester felt busier for them; therefore, on balance this seemed to be an appropriate compromise.

Persistent observation involves familiarity with the data, achieved through multiple readings to identify those points most relevant to the study. Interview transcripts and diaries were read multiple times, coded and recoded to determine emergent findings. For example, when it became apparent during transcription and coding of the final interviews, that parental

influence/relationships were emerging as a theme, the first two sets of interview transcripts were read again to identify where this might have occurred.

Triangulation occurred through the use of multiple sources of data – interviews, questionnaires and diary entries. Within the interviews themselves, speaking to each participant on three occasions allowed for checking if necessary. DePoy and Gitlin (2016) also suggest that achieving data saturation and the presence of reflexivity assist in triangulating data; explaining that saturation is '…the point at which an investigator has obtained sufficient information from data collection…' this being the point '…when the information gathered does not provide additional insights or new understandings' (p. 264). As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, it appeared that saturation had been reached from the data gathered. Including a number of participants yielded valuable insights to a range of experiences which demonstrated the differences and commonalities between the accounts given. Triangulation can increase confidence in the results of the study. Although there is no one specific truth for the experience, other researchers should feel the data obtained through naturalistic inquiry is accurate and reflects the students' experiences; thereby increasing the trustworthiness of the results obtained from the study for those in the relevant field (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016).

Flick (2018) raises an important consideration and one which was encountered in this study, this being the increased demands that methodological triangulation can place on participants. In addition to participating in the interviews, students were asked to keep diaries and/or take photographs and/or videos to illustrate the accounts of their experiences. As explained earlier, some initially kept diaries, but as the year progressed found it time-consuming or boring. At the risk of losing participants if this was insisted upon (a situation encountered by Flick), students were allowed to abandon the diary if they wished.

Member checking, through the ability to correct misinterpretation during the interviews could, and did, occur; along with comparing the diary entries with the relevant parts of that individual's transcript. However, a conscious decision was made not to send the transcripts to the participants (Roulston, 2013), as to do so may have diminished confidence in their language proficiency – an issue of which they were conscious throughout the sojourn.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability relates to the ability to transfer the findings to other settings. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress, the researcher's responsibility is not to indicate the findings' transferability. Rather, the researcher should provide 'thick description' of the participants and the way the research was conducted to allow others to determine whether the findings are transferable to

their own context (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The description of the context in which the case study occurs, the nature of the participants and the phenomena studied in the present study, should enable other researchers to make this judgement for themselves.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability enables other researchers to carry out similar research in their own context and requires transparency in the research process. It is linked with confirmability to provide 'a transparent research path' (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122) from the start of the research to the reporting of the findings. It enables other researchers to understand how and why the results were obtained; this chapter aims to fulfil that purpose.

3.6.4 Confirmability.

The requirement of confirmability relates to the extent to which the findings are based not on the researcher's own viewpoints and perceptions, but instead are 'grounded in the data' (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). Thus, it requires the findings to be based on the participants' responses; this is evidenced throughout Chapters 4, 5 and 6, as points raised are supported by references to the respondents and quotations from interviews or diaries where appropriate.

3.6.5 Reflexivity

The final aspect identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is reflexivity. Throughout this study, reflections on my role as the researcher are included, and can be found specifically in Chapters 1 and 7.

Applying the foregoing to the present study aims to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the findings that follow. The intention is not to generalise for the whole field, and it is true that each participant's view does not represent the totality of knowledge on the matter being investigated; nor that it is necessarily accurate. Nevertheless, it is *their* view and represents how they experienced the sojourn; each student's experience was individual. There was no single master reality; rather a diverse group of realities which may reveal some similarities, but also provided a broad range of experiences from which conclusions could be drawn and strategies developed.

3.7 Ethical issues

Finally, regarding methodological issues, ethical considerations were central to the design and conduct of my study and were important for various reasons. They ensured the participants' interests were paramount; that the two universities involved in the study and the relationship

between them was not compromised; and, that as the researcher, my interests were also protected. The following explains how this was done.

Ethical applications, in various forms, were submitted to the three universities involved in the study before data collection began. The study was designed in accordance with the BERA Guidelines in existence at the time the ethics applications were made (BERA, 2011). As the university at which I am registered to undertake the Ed.D, the first ethics application was made to the University of Reading Ethics Committee. This involved submitting the relevant documents electronically to my Supervisor, who was responsible for communicating with the Committee. After considering the application; questions were returned to me for clarification, and following amendments and clarifying statements, ethical approval was received by email on 25th April 2017. A copy of the amended application is shown in Appendix G – University of Reading Ethics Application. The second application was made to my employer university – UK-U; this was necessary because as a member of UK-U staff, I was conducting research involving current students of the university. The application was made through UK-U's electronic system, supported by the attachment of electronic documents and a risk assessment form. The final application was made to SINO-U, as the initial stage of data collection was to be conducted before the students left for their sojourn. Consequently, I wanted to ensure compliance with all requirements to obtain ethical approval or, in the absence of an ethics process, SINO-U's consent. It was also important to recognise that ethics are culturally relative and therefore, ensure that I conducted the research ethically in each culture (Nam, Weaver, & DelMas, 2015). This required balancing the stronger and weaker requirements in different cultures within the same study.

I was conscious of the cultural sensitivities of conducting business in China, in particular the protocol of seeking consent from those in authority at SINO-U first. Therefore, after taking advice from the Associate Dean (International) with whom I worked on this programme, it was agreed that I would prepare the questionnaire and an explanation of my study. This would be sent to the Associate Dean at UK-U and UK-U's Academic Partnership Unit representative, who would then communicate with the relevant Dean of SINO-U and seek his consent. If that was obtained, I would then communicate with the Vice-Dean of the SINO-U faculty responsible for our SINO-U students, to ensure that she was also in agreement. This process was followed, and consent obtained.

Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest three essential ethical considerations, all of which formed part of the ethics applications and conduct of the research in this study. They were informed consent; the right to privacy; and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind).

3.7.1 Informed Consent

Obtaining informed consent was a condition of the ethical approval granted. To ensure the participants received sufficient information about the study, a Participant Information Sheet was prepared (Appendix H – Participant Information Sheet) detailing the nature of the study, why the participant was chosen and their ability to decline to participate, what would happen during the research, including how the data would be collected, and their ability to withdraw before the end of January 2018. This document reassured participants that

- withdrawal or non-participation, and anything said during the study would not affect their grades or their degree course;
- the universities involved had the proper insurances in place;
- information would be kept private; and
- gave my supervisor's details in the event of problems with the study.

A supplementary information sheet (Appendix I – Supplementary Information Sheet) informed students how their photographs, videos and/or diary entries would be used. Additionally, at the beginning of the questionnaire, links were provided to electronic copies of all information sheets. Students were then asked to confirm they had read and understood the information sheets provided and whether they wished to complete the questionnaire. If they did not wish to do so, they were directed to a final screen thanking them for their time.

The opportunity to decline participation in the questionnaire was included as it was possible that, in my absence, students would be directed to complete the survey. Although this may be culturally appropriate in China, I did not want students to feel compelled to do so. Therefore, the questionnaire gave them the opportunity to opt out without losing face or encountering problems by making that choice. This would ensure that, should there be a different approach to ethical issues between UK-U and SINO-U, BERA guidelines on ethics would be followed. In their online resources document, Ethical Issues for Educational Research, in relation to 'voluntary informed consent', it provides that "[E]ducational research undertaken by UK researchers outside of the UK must adhere to the same ethical standards as research in the UK" (BERA, 2011).

After agreeing to participate, students then attended the first interview when they arrived in the UK. Copies of the information documents were again provided, and a second check was performed to confirm the students were still happy to participate. After answering in the affirmative, they were asked to complete the Participation Consent Form (Appendix J – Participant Consent Form) before the first interview commenced. This form required specific confirmation or consent for individual aspects of the study such as the participant had read and understood the information sheet; understood the purpose of the study; what was required of them and how the information or artefacts they provided may be used; that they had freedom to choose whether to participate and the date before which they could withdraw without giving a reason or detriment to their course; permission for the researcher to take notes and/or make audio-recordings of the interview; and assuring them their privacy would be respected. It was imperative in this study to ensure the students understood the content of the documents as they were written in English and this was not the participants' first language.

3.7.2 Right to Privacy

The right to privacy was maintained by allocating pseudonyms to the participants for use throughout the study and in resultant publications, and by emphasising their involvement in the study would be kept confidential.

One feature of this study, and an issue frequently encountered by insider researchers, is the possibility that readers of the research may be able to identify the universities involved by virtue of my connection with them (Trowler, 2016). Throughout this study, anonymised identifiers have been used to refer to the universities and the cities in which they are based. However, it is not necessarily a problem that the universities are identified, the innovative nature of this programme has been the subject of many external presentations. In the various ethics applications, the only guarantees of privacy given related to the individual participants, rather than the universities involved.

3.7.3 Protection from Harm

Avoidance of harm to the participants is a fundamental requirement of educational research (Fontana, Andrea & Frey, 2005). This applies at all stages of the research, but in this study was particularly relevant during the conduct of the interviews and their analysis. It is also important to ensure the researcher is protected from harm; therefore, to ensure that appropriate protections were in place for both participants and the researcher, a risk assessment was completed as part of the ethical approval process (Appendix K – Risk Assessment).

With regard to potential risks of physical harm, the following issues and appropriate safeguards were covered in the risk assessment:

- If overseas travel to SINO-U was required for the researcher, a risk assessment would be conducted and all relevant advice and warnings heeded; for example, following the warnings and advice on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Red24 websites.
- Transportation and accommodation in China would be assessed for safety and support available in the event of problems being encountered.
- That interviews would take place on university premises during normal operational hours and separate to the classroom environment;
- Additionally, when conducting interviews, ensuring there were no trailing wires if recording devices or computers were used; and
- If students were taking photographs or videos, that they were aware of their surroundings and safety when doing so and were counselled to avoid photographing or videoing other people.

Consideration of the ethical issues relating to emotional and psychological harm, meant it was important to consider the effect discussions during the interviews may have on students. There were occasions when a question/answer were not pursued where it appeared the participant was not comfortable discussing the point. Similarly, if I felt that doing so might force the participant to focus on an issue that might cause distress e.g. homesickness, I moved on without focusing in depth.

When considering psychological or emotional harm, the dichotomy between student anonymity/privacy and the need to intervene if a participant demonstrated distress was considered in advance. In particular, whether preserving anonymity/privacy would mean walking away without intervening when it was clear a student needed help. That required consideration of the circumstances in which UK-U's Student Welfare Officers would be engaged, using UK-U's established procedures for such situations. Fortunately, this was not needed; however, based on feedback from the interviews, I was able to intervene for the cohort as a whole to remedy specific issues which emerged, or to improve the experience for future cohorts. For example, it was clear that a matter of concern for sojourning students before they arrived in the UK, was how they would manage the process of applying for postgraduate study.

To remedy this for future cohorts, when visiting China, I reassured the next cohort of sojourners that on arrival they would have an individual appointment with an Employability Tutor who would advise and assist with their applications; additionally, this tutor was brought in to advise the participants' cohort.

3.7.4 Power Relations

As highlighted throughout this chapter, another important consideration was the power relations between researcher and participants, especially given the students' cultural background. Brinkmann (2018) considered various ways in which the power imbalance is manifested such as the fact the researcher controls the interview process – calling, conducting and concluding the session; the interview purpose serves the researcher's purpose and the interviewer has a monopoly over interpretation. In addition, Fontana and Frey (2005), while focusing largely on in-depth unstructured interviews, felt such interviews to be unethical as they treated the participants as objects who could be manipulated.

When considering how the interviews were conducted, the participants were encouraged to lead the interview as much as they wished; although this had to be balanced against ensuring the purposes of the research were met. For that reason, a set of interview guides were produced (Appendix D – Interview Guides) and reference was made to them during the session to ensure the essential elements were covered. However, the aim at all times was to ensure the students could tell their own story and that, as far as possible, the interview was a conversation. This was assisted by the fact that although I had direct access to the students, I was not teaching, marking or assessing them.

To mediate the monopoly over interpretation, the students' experiences and points raised were checked within and between interviews, and by cross-referencing with their diary entries.

3.8 Summary

This chapter sets out the research questions investigated and established how the study was designed, data was collected and how it was analysed. The rationale for adopting the methods used was established; issues related to the trustworthiness of the data discussed and my presence as the researcher acknowledged. Finally, the ethical issues considered when designing and undertaking the study were outlined. In the following chapters, the data gathered from the questionnaire, interviews, diaries and artefacts will be analysed and the results presented.

Chapter 4 – Cultural Background & Transition - Results and Discussion

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 address the main research question which measures the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students. This will be examined by exploring five sub-research questions, namely:

1. What key issues face students transitioning to an overseas university?
2. How does prior exposure to a western educational style via I@H impact on host-culture adjustment?
3. What key issues do students identify during their UK sojourn?
4. How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before, and during the sojourn?
5. Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

The concepts of Cultural Background and Intercultural Competence, including the impact of TNE/I@H, Cultural Adjustment and Autonomy (including agency and transformative learning) emerged from the interview and diary data. Data analysis methods were explained in Chapter 3 and the following three chapters will outline the Results and Discussion. To explore the individuality of the sojourn experience, presentation of the results combined case-study and theme-based formats. In so doing, the themes emerging from the findings are discussed, while rich narrative is used to highlight the individualistic aspects of the data.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present and discuss the results as laid out in Figure 2 – Concept Map. Namely that:

- Chapter 4 examines the themes of Cultural Background and Intercultural Competence, including the impact of TNE/I@H. These relate primarily to sub-research questions 1 and 2.
- Chapter 5 focuses on Cultural Adjustment, reflecting on the sojourning students' host-culture social and academic adjustment. This chapter relates primarily to the main research question and sub-research questions 3, 4, and 5.
- Chapter 6 focuses on the emergent theme of Autonomy, in particular the extent to which the sojourn facilitated the students' self-development, taking control of their personal, academic and professional lives. This chapter relates primarily to the main research question and will be informed by the findings from the preceding two chapters.

However, it should be noted that each of these concepts are interrelated and do not exist in watertight compartments; therefore, reference will be made to them in other chapters than those where they are the primary focus.

Themes emerging from the data analysis detailed in Chapter 3, will be examined within the relevant concept and related to the literature in the field. Applying these to the research questions, similarities and differences between the participants' experiences will be highlighted and quotes from the interviews will be used where appropriate. When presenting the participants' verbatim statements, it is important to remember that participants were not responding in their first language. Consequently, they sometimes hesitated when considering how to phrase their point, that break is often indicated by a series of dots (…). Some quotations were edited to remove repeated words, false starts and fillers such as 'erm' or 'err' which would distract from the text and arose from the student trying to express themselves in their second language; any language errors were preserved. The following chapters will outline and discuss the data gathered in light of the literature in the field.

4.1 Cultural Background

4.1.1 Hometown

Identifying the students' background was important to determine similarities and differences between them and assisted with determining the influence it might have on their host-culture adjustment. Identity may be demonstrated in many ways, as a Chinese individual, as male or female, northern or southern Chinese, along with different identities the students felt with regard to being a 'freshman' or final year student. Examining the participants' identities, they could all broadly be identified as Chinese, originating from a collectivist society. However, adopting this simplistic view would apply the same characteristics to all Chinese students (Floyd & Morrison, 2014) and would ignore the different factors that can combine to form an individual's cultural identity.

Indeed, the literature demonstrated that cohorts of students are rarely homogenous in nature (Harrison & Peacock, 2010) and for that reason, some prefer to avoid categorising students as either 'home' or 'international'. Carroll (2015), for example, prefers to use the term 'diverse' to refer to the students' characteristics. The reason being that the term 'international' could be used to describe all students who have moved to another country irrespective of the diverse backgrounds from which they have moved. Furthermore, classifying students by nationality has fallen out of favour and a more nuanced approach to cultural identity, such as that suggested by Holliday's (1999) small cultures, may be more appropriate.

Therefore, the students' Chinese nationality may form a broad frame of reference to establish the point from which their adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures start. However, their individual cultural background will also be important to establish any differences between them and to avoid the unhelpful stereotyping that large cultural labels may bring (Holliday, 1999).

Harrison and Peacock (2010) defined 'culture' as

...the collection of socially-learned rules, norms, values and shared meanings that influence individuals' behaviour within a population. (p. 881)

Accounts of each student's background provided an insight into their family background, individual personalities and hometown. Starting with their hometowns was relevant for a number of reasons. It could highlight any regional differences affecting the student's identity and could also impact on their cultural adjustment; especially if the cultural distance between their hometown and SINO-U city was greater. Indeed, as results demonstrate, the area in which the student was raised did help form their identity and there were variations between different areas, supporting statements made by Hogg, Terry and White (1995, as cited in Floyd & Morrison, 2014). The students would then already have made a significant adjustment when beginning their university education and prior to their international sojourn.

Sophia's hometown, Dalian was furthest from SINO-U. She described it as a medium-sized city in Liaoning Province; and spoke affectionately of Dalian where the weather was closer to UK weather, than that in SINO-U. The food in both Chinese cities was similar, being spicy in both places. Describing Dalian as beautiful and a tourist city, she was used to seeing tourists from places such as North and South Korea. However, she had not travelled outside China before the sojourn and did not come to the UK summer school.

Two other students came from Shandong Province further south. **Liam** regarded himself as Northern Chinese; whereas **Isabella** said she was from the south (however, she may have confused the English cardinal compass point names).

Liam said little about his hometown except that his city, Jinan, is the province's capital and ranks third in China for economic performance. Also from Jinan, Isabella lived there all her life, and described it as rich and a place where people are very nice, willing to help others or chat to strangers. Both discussed the poor air quality there, particularly in winter, but Isabella talked happily and proudly of her hometown. Demonstrating the danger of over-emphasising homogeneity between students from one country, and the more varied cultural milieux which

may exist (Jones, 2017; Montgomery, 2010; Scollon et al., 2012), Liam was conscious of the cultural distance between northern and southern Chinese people, a view which he extended to his classmates.

Neither Liam nor Isabella met many foreign people in their hometown. They encountered some international students studying at the university; but only a few compared to places like Beijing or Shanghai. Although they came across some tourists, Liam said 'it's only a minority of people'. Isabella concurred, saying it was mainly 'local people' in her town.

Isabella had not travelled outside China before the sojourn. Whereas Liam had travelled to the US, Thailand and Canada. He felt this was partly why he did not feel nervous about studying abroad. This exposure to the cultures of other nations may also have meant that his perception of his own cultural identity was less fixed (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; J. Jackson, 2010) than a person whose experiences were not as diverse.

Mia came from Annhui province, south-eastern China, which she described as a small city about four hours' drive from Shanghai. She said it is a place of interest, the site of Jinhua mountain, one of the four main mountains of Buddhism in China and said the mountain attracts tourists to the city, especially around Buddha's birthday. Some, but not many, tourists visiting the mountain are foreigners, 'since I have a clear memory that before I study in this programme when I was in my hometown every time I saw foreigners I will be very excited'. Interestingly, finding the presence of foreigners 'exciting' rather than being worried or nervous, may have influenced her choice of programme and decision to study abroad.

Prior to the sojourn, she had not travelled outside China and therefore, did not come to the summer school, although she was one of the official ambassadors welcoming UK-U visiting academics and visiting UK-U students to SINO-U. Mia's experience demonstrates that factors relevant to cultural adjustment may be wider than simply past exposure to other cultures and may include personality factors (J. Jackson, 2010; Montgomery, 2010).

Further south, **Olivia** came from a small city in Hubei, and spoke affectionately of her hometown saying, 'I like life there and it forms personality…'. Mentioning in particular how it is familiar to her, she felt that all buildings look the same in style. She did not meet many foreign people in Hubei, although she remembered a foreign teacher at high school, he spoke Chinese well, but looked different to everybody else.

Olivia had travelled widely in China but had not travelled abroad before coming to the UK summer school two years prior to the sojourn.

The remaining two students both came from Hunan province, which **Ava** described as being in the south of China; and **Noah** described as being in the middle of China. Approximately 2 hours by plane from SINO-U, Ava said 'it's a really really beautiful place…lots of mountains' and had some old buildings, whereas some parts are totally new. Some of the old buildings (by which she meant 70 to 80 years old) were abandoned, although the government are trying to preserve them to attract tourists. Living in the province's capital she said it has many cultural and economic opportunities, so she saw many foreigners there.

Ava visited the UK as part of the summer school two years previously and had also travelled widely in China and visited South Korea.

Noah's hometown was a smaller city close to the province's capital. He described the environment as 'more traditional' saying there were not so many 'upcoming things' coming to his town. This did not worry him, as he felt comfortable because the city was safe and secure, although he was saddened by seeing homeless people on the street. Leaving home disrupted his feeling of comfort and stability, and his desire to address issues of inequality or lack of opportunity became features of the interviews. Unlike Ava, he did not meet many non-Chinese people in his hometown, although he mentioned seeing some foreigners at the university or in a few schools.

Noah had travelled abroad in the past, visiting South Korea and other Asian countries. He also visited the UK as part of the summer school two years previously.

None of the participants originated in SINO-U's city, therefore when moving from home to start university, all would have experienced a period of cultural adjustment. In fact, none of those responding to the survey who originally came from SINO-U's city, chose to sojourn at UK-U. It is not possible to determine from that whether their decision to study in their hometown demonstrated a lack of confidence in moving to other places, but this would be interesting to investigate in other studies.

The students' backgrounds support the argument that adopting a large culture approach does indeed oversimplify life within society, without taking account of its cultural milieux and the differences between individuals. China is a society with different dialects, where people do not eat the same kind of food or have the same local customs. Ava highlighted this '…many people think…the…Chinese is just the Chinese…you said the same language but it's not…people in the different places says different', explaining that her roommate comes from a town only twenty minutes away from hers, 'but our language is totally different I even cannot understand what

she says...'. She said, 'I prefer to call it as the specific place language...since the long Chinese history different places form a different...customs of talking sometimes'. Although there will be similarities on a broad societal level, there will have been cultural adjustments the students had to make when moving to SINO-U, as highlighted by Liam's perception of the difference between northern and southern Chinese people. It appears there is support for the contention (J. Jackson, 2010; Montgomery, 2010) that it may be possible to identify a wider shared knowledge and understanding on a broad societal level, but only as a starting point for understanding the students' experiences. The variation between different areas of China, and furthermore, each student's background and personality will influence their experience. Those changes will start with their move to SINO-U, when they all converge from their hometowns and meet each other for the first time. The transition to university is an important time for changes in identity (Deaux, 1993), and in 4.1.4, I explored this transition with the participants to compare against their experience when moving abroad for the sojourn.

Learning whether the participants encountered many non-Chinese people previously was interesting as it may impact on cultural adjustment during the sojourn. From the interviews, it emerged the reactions to meeting foreigners in their hometown could be linked with self-reported personality traits, for example shyness; and an individual's excitement at meeting new things and new people could be linked to their enthusiasm to interact with foreigners.

4.1.2 Parents & Family

The impact of parents in forming the students' identities became more apparent as data analysis progressed. Initially, I enquired about their parents and wider family to gain a sense of the students' backgrounds. However, when analysing the interviews, particularly the final round, a strong theme emerged surrounding the influence that some parents and wider family members had and, in some cases, how this changed as the student's own view of themselves changed. In some cases, the parents' influential role challenged the notion that sojourners tend to study abroad voluntarily (Savicki, 2008; Ward et al., 2002), and this may impact on their cultural adjustment. This may also relate to levels of individual agency (Gao, 2013) and autonomy and demonstrates that students should not all be treated the same (Heng, 2019; Savicki & Selby, 2008). Moreover, it indicates that various factors influence adjustment (Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008). This linked with themes of self-development and personality which will be explored later.

Sophia appeared to depend on her parents' advice and guidance enormously. Her mother is a doctor specialising in western medicine and her father is an engineer. Clearly therefore, there is some acceptance of western methods in her mother's professional life at least. As the only

child she said, 'so my parents love me very much'. She had been protected and sheltered by them, for example, she was not allowed to cook at home as cutting vegetables with a knife was unsafe. Her parents were influential in her decision to spend the year abroad, she only decided to do so after receiving their advice. She had no idea whether she would have come to the UK if the choice was left to her, saying she was very confused at that time and they gave her the courage to come. They believed sojourning would broaden her horizons, especially as 'many serious Chinese lawyers study other countries' laws'. Believing her parents 'thought further than she did', at the end of the sojourn she was still unsure of her future direction and said she would be guided by them, because they had more experience than her.

Liam described his background as 'middle class in China but working class in western terms'. However, he said 'but it works fine for me and I have a quite comfortable life'. His parents were also influential in his decision to spend a year overseas; in particular his mother, who studied nursing in Singapore and valued the importance of studying abroad. She left nursing to become an executive, whereas his father was experiencing a difficult time after the company he used to work for had problems. Liam and his mother were now supporting him. Before 'the opening' in China, his parents 'were very very poor farmers' during the 1980s and 90s.

The experience of studying in Singapore changed his mother a lot and consequently, she was influential in his move to SINO-U for his undergraduate degree, telling him

> *You cannot always stay in the north unless you went to Beijing because I*
> *think the only city that matters in the northern part of China is Beijing…why*
> *not go to a southern city to try different new things*

She was also influential in his coming to England, it was her decision 'to make me come abroad'. It may be that his mother's exposure to other cultures led to broader cultural influences in Liam's life; similar to the cultural hybridity that globalisation is said to bring (J. Jackson, 2010).

Describing them as 'conservative parents', he explained that 'Chinese parents like to put investments on their kids and education is a big part of it because education changes people'. Having been imbued with the view that education is a transformative, expansive experience, this could be important for Liam's cultural adjustment.

Noah came from a professional family background; his father is a judge and his mother a 'public lawyer'. The extent of their influence was unclear, he did not speak of his motivations for moving abroad; but was uncertain of his future goals. Confused regarding his future direction, he sought his parents' and friends' guidance. However, he subsequently said his parents

persuaded him to study for a Masters immediately after graduation, highlighting the disadvantages of not doing so; nevertheless, he was troubled whether this was the right choice for him. Leaving the safety of his family appeared to have been more challenging for him than for most, and on return to China he said 'I really need to be with family' as it was a year since he had seen them. Unlike other participants, he planned to spend time with them and work in the court with his father over the summer following the end of the sojourn.

Olivia was also close to her family and spoke with great respect and affection for them. Her father is a surgeon focusing on western medicine and her mother is a pharmacist. Interestingly, although her mother dealt with ensuring Chinese medicines satisfied approved standards, Olivia's family only use western medicines for their own health, believing they are better and cleaner. Therefore, it appears there was already an acceptance of international influences in the family's day-to-day life. Also important in her life, and a person she spoke of frequently, was her maternal grandpa. He was a lawyer, she talked of him cooking for her, and how he cooks to a professional standard. Throughout the sojourn she shared photos with him of what she had done and talked of how he was proud of her.

Her parents were influential in her life, and as will be seen in Chapter 6 she felt the year abroad gave her breathing space to think for herself about her future direction. At the end of her sojourn she said

> *My father said…he think it's so smart to send me out to England and for me*
> *to travel in Europe and I opened my mind and I think…how to say…in more*
> *logical way*

However, although her father wanted her to return to work in Hubei province after her Masters, she did not want to do so. Instead, she favoured working in Shanghai, saying she may return to her home province later.

> *I don't want to limit myself to a very cosy and comfortable situation just in*
> *my province because my father will get everything ready for me…it's not*
> *good for me…because it's my own life…I respect him…maybe I will go back*
> *to Hubei province when I tried my best in Shanghai but at first I won't give*
> *in to him [she was laughing]*

Interestingly, as explored in Chapter 6, this was a transition point in her life where she was leaving childhood and strong parental influence behind. She was developing a new understanding of her parents' role in her life. She separated how she would handle the

relationship with her 'mum' who felt she was capable of organising her life; and her father, who still wanted more influence, and was adjusting to what her future relationship with her parents would be.

> *…I think that after I'm 20, I still don't have…how to say…quarrel with him because I totally understand why he think that…why he…because he's…he just want to do good for me…when I was young I can't understand it…but when I grow older…I understand how hard he is and…he's hard working…he's my father…he's not as great as I was young because when I grow up I found that he's not…the superman…he has limitations…he has some weakness and…it's the little things…you can't urge so much but he loves you and you loves him and…so…it's quite how to say…I don't know how to describe this thing*

Isabella's parents did not feature largely in her interviews. When asked about them, she did not really talk about friends or family except to say she called her family every day. In discussing her parents' views regarding her UK sojourn, she replied

> *'they encourage me to make my own choice…they want me to be the leader of my world…they respect me and…yeah, they're good'.*

Ava also did not discuss her parents a great deal, she mentioned talking to them every day, although they often cut the call short because they were busy and due to the time difference. She emphasised that her mother controlled everything at home and Ava did not have to do anything for herself. She did not anticipate the sojourn would affect the relationship with her parents she said, 'I think the experience abroad will not have any influence on our relationship'; although it is possible she may not have been in a position to understand what the effect might be (Benson et al., 2003).

Perhaps the student whose relationship with parents might undergo the biggest transformation was **Mia**. Her father is a surgeon specialising in western medicine, and her mother was a nurse but now works in an administrative function.

As the only child in her family she often felt lonely as a child, especially as her parents had many siblings. Her wider family were influential in her decision to study law with the option to study abroad. Originally, she intended to focus on science, but did not do well in Physics and needed to rethink her direction. Her aunt and other family members majored in law and her father also

encouraged her to take this route. Additionally, one of her uncles spent a year at Oxford University and was an influential force.

Discussing the relationship with her parents, she explained they were very strict, and as discussed in Chapter 6, she enjoyed the freedom that moving to SINO-U and UK-U brought. Although close to her parents, there was a tension between 'strict' parents and a child who was breaking away and becoming independent. She was less reliant on her parents for decision-making explaining during the second interview 'I told my mum that…if I can find job in UK, I will live for one year or two'.

She planned to spend a little time (but not the whole summer) with her parents when she returned to China after the sojourn and before starting her Masters in the UK; but she was conscious there would be conflict.

> *Because one of the things I think my parents are too strict to me and they*
> *will tell me what's wrong and what's right…you should what…you shouldn't*
> *do what and sometimes I don't like that…things so here…If I live…far away*
> *from them I don't need to hear that thing and…I feel more free to do things*

Although she knew they missed her a lot, she anticipated many arguments. She was aware that she was very similar to her mother and felt her parents still believed she was a child.

The influence of family from the home environment is an interesting aspect of the sojourn. The influence of other cultures in their families' lives may demonstrate an element of cultural hybridity in their upbringing for some participants. It is suggested that personal and familial features may be fairly fixed (Jones, 2017). For some in this study, that may be the case (e.g. Sophia), whereas for others such as Mia and Olivia, this may represent a time of change. Noah was clearly grappling with this and may have been either in the process of change, or accepting such influences in his life.

4.1.3 Personality

In addition to the impact of cultural distance and parental influence, the final background factor relevant for student transition to university life and international sojourns, was individual personality. The impact of personality emerged from the data and resonated with the literature in the field. Studies such as Armes and Ward (1989), Bochner (2003), Brown and Holloway (2008), Carroll (2015) etc. demonstrate that individual personality characteristics can influence student adjustment to the host-culture. The premise being, those less likely to interact with host-culture people find it more difficult to adjust. Consequently, observing the students and

picking up cues from how they described themselves, I constructed a picture of some aspects of their personalities.

Sophia appeared to be the most introverted participant. Not only did she appear to be quiet and shy at the beginning of the first interview, she also described herself as introverted, adding 'I'm so shy…so…sometimes I'm afraid to communicate with people that's different from me'.

She explained that, without her parents' advice, she would not have come to the UK saying 'I am very afraid of the difference between the two countries'. However, it was not just in England that she experienced this difficulty adding 'I'm the kind of person that don't know how to start a conversation…even in China…little bit shy…I'm shy'.

Conscious that she needed to overcome this, she challenged herself to do so; although she found it hard to change habits. The extent to which she was successful will be explored in Chapter 6. 'I'm a person that don't want to…take the challenges' saying she preferred to stay at home in bed. 'It's very hard so I think…I'm not a child now so I think I need to…to challenges and to feel the different life.

Isabella, having demonstrated she was a private person in that she did not talk much about her parents, was similarly private when talking about herself. She did not discuss herself much during the first interview but did explain that she was 'a little bit shy'. Her language proficiency seemed to affect the flow of conversation, although she appeared to be more open to challenge than Sophia and more in control of her life direction.

Enjoying routine and plans, she said she got up at 6 am, used to go jogging, then would also do some reading or prepare for the day's classes and 'I like to make a plan for my future…for my study'. She thought she had a healthy lifestyle, liked to play badminton and go to the gym. She was also proud of being the top student in her class and liked researching or reading books relevant to her course.

Describing herself as having strong willpower, she said 'if I decided to do something, I will try my best to finish that'. Importantly for her sojourn experience, describing how she felt about moving to SINO-U she said

> *I'm the kind of person who like to change myself…to challenge myself…to*
> *meet something curious…to meet the new world…it was exciting for me to*
> *study in another city.*

Ava talked about herself less than Isabella but seemed to demonstrate similar characteristics. When describing how every day was different in the early stages of the sojourn she said 'for me, I like different things'. However, later during the second interview she also said she was not usually an outgoing person, preferring to stay in her accommodation and cook.

I think it's a challenge for my personality and it's…it's so hard but I will try
to change it, and maybe more become an outgoing person.

Having said that, she was very eager to share at the beginning of the first interview, and a lot of information came tumbling out of her with little prompting.

Noah appeared to be a deeply reflective person who thought deeply about issues of social inequality and justice. Much of his conversation centred on his desire to help people in some way. He mentioned that he and his friend Liam, who will be considered next, 'were a bit outgoing' and 'could just communicate and talk with others'.

He described himself as a self-motivated person, 'I don't need somebody to whip me behind me'. Apart from that, he did not talk much of his own characteristics, instead focusing his thoughts on how he could do something of value for society.

Liam focused more on his own character and displayed a complex blend of characteristics. Describing himself as a 'more open-minded person', during the first interview he was already thinking of living abroad after graduation, saying 'It's pretty challenge for me but…I'm still young…I can try things…I can try many new things and it's part of experience for me'.

It is possible that his mother having lived abroad for two years, and his parents' encouragement for him to also live abroad, had developed a more expansive aspect to his personality. He demonstrated a willingness to try new things and not feel afraid of them.

However, he also described himself by saying

I'm a more reserved…traditional person…compared to my friends they are
all open-minded…like to show themselves…like to express their
views…there's a lot of difference and a lot of conflict on the ideas
sometimes…they do cause problems sometimes.

He attributed his 'more reserved…traditional' personality to the difference between northern and southern Chinese people, and the decision of the Chinese leaders to open up southern China first. Highlighting the diversity that can exist within one nation (Montgomery, 2010; Scollon et al., 2012), he felt the result was that 'southerners are more open-minded…more

international…we are just…poor countrymen'. However, he felt that being more traditional 'builds my character' and that southern Chinese people like fancy things. Although he was more traditional, he displayed adaptability; when talking about relationship issues he said 'but now, I'm open-minded…so I'm getting better with all the openness'. Probably the clearest discussion of the differences between different areas of China, it reinforced that labelling all Chinese students with the same characteristics is inappropriate (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Harrison & Peacock, 2010) and highlights the destabilisation that occurs when moving away from the home cultural environment (Benson, 2011).

Self-assessing his personality he described himself as a 'strong and adaptable person'; 'somebody who can get used to different situations who likes to try new things'; and somebody who prefers to 'work alone…I feel kind of…type of solo person'. Although he believed it is more efficient to work alone, he sought companionship, and romantic relationship issues were a feature of his sojourn. Describing himself as good at socialising and 'a very sociable person', he said he had wide hobbies, can make friends with everybody and can always find things in common to talk about. Furthermore, he described himself as self-directed and one who takes responsibility for himself, taking advantage of available support when needed.

The two remaining participants seemed to be less reserved. Beginning with **Olivia**, she appeared to be a pragmatic, adaptable person who demonstrated empathy and competence in her approach to dealing with other cultures.

Discussing her career goals, she envied people who have a clear plan for the future because she is not that kind of person. Reinforcing this view, we discussed exam revision in the third interview and Olivia said she tends to do things at the last minute. Similarly, during the first interview, she laughed as she shared a photo of her desk exclaiming, 'it's a mess'. She felt her time abroad would give her the chance to 'make myself stronger and learn much more knowledge'. Change did not appear to worry her:

> *I'm not that kind of sensitive person…once a change happens I will feel it*
> *after the few days…the first…but after a few days I get used to it so it's ok*
> *for me and I'm the kind of person who makes a lot of friends…every time I*
> *feel lonely I ask them out and have a barbecue or shopping or cinema so it's*
> *ok*

When experiencing new, different things she said, 'it's life experience and be brave…at least you live at present and at the moment'. She felt you should 'never be afraid'; she carried her

mother's message with her that most people in the world are good, and bad people are the minority. She said

Never be afraid…I told myself be cautious…be patient…be careful…but
never scared because other people are scared because they don't know…we
are afraid we will make mistakes when we are first foreigners…but
foreigners are also scared when they face us…they will think 'Oh Chinese
people they will eat cats and dogs' will hate us…it's ok

She appeared to be calm and happy, and demonstrated a pragmatic approach to life.

The final participant, **Mia,** appeared to be the person with the most outgoing personality and made many friends; demonstrating a sociable nature it may be one of the reasons she reported feeling lonely as a child. She showed some strong, independent traits and was willing to try new things. Rather than using agents to apply for masters courses, she preferred to do this herself. Unlike her classmates, she chose not to live in halls but rent a house through UK-U's letting agency, and was looking to apply to masters courses at universities that her classmates would not be going to. She was very proud of doing things for herself.

Talking of the subjects she enjoyed in her studies, it was those covering globalisation-related topics, for example a course in China focusing on the international trade of goods; she also talked of how she used to be very excited seeing foreigners in her hometown, but now she was used to it.

It was important to her that she did things well, she described herself as the kind of person who needs 'to chase for perfect things or I need to be better'. She explained how she discovered she was ranked 14th in the class when she was in China, so decided she needed to work harder. The result being that she ranked 6th in her cohort and first or second among the sojourners.

She carried with her some interesting thoughts on gender, particularly regarding her desire to work in criminal law, saying

Actually, I think criminal law is not good for girls to learn it because you
need to…face the criminal or suspect every day and…as a girl…I know I'm
very emotional and can't be objective

As the above accounts demonstrate, the participants displayed a range of personality traits from the shy and introverted to the more sociable and outgoing. The literature links personality characteristics with adjustment (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Carroll, 2015; Edwards-Joseph &

Baker, 2012; Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008) and it will be interesting when examining the students' adjustment to the sojourn in Chapter 5, to see whether this was evident in the present study.

4.1.4 Transition to Chinese University

The transition to university life is recognised as a stressful life event (e.g. Savicki & Adams, 2007; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2002). As outlined in section 4.2.1, the participants moved away from their hometowns when beginning their degree courses in SINO-U. Due to the cultural differences between areas of China, I explored their feelings when moving to SINO-U and compared that to their experience when moving to the UK.

The impact of cultural background when moving to SINO-U was important for two primary reasons. Firstly, it suggested that Holliday's (1999) small culture perspective was appropriate for aspects of this study. Notwithstanding that they could all be categorised as Chinese, the students' cultural backgrounds were diverse, a view further supported by other studies (Heng, 2019; Savicki & Selby, 2008; Sovic, 2008). Secondly, it was at this point that the students came together as a cohort and began the I@H phase of their study. As a cohort, they developed a distinctive cohort identity and became a small cultural group who, for 30% of their time, were immersed in the UK-U academic and (to some extent) social, cultures. Indeed, Holliday suggests that culture can be multi-layered and that might have been the experience for the participants as they transitioned to life in a new part of China, to Chinese academic culture, and also to UK social and academic culture. Part of the adjustment that students must make when entering a university in their own, or another county (Carroll, 2015; Jones, 2017).

Some students found moving to SINO-U more of an adjustment than others. **Isabella** found life in SINO-U's city very different from that in her hometown; it was a big adjustment for her to make. She found the accents of those around her difficult to understand, the food was different and the weather at home was sunnier, it rained too much in SINO-U's city. Having said that, she was not nervous about moving there, she enjoyed challenging herself and meeting something curious, so it was an exciting change for her.

It was interesting that **Liam**, who came from the same area also noticed the cultural distance between home and SINO-U. He seemed to experience the biggest cultural difference between his hometown and SINO-U's city; feeling a strong divide between northern and southern Chinese people. In a comparison demonstrating the impact of globalisation, he described it in terms of 'Game of Thrones' saying northerners are like the Starks and southerners are like the man in the Kings Landing; they like fancy things whereas he is more traditional. This was an interesting comparison for Liam to draw, not only did it illustrate that it is inappropriate to apply

the same characteristics to people from all areas of China; but it also demonstrates the impact of globalisation. He chose to use an example from western culture to make his point, illustrating the interaction between his local environment and globalism (J. Jackson, 2010).

He felt that 'southerners and northerners in China, they do have a very different mode…living patterns…very big difference'. In SINO-U's city the food is spicier than his hometown and he found their accent and culture different. Nevertheless, he said 'but after all, I am in China…I will be fine'. Despite that, he was nervous about moving to SINO-U at first, but said he is adaptable, likes new things and gets used to them.

It was perhaps **Mia** who experienced the most difficulty with moving to SINO-U. It was the first time she had left home, and told of how she cried and felt very sad when her parents left her at the dormitory. After those initial moments she enjoyed moving to another city and did not miss her parents too much in the first semester, 'everything is so fresh for me and…my parents they are very strict to me before, so it gave me much freedom'. SINO-U's city was very different from her hometown where they like sweet food, whereas in SINO-U's city the food is very spicy. She also noted how SINO-U's city is very mountainous with steep slopes whereas her hometown is smaller and flatter with mountains just to the south.

Noah was only 18 years old when he moved to SINO-U and was definitely nervous. But, like Liam, 'it's still in China and you can feel everything familiar with you and it don't feel so…you know…sometimes the sense of lonely'.

Ava explained that moving to SINO-U was the first time she left her hometown, at first, she missed home and had to learn to live and work with others. 'You just have to do what you do and respect others' lifestyles'. She did not notice much of a cultural difference between SINO-U's city and her hometown except the food was different.

The other students did not feel the move to SINO-U was stressful. Despite being an introverted person, **Sophia** seemed to cope reasonably well. Her biggest problem was the weather, it was very cold in winter and there was no heating in the room; therefore, she often stayed in bed to keep warm. However, the friendship and sense of community with her roommates meant she did not feel homesick. They went out together to restaurants and to have fun. She felt positive about the move and said it made a new life for her at the time.

Olivia said little about moving to SINO-U but appeared to have a positive experience saying she was not nervous about it, gets used to change in a few days and makes friends easily.

Reflecting on this initial move it appears that cultural change impacted on the students, those moving from further away seemed to experience the biggest change, affirming the danger of over-emphasising large culture similarities. Furthermore, it is also clear that individual characteristics played an important role and should not be ignored (Jones, 2017); therefore, even small culture similarities could be over-emphasised. Findings supported the comfort that students found from staying within the broader cultural norms of China (e.g. Hofstede, 2011). It is clear therefore, that the participants do identify with the broader cultural traits often attributed to Chinese society. Whether they would do so if they reflected on issues of culture by applying specific intercultural training is another matter and beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, there were some cultural differences to overcome in addition to the usual, stressful transition to university life (Sovic, 2008). Personality traits were also important, those such as Liam, Olivia and Isabella who described themselves as adaptable and enjoyed challenging themselves, seemed to have a more positive initial experience.

From the foregoing it could be expected that the students may also be affected by the transition to studying at UK-U; this transition will be examined next.

4.1.5 Transition to UK University

To understand the key issues facing students in their transition, the question about moving to SINO-U was followed by asking students to compare that with their move to UK-U.

The literature highlights that international students must cope with pressures without their usual support systems available to them (Ryan & Carroll, 2005), this is also true to a lesser extent when students move away from their hometowns, especially across the large distances experienced by some participants in the present study. Therefore, before arriving for the sojourn, the students had already spent 3 years living away from home and had experienced separation issues and some cultural differences in doing so. This, along with the host-academic and social cultural immersion during the I@H preparation for their academic experience, may have already prepared them to some extent for their sojourn. This section involves the analysis of specific concepts, namely the culture shock that may be experienced, the effect of individual factors and the way in which the I@H phase prepared the students for their initial transition to UK-U. Their experiences beyond their arrival in the UK will then be evaluated throughout Chapter 5.

The move from home to SINO-U appeared to assist some students, for example, **Mia** felt it helped her adjust to life at UK-U as she had to live an independent life at SINO-U. However, it would probably be more accurate to suggest that (at least to some extent) this is attributable

to the transition to university life in general, common to most students, rather than internationalisation (Jones, 2017).

Mia, Isabella and **Noah** observed that moving to another country was different than moving to another city in China, because in the UK students had to do everything for themselves. Even though their parents were too far away from SINO-U to be of any practical help, the students still seemed to mentally rely on them. However, in England, that sense of security from knowing their parents were in the same country, vanished. They had to solve their own problems, organise their own travel and learn how to cook for themselves. Isabella commented that when moving to SINO-U the language is still Chinese, the people are Chinese, and the way of thinking is similar; she repeated this during the first and third interviews; it highlighted the impact of cultural distance (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). It is possible at this stage that participants were over-estimating the similarities between the regions in China, as many had reported difficulties understanding the accents and dialects of their fellow students when they first arrived at SINO-U (Harrison & Peacock, 2010); thereby confirming the in-group bias that can exist. At this point, they possibly fell back on large culture stereotypes, forgetting the nuances they had previously reported existing between different areas of China (Montgomery, 2010).

Demonstrating the anxiety that may affect students when contemplating mixing with those from other cultures (Carroll, 2015), upon moving to UK-U, Isabella said 'I'm not sure but there must be many difference between English people and Chinese people…I need to find it out and get over it.' However, this 'different way of thinking' was a perception held within two weeks of arrival and not something she had actually experienced (Harrison, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Coming to UK-U as part of a group also appeared to help the students' transition. This will be examined in more depth when looking at cultural adjustment (Chapter 5), but for now it is interesting that **Sophia** felt the same in England as she did in SINO-U's city because she had many friends and they all came here together. In particular, she felt moving to SINO-U was different because she did not know anybody and felt lonely at that time. However, coming as a group meant, at the first interview, she and Isabella did not anticipate they would feel very homesick. This is contrary to Ryan and Carroll's (2005) findings and instead, suggests the sojourning group replaced the support systems from home that most sojourners lack (Carroll, 2015), thereby reducing isolation and loneliness (Larsen, 2015).

When asked whether they were more or less nervous than when they moved to SINO-U, responses varied. Only one student, **Ava** said she was more nervous; she was worried about

the language and understanding what her classmates said - especially those UK-based classmates who were not English (Friedman et al., 2009; Ryan & Carroll, 2005). She was practising English by listening to the BBC and TED talks; at the first interview she reported that she still felt nervous. This may be related to her language proficiency (based on her IELTS score at the time of the questionnaire) being the lowest of the participants.

Others did not report being very nervous and various reasons were given for this. **Liam** felt his good English skills gave him confidence, and his previous travels abroad helped - 'I'm pretty confident about travelling…travelling and studying abroad so I'm not very nervous…just have some expectations…to try to make some friends here'.

Sophia did not appear to be nervous as she drew confidence from being part of a larger group. Although she talked of being in another country, she did not say it worried her. Having not travelled abroad before, it was interesting to see how she felt after the first couple of weeks in the UK, to which she replied, 'better than I think', so it appears she may have been unsure or nervous of some aspects of moving here.

Isabella reported feeling 'a little bit [nervous]…but I'm trying to get over it'. During the first interview she worried about the language; finding it difficult to understand local people's words, the structure of the lectures and differences in food, and felt a little homesick. However, the points she discussed related to her experiences within the first two weeks, rather than her feelings before she arrived. Interestingly, Isabella's IELTs score was also one of the lower scores among the participants (6.5) and she had not visited the city before or travelled outside China, this is similar to the accounts of initial nervousness expressed in other studies (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012)

The participants least nervous about the move to the UK were Noah, Olivia and Mia. As with her initial experience with moving to SINO-U, **Mia** felt sad when she left her parents at the airport. Explaining that she cried when she crossed customs having just said goodbye to them, this time she did not let them see her cry. However, she then said, after this initial emotional point she felt happy and excited to be coming to the UK. Regarding the actual move itself, she did not find it very different from being at SINO-U, especially as she did not go home frequently while at university in China. She shared the initial excitement written of by Oberg (1960)

Noah was excited more than nervous about studying and living abroad; although he was a little nervous, he said it was not as much as when he moved to SINO-U. **Olivia** felt less nervous than

when she moved to SINO-U. She had heard much of the terrorist incidents in London before the sojourn, but was not worried about them, she said:

> *But I think if you are die you will die, no matter what happens…just like in Western people believes in God, God will take care of you so just be brave and experience everything…so that's what I think…that's why I'm less worried…*

It was clear at this point that a number of issues were relevant to the students' levels of confidence about moving abroad. Those reporting more nervousness, on the whole were those with lower language scores; those with higher language scores reported less nervousness. Supporting previous studies indicating that lower levels of language proficiency can be a barrier to culturally competent behaviour and its relationship with interpersonal communication (Carroll, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Ryan & Carroll, 2005). Prior travel also seemed to have some impact, although there is more variability with this, and personality was an important factor e.g. whether the student tended to be shy and/or nervous. **Noah** and **Olivia** had already visited UK-U when coming to the summer school two years previously, and **Liam** had travelled outside China before coming to the UK. None of these experienced much nervousness about coming to the UK. **Ava** had travelled outside China and visited the summer school, but this was overshadowed by worries regarding her language proficiency.

Isabella and **Sophia** were a little nervous but did not demonstrate great levels of anxiety; neither of them had travelled outside China previously, nor had they visited the UK summer school. Similarly, **Mia** had not travelled outside China before the sojourn, but after her sadness when leaving her parents at the airport, she was happy and excited to be coming to the UK. As will be seen in the next section on Preparation and Support, other factors may have contributed to her confidence. So far, it appears there is little support for Oberg's (1960) proposition that all sojourners experience culture shock, or for the levels of 'shock' mentioned in more recent studies (Carroll, 2015; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Heng, 2019; Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). Furthermore it is not demonstrated that all sojourners undergo anxiety, stress and nervousness rather than euphoria (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). Therefore, the extent to which the I@H preparation assisted with this needs to be considered.

4.2 Preparation and Support

Designing the course and throughout its operation, it was expected students would experience two forms of cultural challenge; supporting the notion that cultural identity continuously evolves (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Ryan, 2000). Those relating to the social culture encountered

through living in another country, and the academic culture encountered when studying in a different education system. This is especially apparent where the culture gap is widest, e.g. when moving between China and the UK (e.g. Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2015).

An important aspect of the students' experience was the I@H preparation throughout the three years prior to their sojourn. Moreover, contributing to this intercultural preparation was interaction with their UK-U tutors who came from various academic backgrounds and nationalities, none of which (during the preparation stage) were Chinese.

The experience for the majority of students could be characterised entirely as an I@H educational experience during the first three years. They received English language tuition delivered by UK-U academic staff based permanently in China; the classes focused on English language, and English for Academic Purposes designed specifically to develop familiarity with the terminology and use of language associated with Law. In years two and three, those English classes were complemented by delivery of the English law modules. The UK-U academic staff delivering the law modules visited SINO-U; each module was taught by a combination of online tuition and a two-week intensive face-to-face teaching period. With this in mind, the students should have been better prepared for the learning and teaching methods (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015), requirement for critical analysis, using the works of others (Montgomery, 2010), assessment methods (Heng, 2019), and speaking in class (Straker, 2016).

Part of the I@H experience included the opportunity to interact with UK-U students visiting SINO-U. Although Mia did not travel internationally, she was one of the volunteer ambassadors who welcomed visiting students and academics to SINO-U. Consequently, she made many friends among the visiting student groups, contrary to the levels of foreigner-interaction usually found in the literature (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002). Additional to this I@H experience, some students (including Noah, Olivia and Ava) were also internationally mobile, visiting UK-U to participate in the summer school two years before the sojourn.

Participants were asked about the preparation received during their three years at SINO-U, and whether more could have been done to prepare them for their sojourn. The students' comments have been grouped into two categories, those relating mainly to:

- preparation for adjustment to the host-culture society; and
- adjustment to the host-culture academic experience.

4.2.1 Preparation for host-culture society

Students did not say much about this, **Sophia, Isabella** and **Ava** felt they would benefit from learning more about various aspects of the host-culture. It is also interesting to note that these were the three participants who worried most about the sojourn, with language proficiency being foremost among their concerns, supporting Ryan and Carroll (2005) and Brown and Holloway (2008).

Ava and **Isabella** felt classes about lifestyle would have been beneficial, covering points such as how to buy movie tickets, transport, how to get their student discounts and bank accounts etc. Ava felt advice on safety, and how to use email would have helped her, and along with Sophia more information about the weather, especially that it was not as rainy in the UK as Sophia had heard; and students should bring more warm clothes for the cold weather.   Such aspects are similar to factors mentioned by Ward & Kennedy (1999).

Overall, students were confident about their preparation for the social culture and did not see much of a role for others to develop this. **Mia** felt 'it's a natural process…you will adjust to life naturally here'. They regarded themselves as self-sufficient, 'I think we are adults we can take care of ourselves (Ava); 'we all adapt, we can look after ourself' (Isabella). Whether they would have felt as confident if they had not been immersed in a western-style environment for part of the preceding three years is difficult to say. However, as culture can be learned over time (Brown, 2016; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Oberg, 1960), this process may have started with the I@H preparation. Notably, there were clearly adjustments to be made, an unavoidable feature of moving to a new environment. However, shock and high levels of anxiety did not appear to be present.

4.2.2 Preparation for the host-culture academic environment

I@H claims to benefit students by providing them with globally relevant skills (Harrison & Peacock, 2010) In the context of the Programme in the present study, the immersion in UK-U culture not only provided those who did not sojourn with another cultural experience, but also prepared the sojourners for their experience at UK-U. The intention being that it would ameliorate the harsh, and sometimes shocking effects, of studying abroad (Carroll, 2015). Supporting Gu & Schweisfurth's (2015) contention that studying in a new academic culture can be more shocking than adjusting to the new sociocultural environment, the students spoke more about their academic preparation. This may also reflect their preoccupation with academic achievement throughout the sojourn.

All participants felt well-prepared for their sojourn, **Mia** felt that teaching was the same as the flying faculty modules at SINO-U and, of the preparation, said 'yeah I think it's enough'; she could not think of more that could be done. **Sophia** concurred regarding the teaching and said she did not find it difficult to adapt to the academic culture, as she was already used to the flying faculty modules and felt familiar with some teachers and the teaching methods.

Isabella felt she was better prepared for 'facing coursework' because of the flying faculty modules. **Ava** and **Isabella** both felt it helped with their language proficiency; apart from their grades, this was their biggest worry during the sojourn.

Liam found the flying faculty teaching beneficial, even though each teaching period only lasted two weeks. He said, 'so it was just a temporary solution for this kind of situation…but I do think it's quite useful to be honest'. He found having China-based UK-U staff advantageous, and said

It definitely have something to do with our joint degree…with our joint
programme because it's not like you can have a full-time English lecturer
and education…in different Chinese universities…they normally don't
provide that'

In his opinion, having to communicate with the three China-based UK-U staff helped, 'so 'I'm not feeling challenged…I don't ever feel quite challenged during my whole time in [UK-U city]'.

Noah felt students were given enough information to know what they were going to experience, saying the group 'have been prepared pretty well to come to the final year here'. Having been taught how to speak English and to write English academic essays benefited them; and the China-based UK-U staff 'really just built up the road for us to go to here so…it was really cool'. He added '…because we've gone through a lot just like the modules in [SINO-U], I found it not very different for us to get involved in this type of studying'. **Ava** shared similar views

The English classes…including the English law and academic law in the
classes that link to [UK-U]…and I have discussed this with several
classmates and ALL of them think that the experience in [SINO-U] three
years about the study of English have helped us a lot…yeah if we don't have
those classes in past three years…we may not adjust to the classes here
anymore since practice is so important

Students suggested potential improvements to the preparation including more skills training, e.g. legal research skills, the training received was valuable, but the participants desired more. They wanted more opportunities to speak English (**Isabella, Mia**), or more emphasis on the need

for students to keep practising their English speaking, reading and listening (**Isabella, Mia**). **Sophia** was worried about achieving good marks to satisfy the entry requirements for her preferred postgraduate university and wanted more help with how to get good marks, but also said the flying faculty modules prepared them for this. **Mia** and **Noah** mentioned providing assistance regarding applications for postgraduate programmes, this was a consistent theme throughout the interviews for all participants. There were some requests from **Isabella** for more information about the procedural aspects of examination rooms in England and for more opportunities to take part in the summer camps.

Clearly, the flying faculty modules, and western educational environment provided by the Programme in China benefitted the students' adjustment to the academic culture in the UK. Some of the more confident participants also felt students needed to take some responsibility for improving their own ability to adjust by working hard and putting in the effort (**Noah**); and being self-sufficient (**Liam**). **Liam** also said, 'we are all young students eager to find something new…but I think we will find our way'. Supporting Oberg's (1960) contention that familiarity with the culture has a value, it appears that, at least with regard to the initial transition, the I@H preparation was beneficial.

The emphasis placed on the development of language proficiency and the academic skills required for studying an English law degree, in addition to the subject knowledge, aimed to avoid the 'sink or swim' experience that affects many study abroad students (Savicki, 2008). The approach was similar to that taken for new undergraduate students at UK-U, as they all need to adapt to the new academic culture (Jones, 2017); with the addition of language and language for specific purposes classes.

4.3 Summary

The data regarding cultural background relates to SRQ1: what key issues do students face transitioning to a UK university? Although there may be similarities between the students and the issues affecting their transition, to focus on those similarities would be to ignore the fundamental differences which exist on an individual level. Therefore, it was essential to consider the participants' individual characteristics thereby building a better picture of their individual journeys (Carroll, 2015; Deaux, 1993; Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008). Furthermore, their motivation for sojourning and the impact this can have on their attitude towards it, may also be important (Carroll, 2015); especially bearing in mind the effect of parental influence in some cases.

It is true that all participants were Chinese and had been educated within the Chinese education system prior to starting the Programme. However, they came from different areas of China and, as Liam highlighted, this gave rise to a perception that individuals from the north had different characteristics to those from the south. Furthermore, each possessed their own individual characteristics. Sophia and Isabella were shy and introverted; whereas Mia, Olivia, Noah and Liam were more outgoing. Ava was shy but described herself as being open to challenge and exploring different things. Consequently, large cultural labels (Holliday, 1999) based on nationality may provide a starting point or broad frame of reference (Heng, 2019), but when considering the student experience, the individuality of that experience for each student is inescapable. It is influenced by their personality, background, and motivation for sojourning (Carroll, 2015), in addition to the small cultural group to which the students belonged.

Some students liked routine and having a plan for the day; others were more likely to do things spontaneously, at the last minute or described themselves as lazy.

Parental influence throughout this study was a surprising factor and impacted to some extent on the students' approach to the sojourn. Throughout his upbringing, Liam's mother had given positive messages about living and studying abroad, based on her experience of training as a nurse for two years in Singapore. Sophia's parents were very influential, studying abroad was their decision not hers. Many participants grew up with an acceptance of aspects of western life.

These characteristics could play an important role in determining the extent to which the students adjusted to the host- social and academic cultures. With these as a background there were also factors the students raised when asked what made them nervous about coming to the UK.

Language proficiency and anxiety about communicating in English affected Ava, Isabella and Sophia, supporting Ryan and Carroll's (2005) findings that language proficiency can cause stress. Isabella was concerned about meeting a different culture and the differences between English and Chinese people. Although, suggesting that language proficiency alone is the cause of such anxiety may be too simplistic. Indeed, among those with similar language scores, personality was also a factor, including confidence, whether they described themselves as outgoing or shy, and whether they worried more about making language mistakes than enjoying the interaction. However, this was not an issue for many, and it is likely the cultural value of participating in the summer schools (particularly that occurring in the UK), I@H preparation and previous travel outside China, reduced anxiety (Oberg, 1960).

Few concerns were expressed and instead, reasons were given why students were not nervous about moving to UK-U. Mia felt that having lived independently at SINO-U for three years helped; and Sophia felt that living in England was the same as living at SINO-U because she was with a group of friends. Noah and Mia said they were excited to be coming to the UK rather than nervous. Another factor which appeared to help was that Noah and Olivia had travelled to the UK summer school two years previously; Ava had also attended the summer school, but her language proficiency worries overshadowed her excitement.

The data relating to preparation and support addresses SRQ2: how does prior exposure to a western educational style via I@H impact on host-culture adjustment? It was clear that, for all participants, the I@H experience including the summer school at SINO-U (coupled with the summer school at UK-U for some), had a positive impact on their host-culture adjustment.

Participants gave some helpful advice on how this could be enhanced, nevertheless, the responses were all positive and it is clear the western-style teaching, altered classroom environment, and being taught by UK-U staff, some of whom were permanently-based in China and were in daily contact with the students, reduced the adjustment problems suffered. Thus supporting the notion that familiarity with a culture has value and can be learned over time (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Oberg, 1960). The students became familiar with the skills needed for success in their UK-U degree. The extent to which it aided their adjustment to the UK-U academic culture will be evaluated in the next chapter.

To conclude, it is clear that many factors influenced the students' adjustment to the host-culture including their background and motivation for participating in the sojourn, personality, language proficiency and the extent to which they engaged in the I@H activities, including the summer camps whether at UK-U or SINO-U. For ease of reference Table 7 overleaf summarises the issues relating to cultural background and other characteristics for each participant. This chapter followed the students through to their initial arrival in the UK for the sojourn. The next chapter will analyse the impact of the I@H preparation on the students' adjustment to their new social and academic environment.

Table 7 - Summary of Participants' Cultural & Background Characteristics

Name	Gender	Hometown/ *Province*	IELTS	Career Aspiration (questionnaire answer)	Cultural Distance	Prior international travel/contact with foreigners	Parental influence	Motivation for sojourning	Personality
Olivia	F	*Hubei*	7.0	Officer	Hometown 2nd closest to SINO-U. Moving there was a positive experience	Summer school was only prior travel. Did not meet many foreigners but was taught by a foreign teacher (memorable experience)	Close to parents but confident about making her own decisions	Remarked that 'her father sent her to England'. But was also one of few to attend the 1st year UK summer school	Pragmatic, adaptable person, empathetic. Dealt confidently with meeting other cultures. Calm, happy, outgoing. Does not make plans, messy. Brave in new situations
Isabella	F	*Shandong*	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business	Hometown 2nd farthest distance from SINO-U. Moving there was a big adjustment	No prior travel outside China. Mostly local people in her hometown, with a few tourists	Only said that parents encouraged her to make her own choices.	Unclear	Private person, 'little bit shy'. Accepts challenge. Likes having a plan for her day/the future. 'Strong willpower'
Ava	F	*Hunan*	6.0	Lawyer specialising in international business	Hometown closest to SINO-U. Not much difference except for food.	Some prior international travel (including UK-U summer school). Saw many foreigners in her hometown	Sheltered upbringing	Unclear	Likes encountering differences. Not outgoing, but open to challenge
Sophia	F	Dalian	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business	Hometown farthest from SINO-U. Weather different but food similar	No prior travel outside China. Prior contact with North and South Koreans	Strong parental influence. Sheltered upbringing	Parents' decision	Introverted, quiet and shy (both in UK and China). Dislikes challenging situations
Mia	F	*Anhui*	7.0	Law consultant in an international company or lawyer	Hometown South-eastern China. Noticed a large difference but was excited	No prior travel outside China. Some foreign tourists in hometown which she found exciting	Strong parental influence. Described them as 'very strict'	Parents played a role in deciding choice of degree programme, but Mia wants to study and work abroad	Most outgoing of participants. Sociable, strong, independent. Global outlook, strives for self-improvement.
Liam	M	Jinan, *Shandong*	7.5	Lawyer – perhaps in China or abroad	Hometown 2nd farthest from SINO-U. Conscious of difference between northern and southern Chinese.	Had travelled internationally (including UK-U summer school). Mostly local people in hometown	Parental influence was important. Mother had studied abroad	Cited as Mother's decision but chose to pursue postgraduate study and work abroad	Open-minded, happy to challenge himself/meet new situations. Reserved, traditional personality but strong, adaptable and 'very sociable'
Noah	M	Henan	7	Masters, then perhaps work for international organisation like United Nations	Hometown closest to SINO-U. Traditional town where he felt comfortable	Some prior international travel (including UK-U summer school). Did not see many foreigners in hometown	Strong views about his own path. Sought/accepted parents' advice, even when conflicting with own desires	Unclear but had a desire to experience and learn from other cultures	Deeply reflective person, keen to help others. Outgoing and likes talking to others. Self-motivated.

Chapter 5 – Cultural Adjustment - Results and Discussion

This chapter focuses on the sojourners' adjustment to the host-culture social environment in which they were living, and the academic environment. It builds on the students' backgrounds and experiences evaluated in Chapter 4 which considered the backgrounds, personalities and initial transitions to SINO-U and UK-U. This chapter evaluates their adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures during the sojourn and the impact of preparation during the I@H phase. Ward et. al.'s (2002) Culture Adjustment Theory, specifically the affective and behavioural aspects are helpful to evaluate the students' experiences. In contrast with the criticism that internationalisation studies often marginalise the student voice (Larsen, 2015), the student voice will be at the foreground of this analysis.

An unexpected emergent theme was their adjustment to different professional cultural environments through their internships in China and the UK. This chapter examines various aspects of the sojourn and adjustment, before drawing the strands together to address the research questions at the end. Adjustment is a process (Berry, 2005) the starting point is often the 'shock' associated with being in a new culture, including the shock associated with being in a new academic culture, which some feel to be more acute than a new sociocultural environment (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Therefore, culture shock and cultural adjustment, to the extent they occur together, often exist on a continuum and are part of a process which occurs over time (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Furthermore, many complex factors influence the sojourn experience (Searle & Ward, 1990), some aspects pervade both social and academic adjustment, such as interaction with foreigners and language proficiency. Other important factors pervasive throughout the findings, and discussed in Chapter 4, include the students' motivation for sojourning, parental influence, personality and whether they intend to return to China after completing their studies. This chapter focuses on sub-research questions 3, 4 and 5 i.e.

3. What key issues do students identify during their UK sojourn?
4. How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before, and during the sojourn?
5. Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

5.1 Initial Impressions of the Sojourn

Adjustment to a new social and academic culture is recognised as a major stressful life event (Savicki & Adams, 2007). Students often demonstrate feelings of nervousness, anxiety, depression and stress (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012); and any excitement quickly dissipates (Hannigan, 1988). Adjustment is said to be more difficult in the first 4-6 months, after which it plateaus (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008), with this said to be a reasonably predictable learning curve (Ward et al., 2002). Therefore, it was interesting to capture the students' early impressions of their life in the UK, both in terms of the academic culture and in conducting their daily lives (the social culture). In particular, to discover whether their first few weeks were typified by feelings of stress, uncertainty, self-doubt and a lack of self-esteem (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Adams (2008) describes this initial period in the new socioculture as overwhelming for the sojourners.

Olivia expected to experience some culture shock, which she believed meant

> *I have to learn everything from the start like new baby…it makes me*
> *have…much more personalities than me before…I can handle things more*
> *patiently when I go back to China or when I find a job*

Interestingly, the foregoing may also demonstrate that she expected to develop multiple cultural identities (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; J. Jackson, 2010), along with her intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2008; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017) through her curiosity to learn about aspects of a new culture. It appears she was expecting these to bring multiple perspectives to bear in her later career (Carroll, 2015); although not necessarily abandoning her home culture (Bochner, 1982). This intention to take these experiences back home will be discussed in Chapter 6 in relation to the potentially transformative nature of internationalisation. Participating in the UK summer school helped to reduce the culture shock she experienced. She remembered the layout of the city and university. Arriving for the summer camp she felt

> *Everything was so different, it's so quiet*

However, arriving for the sojourn, she said she felt like she was in SINO-U's city, that she was familiar with everything and

> *Nothing's so new…that's why the summer camp is so important for us*

Noah concurred, the summer camp visit was the first time he had travelled so far

Everything was interesting and I was excited…just found everything…even

the weather and the climate…yeah was attracting me and interesting to me

and I wanted to explore this city and this country and that was a very cool

experience…

Returning for the sojourn, he was just happy to 'finally get here'; a malfunctioning plane meant a long layover in New Delhi. Then, he wanted to see his accommodation, felt excited and, now he had returned thought it was cold here and needed to buy a coat.

None of the other participants had travelled to the UK before. The euphoria that Oberg (1960) described as the first stage of culture shock was evident in the students' accounts. Mia's UK-based friends met her at the airport and, although she cried when she left her parents in China, she spoke loudly, happily and excitedly about her arrival in the UK, her first experiences were positive. On arrival she said

I can't believe it!

Happy to have arrived after the long flight, she awoke at 6 am in her UK-friend's house after the first night and wrote an Instagram post saying

Oh my God I can't believe I'm waking up in England

Arriving in UK-U's city, she felt it was very small, but could buy all her 'necessaries' there and ended the interview by saying

I like it here

Liam was also surprised by how small things were, he thought Heathrow airport would be bigger – although he then realised, he had only seen one of five terminals. He found UK-U's city small, saying it was

…quite small town…peaceful

Liking 'mega cities' because of the amenities available, in his second interview he said he 'was dissatisfied a bit' when he first arrived

Not with the uni itself…more with the place because I'm a metropolitan

person…I enjoy the mega cities…I enjoy the landscape of the cities

Ava also found the city small compared to SINO-U's city, here it was only a 10 or 15 minute walk to the shops, whereas in SINO-U's city it was an hour's taxi ride. As with other students, on

arrival at 11 pm she was struck by feeling cold; in SINO-U's city at that time of year, it would still feel warm and humid throughout the night.

Although she had been to the UK summer school before, her first two weeks appeared exciting

> *…maybe I think it's really different…for me I like different things…I think it's*
> *very exciting…and every day is different…every day you get up you are*
> *wow! I have a new day*

Although this supports Oberg's (1960) honeymoon period to some extent, it also demonstrates the importance of individual personality (Deaux, 1993); conversely it is contrary to the finding that initial feelings are nervousness, anxiety, depression and stress (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). The characterisation of the initial period as overwhelming (Adams, 2008) does not appear to be accurate for the sojourners in the present study. Clearly there are adjustments to be made in any new situation and this involves some cultural learning. However, none of the students reported being overwhelmed at this stage, nor that they found this period particularly difficult or stressful (cf Adams, 2008; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Heng, 2019). The majority did not express feelings of self-doubt or low self-esteem (Brown & Holloway, 2008). The only student who expressed doubt or uncertainty was Sophia, and as will be seen, it was clear that she was conscious of needing to adapt to the new sociocultural milieu ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Ward et al., 2002) and learn more about it (Bochner, 2003).

In this first week everything was new for the students, having moved into their accommodation, enrolled at the university and taken part in the week-long induction event with UK-based students; classes started in the second week, so each day's schedule was different.

Students noticed there was more emphasis on independence, illustrating Wang's (2008) view that Chinese learners are used to a teacher-led approach. Ava found the freedom important and motivating, along with other students she noted there was more freedom but that carried more responsibility

> *You are expected to do a lot of things…instead of be forced to do*
> *something.*

This positive impression continued, after the first month she wrote in her diary 'The experience there [sic] impresses me and I decide to apply for my masters degree here'.

Isabella had not been to the UK summer camp and her first days were very busy – she said, 'I don't have time to think more'. She had to become familiar with the city and buy her bedding and other essentials. Her initial impressions were that it was cold, that people wait in lines and

Peoples are more…outgoing…they will say hello to you…to strangers

In those early days she wanted to push herself to be familiar with, and accustomed to, the environment and to know more about local people. It was clear she had some adjustment issues but was positive about the experience and was looking forward to the rest of the sojourn. She felt there were 10 months to adjust herself and life was going to be better than the day she arrived, saying

I think it will be a brilliant experience

Sophia had not travelled outside China before, nor had she engaged with UK-based students. The prospect of moving abroad worried her, she had no idea about the life or culture and said 'I am very afraid of the difference between two countries'. Her first impressions of life in the UK were 'Better than I think…[she] thought the people were very kind' and 'I think life here is good'. She seemed to have a balanced approach to recognising issues but valued the experience without displaying great stress.

Observing how Sophia's sojourn developed was of particular interest, as the literature suggested that, of all the participants, she might encounter the most adjustment difficulty; especially because she was not motivated to sojourn by her own internal desire. Although she began to open up more and gain confidence during the first interview, she was worried about speaking to UK-based students because of cultural differences and the potential conflict they may bring; despite recognising that making friends with foreign students would be good for her English language skills ((QAA), 2015b).

Struck by the difference in architecture she took photographs of the Cathedral near UK-U and sent them to her parents. Although she had to get used to the lifestyle and climate, her overall feeling was positive. Statements in her second interview indicated conflicting feelings about her initial experiences

I think it very comfortable when I first came

Whereas later in the same interview she said

It was not very comfortable at the first time

During the second interview she said life had improved, indicating that, although her early days were more comfortable than her pre-sojourn worries predicted, she had some adjustments to make.

It appeared there was an initial sense of excitement for those visiting the UK for the first time; a finding contrary to more recent studies (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). The students in the present study began organising their daily lives and establishing themselves in their accommodation immediately, and this did not appear to present a crisis period for them. In addition to transitioning to a new culture the sojourners also faced the usual issues of transitioning to a new university (Sovic, 2008). Adjusting to the new culture makes it easier to conduct daily life (Oberg, 1960); the new culture eventually becoming part of the student's identity as they learn the new societal rules over time (Oberg, 1960). The area of interest here is the impact of the pre-sojourn preparation on the adjustment process.

As these results will demonstrate, although they noticed differences between China and the UK, there did not appear to be an overwhelming crisis for any of the sojourners. Although the literature demonstrates that students need to adapt quickly and frequently describe this as a 'sink or swim' experience (Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Savicki & Selby, 2008; Ward et al., 2002; Wu, 2002), it did appear that the I@H phase helped to improve adjustment and avoid this. In preparing the students for sojourning in a UK academic environment, the I@H phase generated some of the benefits known to result from internationalised education, in that it brought the students into contact with host-culture staff and students and, as will be seen, gave rise to a course identity (Carroll, 2015). Findings emerged which showed the students settling rapidly into a routine in the first semester, e.g. Noah spoke of how they quickly established a rota for their flat and enjoyed the freedom. Contrasting it with student accommodation in China, he said 'there was not a lot of freedom as we have in this place'. When problems occurred, mirroring Oberg's proposition, it seemed it was not the environment that changed, but the sojourner's attitude towards it. For example, Sophia disliked noise and had two problems. Her first room in the accommodation was noisy, there were loud plumbing noises which, having spoken with building management resulted in her moving to another room. Her new roommates were noisy and liked to socialise, she said this eventually improved because firstly, they started going out in the evening; and secondly, she felt her mindset needed to change towards the issue, so she changed it.

Early adjustment to the host-culture appeared to be assisted by the prior I@H preparation and summer camps. Although students noticed many differences between life in China and the UK,

these were largely accepted as simply different or positive; however, there were some challenges, language proficiency was a key issue which pervaded all aspects of adjustment for some.

5.2 Language Proficiency

The impact of language proficiency on adjustment cannot be ignored. As early as 1960, Oberg (1960) believed that sojourners must know the language to get to know the host-culture and this link between language proficiency, cultural adjustment and intercultural competence has continued in contemporary literature (Carroll, 2015; Friedman et al., 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Heng, 2019; Ryan & Carroll, 2005; Straker, 2016).

Moreover, learning English alongside discipline-specific learning has been reported to give students a good starting point for their sojourn, although some concerns usually still remain (Carroll, 2015), that did seem to be the case for the present study. The I@H phase language tuition improved language proficiency, reduced issues with subject-specific terminology and the sociocultural issues associated with the subject (Heng, 2019), such as understanding why and how a different legal system works. Furthermore, the students became familiar with learning and being assessed in English and interacting with host-culture students.

As the results will demonstrate, where issues remained, language proficiency may not have been the only factor inhibiting interaction or participation in class. Straker (2016, p. 303) linked language proficiency and classroom participation, recognising also that 'enduring personality traits' could be associated with linguistic behaviour. That indeed appeared to be the case for Sophia, Ava and Isabella.

The contention that lacking confidence in language can affect interaction, thereby leading to isolation and loneliness ((QAA), 2015b; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Lysgaard, 1955; Ward et al., 2002) and homesickness (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Hannigan, 1988; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011) is only partly evident in the present study. Lack of confidence did impact on interaction with UK-based students; but its effect in terms of loneliness, homesickness and isolation is less marked; this was mediated by the advantages of sojourning as a close-knit group (Li, 2012) and the benefits offered by modern technology for conversing frequently with family and friends in China. Moreover, most participants seemed to interact more with people in the local societies they were living or traveling in, than with UK-based students sharing their classroom.

For some, particularly Sophia, Isabella and Ava, lack of confidence in their English language proficiency impacted on their interaction with host-culture students. Sophia believed coming to the UK and meeting students from other countries would help to improve her English, which in turn, would help her to achieve a higher salary back in China. However, believing her language proficiency was weaker than her classmates, it also made her most nervous about coming to UK-U.

With one of the lower IELTs scores, language proficiency was also an issue for Isabella and affected her interaction with UK-based students. She felt her English ability improved throughout the year, believing interactions with medical staff following her accident helped. Satisfied because she could talk with local people, her English-speaking ability surprised her; although it was not easy at first, she said 'to some extent it helped me to improve my English'. This corresponds with findings suggesting that positive interactions with culturally different others can help to develop confidence and intercultural competence (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Her reticence to communicate may be linked to her introverted personality, which may also have impacted on her second-language learning (Deaux, 1993; Straker, 2016)

Language proficiency concerns also meant Ava was more worried about moving to UK-U than SINO-U. She worried about understanding her UK-based classmates, especially those from outside the UK; at the first interview, she was 'still a little bit nervous', a feeling also discussed in the literature (Ward et al., 2002). Feeling her reading was slow, she 'really really really worry about my readings and writing' and how this might impact on her internship which involved interviewing clients, recording what they said and writing letters. This supported Chang's (2011) contention that feelings of stress and uncertainty can be exacerbated by learning in a second language.

Language proficiency also contributed to the students' anxiety regarding their final degree classification; very grade-oriented, they sought strong results to secure entry to prestigious UK universities for postgraduate study. Ava was the only student to mention that first semester classes were sometimes difficult, a feeling largely related to language difficulties. Anxiety regarding language proficiency is common among sojourners (Carroll, 2015; Ryan & Carroll, 2005). However, the participants in this study appeared to start their sojourn from a more advantageous position than many; having learnt and been assessed in the target language for three years, and being already familiar with the skills needed to succeed (Savicki & Adams, 2007) appears to have been helpful.

Lack of confidence may have contributed to language proficiency anxiety; Ava wrote in her diary that her first interview for this study was an enjoyable experience and it was the first time she had spoken to somebody in English for an hour. She resolved to improve her speaking so she did not struggle for words.

By the time the second and third interviews occurred, she believed she had improved. In the second interview she felt more confident about her language proficiency; when asked whether she was talking to people more she said 'yeah…although sometimes I have to think about some words in my brain…but I can keep talking to them'. She felt her reading had improved, although she found legal language complex at times. However, this is also true for UK-based students and it became apparent the sojourning students were undertaking more independent reading than most of their UK-based counterparts. Despite her improvement, the underlying lack of confidence in language proficiency meant, although she talked with UK-based students about academic questions, 'lots of times I'm scared to understand them in depth'.

Conversely, Liam felt his language proficiency was strong, therefore talking with people of different nationalities was not a great challenge. In the second interview he said he had 'very effective communication' when he talked with students of different nationalities such as English, African, Eastern European in class. Moreover, he was committed to adjusting to other cultures, as he intended to study his postgraduate course in the USA and thereafter work either in the USA or UK; he regarded returning to China as his 'back up option'; highlighting the importance of individual motivations (Deaux, 1993; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017).

Clearly therefore, language proficiency can influence confidence when adjusting to the host-culture through interacting with local people. However, Noah added an interesting perspective, commenting that language proficiency is a continuous challenge which continues as proficiency builds

> *Firstly, I think my biggest challenges was the language because it is a*
> *second language, although I have learnt English for a long time but*
> *sometimes…you still learning because learning another language is a long*
> *time process…it's not just…Rome doesn't built one day!*

Examined next is a second pervasive issue affecting adjustment - the extent to which the sojourners interacted with local people both in and out of the classroom.

5.3 Interaction with foreigners.

The opportunity to interact with foreigners was one of the attractive features of the sojourn, although the extent to which participants did so varied and was influenced by factors examined in Chapter 4. As attractive as it might seem, and argued by some to be an important factor in adjusting to the new culture (Bochner et al., 1979; Carroll, 2015; Friedman et al., 2009; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Ward et al., 2002), it is also often a challenging part of sojourning. Irrespective of its claimed benefits in aiding cultural adjustment and alleviating homesickness (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011), interacting with those from other cultures is often a challenging part of sojourning (Carroll, 2015; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2015; Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). Although it is rare that cohorts are homogenous in nature (Carroll, 2015; Harrison & Peacock, 2010), there is perhaps less diversity in the SINO-U classroom than might normally be encountered at UK-U for example. Therefore, when sojourning at UK-U the classroom diversity may be unfamiliar to the sojourners. Although they will have interacted frequently with UK-U academics, and occasionally with UK-based students during the summer schools; studying abroad will have required them to mix and interact across cultures (Carroll, 2015) in a way they had not done previously. This would highlight the potential cultural distance between the sojourners and their UK-based classmates and the shared ways of behaving that exist between sojourning students. Depending on their willingness to interact with others and their reactions if they do, it may then be possible to identify some aspects of interculturally competent behaviour (Deardorff, 2008; Montgomery, 2010).

At the first interview, Sophia, expressed the desire for contact with foreigners and Isabella, Ava and Liam hoped to make some friends here. Therefore, it was interesting to explore the extent to which this occurred, particularly as the literature suggested there can be a tendency to interact with those from their own background, their 'in-group' (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Doing so is less stressful, but can lead to in-group bias, in other words over-estimating in-group similarities and out-group differences (Harrison & Peacock, 2010).

Sophia had not travelled outside China before the sojourn and did not meet any visiting UK-U students at SINO-U, therefore lacked the opportunity to befriend them. On arrival in the UK, she was afraid to meet UK-based students, as she found it difficult to start relationships with people and she worried about cultural differences which might lead to conflict. This supported the contention that cultural distance creates a barrier to interpersonal communication (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002); and highlights the challenge of between-

culture contact (Armes & Ward, 1989). However, she recognised this was just a perception and when she made friends with UK-based students, it might not be an issue. Despite her good intentions, although she enjoyed communicating when sharing classes with them in the second semester, she did not make any friends among the UK-based students, 'just had a little talk with them' and did not socialise with them outside class. She found some of the UK-based students very active in class, which may have meant she was quiet, and at the start of the second semester had only spoken once with foreign students in class.

Isabella also described herself as shy and mentioned the impact this had on her interaction with others. When she first arrived, she hoped to make some friends among the UK-based students, although said there were not many opportunities to do so; however, she had joined some student societies. She met some when the UK-U students visited China for the summer school but had not kept in touch with them.

She noted the multicultural nature of UK-U's city and that people spoke more slowly so she could understand them. In the first semester, she looked forward to sharing classes with local students; when this actually happened in the second semester she explained that 'we have our friends circle and…local people…also have their friends circle' but during seminars she said 'we have opportunities to talk with local people or some other foreign students…it's fine…it's good'. The difficulty with joining established friendship circles is one commonly encountered when joining later in a course ((QAA), 2015b). However, she did not interact with them outside the classroom.

In the second interview, when asked whether she had as much contact with UK-based students as she hoped, she responded this is the final year for them there is not much time for it; adding she was shy and did not seek much contact. Again, this highlights the importance of personality factors (e.g. Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002). By the third interview, her initial enthusiasm for contact with foreigners had waned and she stopped initiating contact with UK-based classmates – 'we prefer to have talk with our own classmates' (Chang, 2011; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Although she sometimes talked with foreign students she worried about her listening skills, saying 'it's not easy for us to talk with them', and did not make friends with UK-based students outside class.

Nevertheless, she appeared to have more confidence than Sophia when talking with foreigners, saying during her first interview, she was not afraid of talking to local people; and she had been talking with a gentleman at the gym about British life. Similarly, due to injuries suffered in an

accident, she had a lot of contact with foreigners in person and by phone. Unlike Sophia, she intended to remain in the UK to complete her postgraduate study.

The remaining students all had more contact with UK-based students before the sojourn and this impacted positively on their interaction with foreigners during it. Indeed, the positive effect of the Programme's summer schools arose on numerous occasions and appeared to be one of the most valuable aspects of the preparation phase. Heng (2019) noted a similar phenomenon with the Chinese sojourners in that study experiencing difficulty befriending host-culture nationals, but this changed when they studied abroad together. It appears that removing the student from the pressure of normal classes into a different activity and the focus on their academic achievement, can be helpful for making friends with host-culture students. Olivia, Liam, Noah and Mia were all involved to varying extents and made lasting friendships with some UK-based students. Ava also interacted with visiting students at SINO-U and seemed to have a more positive approach to intercultural contact when at UK-U. What comes first is unclear – the personality-type to engage with the summer school and foreign students; or the confidence to interact that summer school involvement brought. Nevertheless, Noah said

> *…so I actually think what's very very very good of this joint programme that the exchange summer camp group…and you just went to China and went back…make some friends…so two years ago we just made…a lot of friends and we still got in touch and we still very good friends and we just met a few days before [explaining that he stayed at a UK friend's house]*

He went on to say

> *actually think this friendship can last a lifetime*

Noah visited the UK-U summer school two years prior to the sojourn and named three UK-based students he became friendly with, all of whom worked in China after graduating. He said

> *yeah we have become very very good friends*

He was very positive regarding the summer school friendships he made saying

> *…that was really good because friendship last very very long if you truly just embrace it and open yourself to them and be honest you can make some friends and the friendship will last absolutely*

Within the sojourn's first couple of weeks, he had already made new friends from the UK, Latvia, the Middle East and Africa and joined the student Law Society. During the second semester he enjoyed mixing with UK-based students in class and discussing questions with them. He said

yeah that was really good…I truly think that's a real study life in the [UK-U]

At the end of the sojourn he observed there was more time to interact with foreign students in the first semester but not much opportunity, because classes were all composed entirely of sojourning students. Whereas, in the second semester, there was more opportunity to interact, but less time due to the intense workload. This focus on learning is not unusual in the literature, indeed Heng's (2019) participants reported prioritising learning over socialising and, summer schools aside, similar experiences were reported by the participants in the present study. During his internship he also worked two days per week alongside UK legal professionals offering a different level of interaction. The 5 student interns became part of the social fabric of the firm, participated in their Christmas celebrations and organised the Christmas festivities for all staff. This demonstrated their ability to take on other cultural traditions; the development of multicultural identities having been recognised as positive for sojourner wellbeing (Ward et al., 2002)

However, where friendships were made, generally through the summer schools, the experience was positive. Unlike those reported in Montgomery's (2010) study, not all host-national friendships were superficial in nature. Instead, those developed before the sojourn, either as a result of the UK-U or SINO-U summer schools produced deep friendships. Freed from the pressure of studying and achieving good grades, the space to form deep, lasting friendships was valuable. One only student (Mia) appeared to forge deep friendships among the UK-based cohort during the sojourn. Talking of the value of social interaction in helping adjustment, and the role of the summer schools in facilitating this, Noah said

Actually think that part is one of the most…exciting parts of this joint
programme because…we can just establish a bridge between the students
in…the two schools and…if that's just a chance…a opportunity for both
students…from both groups to get connected with each other and maybe in
the future and…something we…not only for the work part but also for the
private life part it will be good

Mia, Liam and Olivia were also still in contact with students (now graduated) who visited SINO-U two years previously and met some of them during the sojourn. Liam joined student societies

when he arrived and interacted with UK-based students within the first two weeks saying, 'I'm trying to fit in'. Like Mia, he did not come to the UK summer school, but was one of the official ambassadors welcoming visiting UK-based students to SINO-U; also like Mia, he was still in contact with the UK-based friends he made and talking of the summer school said

We do create a strong connection together…you will find our star
pupils…they have a very strong connection with your students here.

Explaining he met some of these friends during the sojourn, he said

…and some of them they become my good friends

Notably, both Liam and Mia demonstrated high levels of commitment to host-culture adjustment as both intended to remain abroad for postgraduate study and, at least, for the early part of their career. High levels of host-culture adjustment were also shown by Olivia and Noah who also intended to study abroad for their postgraduate degrees. This demonstrates the importance of factors such as motivation for studying abroad on the sojourn experience (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017).

Olivia had a close circle of friends in her hometown and also made friends among the UK-based students when she visited the UK summer school, and among those who visited China; she felt the UK summer camp was important for her adjustment. She was still in contact with them and had visited UK tourist sites and enjoyed meals with some. However, making new foreign friends was not a priority for the sojourn, again prioritising learning over socialising (Heng, 2019) at the outset she hoped to make some friends during the year but not many, saying 'several is high enough'.

During the second interview she explained that after going to class, the gym and her private studying she did not have time to meet new people. She equated this with going out to clubs or other social places, saying that some of her friends did this and met more foreign people. However, she spoke with UK-based students in class during the first semester. They worked together outside class to prepare for the next week and she taught the UK-based student she was paired with to write their name in Chinese. Strangely, although she worked with this student every week throughout the first semester, she did not equate this with foreigner contact.

Finding interacting with UK-based students more challenging in semester two when all classes contained UK-based students, Olivia said she was just familiar with their face and felt 'I have to be more brave to speak in front of them'. Depending on which class she was in and where she

sat, she sometimes worked with them, but found it 'more convenient' to sit and chat with Chinese friends (Chang, 2011; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960). Nevertheless, she was happy that she communicated with foreign people during her daily life and often had conversations with others such as her personal trainer.

I get enough contact…so I'm satisfied with the contact even if I didn't make
much friends

She shared a story of an older English couple she met at Oslo airport and how they talked for a long time about the couple's love story. She also had frequent contact with medical professionals due to the injury sustained on holiday and had to deal with her treatment and physiotherapy in English. The only real challenge for her was coping with the many cultures encountered, she noticed that doctors came from many countries and worried about causing offence. She found it confusing that doctors from different cultures had different ways of doing things (J. Jackson, 2010), echoing Savicki and Adams' (2007) contention that adaptation also involves learning societal rules. For example, to examine her leg in China, she would be expected to remove her trousers, whereas in the UK, one doctor urged her to cover her legs.

Mia had the widest friendship circle with others from the summer schools. As an ambassador throughout her time at SINO-U, she was one of the official volunteers to welcome and liaise with visiting students. When asked whether knowing people from the summer camps made coming to the UK easier, she replied 'yes…definitely', adding it helped her practice her English.

Forging deep friendships, she remained in contact with them after they returned to the UK. Rather than travelling with classmates to the UK, she travelled alone and two of her UK friends met her at Heathrow airport, she stayed with one for the first night and later they accompanied her to UK-U's city, helped her settle into her accommodation and buy essentials such as bedding. She kept in touch with her friends throughout the sojourn and made new friends during her first semester internship. She remained friendly with these students during the second semester and felt lucky to have English friends in her classes, as it felt very familiar. Thus supporting the findings in many studies (e.g. Bochner et al., 1979; Ward et al., 2002) that contact with host-nationals assists adaptation to the host-culture and social support buffers against the effects of sojourning (Searle & Ward, 1990); especially where the students work together in and out of class (Heng, 2019). She sat with them in most classes and chose to revise for the examinations with them, instead of with Chinese friends. This was unusual for the sojourning group, none of the other participants did this. Indeed, it was also unusual in the literature with some host-culture 'friendships' being described as 'functional' (Montgomery, 2010); whereas Mia's

example appeared to reveal strong friendships and inclusive behaviour (J. Jackson, 2010). It appeared to be a real meeting of cultures, she explained to her UK-based friends that her educational background made her good at examinations and she shared tips with them; on the other hand they revised with less intensity and encouraged her to take breaks where they would go for food and drinks together.

During the sojourn she visited UK tourist sites with her UK-based friends, as well as travelling with Chinese friends; and opened herself up to interacting with foreign students. During the first week of the second semester she tended to sit with her Chinese friends in class, but recognised that meant she had no chance to speak English; so moved to sit with her UK-based friends instead saying 'I need to speak English'.

Opening herself up to intercultural contact, also brought challenges; she was the only student to report a negative encounter with UK-based classmates. Two girls sitting nearby made derogatory comments about the Chinese students when Mia asked a question in class. Although unhappy about it, she dealt with it and it did not hinder her interaction with other UK-based students.

Ava fell between the two groups in terms of prior contact with students through the summer schools. She came to the UK summer camp prior to the sojourn and made two or three friends; they linked with each other on social media, but she only kept in contact with one of them. Her early impressions regarding foreigner-contact were positive. She was not worried about talking with UK-based students

Because I think they're very nice…they're very friendly when you talk to them, they will listen to you carefully

Having played ping pong with a boy who was not one of her classmates and spoken to some students, she did not feel communicating with others would be a problem. In the first couple of weeks she joined some student societies and was invited by her neighbours (two Indian girls) to see how they decorated their flat and share Indian food with them, although she declined the latter offer.

During the second semester, she found more chances to talk with UK-based students in the shared classes. In some sessions, the tutors divided the class into small groups, mixing the students to work on problems together and she found it interesting to see how different people thought differently on some points. Thus highlighting the development of global citizenship through being open to views which differed from her own (Webb, 2005), and how encountering

multiple perspectives 'can awaken the students to the existence of multiple solutions' (Carroll, 2015, p. 61). However, as previously noted, she was nervous about interacting with them and only really talked with them about academic questions. Although, this improved as the semester progressed and during the third interview, said she talked more with them in class.

Unlike others who befriended UK-based students during the summer camp, Ava reported that her friends in England were now working so it was hard to meet them, although they remained friends through Facebook. She made new friends with people outside the University during the sojourn, for example she became friendly with people she met during her travels in Norway and remained in contact by email. Again, she demonstrated a stronger commitment to the host-culture than Sophia, and this is perhaps unsurprising given that she intended to complete her postgraduate studies in the UK. Nevertheless, although it appears to be easier to make friends during activities such as the summer camps (Heng, 2019) and Ava was willing to do so, those friendships were less intense than for the other summer camp participants. This may show the importance and interplay of other factors such as commitment to host-culture adjustment and individual factors such as confidence, personality and language proficiency in maintaining that connection.

5.4 Cultural Adjustment

Having examined the two pervasive issues of language proficiency and foreigner-interaction as a backdrop, what follows next is the students' cultural adjustment to the host-social and academic cultures, recounting the positive experiences and challenges faced.

Those sojourning abroad are involved in a cultural learning experience (Berry, 2005; Bochner, 2003; Ward et al., 2002) and, in line with the shift from culture shock, should not be viewed as 'the passive victims of trauma stemming from a noxious event' (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 65). Framing the experience in this positive manner is important as the participants did not move abroad due to some difficult circumstances precipitating their move; rather, they opted to spend their fourth year in the UK rather than remaining in China. Indeed, most had been working towards this since joining the Programme.

On arrival at UK-U and, arguably in the preceding three years, the participants experienced a process of acculturation (Berry, 2005). In so doing, Ward et al. (2002) along with Bochner (1982) believed the strategy most likely to contribute to sojourner health and wellbeing was one which did not involve the sojourners abandoning their home culture.

The literature in this field still refers to culture shock literature, and views cultural adjustment as a process occurring over time and as a continuous process until mastery of the new culture is achieved (Friedman et al., 2009). One of the present study's interesting features is the impact of the I@H experiences on the sojourners' adjustment to the new culture. Adjustment involves the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills (Savicki & Adams, 2007), the ability to adapt to the new environment (J. Jackson, 2010) and the development of intercultural competence (although this is only under examination to a certain extent in this study) (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). To do this, the students' cultural identities are challenged as they cope with the various cultural milieux impacting on their lives (Berry, 2005; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). The end result being that they may be able to view situations from multiple perspectives (Carroll, 2015). In addition to sociocultural adjustment, most sojourners must also adjust to a new culture of learning (Carroll, 2015; Chang, 2011; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997), this will be examined in more depth in 5.4.2.

Studies revealed a link between time and adjustment (Brown & Holloway, 2008) specifically, those sojourning for periods lasting between 6 months and 18 months experience the most difficulty. Some suggest there is a dip in adjustment which then recovers during the sojourn (Pedersen, 1995, as cited in Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008), whereas others suggest an adjustment plateau which is generally not overcome until after 18 months in the new culture (Savicki & Adams, 2007). Consequently, the students in this study would seem to be among those most at risk of adjustment problems. However, although their sojourn only lasted one academic year, this did not seem to be supported by the results.

Frequently occurring data emergent from the interviews and diaries included elements of social adjustment such as accommodation, food, shopping, travel and leisure and observations regarding the host-culture society. In terms of academic adjustment, students focused on the classroom experience, interaction with host-culture students and lecturers, university facilities such as the library, and assessments. A surprise factor emerging from the data was the professional cultural adjustment resulting from the first semester internship. These points will be examined in turn.

5.4.1 Social Adjustment

A number of consistent themes featured in the interviews or diaries; for example, the students' perceptions of English weather was a common feature, it was difficult to dress for the changeable weather, especially during the autumn (Mia), it was colder than they were used to (Noah) and windier, Liam felt the wind was 'creepy'. The inclusivity of life in the UK also featured

in some interviews, Mia was surprised to see pregnant, old and disabled people exercising in the gym. She said it would not be seen in China and felt it was positive. The following themes featured in more detail. It was in these accounts that the students' development of intercultural competence is most evident as they experience living in another culture, seek to understand the experiences, and then reconcile them with their lives back in China. However, for the circumstances of this particular study, which did not include a measurement of intercultural competence, J. Jackson's (2010) wider view of intercultural competence which looks at the students' adaptive capacity seems to be more appropriate.

5.4.1.1 Accommodation

In China, all students lived in dormitories, each room of approximately 6 square metres was shared by four students and contained a toilet, but no shower or cooking facilities. However, students usually bought a washing machine to do their own laundry. Of interest was whether moving to a private room with ensuite facilities within a flat containing approximately 6 individual rooms, would contribute to a sense of loneliness; this did not seem to be a problem (Isabella).

The students reflected in particular on the level of privacy they experienced compared with that in China, they thought about the differences between the approaches to life and what it meant to them. Students enjoyed the sense of privacy and freedom in their accommodation, although Ava disliked not being allowed to have their own washing machine and found the central laundry facilities expensive, inconvenient and time-consuming. However, unlike in China, all bills in University accommodation were covered in the rental price with no separate repair costs if anything went wrong (Olivia); though the accommodation was expensive compared to China (Liam). Noah described the accommodation as 'pretty cool' and preferred the sense of privacy. Along with Liam, he found sharing a room with others in China challenging, although he speculated that Chinese university accommodation is organised that way to help create a 'living community', linked to the collectivist/individualist societal divide. This indicated the preference for the collective over the individual may not be as strong as Wang (2008) suggests. Noah said

[in the UK] everyone has got their own room…the privacy…the private

individual is treated more seriously

Consistent with her independent nature demonstrated in other aspects of the sojourn, Mia was the only participant who rented a house, rather than live in university accommodation. Sharing with three sojourning friends, she enjoyed renting a house, speaking about it at the second interview she felt

Very free!...Yes...much freedom. Because in Apollo [University

accommodation] they need to check the situation of the rooms [room

inspections]

The house was further away from the University than the other accommodation, and the housemates bought second-hand bicycles to get to and from class each day. Demonstrating the importance of contact with host-culture students, her UK-based friends assisted her with getting the key and settling in. This was contrary to many studies which reference the importance of a compatriot or other international student network, particularly to assist with settling in (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Montgomery, 2010; Ward et al., 2002).

5.4.1.2 Food/Cooking

As the sojourn progressed, the ability to cook for themselves became very important for a number of reasons, it performed a social function, highlighting the importance of the social buffer (Searle & Ward, 1990) helped them to enjoy cuisine they were familiar with and became a feature of their self-development (Ding, 2017). Mia joined the Cooking Society to ensure she could learn to cook. Joining student societies was an element of student life that was different in the UK, and meant the students interacted with a wider circle of people. Noah liked being able to cook in the flat and, for many, this went together with the realisation that food in the UK, even Chinese food they could buy in England, was different to what they were used to.

Noting the different food in the UK, Isabella and Ava felt it was a good opportunity to start cooking for themselves, even though they did not know how to; additionally, the food they would normally eat in China was very expensive in the UK. Therefore, students generally cooked familiar dishes from home, although they found it was not always possible to buy the ingredients available in China e.g. animal products such as giblets needed for hotpot (Ava), she was surprised that English people do not eat them. Similarly, Mia was surprised that, although the UK is an island nation, she could not find seaweed or much fish in supermarkets. Another discovery was the variation in the price of food items e.g. milk varied between stores, whereas in China there is one set price; similarly, students mentioned longer opening hours in China (Olivia, Ava, Noah, Sophia).

Experiences of local food varied, Ava felt she needed to get accustomed to it and mentioned that some classmates cannot get used to it; or preferred Chinese food (Noah) hence why they cooked it for themselves. Missing food from home is an aspect of the intercultural experience common to other studies (J. Jackson, 2010), nevertheless, even though it was not food they chose to eat every day, students were willing to try local food. Participants (Ava and Isabella)

had heard about food they associated with the UK such as fish and chips and wanted to try them.

I really want to but one of my classmates told me that 'oh it's not that
good' but I still want to try it (Ava)

By the end of the sojourn, she had done so and said in the final interview she wanted to eat it again before she left. Sophia was concerned about its high calorie content, but thought it tasted good saying 'it's beyond my imagination'. Mia was similarly enthusiastic during the first interview and was eager to share her experience

As to chips…oh my God English chips is the best!

The participants also mentioned 'cream tea' as a cultural food they should try; Olivia, Ava and their classmates often ate at a specific café close to UK-U because they thought the cream tea was particularly good there.

Noah enjoyed local food, particularly burgers with barbecue sauce. Initially, he was not cooking for himself, preferring to eat out. However, unexpectedly, by the end of the sojourn this changed.

Participants noticed a number of differences between the UK and China. Ava was surprised that it was customary to put milk in black tea; it was a taste she liked and adopted after trying it. Olivia liked English food, even if it was more expensive than food in China and said the Chinese impression that English food is awful was untrue. Commenting that England has food from all over the world, she was excited about the street food she tried; she felt it was healthier and cleaner than Chinese street food, as in China people often get stomach ache after eating it because 'you cannot make sure the food is totally clean'.

Some of these experiences were interesting or simply different for the students; others were challenging as the different cuisine was quite an adjustment. Consequently, students tried to replicate the food they were accustomed to by cooking their own meals. Although on a day to day basis they were replicating food from home, they were also integrating with the local culture.

5.4.1.3 Architecture

Some students mentioned differences in architecture, as an example of culture shock (Noah) and found it striking, particularly early in the sojourn. Buildings which he, Ava and Sophia found to be different were the medieval buildings, and Cathedral and churches, which Noah found to

be attractive saying there is 'not so much religion in China', although Buddhist temples could be seen. Sophia took photographs of the Cathedral and sent them to her parents.

In the first interview, Ava compared the architecture to that in her hometown; explaining it was not exciting in her hometown as every road looked the same, whereas in England, she felt it was like a surprise 'you don't know what you will see next'. We discussed the possibility that I would feel the same about buildings in her hometown compared to those in the UK.

5.4.1.4 Safety

Although many aspects of social culture in the UK were attractive and positive experiences, some differences caused concern, e.g. personal safety and crime.

Olivia's parents warned her against opening her door to other people at night; therefore, when her flatmates had parties and boys came to the door, she and her friend felt worried and stayed in their rooms. When he first arrived, Liam felt it was better to visit bars with friends for safety reasons. During the second interview he explained that he felt relatively strong in the Asian community, but not compared to people here; therefore, he was going to the gym to get physically stronger.

Safety concerns did not form a large part of the students' conversations, but they were mentioned by different people on a number of occasions. During the first interview, Liam said

I don't know whether this region is peaceful, but I do hear sirens every night

He felt this was 'creepy' and 'scary'; although I explained that he lived close to the ambulance station and ring road, so hearing a siren did not necessarily mean a crime had been committed.

Olivia and Ava witnessed 'a robbery' when buying street food - they saw a man being chased by police because he had stolen something from a stall. They also told of a classmate who was punched by a homeless person in the street late at night (between 9 and 10 pm) when returning home from the library. Olivia said she would not stay out late. Having recounted the story to friends in China, they pointed out that China seemed to be a safer place.

It is clear that the sociocultural adjustment was the more challenging aspect of the sojourn for the students. It required them to evaluate the new cultural milieu and reflect upon their lives in China and the UK. Supporting the notion that an individual's cultural identity can change (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; J. Jackson, 2010) particularly when adapting to a new cultural environment, the students were adjusting to the new social environment, socialising, eating and living in it (Carroll, 2015). This acculturation process is suggested to be the most likely to

contribute to sojourner health and wellbeing (Ward et al., 2002), although the motivation to change is also needed if this experience is to be transformative in nature (J. Jackson, 2015), and this was evident for some more than others.

5.4.1.5 Homesickness and Loneliness

Another challenge for sojourners can be feelings of loneliness, homesickness (Adler, 1975; Brown, 2016; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Searle & Ward, 1990) and isolation (Guan & Jones, 2011; Sovic, 2008). However, in more recent times the advent of social media has meant that contact with family and friends at home is easier (Montgomery, 2010). It would be unrealistic to expect these effects to be eliminated by the pre-sojourn preparation, as the students are spending one year in a different country, experiencing what studies believe to be the widest culture gap (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2015). Therefore, it was more appropriate to examine whether these effects were reduced and what strategies were adopted to deal with them, especially if this could improve the experience for future cohorts.

Homesickness and loneliness did feature in the students' experiences and appeared to vary between people. Olivia did not really feel homesick in the first semester because she talked to her parents and grandpa every day, this contact being facilitated by social media such as WeChat. She was not homesick in the second semester but had communicated with them less to avoid worrying them with news of the injury suffered while travelling. After spending her postgraduate year in the UK, she intended to return to China to be close to her parents in case they needed her; reasoning that a short internal flight was quicker to organise and travel than a long international flight. Talking with parents regularly to avoid loneliness was important for most participants, especially during the first semester. Many spoke of the benefits of modern technology for facilitating this, but also the drawback of the time difference between China and the UK. From one perspective, this supports Montgomery's (2010) argument that modern technology can make the home-culture support systems provided by family and friends more readily available. Indeed, modern technology also enabled the summer school friendships to strengthen and flourish. However, when faced with serious problems, Olivia and Isabella chose to avoid relying on this support system, preferring to work through the worst of the situations by relying on their own resilience, support of sojourning friends and the University, along with the health professionals involved with their care. Their parents were only involved when the students felt it to be appropriate. This will be explored further in Chapter 5.5 when considering the support system provided by the sojourning group.

Rather than being homesick, Olivia missed certain things about China, in common with other participants she said, 'I really miss the Chinese food' (Liam & Mia).

Conversely, during the first interview Isabella mentioned that she was experiencing some homesickness and appeared to be rather emotional about it; showing some support for Brown and Holloway's (2008) and Edwards-Joseph and Baker's (2012) assessments of initial experiences. At that point, having only arrived in the UK within the last two weeks, it was a difficult balance to allow her to explain how she was feeling without focusing on it too much for her. During the second interview when asked whether she felt homesick she said, 'not really…Just I'm busy so…I don't have time to feel homesick'. Then, speaking of the social buffer provided by sojourning as a group (section 5.5), added that she did not suffer loneliness because she had friends 'for us I think…homesick would not be a big challenge'; believing it would be totally different if the group members had gone to different universities.

At the end of the sojourn, Isabella said she had not really felt homesick during the year and then said, 'maybe I feel homesick for a while, but I made it'. She thought it would be a bigger problem for students who had a close relationship with their parents. Her resilience was surprising considering she endured more difficult circumstances than most sojourning students will ever face, having been injured in the hit and run accident, undergone surgery and physiotherapy. Noah also believed sojourning as a group had cushioned against loneliness (Li, 2012), saying it was not too harsh because they had friends with them. He shared Isabella's view that sojourning alone would have been different, supporting other studies (Adler, 1975; Brown, 2016; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Searle & Ward, 1990) loneliness was a feature but interestingly, contrary to Guan and Jones (2011) and Sovic (2008), isolation was not.

Talking of loneliness in the first interview Noah said, 'lonely doesn't always mean bad things, you can become more mature…you can become more independent and then you can do whatever you wanna do to achieve the bigger goals!'. In his final interview he said '…to be honest…I haven't felt too many times of loneliness'.

Specific triggers seemed to bring on loneliness, for Noah it was when he caught a cold after being in the UK for a few weeks. He wrote in his diary that he spent some days in bed, at which point loneliness and homesickness took over, 'I could not find any way to cure my homesickness. How I wished to go back to my hometown!!'. Then, having seen a textbook he was determined to get some sleep, 'looking forward to a new reborn morning and new journey'. Mia also developed a cold around the same time which made her feel 'a little homesick'. For Ava, it was

cooking a typical meal from home to celebrate the group submitting their last semester 1 assessment, tasting the food made them homesick, they missed food from home.

Events which reminded students of family also triggered loneliness. During the second interview Sophia said she had got used to the life now, but a year was a long time; Spring Festival was approaching in China and she felt a little homesick as it was the time families got together. However, she said it was better than at first and being part of a larger group helped her guard against loneliness, 'ok we know each other so maybe it will not feel very homesick'.

This was Mia's first time abroad and she also experienced some homesickness – 'sometimes I will feel homesick' but quickly added 'you cannot let it control you' and 'you have to get out of it quickly'. However, she did not feel homesick often, like Sophia events linked to family caused the most sadness. For example, when her room-mate's parents came to England at Christmas, conscious that her parents were not with her she said, 'that was so very sad'. Talking of the frequency of homesickness she said, 'just a little when my room-mate's parents came here…for the Christmas and I think of my parents…just sad…and later…no!'. At the end of the sojourn she said she was not homesick; she just missed the country of China; but said she did not miss her parents too much because she was used to it.

Similarly, Olivia wrote in her diary about missing friends and family on her birthday; while at Christmas she wrote 'The Christmas lights were turned on. The light was so warm, which made me feel like going back to my hometown.' It is clear that homesickness and loneliness were alleviated by the ease of access to friends and family in China and the UK, this will be explored further in Chapter 5.5.

5.4.2 *Academic Adjustment*

As the literature demonstrates, learning in a new academic culture requires a great adjustment (Carroll, 2015; Heng, 2019; Jones, 2017), perhaps greater than the sociocultural adjustment (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Furthermore, this adjustment is greater for non-STEM subjects such as Law which rely on language proficiency and an understanding of the sociocultural context underpinning the legal system and the way it works (Heng, 2019). The aim of the I@H preparation was to immerse the students in the host-academic culture to build familiarity with the teaching and assessment methods, along with other aspects of difference they may encounter; thereby avoiding the perception of a skills deficit often associated with sojourners (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008). This included developing skills in using the works of others, critical awareness, writing styles (Carroll, 2015), interacting with UK-U academics and language

proficiency. Along with the Law modules, the English for Academic Purposes tuition during the I@H phase also built familiarity with the UK socio-legal culture.

It was hoped the students would not feel caught between two academic cultures and were therefore able to thrive in both ((QAA), 2015b), which was especially important during the I@H phase. Success in this aspect of the study could result in the development of intercultural competence in terms of academic cultures, enabling the students to create the 'third space' in which the most useful approaches from both environments are employed (Ryan and Viete, 2009, as cited in Carroll, 2015). The extent to which the I@H preparation impacted upon the students' academic experience at UK-U will be evaluated in this section.

Stresses associated with learning in a second language can be compounded by learning in an unfamiliar classroom environment and pedagogical approach (Chang, 2011). The rationale underpinning the pre-sojourn preparation was to render the strange familiar, thereby improving adjustment.

Adjustment issues did not feature a great deal in the students' discussions, usually their comparisons between studying in China and the UK were observations, rather than adjustment difficulties. The main topics of conversation were seminars, lectures (including interaction with tutors), the library, assessments, practical legal skills and the challenges of studying contrasting legal systems. Participants did not conclude that either was right or wrong, just different (e.g. Noah); although they often expressed a preference. Before discussing those themes, some other general points arose.

Some students reported initial difficulties understanding accents where the tutor's first language was not English (Liam); this may also have been an issue for UK-based students, but arguably the difficulty could be amplified for the sojourners. But, within two weeks of arrival, Liam and Mia reported they were quickly getting used to it. Nevertheless, it would be over-stating the impact to say that it reached the levels of stress, uncertainty and lack of self-esteem expressed by Brown and Holloway (2008).

The requirement to use email for all University communications (Olivia, Ava) was new to the students. Despite our desire to introduce this at SINO-U, it was not possible because SINO-U did not use email to communicate with students, nor did they issue organisational email addresses. WeChat was the main communication medium.

Additionally, in China the students were organised into classes e.g. 'Class 1, 2, 3…just like in high school or elementary school' (Noah), they had their own assigned classroom and tutors moved

between them. In the UK, the students moved to different rooms and were not with the same students in each seminar. Upon arrival at each UK classroom, attendance was monitored by checking-in electronically with their identity card; this was new for them (Noah). Different timetabling conventions also required some adjustment, students were accustomed to a long lunch break with time for a nap; in the early weeks at UK-U, its absence meant students felt sleepy in class during the afternoon (Olivia, Ava & Noah). The foregoing were all examples of the culture gap between the two societies (Guan & Jones, 2011)

The experience in semesters 1 and 2 were different, this highlighted another feature of the sojourn in semester 1, which was the greater emphasis on independence in the UK. The traditional 'academic' content of semester 1 was lighter due to the primary focus on practical legal skills and the students' UK legal internship - a compulsory part of their course. Semester 2 focused entirely on academic law and all modules were shared with UK-based students. This had two effects, there was limited ability for sojourners to interact with local students during the first semester; and their timetables were lighter than they were accustomed to in China (Isabella, Ava & Noah). The students' opinions should be read in light of this.

In China, classes were scheduled between 8.30 am and 6 pm throughout the week; the rest of the time it was 'study…study…study'; whereas in the UK 'you have plenty of time to control yourself' (Noah). This generated the opportunity for students to exercise their agency and develop autonomy (Tran & Vu, 2018). This will be examined in Chapter 6. He found this a test of independent study and self-discipline adding humorously that for people lacking self-control 'maybe the time will ebb away…but in China somebody will 'whip' you'. Regarding himself as self-motivating, it was not a problem for him, although he did express a desire for tutors to give more reading materials, as during the first semester he felt 'a little bit free'; indicating he had yet to develop autonomy in directing his own free study time and was still used to being teacher-led (Benson, 2011; H. Wang, 2008)

Semester 2 consisted entirely of timetabled classes (rather than having time left free for the internship) generating the perception that it was busier than semester 1 (Ava, Noah & Mia). This surprised Noah who said 'the biggest difference in expectation is that I truly didn't think the…study burden or the workload would be so much for us'. Consequently, he found semester 2 more pressured and stressful and therefore more challenging; although in the final interview he said 'I actually think I learned a lot through this process', explored through the development of autonomy in the next chapter (Benson, 2011). He suggested that others also found it intense,

especially the amount of independent reading. However, this was partly due to the higher level of independent reading conducted by the sojourners than their UK-based counterparts.

5.4.2.1 Seminars

Pedagogical approaches differ across cultures, and one notable difference was that students did not have seminars in their Chinese modules, only lectures (Noah & Sophia) 'most of the Chinese students they don't experience what a seminar…maybe they only when they go abroad to study, they know a seminar tutorial' (Noah). Furthermore, he said in Chinese classes the teacher talks and students write it down 'so that's really just like…like in factory' supporting Wang's (2008) account of education in China. This difference in style of learning could have presented a problem for the students, however studies caution against the use of stereotypes based on presumed learning traits for cultural groups (Marginson, 2014; Straker, 2016; Tran & Vu, 2018). This was borne out by the students' experiences and demonstrated the value of I@H preparation.

Sophia preferred having seminars in addition to lectures, as she felt it was a good way for the students and teacher to discuss topics and knowledge. Participant perception of interaction in seminars varied, Isabella felt the sojourners prepared more than UK-based students and were more active participants in class discussions; again, reflecting the higher levels of independent study the sojourners undertook. Conversely, Sophia believed UK-based students were more active in class discussions. This may reflect individual personality traits and therefore how likely they were to speak in class – Sophia described herself as shy and introverted and not one who liked to speak in class or start a conversation. Similarly, Ava did not like to speak in the group and preferred talking to the tutor after the class. Isabella also commented that some sojourners felt shy when talking in front of so many local students, and that different people had different characteristics; again, highlighting the sojourn is an individual experience (e.g. Brown & Holloway, 2008; Oberg, 1960).

Liam enjoyed being in groups with people of different nationalities and had 'very effective communication with them'.

5.4.2.2 Lectures

During the first interview, Isabella felt the structure of lectures were different than in China (Chang, 2011); although at this point she was being taught in a variety of ways, practical skills workshops, lectures and seminars, and an internship. Having said that, when asked how she felt being in classes in the UK, she did not feel much difference as her classmates were the same.

This may mean the I@H preparation worked well and she did not notice much difference in the academic culture.

Similarly, although the lectures and seminars were different from his Chinese Law classes, Noah felt prepared for them having experienced the flying faculty modules – 'because we have gone through a lot just like the modules in [SINO-U] I found it was not very different for us to get involved in this type of studying'. Olivia enjoyed the structured approach of the modules; which may be more evident at UK-U because they were studied over a longer period than the flying faculty modules. She did not like team-teaching, where more than one tutor was involved with delivering topics on the module; a feeling also expressed by UK-based students.

Sophia also noted the similarity to the I@H stage, she liked the discussion in class, both between students and lecturers, and between students themselves, saying she enjoyed the first semester. This experience was enhanced in the second semester when they were mixed more with UK-based students. It appears therefore, that students adapted quickly at UK-U and did not notice a large gap in pedagogical approach, thereby enabling them to function in the new environment (Bochner, 2003)

Although the students were taught by China-based UK-U staff and the flying faculty staff in an environment bringing in western approaches, this can only go so far to facilitating adjustment. The UK-U staff encouraged discussions in class, however, students still to some extent replicated the experiences they had in China (Savicki & Adams, 2007). They were not accustomed to talking to Chinese tutors in, or after, class about their questions or opinions; so, it was only on arrival at UK-U and sharing classes with UK-based students that Ava saw them talking to tutors. It encouraged her to talk to tutors and ask questions which, she reflected, she would not do in China.

Valuing the ability to ask questions in class, and see tutors during their scheduled office hours, Noah said 'that's pretty cool…actually think that can really help students understand more…to get in touch if they truly wanna learn'. In the early weeks of the sojourn he contrasted this with the approach in China which was more 'passive' (H. Wang, 2008) and the only way to speak in class was if the professor asked a question, saying 'the experience was just like in a high school'. He enjoyed the difference and felt it helped students understand the subject better – an approach he would have been used to from the I@H stage.

Sophia's comments concurred with Noah's main points, describing her UK-based teachers as 'kind and funny', and 'somehow different from our lecturer', because they asked whether

students had any questions and were happy to answer them. However, echoing findings in the literature that sojourners tend to replicate approaches learned in the home education system (Savicki & Adams, 2007), in the early stages she did not find it easy to ask questions, believing she needed to know more about the subject before asking. Nevertheless, she reflected that her first semester was 'very good' and appreciated the teachers' willingness to answer questions and explain areas students found difficult. As was also found in the literature (e.g.Heng, 2019), it is clear that individual factors tend to dominate, rather than being due to traits applied to learners from a particular culture in general.

Isabella supported these views and said at UK-U, there were more opportunities to share views in lectures than in their Chinese classes, where the teacher is used to telling the class what the knowledge is instead of asking for students' opinions (H. Wang, 2008). She felt this helped her develop the ability to critically analyse material.   Rather than demonstrating adjustment problems, this appeared instead to demonstrate the students' self-development. Although the students were successfully prepared to some extent, the wider availability of resources meant this was enhanced when they arrived in the UK.

5.4.2.3 Library

Perhaps the biggest academic difference emerging from the data was between the two libraries. Ironically, although UK-U's library is older, Olivia felt SINO-U's library was old and full, students would queue at 6 or 7 am to get a seat. Whereas, she felt student-life at UK-U began at noon. However, different practices in both places might account for this perception, as students could 'reserve' a place for the whole day by leaving belongings on the desk in SINO-U, whereas this was not permitted in UK-U's library.

Ava mentioned that SINO-U's library is often noisy (a problem that also existed for some time at UK-U), is not separated into different zones and the tables seat 10 or 12 people. Ava and Sophia also mentioned the only computers there are for searching the library catalogue. SINO-U's library is large and well-stocked with large tables seating many students, as well as some individual desks and a utilitarian, minimalist design.

By contrast, at UK-U. the redesigned library aimed to tackle what had been a long-standing noise issue. Commenting that it was 'user-friendly' (Olivia), they liked the fact it was divided into different zones, e.g. silent zones and areas where work could be discussed with friends (Olivia, Ava). They also felt there was plenty of space to sit comfortably (Olivia), some big tables and smaller tables for individuals, pairs or small groups (e.g. of 4) (Ava). Sophia said '…the environment is more comfortable and everyone most has their own desk'.

Students were also impressed with the technology available such as electronic stacking shelves which closed to maximise storage (Ava & Sophia), printers and computers which could be used for research, internet access and to write assessments or check email. Ava added that SINO-U library 'is not so technical'; saying at the end of the sojourn she 'loved the library here', adding 'I think the library is fantastic! More fantastic than Chinese'. Writing in her diary she said 'I think I find a heaven for finding resources hhhhhhh ☺. So happy'

Noah was similarly impressed with the library, online resources and ability to obtain texts from other libraries, adding, if students really want to learn 'they definitely have the best resources to learn'. This change to their learning culture was important for the students and, as will be seen in Chapter 6, helped them to develop their autonomy. Occupying the 'third space' this cultural adjustment facilitated, not only did they not struggle in the sojourn culture, it helped them to achieve above average results.

5.4.2.4 Assessments

Assessment style concerned the course team when designing the Programme. Influenced by assumptions based on experiences with international students on undergraduate courses, and worried language proficiency could hinder success in the early stages of the course, it was decided to phase-in examinations as a form of assessment. Consequently, early flying faculty modules focused on written coursework and online computer-based tests. Later modules were assessed by written coursework and examinations. At that point, students would have been studying in English for two years and needed to prepare for the assessment methods they would encounter at UK-U.

I approached the interviews with the view that unseen examinations would prove to be the riskier, less popular form of assessment for the sojourners; and coursework would be preferred. The results were surprising, demonstrating the danger of pre-conceived ideas and how culture-specific educational ideas can be (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Harrison & Peacock, 2010).

During the first semester, it emerged that students were sometimes nervous about how to approach coursework assessments and wanted more guidance. Consequently, they were anxious whether they could achieve sufficiently high grades to enter their chosen postgraduate courses. Reflecting on the first semester, Sophia felt, with regard to getting 2:1 grades, 'it is harder than I imagine'; she also felt hindered by her language proficiency. On the one hand, it supports reports of the anxieties often experienced by sojourners, for example relating to assessment styles (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Heng, 2019; Savicki & Adams, 2007). Although when considering the issues in more depth, they were not those solely associated with

sojourners, but also those new to UK-based students e.g. practical skills assessments and internship portfolios. Any issues encountered in this respect may present an opportunity to undertake further work to make assessments more accessible for all students (Jones, 2017). An additional aspect of the concern around assessments related to the students' preoccupation with achieving a good degree classification to enable their entry into the postgraduate course of choice.

Students welcomed the opportunity to get feedback on marked coursework assessments, commenting that such opportunities are not available in China, 'all we can get is just the mark' (Ava).

The nervousness regarding courseworks was not unanimous and again reflected that individual characteristics influence the sojourn (e.g. Tran & Vu, 2018; Ward et al., 2002). Ignoring such individual Mia was pleased with her first semester results and that all assessments at that stage were courseworks. Similarly, Ava preferred courseworks to examinations, which she found to be a memory test; she liked being able to research a point and write about it in courseworks. 'Yeah exam is more challenging'. This was unusual among her peers who generally preferred examinations. Having said that, she did not find the exams a problem, finished them all within the permitted time and said preparing for them forced her to work harder.

Isabella felt students need to work hard to become familiar with the study culture – in particular the emphasis on coursework and that what is required is not clear. She was unsure about how to structure essays, her research skills and ability to critically analyse, supporting Cortazzi and Jin's (1997) contention that students need to adapt to a new culture of learning.

At the beginning of the second semester, students expressed nervousness about the prospect of end of module examinations. The final interviews reflected on the exam experience. Mia felt confident about her performance and her final interview focused strongly on her hopes for a first-class degree. Saying she wrote approximately 13 pages per examination, she said 'it's just an exam the same as what I think it will be'. Contrary to our expectations, she performed better in exams than coursework in the I@H stage, and said she 'LOVES exams'.

Similarly, Olivia was not worried about exams as long as she got good results. Before the exams she worried about the legibility of her handwriting, but, having seen that of non-Chinese students she was not worried anymore. She observed they wrote in larger characters, sometimes without remaining in the lines and how that would not be permitted in China. Feeling the tutors had prepared them well, she wrote for the whole time and completed all

answers, 'so…it's a great experience'. Ava and Mia concurred, appreciating the assistance given with revision.

Sharing Olivia's view regarding preparation for the exams, Isabella felt the revision period was sufficient for them to prepare and seemed calm about the examinations; 'if you work hard it's not difficult'. Although Noah felt the revision period was too long, again highlighting the individuality of the experience.

Isabella also felt confident, explaining they were not difficult, there were a lot of things to remember after a year of study, but also felt her English ability had improved so she could handle the exams. Other students had similar thoughts, Noah said students 'just felt the normal pressure', he surmised some may have found it more stressful because they were writing in English; but, contrary to our assumption, did not see any particular problem with doing examinations.

Liam was happy the exams were over saying, 'yeah it's a long torment'; but was not worried, 'we don't have too much exams'. He explained, in China they have exams every month, perhaps more than one per month. Commenting on our concerns regarding exams he said, 'we've been through bigger pressure…bigger pressure before…you can never imagine…yeah compared to us it's like holiday'. Similarly, Mia dismissed our concerns about introducing exams earlier in the I@H stage, saying Chinese students sit examinations very frequently in their high school education, daily at some levels and monthly at others.

Interestingly, following her comment that she preferred courseworks, Ava appeared to find the exams more stressful than others, saying 'Oh my God so so so difficult the exam…I…I have to prepare lots in last several days'. She was not actually referring to the examination itself, but to the extent of her preparations and explained how she read widely around the subject, whereas in China she would just memorise materials. She preferred the approach here as she felt she understood the material better '…when you are all those readings you can understand them better and you have to find the principles yourself and no-one can help you since…everyone's understandings are different'. Noah concurred, saying all students in China need to do to get good results is to memorise a lot; whereas in the UK students must read widely to truly understand the subject 'if you truly wanna learn instead of just passing the exam…just like me you could truly get a lot from this'. This supports the findings in Benson et al., (2003) and is contrary to the widespread belief that memorisation is a characteristic of Asian learners (H. Wang, 2008); the sojourners were content to take control of their own learning in this way.

Further evidence of the students' ability to employ the immersion in the host-culture during the I@H phase and contrary to findings in some literature (e.g. Carroll, 2015), it was not felt necessary to set aside the approaches that served the students well in China. Instead, they were able to combine both approaches to succeed in their UK-U year 4 assessments. There was a feeling, both during the I@H phase and the sojourn, of simultaneously belonging to different cultures (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Therefore, there did not appear to be a great adjustment for the students to make, as what could have been unfamiliar academic practices and pedagogical approaches had already become familiar (Carroll, 2015; Chang, 2011).

Having said that, Ava's preference for courseworks was surprising, as Mia explained that in their Chinese modules courseworks are only for formative purposes and students can copy any amount of text without anyone worrying. Consequently, Mia felt western students perform better in courseworks because their research skills are better. Conversely, she said Chinese students had better memorising skills and therefore would perform more strongly in examinations. Indeed, this appeared to be the case when examining the anonymously-marked examination grades and echoed Palfreyman's (2003) statements showing that irrespective of the commonly-adopted learning strategies of Chinese students, they often achieve higher than average academically. Furthermore, Mia's comments suggested that practices that are appropriate in one culture may not be in another, including those related to plagiarism (Heng, 2019; Montgomery, 2010) and highlighted why assumptions regarding the practices of those from other cultures should be avoided. As an example, the work of others is cited for different reasons in SINO-U e.g. to demonstrate reading has been done and the work understood. Therefore, it is inappropriate to apply the same criteria to it that apply at UK-U in relation to the way those works are cited. For that reason, rather than couching it in language such as 'cheating' or 'plagiarism' which indicate bad intent and a skills deficit (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008; Straker, 2016), arguably, it is more appropriate to consider it in terms of differences in pedagogical approach.

Participants found the experience of doing examinations in England was different; they lasted for 3 hours, whereas in China they typically lasted for 1 or 1.5 hours (Isabella & Noah). Noah spoke of how his hand hurt, estimating he wrote approximately 3,000 words per examination; by comparison he wrote approximately 800 Chinese characters in his Chinese GaoKao examination.

Another major difference was that UK-U exam halls contained approximately 300 students (Ava & Noah), Noah exclaimed it was a 'HUGE room' compared to those in China which typically

contained around 50 people. However, once he started writing he did not have time to think about those things. The examination procedures were also different (Ava), although we tried to replicate the UK-U procedures at SINO-U, there was a limit to which this was possible; this showed because the differences were noticed. For example, more regulations and procedures were read-out at the beginning of the examination, certain information had to be entered on the answer booklet, and there were restrictions on students leaving the room at the beginning and end of the examination. However, these comments were observations of differences rather than problems encountered, nevertheless they would have required adjustment on the students' part.

Most anxiety surrounding the assessments resulted from the grade-oriented behaviour of the students; and this nervousness about results was a feature of the interviews. Noah suggested that some modules should not be assessed wholly by examination as some students worried they had failed. Ultimately however, no student failed the course and the results of the cohort were very strong. Contrary to Wang's (2008) view that students focused on the collective and not individual gain, the sojourners supported their classmates, but were also competitive and grade-oriented.

5.4.2.5 The impact of I@H

The foregoing experiences provide the context for considering the extent to which the I@H preparation impacted on the students' academic adjustment. The analysis has already indicated the importance of the I@H phase, and that it was helpful for the adjustment of the majority of the students. Savicki's (2008) book contained a number of studies by others which reported that placing students in a 'sink or swim' situation by immersing them in the host-culture without preparation or support did not help their adjustment. To avoid this situation, the I@H phase focused on more than just teaching and assessing English law. Rather than being predicated on an international student deficit model, the pedagogic approach and skills developed followed a similar approach to that used for all new UK-based students at UK-U. The students developed 'a portfolio of globally relevant skills and knowledge' (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 878) to be employed during the sojourn, or (more traditionally for those remaining in China) to satisfy the goals of I@H education (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Crowther et al., 2000).

The students in the present study benefited from daily contact with UK-U academics, targeted language and language for specific purposes classes, and familiarity with the UK-U academic culture (Lumby & Foskett, 2015). On a social level, they were able to build long-lasting friendships with UK-U students and for some, visit UK-U as part of the summer school. Over

time, the I@H preparation enabled the students to become competent in most aspects of the host-academic culture before the sojourn began (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). On arrival at UK-U for the sojourn, the overall absence of 'learning shock' in the early stages of the sojourn was noticeable (cf Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Nevertheless, Noah reflected that learning law in the flying faculty modules is not the same as learning in England; thereby demonstrating that I@H is not a complete substitute for international mobility (Harrison, 2015). He felt different strategies and techniques were needed to study in the UK. An example emerging from the participants being that the I@H preparation was clearly valuable, for those students likely to discuss with, and ask questions of UK-U tutors. Although for those less confident, or simply affected by not previously experiencing this, seeing students in a more diverse classroom engaging in such behaviour was valuable – something that could not be replicated in the I@H stage. However, in the third interview, he spoke of the benefits of I@H reflecting

> *I actually think the [SINO-U] studying is very very important for people who*
> *want to come to the UK to study…at that point they built up the*
> *foundations so they knew what was going on…what English law was…and*
> *how to study that at the very beginning…I mean the preliminary stage…you*
> *gotta do this because I actually benefit a lot from this.*

Mia supported this, she felt the preparation for studying was fine and felt little problem adapting to studying in England. Liam lamented that the flying faculty modules were taught on an intensive basis with the in-country teaching period only lasting two weeks; after that, apart from the English language modules, the rest of the course was in Chinese. Noting the value of the language modules for developing professional linguistic competency, he added they do not help with the cultural aspects e.g. ordering a beer in the bar – initially he did not know what the beers were like or how to pronounce the names.

Noah, Sophia and Olivia felt the flying faculty modules had enabled them to prepare for, and participate in seminars, to take lectures, prepare for exams (by which they meant assessments), and use the virtual learning environment. It is clear the I@H stage helped to familiarise students with the academic culture (Oberg, 1960), thereby assisting their adjustment and avoiding the crisis commonly encountered, enabling them to function in their new environment (Bochner, 2003).

5.4.2.6 Practical Legal Skills
A key difference highlighted between the first semester internship and classes and the experience at SINO-U was the practical nature of what and how they learned. Although at times

it was challenging, students were positive about the experience; especially the internships which they found more beneficial than their Chinese internships (Ava, Noah, Sophia). The immersion in a real-world environment added another layer to the intercultural experience (Holliday, 1999). Arguably, this would be the case for all students not just sojourners (Savicki, 2008).

Liam and Noah were among 5 students interned for 2 days per week in a law firm, where they kept regular UK working hours and were exposed to UK professional work culture. Liam was nervous prior to starting, 'I haven't been there before, so I don't know what to expect'. This experience featured prominently in Noah's interviews and diary; 'That was different…absolutely different part from the academic life here'. He found being in a 'real' law firm tiring, saying the interns awoke at 6 am to travel to the office and worked through until 5 pm. Comparing the working cultures and ways of running law firms in the UK and China, he found them very different.

> *But I really learn a lot from that because I really got a lot of experience in*
> *the law firm and in the law firm, I found I have the truly working experience*
> *look like or how the work…looks like in the UK.*

He reflected it was 'really really unforgettable, memorable experience'.

Mia was also nervous about her internship in a business advice clinic. Aware she would need to speak with clients, she resolved to work harder, so she understood the client's needs. Contrasting this with her Chinese internship, there she had no contact with clients. Olivia participated in the same internship, finding the experience exciting she said, 'I really enjoy my experience there'. She explained that each sojourner was paired with a UK-based student; the pairs worked together on tasks and she was amused that her partner was as lazy as she was – waiting until the night before the next class to contact each other via social media to decide how to divide the work between them. She felt '…it's quite helpful for me to know a little about the real life in law rather than just academic things'. Pairing sojourning and UK-based students was helpful. Not just for their professional and academic knowledge, but also for developing intercultural understanding. They shared similarities between cultures and also enquired about, and understood, differences between them (Paracka & Pynn, 2017), helping them to develop as global citizens (McLean & Ransom, 2005; Webb, 2005).

Contrasting this with her Chinese internship, she valued the interview training and the actual client interviews. Demonstrating strong lawyerly skills, she explained that due to client

confidentiality, she could not discuss the interview, 'but I will say the interview experience is so good'. However, she found it challenging because interviews are dynamic in nature which added to the challenge of conducting them in her second language; a further complication being that English was also not the client's first language.

The sojourners also received training in negotiation skills; Olivia was happy that she pushed to get the best result for her client saying, 'I like this feeling'. Demonstrating how the students were also developing their professional identity, she said the tutor noticed she adopted a different persona when negotiating.

Ava was in the same internship group and also valued the opportunity to interview clients rather than simply 'copying, printing and checking contracts for language mistakes' which she found 'really really boring'. Explaining 'I think it's VERY good for our career', she nevertheless found the experience challenging and made her nervous; 'I'm afraid that my questions is stupid and sometimes he cannot understand my questions'. However, when she subsequently received her feedback, she said 'he like us which makes me very surprised'. Reflecting on the internship she said '…it's good experience…I never forget it'.

Sophia and Isabella completed their internship at a local law centre working with practising lawyers on employment law cases, completing official paperwork for tribunal hearings and interviewing clients (after receiving training). Isabella found the clients' accent challenging but said ''…I have the opportunity to interview client with the help of other students…but it's a fantastic experience'. Sophia also valued the experience and said she gained many practical skills.

There is no doubt the internship challenged the students, but the findings suggest this was a positive challenge which led to their development, and formed an important part of their experience, rather than one which caused distress. The students' excitement at developing and mastering these new skills was palpable, especially in the new professional cultures they were experiencing (Savicki & Adams, 2007).

The students reflected on the practical nature of their semester 1 classes and their development of professional skills; such reflection being important for self-development (Benson, 2011; Little, 1991). They reflected on the difference from their experiences in China saying, 'if I went to work in China I could use the skills [developed at UK-U] and that one was really different to what I learnt in [SINO-U] because in [SINO-U] they just taught you the theory is this…that theory is

that…' (Noah) saying that could not be directly implemented in real life. This was useful to him and also taught him of the need to develop commercial awareness to benefit his clients.

Olivia's experience was similar, 'yeah I think [UK-U] pay a lot of attention to the practice…to the employment…but [SINO-U] pay more attention to the academic so it's quite different…that's all'. The practical approach, along with seminar classes helped her to better remember what she learned, reflecting that semester 1 was 'satisfying…because I attend almost every class…every seminar…I do learn something'. Comparing this with China and the emphasis on memorising, there she forgot everything after taking the exam, she also felt the practical approach would be helpful for her future career.

Liam reflected on another practical skills-based module in which he learned negotiation and the drafting of legal contracts, he said 'it was very interesting…we don't normally have some like…the face-to-face competition'. He was now eager to try it in a real-life situation, recognising the limitations of simulated negotiations.

Evidently, developing practical skills in this way was challenging, exciting, different to what would be experienced in China and beneficial for their future careers, the employability benefits of sojourning also noted by the OECD (2018). Like the sojourners, UK-based students also find developing these new skills challenging, therefore this challenge should be separated from the cultural challenges of learning in a different country. The latter did not feature to a large extent, only really becoming apparent when issues around language proficiency arose.

5.4.2.7 Contrasting legal systems

With regard to the academic law studied, the true impact of studying in a different country's legal system was stronger in the second semester when the students were 'knowing the real English law' (Mia). A challenging aspect of the sojourn, it also demonstrated true internationalised learning (Haigh, 2014). Although there were some overlaps with aspects of Chinese law, the underlying foundations of the two countries' legal systems were different, and Sophia found it difficult to separate the (Chinese) civil law system and the (UK) common law system. She said some of the Chinese concepts 'are very deeply rooted in your mind' so separating them was hard and caused some confusion.

Mia said the two legal systems treated matters in different ways, for example in English Company Law, a company can commit corporate manslaughter. However, this is impossible in China because manslaughter is a crime that can only be committed by individuals. Noah noted

that 'everybody may be struggling because some concepts in English law do not exist in Chinese law'.

Liam also mentioned the potential confusion competing legal systems caused; however, he did not think it was difficult, just a different way of thinking. His strategy was to remove that bit of Chinese legal system knowledge and 'make a blank space in my brain'. It was noticeable that the students were developing multicultural legal identities (Toohey & Norton, 2003), albeit with some inevitable conflicts.

This is a situation that Carroll (2015) suggests most students would find difficult. They are expected to work with, and tolerate ideas, that are different to those they already hold. During the I@H phase, the students in the present study were expected to successfully operate in two different academic cultures and contrasting legal systems simultaneously and seamlessly switch between them. Although, as can be seen, it was not without its problems, nevertheless, they were successful in doing so; suggesting that the progressive familiarisation achieved through the I@H immersion was successful in improving the adaptation to the sojourn.

5.4.3 Perceptions of the sojourn experience

Overall, the participants appeared to adjust well to life in the UK and did not seem to experience the level of crisis anticipated by literature in the field (Carroll, 2015; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Savicki & Adams, 2007; Ward et al., 2002). Studies suggest that sojourners need to adapt quickly to the new cultural milieu ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Ward et al., 2002), and it appears they did so. Furthermore, although cultural adjustment studies suggest there is a predictable cycle, with adjustment dipping and then recovering before reaching a plateau (Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008; Ward et al., 2002), this did not appear to be the case in the present study. Some said they were amazed it went so quickly, perhaps emphasising the smoothness of the transition (Noah & Mia). In his diary, Noah wrote

Today was the last day of the first semester in [UK-U] law school [sic]. The first semester has been so fantastic I have not only experienced something I have never experienced before not only in life perspectibe [sic] but also in academic way

This semester was full of memory and worth remembering. I am very looking forward to the next semester.

Isabella found life in the UK less stressful and people enjoy themselves. Ava suggested that shops close early because people in the UK like to go home early and enjoy their home life. Sophia liked life in the UK because it was less crowded than in SINO-U's city.

Mia compared her social life in the UK and China. In China, she said they stayed in the dormitory at night, there are no parties or clubs (by which she meant student societies). She wrote

I think the student life here is more interesting than Chinese student

Ava noticed that people here make a lot of friends and that inspired her to try to be more outgoing. She also noticed different cultural habits regarding eating out. For Chinese people, the emphasis would be on the food, 'the main intention to have a meal together is just to have a meal' and there would not generally be much conversation. Whereas in the UK, it is a more social occasion where people talk. She also felt the 'lifestyle is totally different from China'.

Olivia felt attitudes towards older people are different in the UK

Because of the year in England it also gives me the feeling that…never think

you are old, and you have all the possibilities…even in your 70s…80s…you

can always live your own life

Isabella was positive about her experience, saying she got used to living in another country with local people, 'yeah it's good'. Again, coming as a group seemed to have a cushioning effect; living with classmates helped 'so it will be easy for us to…live a life here'.

Noah did not seem to feel any real difference living in the UK between the first and second interviews. He said at the beginning 'I found everything convenient'. When asked whether he had adapted more to life in the UK during the second interview, replied 'I adapted right from the beginning' and did not see much change as he could do all he wanted to do.

Despite her pre-sojourn worries, Sophia's feelings were similar - 'I think it very comfortable when I first came'; although she had to adjust to a different, noisier lifestyle than she was used to, she said at the end of the second interview

I feel very comfortable

I got used to it now

Very happy

Perhaps echoing Savicki & Adams (2007) findings that approaches learned in the home educational system continue to impact on sojourners, she did not feel too much adjustment was needed and followed a routine similar to that in China, she went to class, came back and slept.

Some felt that adjustment was a natural process. Mia spoke of her transition to living an independent life at SINO-U in those terms, making that move helped her adjust to life here, saying she was very good at adjusting to life in another environment. Noah said, 'we just…didn't need to use lots of strategies to adjust or adapt to the new culture…I actually think was a really smooth period', describing it as 'just like a automatic process'.

Liam concurred, 'everything happen so naturally…you don't have to…like do something on purpose yeah…it just…flows'; adding '…it's fine to me…I think everything is natural'.

The extent to which this is attributable to pre-sojourn preparation, globalisation, or personal characteristics is not easy to determine. He felt after everything settled down the only real changes were having to prepare his own meals; and initially, learning in a second language all day, 'it's probably quite mind-blowing in the first two or three lectures'.

> *Everything here is not so different…as long as you don't have*
> *communication problem, I think in every place of the developed area of the*
> *world probably the same…everyone drives a car…everyone takes a bus or*
> *subway…yeah everyone eats McDonalds.*

In some ways, this relates to the 'cultural hybridity' that can occur as a consequence of globalisation (J. Jackson, 2010); although there can be a danger of assuming too many similarities. Olivia noticed that having seen the same film in cinemas in China and the UK, that UK cinemas show 'blood' scenes that were not shown in China. Therefore, even the same cultural artefacts such as movies may not give the same experience in different places.

5.5 Group Dynamic – social support as a buffer

The effect of social support as a buffer against the effects of sojourning is discussed in the literature (e.g. Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Li, 2012; Searle & Ward, 1990) and is one of the key themes emerging from the findings. Students who feel isolated may avoid seeking help, and social interaction can avoid this ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Larsen, 2015). This is often achieved by sojourners interacting with other students, who they did not previously know, in the host-culture social or academic environment; and replaces their usual support systems (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). However, the literature also notes a tendency for sojourners to

socialise with others from their own country, a 'compatriot network' (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Ward et al., 2002), or with other international students (Montgomery, 2010).

Circumstances in the present study were different, the students were not sojourning alone. Instead, they came to the UK as a 39-strong cohort, some of whom already had UK-based friends due to the pre-sojourn I@H initiatives. Carroll (2015) noted that cohorts which prepare and travel together for a sojourn, often build a cohort identity which can facilitate support between students. However, the preparation of which she writes is often conducted over a relatively short period of time prior to travel, unlike the extensive I@H phase in the present study. Indeed, Carroll advocates a longer preparation period and that does appear to have been beneficial in this case.

As a consequence of the participants preparing and sojourning as a group, coupled with the strong community they formed, this cohort of sojourners could be regarded as a small cultural group (Holliday, 1999). Within that, smaller groups of approximately 6 students sharing a house or flat also formed strong support networks demonstrating the multi-layered cultural groups that can form. Many participants drew support from others in their cohort, prima facie supporting studies showing that a greater culture gap can mean lower-levels of interaction between host-culture students and sojourners (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). A greater culture gap can also create a barrier to personal interaction (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002), particularly between Asian and Western cultures where the cultural distance is widest ((QAA), 2015b). However, it cannot be definitively claimed that the culture gap prevented them from interacting with host-culture students, it could have been the convenience of sojourning as a cohort and the tendency to focus on their studies (Heng, 2019). Particularly when, as for the students in the present study, this is not a relatively short study abroad sojourn as part of their course. The year abroad is the final year of the participants' course for the UK-U Law degree, which would be classified solely on their performance during the sojourn.

Sojourning as a group appeared to help participants adjust to the host-culture, even though they may not have interacted to a large extent with UK-based students. Indeed, Mia mentioned the benefits of coming as a group, saying it would be different in her postgraduate year when she moved to a different UK university. The best thing for Noah was that the group were a community (3rd interview) – at the farewell event he developed this further, 'we came as a group but leave as a family'. This supports Montgomery's (2010) contention that an international student network can be a supportive one. Noah's comment appears to demonstrate that the

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fact the students were already part of a cohort added an extra dimension to this. Extending beyond the merely superficial and functional relationships noted in Montgomery's study.

Participants felt this community helped them in many ways, for example with avoiding loneliness and homesickness (Noah, Isabella, Sophia). In week 7, Ava wrote in her diary that spending time with friends 'made her feel warm'. It helped avoid problems with studying and made it easier for them to live a life here (Isabella); and was good because they found accommodation with friends (Ava). After one month, Noah wrote in his diary

> *Everybody seems to have got into the life and study in the [UK-U] [sic],*
> *everyday after class we would discuss the contents learnt from the lectures*
> *on the way home and we would chat in the dinning [sic] room every day*
> *after dinner.*

Comparing life in UK-U with her initial experience at SINO-U, Sophia echoed this. On arrival at SINO-U she did not know anybody and felt a little lonely; although as she got to know people there, she did not feel as homesick. However, coming to UK-U with a group of friends meant being here felt no different now to being at SINO-U. Supporting the findings in other studies that a strong compatriot network can help students to settle in (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015).

Clearly sojourning as a group brought many benefits, but there were also drawbacks. Noah felt, with friends to rely on, they did not need to be as independent as they would if they came alone. At the third interview, he said he did not interact with UK-based students as much as he originally intended to; but then said that was because he focused on his studies. Therefore, it is possible that without the presence of his classmates he would not have interacted more, he may just have been lonelier. This did not mean that the participants did not have UK-based friends, Noah did maintain contact with his summer school friends and it is these cross-cultural friendships on the whole which appeared to be most successful and enduring.

The group dynamic also appeared to function as a source of mutual support and assisted the students' self-development (Tran & Vu, 2018). Liam suffered relationship problems, and Mia occasionally felt homesick, both found talking with friends helped. Although for Mia, this was an extensive network consisting of her fellow sojourning students, summer school friends made over the three years (due to her role as a student ambassador) and those she met during the sojourn. Moreover, some participants experienced some very challenging circumstances which the sojourning group helped them get through. When Isabella was injured in a hit-and-run accident requiring surgery and physiotherapy, her friends took her to hospital, helped in

meetings with medical staff and during her recovery. Talking about that, she said 'it's not good, but erm…I finally made it'; she coped with the help of her friends adding 'I have to make it…'cos there are no other choice'. Similarly, Olivia was injured while travelling, her friends helped her while she was recovering. In both cases, friends helped liaise with UK-U, cooked meals as a group, and with anything else they both needed. In both cases the groups of students demonstrated their 'collective agency' in dealing with these difficult situations (Tran & Vu, 2018). At times, studies suggest that reliance on compatriot networks demonstrate a maladjusted coping strategy by avoiding other sources of help and remaining in isolation ((QAA), 2015b; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). However, in the present study, the students also sought assistance from UK-U tutors and other UK-U departments, along with the relevant health services.

As explored in Chapter 6 - Autonomy, coming to UK-U as a group also assisted the students with their travel plans. Travelling around Europe or the UK was often organised and undertaken in small groups of classmates. Whether they would have felt confident to travel as widely if sojourning alone is impossible to predict.

5.6 Summary

Navigating everyday life in another country can be difficult, and is noted to be particularly difficult in the transitory phase when adjustment is still underway ((QAA), 2015b; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). Culture Adjustment Theory (Ward et al., 2002) suggests that after experiencing the shock of encountering the new culture, sojourners will adjust over time and in a reasonable predictable manner. It is commonly felt that the experience will be initially overwhelming (Adams, 2008), with adjustment occurring over time and reaching a plateau after 4 – 6 months (Savicki & Adams, 2007; Ward et al., 2002). Having established that the participants in this study were at particular risk because they were only sojourning for one academic year, understandably they faced challenges throughout their sojourn.

Not only had they already transitioned to living away from their hometown while studying at SINO-U; they also benefited from the support system of the sojourning cohort. Consequently, they may already have been prepared for the sojourn in some respects. Although they were living and studying in a different culture, they demonstrated high levels of competence in the UK-U academic culture, having been exposed to it during the I@H stage. It was the social culture that appeared to represent the biggest difference for them.

It appeared that the I@H phase and the fact that the students sojourned as a group were beneficial. Not only did these factors help to avoid the shock that may have been encountered

when arriving at UK-U, but also enabled the students to develop their intercultural competence in dealing with diverse cultural experiences, and to develop as global citizens.

The following will apply the foregoing findings to the three sub-research questions addressed in this chapter; namely outlining the key issues identified during the sojourn, the pre-sojourn and in-sojourn strategies which alleviate them, and the impact on adjustment of pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students.

5.6.1 What key issues did students identify during their UK sojourn

The students identified some key issues which impacted to varying degrees on their sojourn. Surprisingly, culture shock did not feature to a large extent. Sophia mentioned differences in culture, and it appeared to be one factor which initially inhibited intercultural contact.

Aspects of the social culture which were different for students, such as local food and getting to know the local environment (Isabella), clearly required cultural adjustment, but also initiated self-development. Concerns regarding crime and safety also arose but did not feature greatly. Some aspects of academic culture also required some adjustment, such as the emphasis on courseworks as a form of assessment, particularly those assessing practical legal skills; although it appeared the I@H stage prepared the students well for their academic experience.

Issues causing the most concern included language proficiency, even among those such as Noah who did not regard it as a struggle. Individual personality traits were also an important factor for those describing themselves as shy or introverted, particularly Sophia and Isabella. For Isabella it was compounded by the fact the sojourners joined a group of UK-based students who had well-established friendship circles.

Homesickness and loneliness were raised but did not feature to a large degree, the mediating factors will be discussed when addressing the sub-research questions which follow. Independence also arose as a challenge, but largely one which was positive. It was apparent in various guises, for example, Ava and Mia mentioned they had more freedom in the UK in their lives and in terms of how they organised their learning.

5.6.2 How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before and during the sojourn?

SRQ5 examines the pre- and in-sojourn strategies that can be used to alleviate the issues affecting sojourners. Language proficiency was a challenge to which the only real solution was engaging with the target language in the I@H phase and during the sojourn. Noah explained it is a challenge which is not overcome but is ongoing.

To some extent, interaction with local students was inhibited by language proficiency, but mixing sojourning and UK-based students in class helped to overcome this to some extent. With the possible exception of Mia, this did not lead to building friendships with UK-based students.

Few friendships within the classroom were made, more interaction arose from chance encounters in the local environment or while travelling, and more importantly, from the Programme's summer schools organised in China and the UK. Participating in these summer schools helped Olivia, Mia, Liam and Noah and (to a lesser degree), Ava adjust to sojourning at UK-U. For example, because there was less to adjust to when they arrived, Olivia and Noah felt they had more time to think than Isabella, who had not previously visited the UK. The results demonstrate that the Participants tended to rely on those in their sojourning cohort for friendship, which lends some support to findings in the literature reporting that sojourners rely on compatriots rather than host-culture support (Adams, 2008; Ward et al., 2002). However, the reality is more complex, those who maintained host-culture friendships from the summer schools, also benefited from their help and support. Sojourners also approached UK-U tutors with whom they were familiar from the I@H phase and engaged with health services to organise treatment.

Similarly, the fact that few new friendships with UK-based students were made did not mean that the sojourners were not interacting with those students. In fact, during semester 1, they were paired with UK-based students during their internship and /or were working with UK-based legal professionals and clients. However, this was purely a 'working relationship' for most and did not extend to socialising beyond the classroom.

Cooking their own meals, especially because they shared accommodation with sojourning friends, was important for a number of reasons. It performed a social function, demonstrated the supportive social network brought by sojourning as a group, and demonstrated the self-development experienced throughout the year; which helped build the sense of community.

That sense of community also helped alleviate any homesickness or loneliness, along with other strategies the students mentioned. Foremost among these were the advantages of modern technology, only available to sojourners in relatively recent times. The ability to make video calls to family and friends in China was a great comfort to the students, although the time difference was challenging. Developing links with other sojourning students via internet chatrooms was also valuable. Students also found it helped to keep themselves busy, either with studying, exercising, going to the gym, or simply 'putting their minds elsewhere' for example by listening to music.

5.6.3 Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

SRQ5 concerns the impact of pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students for overcoming host-culture adjustment problems. Clearly, the summer camps, along with the contact with host-culture students they brought were beneficial to the students involved in them. However, the interplay between those and other factors cannot be ignored. For example, pre-sojourn contact was more beneficial to Mia, who had not left China before the sojourn, than to Ava who had visited the UK summer school. Personality factors influenced the extent to which those engaging in summer camps built and maintained friendships and connections with UK-based students. Although interaction with UK-based students clearly helped with adjustment to the host-culture, purely focusing on this may not be appropriate. Instead, it appears that part of the value offered by the summer camps was familiarity with the target culture which may have increased confidence about the sojourn. Furthermore, similar to Heng's (2019) participants, students became very grade-oriented during the sojourn reducing their focus on interaction with UK-based students; therefore, building friendships before the sojourn seems to be more successful. The nature of the sojourn is likely to have exacerbated this effect, sojourning for the final year of a degree in which the students' degree classification rests solely on the grades achieved during that year.

5.6.4 Conclusion

The preparation for the sojourn afforded by the I@H phase and the UK summer camp, and sojourning as a group, appeared to ameliorate the negative effects that sojourning students frequently experience. The relative ease with which they appeared to navigate their time in the UK instead left space for self-development. This emergent finding will be explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 – Autonomy - Results and Discussion

This final Results and Discussion chapter focuses on the theme of autonomy which, in an education context, is defined as 'the capacity to take control of one's own learning (Benson, 2011, p. 58) and is seen to be linked to the students' capacity to make such choices i.e. their agency (Gao, 2013). Ding (2017) considered autonomy in the context of student transition to university life, particularly the experiences of mainland Chinese students during their first year of undergraduate study in Hong Kong. In the same way that she examined the students' transition from high school to university, the challenges and how they became more independent, the present study followed the participants' transition from SINO-U to their final year of study at UK-U.

Autonomy was relevant when examining the extent to which the students took control of their daily and academic lives (Benson, 2010), and how this was linked to their capacity to do so (Gao, 2013). Indeed the literature suggested that all sojourners are agentic (Carroll, 2015; Tran & Vu, 2018), including Chinese study-abroad students (Heng, 2019), in that it is their own efforts that see them leave with an award. This may be true to a certain extent, especially in relation to academic achievement, but in other aspects of life, the results of the present study suggest that it may not necessarily be so and will depend on the individual students' context. It should be considered whether the student sojourned voluntarily, it is reported that most do (Ward et al., 2002) although as Sophia's experience in the present study demonstrated, this may not be true for all. Sophia's account supports Clydesdale's (2007) findings that autonomy in life and learning may develop at a different pace.

Palfreyman (2003) highlighted the importance of the individual's sociocultural context for autonomy. Students in the present study negotiated a number of sociocultural contexts in the course of their studies – being a Chinese learner studying a Chinese degree course at SINO-U; simultaneously being a Chinese learner studying a UK degree course in English in a 'western pedagogical environment' at SINO-U. Then, during the sojourn, as a Chinese learner studying a UK degree course while living in the UK; and experiencing Chinese and UK professional environments during their internships. Furthermore, the impact of the small cultural group(s) to which they belonged, and their individual characteristics were important considerations for these contexts.

Unlike most sojourners, the I@H experience appears to have helped them develop some of the autonomy needed to thrive in the sojourning environment. Coupled with the preparation for the host-culture academic and social environments, it appears to have reduced the adjustment

challenges to varying degrees and thereby created a space for more self-development. In fact, when asked to summarise her year, Olivia said 'I think the key word is self-development'.

6.1 'A change point in my life'

It seemed the students were leaving their student days behind as they focused on their forthcoming postgraduate studies and careers. Similar to Heng's (2019) participants and those in Chambers & Chambers (2008), students were also conscious of adult life awaiting them upon graduation. However, in Chambers & Chambers, the sojourn was a respite before such concerns were upon them, for the participants in the present study, their grades and degree classification were important for admission to a high-ranking university for postgraduate study and for their careers. They had chosen a route with more pressures than their classmates who chose to stay in China; therefore, their sojourn was not a relatively carefree time. In particular, Olivia felt this was 'a change point in my life'. She may have been more comfortable with this because she was settled with the next steps in her life. Whereas it was more troubling for Noah as he was not yet content with his career plans. He had a feeling that time was running out for him, but he knew he had to decide what he was going to do; the path his parents urged him to pursue was not where his heart lay. This perhaps illustrated there was some tension for him in 'charting the course of his own life' (Benson, 2010) and he was not as agentic in life as in his studies (Clydesdale, 2007). As Table 6 (overleaf) demonstrates, following his parents' wishes meant abandoning his pre-sojourn desire to work abroad and/or improve the lives of others. Autonomy is a developmental process (Benson, 2010; Ding, 2017) and he appeared to be struggling with the extent to which his parents, rather than he, were making decisions for his future. Indeed, this was more common for most participants at the beginning of the study when choices were more heavily influenced by others' beliefs as to what was good for them.

For others however, and as the sojourn progressed, their career aspirations appear to have extended or they became more flexible and open-ended in the way they viewed their career options. These additional opportunities for their futures as a result of the sojourn demonstrating another sign of how their autonomy and their agency for becoming (Tran & Vu, 2018) developed. Updating the table from 3.3 demonstrates the extent to which the students' ambitions changed throughout the sojourn, the final column shows their career aims at the end of the sojourn.

Table 8 - Career ambitions at the end of the sojourn

Name	Gender	Hometown /Province	IELTS	Career Aspiration (questionnaire answer)	Career Aspiration at final interview
Olivia	F	*Hubei*	7.0	Officer	Undecided. Maybe lawyer in Shanghai, then Government Officer after a couple of years.
Isabella	F	*Shandong*	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business	Lawyer in China, preferably in Criminal Law; or Commercial Law.
Ava	F	*Hunan*	6.0	Lawyer specialising in international business	Working in China as a Lawyer.
Sophia	F	Dalian	6.5	Lawyer specialising in international business	Did not attend final interview.
Mia	F	*Anhui*	7.0	Law consultant in an international company or lawyer	Internship or working abroad – in the international community or agency such as the UN.
Liam	M	Jinan, *Shandong*	7.5	Lawyer – perhaps in China or abroad	Stay in US, pass New York Bar Exam and work as a lawyer in the US.
Noah	M	Henan	7	Masters, then perhaps work for international organisation like the United Nations	Undecided. Would like to volunteer as a teacher. Become a Lawyer, then a Judge. Would also like to study law in Japan. Parents want him to return to China and take Masters degree.

6.2 Taking control of daily lives

In common with other studies (e.g. Chambers & Chambers, 2008), during the sojourn, the students developed in many ways, taking control of their daily lives e.g. responsibility for their health and financial affairs while in the UK. Ava described opening her UK bank account on her own, her parents always helped with such things in the past:

> *I feel so happy that I can do lots of things on my own and this is precious for*
> *my future life and I'll very appriciate [sic] my UK experience*

Additionally, they learned to cook for themselves, which they did not need to do before. For Sophia it was a way of demonstrating her independence, her parents had not allowed her to cook at home as they believed it was unsafe. When she returned home, she planned to cook for them. Therefore, although she had surrendered power to make the major decisions in life

to her parents, signs of empowerment and agency were beginning to show (Gao, 2013) as she began to discuss small ways that she would begin to take control. Confirming Nunan's (1997, as cited in Benson, 2010) thoughts that autonomy is not an all or nothing concept and the degree of its development is likely to be individual to the student.   After joining the university Cooking Society during her sojourn, Mia cooked 10 dishes for her friends on her birthday, 'this what I am most proud of'. Noah said, learning to cook was 'really big change for me in life'; it was symbolic of a bigger life change throughout the year, 'you not dependent on the people…you just can depend on yourself and just be more independent and sometimes you really think you have grown up a little bit'. Within two months of arrival, Ava wrote in her diary of inviting her friend over and cooking a meal

It seemed that everyone has become good cooker. Since we came here, not

only professional skill like analysing has improved, but also our living skills

have amazed ourselves.

Similarly, Olivia wrote

I made my own soup!!! It was tomato beef balls soup. It was the first time

to use shredded beef to make balls. So proud of myself even if it did not

taste as good as what my grandpa made.

These seemingly small steps were important milestones for the students and part of the transformation in their life skills they felt had occurred (Mezirow, 2000).

6.3 Becoming independent

In common with findings in Gu & Schweisfurth (2015), this notion of becoming independent featured in conversations with all participants. It was something they demonstrated from the beginning of the sojourn, by taking control of their daily lives, and increasingly demonstrated in their learning. When asked if the course team could help the students more effectively with their sojourn, Liam said they 'can do this for themselves'. Mia and Ava noted how they had learned to live alone and, that if they felt homesick, they should not let it control them. Noah felt that overcoming loneliness developed maturity and independence.

Ava explained she became more independent since arriving in the UK, (thereby, developing autonomy) saying in the second interview

'I can face trouble for myself…in the past I never want to solve them…I think

they're difficult and I don't want to think about them anymore…but now I

can…if I have some questions about my lesson and I will go and ask the

tutor and discuss with my classmates and try to find some answers from

the book material for myself'

Similarly, Liam said 'yeah, it's a way of developing life skills, which many of the Chinese students lack…I could never imagine how…like incapable they are before I went there'. Not only did this signify the personal development that occurred, but also the shift in cultural identity under way (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Harrison, 2012; J. Jackson, 2010) Learning to learn in a different way, for example discussing issues with tutors and classmates that she would not have done before (Benson, 2011; Benson et al., 2003; Riley, 2003; Toohey & Norton, 2003). A further demonstration that it may be inappropriate to apply large cultural labels to learners (Holliday, 1999), especially in relation to passivity in class as a result of the high power distance found in Chinese classrooms (Ho & Crookall, 1995; Palfreyman, 2003; Tran & Vu, 2018; H. Wang, 2008).

During the sojourn, all participants travelled, usually in small groups around the UK and Europe. Many participants regularly visited Birmingham for shopping and entertainment, sometimes alone; Mia and Liam also travelled alone to London and Luton for leisure or for English language tests respectively. When organising a hotel in London, Olivia accidentally booked and paid for the wrong date. However, she successfully resolved this without help and credited her studies with helping her develop this ability.

Not only did the students use transport networks such as railways, buses, the Underground in London, but also arranged private cars for daytrips and organised all aspects of their foreign travel. Ava and Olivia explained they were part of a small group which arranged a trip to Iceland, Norway and Denmark. In China they usually used an agent to make such arrangements, but here they did it themselves; dividing tasks between them, assigning responsibility for arranging the Schengen visas, booking the accommodation, arranging excursions, air travel and other transport. Olivia wrote in her diary

I felt satisfied because I got the visa by myself and it saved money. DIY was

a good way to experience life in the UK.

This supported Toohey and Norton's (2003) contention that learner autonomy, personal autonomy and multicultural identities are interwoven. The students' desire to continue to do things for themselves and confidence to do so in the future, demonstrates the transformative potential of intercultural encounters (Mezirow, 2000).

6.4 Growing up

In assuming more control over their learning, daily lives and future goals, there was a sense of growing up, of becoming more mature. '[B]ut I think the most important [thing about the sojourn] is how I can think for myself…how I make decisions…how I do some things like that' [Olivia]. One of the biggest life decisions so far, which troubled Olivia for a while, was deciding on her postgraduate university; ultimately, she realised that others may be able to advise, but the decision had to be hers and said 'so I think it made me grow up gradually'. Sophia experienced a similar feeling when she first arrived, 'it is very hard…so I think…I'm not a child now so I think I need to…to challenges and feel the different life'.

Ava spoke of becoming 'a better student' and 'a better woman' during the sojourn. Liam also shared similar feelings, speaking of his living skills he said, 'I think I'm a better man than before…some part of me matured'. This growth in maturity was also reflected by Mia who said 'I can do everything by myself now'; believing her friends in China might still think of her as childish and immature, she thought they would be surprised as they had not seen her in her 'mature phase'.

Clearly, the sojourn provided an opportunity to reflect on themselves as people, their life and their future goals (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). Olivia spoke of celebrating her birthday in England saying, unlike previous ones, this birthday was 'more about the inner girl in myself because I came to a very…totally new environment and…live on my own'. She coped with difficult situations herself instead of involving her parents e.g. when she dislocated her knee while travelling in Norway. Knowing her parents were busy, it would be difficult to arrange a visa and the journey would be long for them, she decided to handle it herself. She sought treatment in Norway, arranged her own flight back to the UK, left her friends to continue their holiday, and back at UK-U arranged her treatment and physiotherapy herself. She only told her parents when her recovery was underway, took heed of their advice and utilised her support network here at UK-U (both friends and university staff) to seek the best treatment options. This support network also helped Olivia manage her daily needs and keep up with her studies. This was a clear demonstration of autonomy in the way that the group can work together to support each other (Tran & Vu, 2018).

6.5 Taking responsibility for their own development

It was clear from some participants' statements that they had accepted responsibility for their own development. Aware that language proficiency affected her performance, Sophia said, 'it's my own problem' and reflected that she would need to proof-read her assessments thoroughly

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before submission to ensure they read well. Similarly, Ava felt getting good grades was her responsibility, she had to 'fight' for it which, she said would not have been the case if she had spent the fourth year in China. Students remaining in China for the year focused on completing their dissertation and preparing for their postgraduate entrance or judicial examinations; whereas the sojourners faced more challenges in getting good grades. Nevertheless, she felt this was good for her and enjoyed her successes when she performed well in class; but also accepted responsibility for reflecting on feedback to improve for the future. This ability to reflect and take independent action being crucial for developing autonomy (Little, 1991). When she was disappointed with a grade, she said 'I think I can know from that, but I hope I can get better in how to make a contract for the future'. She also felt she had learned vital points about providing a better service for her future clients as a practising lawyer.

Noah's extensive use of the library, for his own self-development and beyond what he needed for the modules studied, demonstrated his ability to take control of his own learning (Benson, 2011). Additionally, his professional autonomy was developed through his UK internship which he found challenging, he realised that UK legal interns are expected to be self-sufficient, he would be given tasks to complete and although help was available, nobody would lead him by the hand 'you gotta just sort it out yourself instead'. This ability to manage address their own learning needs dispels the suggestion of passivity as a general trait (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Tran & Vu, 2018).

6.6 Challenging their cultural identities

The exposure to new social, academic and professional cultures, led to the development of multiple identities (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Toohey & Norton, 2003). Gu & Schweisfurth (2015, p. 950) discussed these dual or multiple identities in transnational individuals, referring to this situation as 'diaspora consciousness'. This may mean for example, that individuals feel they have a Chinese and international student self. A phenomenon encountered by those returning to their home culture in Gu & Schweisfurth, J. Jackson (2010) and Benson et al. (2003). During the first interview, Olivia explained what culture shock meant to her saying that overcoming it means she would have 'much more personalities than before…I can handle things more patiently when I got back to China or when I find a job'. There was a clear sense of reconstructing the norms by which she lived her life, for example when she spoke of 'having to learn everything from the start like new baby'. On a personal level, she experienced changes in the first weeks of the sojourn. Shopping in England, she bought make-up which she did not usually wear in China, writing in her diary

However, I'm not in China now. Every woman in England is elegant. I'm changed.

Although some students adopted transnational traits (e.g. Olivia, Noah and Ava), future research would be needed to determine whether these were lasting effects (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015); and therefore of the permanent nature of these changes that Mezirow (2000) would regard as truly transformative. In keeping with the individual nature of autonomy, it is not the case that all students will develop in the same way. For example, Sophia's identity may not have made such a marked change, nevertheless it appears she may have developed 'resilience' (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015) as an aspect of autonomy.

Anticipating that students' academic and social identities may be challenged (Benson et al., 2003), an additional challenge emerging from the findings was to the students' professional identities. From the knowledge gained in their Chinese law degree studies and the internships undertaken in China; they had an appreciation of the norms of professional working life for lawyers in China. Undertaking an internship in the UK had provided a different viewpoint for them and, in some cases, caused them to re-evaluate how practising lawyers should operate.

6.6.1 Developing professional autonomy

Through the placement, Noah experienced different ways of working in UK legal practices and planned to use these in his professional life. He voluntarily learned about English law and the English legal system, far beyond that needed for his degree. He was eager to absorb as much knowledge as possible so he could use it in his career as a judge in China to influence change. The link between learner autonomy, personal autonomy and the construction of multilingual identities is discussed in the literature (Toohey & Norton, 2003). This is evident through Noah's desire to learn beyond what was needed for his course and to take this back to implement good practice from elsewhere in his judicial career. His desire to effect change being an example of agency for becoming (Tran & Vu, 2018). Ava believed she possessed 'client skills' she would not have developed in China. She noted differences in the emphasis of the two legal professions, e.g. in the UK a Solicitor's primary duty is to the court, whereas in China the lawyer's primary duty is to their client.

Participants felt that, if they work in professional environments dealing with UK lawyers, they are likely to have a better understanding of the cultural dynamics of the business relationships (Paracka & Pynn, 2017). Thus demonstrating the development of lawyers and individuals capable of operating in a global context (Haigh, 2014), having developed intercultural

competences (McLean & Ransom, 2005) and enhancing their abilities as graduate employees (Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Lumby & Foskett, 2015)

6.6.2 Developing as individuals

Ava also discussed the changes to her personal cultural identity, through exposure to multicultural classrooms and social environments, she could appreciate different cultural thinking about the same point (Carroll, 2015). Speaking of her return to China, she said 'you will express more new and an interesting opinion which are different from the...other people'. Similarly, Olivia assimilated aspects of UK culture into her personality and felt it would influence her life back in China. She now desired more privacy and independence, intending to rent her own studio flat in her postgraduate year, rather than live with others. She explained that in China it is better to keep your life the same every day, whereas now she thinks 'I have the technique to do whatever I want...I can learn new things...I am not afraid to change'. She also enjoyed the slower pace of life in the UK and talked of opening herself up to others to learn from them, giving an example of her conversation with an Uber driver about his views on being a better parent. In keeping with Benson's contention that exposure to a second language invokes destabilisation and reconstruction of the learners first language cultural identity, so too could immersion in a second culture. Thereby enabling the students to apply their global perspectives in their lives and careers (Carroll, 2015; Heng, 2019).

Whether this will bring unexpected consequences for the returning sojourners remains to be seen. When speaking during the final interview, the students did not expect that their new ideas would mean they would be viewed differently after their return. However, neither did Chik and Lim (Benson et al., 2003) when they found themselves regarded as 'westernised' on returning after their sojourns. Returnees may find themselves 'caught between two cultures' ((QAA), 2015b), although the QAA report discussed this with regard to the sojourn experience, there is no reason why it cannot also apply to the return home, this will be considered further in section 6.9.

Like others, Olivia adopted a healthier lifestyle during the sojourn, influenced by local people she met, she joined a gym and hoped to continue this in China. Liam explained that most of the cohort had joined a gym since arriving; the puzzling aspect was that there were gyms close to the campus in China but being in the UK seemed to have sparked a new interest in taking care of themselves. This was reinforced by Mia who said that regularly attending the gym was part of taking responsibility for her health and lifestyle. She wanted to do it for a long time and, influenced by people around her, finally joined in the UK; she was hoping for better health and

a better figure. It was clear that the cultural mentors (Y. Wang et al., 2017) encountered during the I@H stage, including flying faculty tutors (along with the UK-U tutors), continued to influence the students on arrival in the UK, particularly with regard to the focus on health and fitness. These mentors also played an important rule during the sojourn.

6.6.3 Developing academic autonomy

Participants experienced greater freedom in the UK to organise their own study, but this also brought challenges. Ava and Mia felt developing time management skills and self-control during the sojourn was important for their success.

Initially, Noah demonstrated a preference for more teacher-led learning (H. Wang, 2008). In his first interview, he was eager to learn and read more widely, expressing a desire for the teacher to give him more materials to read. At the end of the sojourn he had assumed responsibility for reading more widely, made extensive use of the University library's physical and electronic resources and requested books from other libraries through the inter-library loan system. He showed a thirst for knowledge, and an eagerness to gather as much knowledge as possible about English law and the English legal system before he returned to China, demonstrating an ability to identify his own learning needs (Tran & Vu, 2018).

Discussion in the literature that autonomy may be ethnocentric in nature and this western construct may be unsuited to Chinese learners (Palfreyman, 2003) did not appear to be as problematic in this study as posited in the literature. During the I@H phase of their studies, the course team's role was to assist the students to succeed in a western pedagogical and social environment.

Indeed, the students' experiences suggest that although they may employ strategies associated with Asian learning environments, when embedded in a western pedagogic environment, the students adapt to a different mode of learning. The literature suggested that the power-distance in Asian classrooms results in passivity among students (Ho & Crookall, 1995; H. Wang, 2008). However, embedding the students in a different pedagogical environment in the I@H phase demonstrated that the students in this study adapted to the different way of learning. The I@H preparation ensured the development of essential skills was undertaken before the sojourn began, which may have reduced the potential for anxiety by developing familiarity with the host-academic and, to some extent, social cultures; thereby reducing the culture gap. The students developed multiple cultural identities, able to function successfully in both types of learning environment (Toohey & Norton, 2003). As observed in Palfreyman (2003), they continued to use learning strategies which served them well during their Chinese education,

such as memorisation, but this was just one component of a bundle of learning strategies which they employed to achieve higher than average results. Coupled with reading more extensively than their UK-based counterparts, they were equipped with more knowledge and understanding to apply the law to hypothetical scenarios in exam conditions. Therefore, they demonstrated a fusion of the approaches acquired and developed in both learning cultures and the transformative nature (Mezirow, 2000) of successful internationalisation programmes.

6.7 Personal Growth

Not only did the students begin to integrate different academic, social and professional cultures and take more responsibility for their own lives; some also noticed this allowed them to develop aspects of their personality, in common with reports in Chambers & Chambers (2008). Ava now felt comfortable expressing her opinions with teachers and others

> *in the past I think I kind of…lack of confidence but after going there*
> *[meaning 'here' in the UK] the teacher and student around me…teach me*
> *how to be confident people and I think it is important for my future career*

Similarly, Sophia noticed her confidence increased, knowing she needed to tackle her shyness she now felt more confident and outgoing. At the end of the sojourn she said she would now talk to staff in shops if she could not find what she wanted, and asked questions after class if she was confused.

Olivia noticed that, in the early days of the sojourn, long days in class left her tired and the 'days make her feel lost', by which she meant she was not thinking about her future plan. She then added 'the days make her clear…she has to adjust her situation'. Writing in her diary about her birthday early in the sojourn she reflected

> *Am I more mature than the year before? I'm not quite sure. However, I'm*
> *already on the way to become myself. It makes me satisfied.*

Noah encapsulated the experiences related by others in terms of growth in confidence and independence when he said

> *Yeah I think the whole year experience just help me a lot…I mean the*
> *different aspects you gotta be more independent in your study…you gotta*
> *be more independent in the life and just surrounded by different people*
> *from different cultures I mean they just make you feel more confident if you*
> *meet the same situations in the future…I think that's pretty good*

6.8 Empowerment

An expression of their agency (Gao, 2013), one outcome of the personal growth resultant from the sojourn was empowerment, a feeling expressed in a variety of ways by the participants. Mia was forthright in her view, 'after I move abroad, I feel…more crazy than before but…in a good way…because I feel I'm liberated…I feel freedom…So I feel much different and I feel happy…more happy than before'. This was important for her as she wished to remain abroad after her postgraduate year, seeing it as an opportunity 'to build the person who I am'. If she returns to China, she may find it more difficult than others to settle back into life there.

Reflexivity and reflection are linked to agency (Gao, 2013) and underpin the development of autonomy. The space to reflect on themselves brought insights to their own personalities. Throughout the sojourn Olivia spoke of indirect wider-family pressure to marry, she was often shown photographs of her cousins marrying or having children; there was an underlying expectation that she would soon do the same. She no longer felt this pressure to marry young, she ended the sojourn happy to wait and felt she knew more about what she was looking for in a partner. For the moment she said, 'I just want to be more like focus on myself and develop my strengths and stretch myself…it's better when I'm being more mature then I think I will be better'. Having observed the romantic relationships that developed between her classmates and the rocky path some had followed; she was keen to wait until she felt both she, and any potential partner, knew their own personalities better and what they wanted from life.

Ava now felt she had the power to achieve her dreams '[y]eah I think experiencing different countries is important…it will let you find your dreams and let you ascertain what you want to do in the future and broaden your…eyes'.

6.9 Return to China

Echoing the autonomy literature (Benson et al., 2003), some students found it difficult to imagine the consequences of spending time abroad. The return home can present an unexpected challenge (Pusch & Merrill, 2008), although the extent to which it does for the participants is likely to vary with the individual. Liam and Mia reconciled this by intending to stay abroad. However, if they do return to China permanently, this may be particularly difficult for them; they may suffer reverse culture shock as they try to come to terms with living in their home culture again (Presbitero, 2016). Sophia and Isabella talk of how they both engaged less with the host-culture and believe there will be no difference, it will simply be a case of returning home (Pusch & Merrill, 2008). This may make it easier for them to return to China, assimilating less of the host-culture into their lives. Although Ryan (2000) wrote of individuals being

continuously constructed by culture, if they were not committed to engaging with the host-culture, it may not be so difficult to return home. However, they did notice challenges to their personality and that they became more independent. The extent to which they were changed by the sojourn, or that their friends, families, home environments and the relationships they have with them will change is difficult for them to anticipate.

Noah reconciled the influence of both cultures in his life by intending to take back what he had learned to try and influence change. However, in doing so he did not appear to have rejected his home culture, instead it seemed to be more of a desire to take good experiences from other places in the world to incorporate them into the Chinese legal system. He spoke of how Japan had done so in the past and he was now eager to travel there; demonstrating the development of autonomy and the intercultural learning achieved, but without abandoning his home culture (Bochner, 1982) However, he had not yet experienced whether this would be viewed as disruptive; it would be interesting to study his experiences following his return to China. Taking home what he learns from his various overseas sojourns to influence societal change in his proposed judicial career, may bring challenges. Such an approach may be welcomed, or it may give rise to challenges and being perceived differently (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; J. Jackson, 2010).

As Ava felt she would be able to express more interesting opinions, different from those in China, it remains to be seen whether as 'a returner from abroad' (Benson et al., 2003) she would be viewed as westernised. For all students, it is possible they will be viewed differently and have not foreseen this; therefore, they may experience the reverse culture shock discussed in the literature.

Olivia may experience the most conflict and feel caught between two cultures ((QAA), 2015b). She had integrated many aspects of UK culture which she hoped to continue on her return, but had already experienced some changes to family relationships and anticipated others. One relative in the Chinese military had stopped communicating with her while she was in the UK, she was not sure whether this would resume on her return. She also believed her relationship with her father would change and was considering how she would negotiate this. Her reflective approach may ease her reintegration, the extent to which she retains any of the changes to her personality or cultural identity after her return are beyond the scope of this study.

A question which will only be answered in the future is whether, if this becomes too challenging, the returnee students will allow the (UK) western aspects of their cultural identity to fade.

6.10 Summary

Similar to the link in the literature between individualisation and autonomy (Benson, 2011), it is clear from the foregoing that self-development was a key part of the sojourn, particularly the students' ability to identify their own needs and act on them. As with Ding's (2017) participants, the students grew up, took care of their daily lives, cooked their own meals, managed their own study and developed their own opinions. Furthermore, the concepts employed in this study interact to determine the extent to which the students adjust to the host-social and academic cultures and influence the development of autonomy (Toohey & Norton, 2003). None of these concepts operate in isolation and the interweaving of sociocultural and academic factors including the individual's life history (Tran & Vu, 2018), personality traits, parental influence (including parental encouragement to embrace western/other cultures and living abroad), collaborative and friendship groups, and preparedness for transition (Ozga & Sukhnandan, 2002) through the I@H preparation and summer camps, can all either encourage or constrain the development of autonomy. This highlights that focusing on cultural generalisations based on nationality can be misleading (Holliday, 1999; Palfreyman, 2003) and reinforces the importance of focusing on the individual student (Sovic, 2008) and small cultural groups (Holliday, 1999).

The students' experiences demonstrate that sociocultural activities were especially important for the development of autonomy; these included the summer camps, travelling, the sojourning cohort, the friends in their accommodation and other intercultural contact. Those friends made while travelling, through chatrooms or encounters outside the classroom for example in the airport or gym, were more important for many than the friends made in the formal UK-U classroom setting.

As Clydesdale (2007), among others, identified, autonomy in life and study might develop at a different pace. Indeed, there appears to be some doubt surrounding Heng's (2019) claim that all students are highly agentic. In the present study, Sophia and Noah were more willing to surrender some power to their parents than Mia and Olivia for example. The students had already developed a certain degree of autonomy in their lives and study. This was developed further with more distance from home, more free-time and space to think about themselves as individuals and their future goals. Arguably, they were more prepared for the academic aspects of the sojourn, although the availability of more learning materials and library resources afforded another opportunity for the development of autonomy.

Although Wang (2008) felt the collectivist orientation of Chinese learners could mean that western notions of autonomy were unsuited to them; that did not appear to be the case in the present study. The tendency to form a cohesive group helped to cushion them from the harshest effects of sojourning. However, it also meant that some students avoided socialising with UK-based students in class and remained within their group in their daily lives. Nevertheless, they did not experience the levels of stress or loneliness that might have been expected. Furthermore, there is evidence of the sojourn as a potentially transformative experience (Mezirow, 2000) in which some appeared to demonstrate intercultural competence and global citizenship. Nevertheless, whether such changes endure after their return to China is beyond the scope of this study. Such changes can make the reintegration into the home culture more challenging (J. Jackson, 2010; Pusch & Merrill, 2008), although it can be beneficial for their future careers (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015).

The findings revealed that the students developed supportive and collaborative networks socially and educationally while behaving autonomously, demonstrating a reflective approach and responsibility for their own learning, daily lives, personal development and future plans. Bringing the findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 together, Chapter 7 will present the conclusions from this study, highlight its limitations and make recommendations for further development in the field.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the study, outlines its contribution to the field and considers the implications and recommendations which can be drawn from the results. It highlights the limitations of the research and suggests areas for future research. It then considers personal reflections, particularly how the findings have influenced my practice.

7.1 Summary of Study

This thesis focused on the impact of pre-sojourn preparation of one cohort of Chinese sojourning students and their cultural adjustment during their year-long UK sojourn. The purpose was to evaluate the impact of the I@H preparation on the students' adjustment to their new social and academic cultural milieu. Leading my School's Internationalisation strategy and responsible for co-designing and operating the Programme, evaluating their preparation and how the students' experiences could be enhanced were central to my role. Based on naturalistic inquiry, an interpretive approach was used to examine the sojourn through the students' eyes as far as possible. Using an ethnographic approach, an initial questionnaire assisted sampling and gathered basic background data. The students' experiences were explored through diaries and interviews. The concepts of Cultural Background and Intercultural Competence, Cultural Adjustment and Autonomy were explored.

These concepts provided the context to explore the main research question evaluating 'the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students'. Five sub-research questions assisted with exploring the main issue, they were:

1. What key issues face students transitioning to an overseas university?
2. How does prior exposure to a western educational style via I@H impact on host-culture adjustment?
3. What key issues do students face during their UK sojourn?
4. How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before, and during the sojourn?
5. Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

The literature reviewed established the context for this field, that of internationalisation and, more specifically, I@H. That was applied to the Programme and the pre-sojourn preparation undertaken. The literature on cultural background and intercultural competence, established the basis for examining the students' cultural backgrounds and how that might affect their

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adjustment, and potential development of intercultural competence. The cultural adjustment literature, relating to issues associated with Culture Learning Theory, established the issues known in the field affecting sojourners as they experience the initial difficulties associated with living and studying in a different culture; and how they adjust over time. The literature on autonomy provided the evidence against which the participants' self-development and developing identities were explored and indicated the links with agency and Transformative Learning Theory. As the literature on internationalisation and cultural adjustment have been explored extensively and developed rapidly in recent times, some early seminal works such as Oberg (1960) were cited; but most works were written more recently, largely following the major reformulation of the concept provided by Ward et al (2002).

Adopting an embedded mixed-methods approach, an initial questionnaire assisted sampling and gathered demographic data. Having selected the sample, the participants' sojourn experiences were gathered from diaries, videos, photographs and a series of semi-structured interviews. Data were collected longitudinally at several points during their sojourn, the intention being to view it through the students' eyes as far as possible, thereby addressing concerns that the student voice is marginalised in such studies (Larsen, 2015). The longitudinal design aimed to capture the experiences as close to their occurrence as possible, to avoid the inadvertent distortion of retrospective accounts (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

Data were analysed through coding the transcripts and diaries using the constant comparison model to identify emergent themes; the connections between them and their relationship to the literature and each other. From this emerged the themes of culture, cultural adjustment, self-development, I@H preparation and the group dynamic.

The results of the five sub-research questions were as follows:

1. What key issues do students face when transitioning to an overseas university? The fact the students in the present study had been studying for three years on a programme designed to facilitate their adjustment to the UK pedagogical environment (the I@H preparation phase), provides an important backdrop for this question. Therefore, their experiences may be atypical to that found in the field. The key finding to emerge was the individuality of the experience – the background, personality, skillset (especially language proficiency), and motivation for sojourning were all important factors and shaped each individual's hopes and fears.

    Issues of culture were important, especially the extent to which large and small cultures were appropriate for, and impacted on the study (Holliday, 1999). The students'

Chinese nationality provided a broad frame of reference for some of the adjustment issues faced. For example, they were all Chinese, had all been educated within the Chinese education system and were enrolled on the same undergraduate course, however, it would have been wrong to assume they all carried similar regional and personal backgrounds and aspirations. Instead, the individuality of the experience and the small cultural dynamics of the Programme under study, were particularly important for identifying the issues faced by sojourning students and the extent to which that was relevant for assisting the Programme's students in developing their intercultural competence. Also influential was the fact that the students had already transitioned to living away from home, having moved from other areas of China. That, and the I@H preparation meant that few concerns were expressed about the move to UK-U. The I@H immersion in the UK-U academic culture, as far as that was possible, developed their intercultural competence through the daily contact with China-based and flying faculty UK-U staff, in addition to the legal knowledge studied in their degree. It also aimed to reduce the cultural distance the students experienced by developing language proficiency, subject specific language skills, and through summer school activity in China and the UK. Consequently, few fears were expressed when transitioning to UK-U.

Carroll (2015) suggests that students experience difficulty when encountering ideas contrary to those they already hold. The Programme under study required the students to successfully operate in both the Chinese and UK academic cultures and subject-level study simultaneously during the I@H stage. In those three years, they had to seamlessly switch between both within their academic week.

It is common for sojourners to experience learning shock in addition to the shock of moving to a different sociocultural environment (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015). The I@H stage in the present study meant the students were already familiar with the UK-U academic culture before the sojourn began. Other aspects of the I@H preparation involved contact with UK-based students visiting China during the summer. Those friendships, along with those developed during the SINO-U students' visit to UK-U during the UK summer school, were valuable for some students. They gave rise to the deepest and most enduring friendships, which were often more important for the sojourners than other interactions with UK-based students that occurred during the year abroad. Although not falling within the definition of I@H, the UK summer school was also valuable for developing familiarity with the UK-U city and environment.

2. How does prior exposure to a western educational style via I@H impact on host-culture adjustment? The preparation afforded by the three-year pre-sojourn stage appeared to reduce the anxiety for many about sojourning at UK-U. During that stage, learning and being assessed in English, in a western-style pedagogical environment, helped prepare the students. Being taught by staff from UK-U, adapting to western teaching methods e.g. the use of seminars, and the summer-schools at UK-U and SINO-U assisted the students, facilitating contact with UK-based students and familiarity with the sojourn environment.

3. What key issues do students face during their UK sojourn? One of the surprising outcomes to emerge from the data was not how much culture shock impacted on the students during their sojourn, but how little. At least in terms of how much it featured in the interviews. Some issues affected the students, some of which pervaded all aspects of their sojourn, and some of which applied to either the social or academic cultures experienced. Pervasive issues included, for some, language proficiency, concern about this could lead to anxiety about interacting with UK-based students and student achievement and attainment. For some, this was compounded by personality traits, for example for those describing themselves as shy or introverted. Sojourning as a group and coming into the third year of a course where UK-based students had already established friendships compounded this.

   In terms of social culture, students discussed local food, shopping, transport and the weather as points requiring adjustment. However, these did not cause distress and some facilitated self-development e.g. learning to cook for themselves. Crime and safety emerged as a concern, but not one that was a prominent feature of the sojourn. Unsurprisingly, homesickness and loneliness were mentioned, but modern technology facilitated contact with home and other mediating factors discussed in SRQs 4 and 5, meant this did not pose the problem that might have been expected, demonstrating the value of the I@H phase of Programme.

   Academic adjustment issues did not feature prominently, the students instead discussed differences between the Chinese and UK educational experiences.

   The sojourners felt they needed to be more independent in their personal and academic lives and this facilitated self-development.

4. How could pre- and in-sojourn student-developed strategies to alleviate issues be used to help others before, and during the sojourn?

Engaging with the target language was important for confidence-building, improved proficiency and relieved anxiety about academic achievement.

Sojourning as a group created a sense of community which provided a support network, friendship group, and facilitated self-development. An example being the 'family' atmosphere created by flatmates cooking and sharing meals together which demonstrated the development of life skills, brought personal growth and an increasing sense of independence.

As mentioned previously, in addition to the sojourning group cushioning against homesickness and loneliness, the impact of modern technology for facilitating contact with home and making new friends via internet chatrooms, cannot be ignored. Additionally, living a full life helped with avoiding homesickness and loneliness. Many started exercising at a gym and taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

5. Does pre-sojourn contact with host-culture students help to overcome host-culture adjustment problems?

According to the participants, and emerging from the data, was the importance of the summer camps at UK-U and SINO-U. For those attending the UK-U camp, it generated friendships and brought familiarity with the sojourn environment. Those involved with the summer camps in China became familiar with other UK-based tutors and UK-based students.

However, a caveat is that the benefits, especially for maintaining friendships, vary and are linked with other important factors. Whether the friendships last depended on the personality of the sojourner (e.g. shy or outgoing) and their language proficiency, or at least the level of confidence to make mistakes without worrying.

Applying this to the main research question evaluating the impact of pre-sojourn preparation on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students, it is clear from the foregoing that the students' host-culture adjustment was assisted by the pre-sojourn preparation in many ways. In terms of social adjustment, the students formed a tight-knit group over the preceding three years, which formed a social and support network during the sojourn. They received English language tuition beyond what they would normally receive in Chinese-led College English classes. Being taught by China-based staff from UK-U brought a social, as well as language-based element to their education. Additionally, for those who participated in the UK-U summer school, and to some extent those who interacted with the UK-based students visiting China, familiarisation with UK culture helped them to slip relatively easily into the local environment and lifestyle when they first arrived.

Perhaps the biggest impact we could have as a Course Team during the preparation stage, was on the students' adjustment to the academic culture. Indeed, this appears to have been successful. The I@H preparation seems to have meant the students smoothly transitioned to the academic environment. Apart from some initial adjustments relating to the different styles of the teaching day between China and the UK, and the tiring effect of learning in English all day, the adjustment process appeared to be smooth. Consequently, the smoothness of the transition appears to be one of the more important benefits of the I@H preparation.

The result being that, due to the absence of major adjustment problems, students felt the sojourn gave them space to develop as individuals. For the UK-U staff, it also meant they were pleasantly surprised by the high level of academic success demonstrated by the sojourners.

There were limitations to this study which should be acknowledged. Firstly, Liam mentioned the 'star students' on the programme had 'a very strong connection' with the UK-based students. This may mean the more confident students participated in the study. Although there seemed to be diversity among the participants regarding their level of interaction with UK-based students; there is scope to study the whole sojourning group to determine whether the benefits of preparation were shared by all. Similarly, there is scope to study those who chose to remain in China to determine whether concerns surrounding sojourning led to that decision; or whether better preparation would increase confidence in doing so.

Additionally, the students in this study can only speak for their own cultural group, and their level of preparation will be different to that of students on other courses. However, it is also clear that generalising for a specific cultural group has its dangers due to the many factors influencing adjustment.

Furthermore, the participants in this study were self-reporting their challenges, successes and adjustment, as well as self-reflecting on their sojourn. This is an inherent risk in seeking to examine the experience through their eyes, but the study did include some observations on my part. Nevertheless, it has to be considered that the students may have reported experiences more positively than their experiences merited. Especially given the cultural considerations surrounding the preservation of 'face' in the Chinese culture, both for the students themselves and their tutors, in the event that comments could be regarded as critical.

Another potential limitation related to cultural factors, is the power relationship between researcher and participant. As the researcher who designed and directed the course of the research, and also due to my position in the School and with regard to their course, the students

could consider me to be in a powerful position relative to them. This could impact on the participants; therefore, care was needed to ensure they were participating freely, were fully informed about the research, understood that it was concerned with their experiences and there would be no adverse implications from anything they said or if they chose not to participate. Nevertheless, although care was taken to avoid the impact of an imbalance in the power relationship and any potential bias due to my role on the Programme, it must be considered that these may have played some part.

The study was not conducted by a team of researchers, therefore cross-checking of the observations made was not possible. Additionally, the interview transcripts were not sent to the students, this was a conscious decision as they were struggling with confidence regarding their language proficiency. It was a concern they may judge themselves too harshly and therefore damage their confidence if presented with verbatim transcripts. The series of interviews throughout the year did offer the opportunity to revisit points made previously, and acted as a different kind of check on my perceptions of their feelings. This is linked to another limitation that the interviews were conducted in English rather than Chinese. If there had been Chinese-speaking researchers in the team, the students may have spoken more fluently, but the indirect benefit of increasing their confidence about speaking in English would not have happened.

The final potential limitation is that, although studying Chinese learners, the study was rooted in a western theoretical framework, western epistemological and ontological foundations and conducted by an anglophone. Although considering this study researched adjustment to a western environment, it is argued this focus was appropriate.

7.2 Contribution to the field

This thesis makes two key claims to originality, both of which will be examined in more depth below. The claims are:

1. That the I@H phase of the Programme yielded benefits for the sojourning students' cultural adjustment.
2. That the present study makes a theoretical contribution which results from the drawing together of the key concepts to evaluate the effects of I@H preparation on student adjustment.

7.2.1 The benefits of the I@H phase

The ground-breaking approach of the Programme under study in relation to SINO-foreign co-operative courses, meant that employing I@H in this way had not previously been studied. The course-design and high level of co-operative working between the partner universities lent itself to preparing the students for their sojourn during the 3-year I@H phase. The students who decided to remain in China for year 4 also benefited from the I@H phase but did not face the challenge of adjusting to another culture in their final year.

Benefits of the I@H phase on the sojourners' adjustment included:

- Reduced sociocultural and academic culture shock
- The generation of a supportive group dynamic; and
- The ability to exercise agency and develop autonomy

The implications of these findings will be examined in the following section.

Culture Learning Theory suggests that sojourners find the early stages of a sojourn difficult. Studies report that this is a reasonably predictable cycle of adjustment which shows that initial difficulties in adjusting to the new social and learning cultures give rise to anxiety and stress. Facing such challenges gives rise to a period of adjustment which plateaus after approximately 4 months. Often negatively affected by anxiety regarding language proficiency, adjustment is said to be improved by interacting with host-culture nationals as an aid to overcoming the challenges faced. Consequently, where the sojourners are students, the focus is usually on their interaction with host-culture students; although it is noted that sojourners often interact with compatriots or other international students.

Rather than finding the initial experience overwhelming, it appears that the I@H preparation facilitated cultural adjustment and the development of intercultural competence prior to the sojourn. Although it may not wholly replicate being immersed in the host-culture, it seemed to bring enough familiarity that the students felt better able to adjust on arrival and avoid the stress and anxiety commonly said to occur.

7.2.2 Theoretical contribution

The second claim to originality relates to the theoretical contribution that this study makes. Emergent concepts from the findings were drawn together to offer a unique insight into the students' journey as they adjusted to their new environment, and demonstrated the complex interwoven nature of factors affecting sojourning students. Indeed Adams (2008) suggested

that intercultural adjustment cannot be solely explained by one theory alone. Therefore, returning to the conceptual diagram discussed in Chapter 2 (repeated here in Figure 3for reference) all concepts are set within the Internationalisation of Education, including TNE (Knight & McNamara, 2017), specifically the way in which the I@H preparation (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Crowther et al., 2000; Harrison, 2012) for the sojourn impacted on the students' cultural adjustment.

Figure 3 - Conceptual Framework

I@H is usually perceived to allow non-mobile students to benefit from internationalisation of education, often by taking advantage of the diversity present in the classroom. In this study,

I@H brought some benefits to non-mobile students; but was also employed to improve the adjustment of sojourning students. Furthermore, the cohort involved in the I@H preparation could not realistically be described as diverse, rather it was the interaction with UK-U staff which brought the diversity to the experience

Along with I@H, global citizenship (Garson, 2016; Haigh, 2014; Webb, 2005) and individual factors, including the students' cultural background, were considered. Factors of particular relevance were the individual students' cultural identity, their personality and family background, especially their motivation for sojourning and the influence of their parents (Floyd & Morrison, 2014; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lumby & Foskett, 2015). When evaluating cultural identity, large cultural labels such as the students' Chinese nationality were only considered in terms of their ability to provide a broad frame of reference and starting point to consider identity from a less stereotypical perspective (J. Jackson, 2010; Montgomery, 2010). Instead, Holliday's (1999) small cultural perspective was applied, especially when considering the fact that the cohort to which the sojourning students belonged could be considered a small cultural group. Examining the above established the pre-sojourn factors affecting students and the changes they underwent.

Immersion in the host-culture during the I@H phase developed intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2008; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; J. Jackson, 2010) to the extent that is relevant to this study, and facilitated familiarity with the host-culture. Having established their backgrounds and experiences during the pre-sojourn phase, the expected effects of sojourning were explored with reference to the theory developed by Ward et al., (2002), that of Cultural Learning Theory. Studies revealed the recognised effects of sojourning (e.g. (QAA), 2015b; Adams, 2008; Chambers & Chambers, 2008; J. Jackson, 2010; Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Montgomery, 2010; Oberg, 1960; Savicki & Adams, 2007; Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008; Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008); those and other studies were applied to evaluate the findings from the present study to consider the impact of the I@H preparation phase.

The I@H phase proved to be beneficial in that the findings in the present study do not support studies demonstrating that all sojourners experience stress, nervousness and anxiety, rather than euphoria, on arrival (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012). Nor did they demonstrate that learning shock was encountered, a feature which some report as being more acute than culture shock (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Heng, 2019; Montgomery, 2010). Instead, the findings demonstrate that sojourners can adjust well with appropriate preparation.

In this case, I@H preparation appeared to reduce the cultural distance, thereby improving cultural adjustment.

Notwithstanding the benefits of I@H preparation, cultural adjustment is a complex process and, the findings demonstrate, one which is individual to the student (Armes & Ward, 1989; Berry, 2005; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Edwards-Joseph & Baker, 2012; Friedman et al., 2009; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Oberg, 1960; Ward et al., 2002; Zhou et al., 2008).

The effects of language proficiency and the likelihood of the student to interact with others, whether in their home or host-cultures are important considerations. Therefore, the student's personality, whether they are shy or outgoing, can affect whether they interact with host-culture students during the sojourn. It may also affect their language proficiency, those with the lower language proficiency scores tended to be the less confident, shy students. The more outgoing students were more confident and less worried about making language mistakes. Thus, demonstrating the complexity of the adjustment process.

Although interaction with host-culture students is argued to improve cultural adjustment (Bochner et al., 1979; Friedman et al., 2009; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Lysgaard, 1955; Ward et al., 2002; Ward & Kennedy, 1994), some studies suggest that compatriot or other international student networks can be a helpful support network (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Montgomery, 2010). In the present study, the small cultural group formed by the sojourning cohort was important for cultural adjustment, and formed a strong, tight-knit community. This community provided a social function, became a learning community, was a valuable support network and was also important for developing their autonomy

The improved adjustment gave the students space for self-development and this was explored through the lens of autonomy (Benson, 2011). Ding (2017) examined the development of autonomy in a group of sojourners transitioning from high school on mainland China to first year undergraduate studies in Hong Kong, and the adjustment problems this posed. This was coupled with other works in the field such as Benson, Chik and Lim (2003), exploring issues surrounding autonomy for Asian students exposed to a western context, and Wang (2008) and Palfreyman (2003) who examined whether imposing a western idea of autonomy on Chinese students is appropriate.

Autonomy is linked with the exercise of agency, i.e. the capacity to act. Many participants began to exercise agency in taking control of their own lives. However, as with other aspects of the sojourn this was affected by the individual students' personality and family background,

particularly the influence of their parents in their lives. However, even among the less agentic, there were still signs of smaller steps in the development of their agency.

For the more agentic students, the development of their autonomy, coupled with intercultural competence and cultural adjustment was potentially transformative (Mezirow, 2000) in nature. This may bring challenges for their relationships with others, including their friends and family, on their return to China. However, studying their return to China is beyond the scope of this study.

The findings demonstrate the cyclical nature of the concepts outlined in Figure 3, all of which are influenced by the I@H preparation for the sojourn. It is evident that the outcome of the adjustment process, the intercultural competence and autonomy developed, and the transformation which occurred are all likely to impact on the students' evolving cultural identities, personality and relationships with others. Furthermore, it may not be a singular occurrence, this cycle may be repeated in different contexts throughout the individual's life.

This study brought together these separate, but inter-related areas to offer a novel perspective in this crowded field. The results of this study suggest that I@H preparation, within the context of this Programme's design, summer schools and sojourning as a group contribute to improved cultural adjustment, and consequently the development of autonomy, for sojourning students.

7.3 Implications and Recommendations

This section will examine what the findings suggest in relation to the innovative aspects of this study, namely the impact of I@H on culture shock, cultural adjustment, the relevance of the group dynamic, and the autonomy and self-development facilitated by the improved adjustment. This will culminate in a clear recommendation that, where possible, deep transnational partnerships which give the opportunity to employ I@H to both prepare potential sojourners, and allow non-sojourning students to benefit from an internationalised education, should be considered when entering into international partnerships. Although resource-intensive, they provide other benefits to the partners, improve the students' experience and thereby facilitate the development of their autonomy. These results follow the continuum that is student adjustment, beginning with the students' pre-sojourn position and the preparation they underwent; their adjustment to the sojourn, and the resultant self-development. Through the lens of this small-scale qualitative study, a more nuanced exploration of the student experience is offered which demonstrates the complex, interwoven factors involved. The final part of this section will focus on possibilities for further research raised by these results.

7.3.1 The impact of I@H on cultural adjustment

The challenge of being thrust into an unfamiliar environment should not be underestimated. Cultural adjustment is a complex undertaking involving many factors (Savicki, Binder, et al., 2008). However, it is possible to prepare students for the experience so it does not present such a challenge. This study demonstrates the contribution made by I@H preparation on a specifically designed programme. Sojourning students often voluntarily spend time abroad, but that does not mean their willingness to do so outweighs the challenges of living and studying abroad. Indeed, some students may not have 'volunteered' for this experience at all, they may have been strongly encouraged or persuaded to by family members and their heart may not be in it. Therefore, irrespective of the level of pre-sojourn preparation, other factors impact on cultural adjustment, for example impacting factors recognised to affect adjustment include the degree of commitment to the host-culture (Ward et al., 2002) and motivation for sojourning (Carroll, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). For some, such as Sophia, those two factors were linked; studying at UK-U was her parents' decision, it was one that was made very late and, unlike most participants, she did not intend to stay abroad for her Masters, intending instead to return to China immediately after her examinations and remain there.

On arrival, sojourners must operate in a different academic environment, perhaps with different norms, rules and ways of teaching (Carroll, 2015; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Gu et al., 2010; Heng, 2019; Montgomery, 2010). The conventions surrounding assessments may be different, and the assessment methods new to them. Although this may be exciting, it can also cause anxiety about the potential to achieve good grades. Coupled with this is the challenge of living and learning in a country where the language is not the students' native tongue.

The I@H preparation in the present study aimed to reduce these challenges, thereby facilitating a better student experience and allowing the students to flourish personally and academically in their new environment.

Having been taught already by UK-based tutors during their pre-sojourn stage, the students were familiar with some tutors at UK-U and with the styles and methods of teaching and assessment. SINO-U's willingness to create an area of the teaching building decorated in UK-U's style and adopting UK-U style classroom layouts, helped reinforce the difference in approach. The presence of three permanently based UK-U tutors in China also served to develop English language proficiency, familiarity with the subject-specific terminology and sociocultural context of UK law and developed the sense of community, the importance of which

is examined in section 7.3.2. The English language and law courses studied in China, amounting to 30% of the students' Programme, built subject-knowledge and increased confidence.

On arrival at UK-U, the notion of culture shock did not seem relevant for these students as they seemed to embrace the change and feel positive about it. That is not to say that they never experienced the 'shock' of dealing with a new culture, as with many new university students (Jones, 2017), this may have happened when they began their undergraduate studies at SINO-U. Moving from their home to university, sometimes thousands of miles away, they would have had to adjust to a new way of life, the 'learning shock' (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015) of Chinese and UK academic cultures, learning in English (as well as Chinese), learning about two different legal systems, and living in a new city.   Developing familiarity through a tailored and gradual immersion into the host-academic culture may have avoided the 'shock' and overwhelming experience that frequently affects sojourners (Adams, 2008). Indeed, as will be seen in section 7.3.3, this supports the argument raised (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008) that reducing stressors early in the sojourn may facilitate a more in-depth exploration of the host-culture in the later stages; in the present study often manifesting in the development of autonomy.

It was important in the design of the I@H phase that it was not undertaken from the 'deficit model' standpoint (Straker, 2016) often applied to international students.   Instead, the approach began with the premise that all new undergraduate students enter an environment that is new to them. Some, whether home or international, will find their adjustment more challenging than others (Jones, 2017). Thus, in keeping with Straker's (2016) view that, as educators, we should try to level the playing field, the Programme's students received the same legal skills training that first year UK-based students receive, alongside language tuition. It was this I@H experience which sought to narrow the familiarity gap for those sojourning and provide an internationalised curriculum at SINO-U, whether sojourning or not. This is particularly advantageous for the sojourning students as, in keeping with Savicki & Selby's (2008) argument, it builds familiarity during the I@H stage, thereby reducing the adjustment required during the sojourn. Doing so is especially important for this kind of sojourn as it represents a critical time for the students, being the final year of their undergraduate study where their entire degree classification is calculated based on that one academic year.

Despite the foregoing, it would be wrong to suggest there were no adjustment issues resulting from the sojourn. Students were still concerned about language proficiency and wanted to improve their English during the sojourn. Rather than being something to overcome, Noah felt

this was a lifelong journey as it was always possible to improve. Furthermore, studying in English all day was mentally tiring during the first days of the sojourn for some.

The summer schools were an important part of pre-sojourn preparation, both by building familiarity with the UK-U environment and for building friendships with UK-based students. Those who did not participate in the summer schools appeared to show greater levels of anxiety with regard to language proficiency. However, the underlying reasons for this may demonstrate the complexity of evaluating the sojourn experience, as they were also the less outgoing participants who described themselves as shy and introverted. Consequently, not only did they find it difficult to form relationships with foreigners, but also back in China.

The summer schools, immersion in western teaching methods and environments, and contact with UK-based students, appeared to reduce the culture shock felt when transitioning to UK-U such that, for the academic environment at least, students found it familiar and quite similar to being at SINO-U. The reduction in culture shock facilitated the students' further development as individuals, manifesting in a change in their identity in some cases and development of their autonomy in others.

Understanding the value of pre-sojourn preparation can help academics, course designers and policymakers modify their practices. Therefore, one recommendation is that course-designers consider targeted top-up options to specific partner courses. Although they may not have the same I@H preparation as the course in the present study, they may be able to build in measures to develop familiarity and friendships in the host-university; thereby increasing confidence in sojourning. These could include online international learning projects and summer/winter camps. However, in so doing, courses considering implementing summer schools should carefully consider their purpose – i.e. whether they are purely as marketing exercises to encourage students to sojourn, or with a dual purpose of supporting students after arrival.

7.3.2 The importance of the group dynamic

One outcome of the I@H stage was the forging of a strong group identity. In total, there are now 400 students on the Programme, the participants' group were the first cohort to join the course and the first to sojourn at UK-U. Throughout their first three years, they formed strong friendships within their group. Then, during the third year, as the sojourn applications were confirmed, the prospective sojourners were in contact face-to-face and by social media to make the necessary arrangements. For many, this included travelling to the UK and onward to UK-U as a group. This strong group identity and formation of a community was important for the

students, and helped cushion against the reported effects of sojourning, leading Noah to comment at the end of the sojourn that 'we came as a group, but leave as a family'

7.3.3 Autonomy and self-development as an outcome of reduced culture shock

In line with the suggestion (Savicki, Adams, et al., 2008) that reducing stressors early in the sojourn would facilitate cultural adjustment, in the context of the present study, I@H preparation and cushioning effect of the friendships made (whether sojourning classmates, summer school friends or foreign classmates) gave space for the development of autonomy and allowed for personal growth. Especially for those like Olivia, who felt that being familiar with the sojourning environment on arrival gave her time to breathe, and that she would develop more personalities than she had before. This contrasts with Ding's (2017) participants who appeared to suffer greater culture shock on arrival and demonstrates the integration of aspects of UK culture into some students' lives.

In developing the ability to be reflective in their learning and to have control over their daily lives and futures, the question then remains whether the sojourners in the present study are now not really Chinese. They have been encouraged to change from the accepted cultural norms of their home country, which may challenge some of their collectivist ideals (Benson et al., 2003). This goal is implicit in the transformative nature of international HE but may be problematic when the sojourners return to China, in fact one of the sojourners hoped to remain abroad permanently and felt that returning to China would be difficult. Not only may they encounter a degree of 'reverse culture shock' (Presbitero, 2016), they may also be regarded differently by those around them. Nevertheless, these experiences and the desire to effect change on their return to China reflect the roles played by global citizenship and education in contributing to the development of culture (Garson, 2016; Haigh, 2014; McLean & Ransom, 2005; Monk et al., 2015) and Benson's (2011, p. 71) claim that 'autonomous learners are likely to be able to contribute to cultural development and transformation'.

In addition to changing their relationship with society as a whole, some participants also felt the sojourn would change their relationship with their parents. The development of autonomy meant that some were now balancing their own goals for the future, against those their parents were expressing. Some found this would be a challenge but were embracing it positively; some were struggling with asserting their own desires for the future; and some did not feel their relationship with their parents would change at all. Although it is possible they could not envisage the potential effects of sojourning until it was experienced.

This section culminates with a recommendation that the benefits of I@H preparation discussed are considered when entering into new transnational partnerships. To facilitate a positive student experience, enhance host-culture social and academic adjustment and thereby encourage the development of autonomy, institutions should consider the development of deep, transnational partnerships whereby students can be immersed in the host-culture through I@H preparation on specifically developed programmes of study. Although more resource-intensive than simply allowing students to transfer into the final year of study, it has been shown to facilitate better adjustment and therefore a better student experience.

7.3.4 Further research

These results raise the possibility of further research in a number of areas. Namely, the benefits of sojourning as a group, the impact of I@H on those who remained in China, friendships with host-culture students, and whether the development of autonomy and transformation occurring during the sojourn persist beyond the return to China. This study indicates that sojourning as a group can cushion against the effects of sojourning, irrespective of relationships built with host-culture individuals. However, this may only be effective if the group have already established a group identity before the sojourn, as happened here. For courses lacking the I@H phase present in this study, developing a cohort identity before sojourning begins may be explored.

I@H preparation played an important role in familiarising sojourners with the host-social and academic cultures; thereby appearing to positively impact on their adjustment during the sojourn. Beyond the scope of this study, but also meriting further research would be the effect of the I@H phase on those students who chose to remain in China for their final year of study.

Contact with host-culture individuals also provides further opportunities for research. The literature suggests that increased contact with a sojourner's compatriots or other international students is often at the expense of interaction with host-culture individuals (Chang, 2011; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). Prima facie, that appeared to be true for the majority of participants in this research, however that does not reveal the complexity of foreigner interaction present in this study. The pre-sojourn friendships made were important for some participants who remained in contact with those friends throughout the sojourn, even though only one of them made friends with host-culture students in the classroom. Although the students did not make many host-culture friends during the sojourn, this did not mean there was no intercultural contact. Sojourners often worked with UK-based students in class, or UK-based professionals during internships and enjoyed contact with people from other cultures while travelling or

through their daily lives. This included friends made while travelling, contact with others at the gym, including significant contact with personal trainers, and for some, significant contact with healthcare professionals and physiotherapists. Therefore, further research should broaden its view of what intercultural contact means; simply viewing it as friendships may not be appropriate. Additionally, the importance of host-culture friendships made before the sojourn should be considered, on arrival at UK-U most participants then focused on academic achievement. This overshadowed making new friends, but pre-existing friendships endured on the whole.

The impact of adjustment to another culture and resultant changes to identity that it brings do not end with the sojourn. The time-limited nature of this study precluded studying the effects this may have when the students returned to China and the reverse culture shock that may be suffered (Presbitero, 2016). It was clear from the literature (Benson et al., 2003) that sojourning abroad yielded unanticipated consequences for how the sojourner was perceived on returning home. It would be interesting to see how relationships with their parents changed, whether they maintained the aspects of UK culture they intended to, how they were perceived and whether the changes they hoped to make in China from their experiences abroad were realised, or whether this was regarded as disruptive.

Although few courses will prepare students in the same way for their overseas sojourn, there is scope for further research to determine how students could be prepared more effectively; thereby reducing the negative effects of sojourning.

The final potential for further research lies in how the lessons learned from this study could be extended to transition to university life in general. The relevance of motivation for studying and parental influence could be important, as could the benefits of building familiarity with the incoming cohort, links with existing students and reducing the gap between school-level and university-level study to assist with student achievement and attainment.

7.4 Personal Reflections

This study yielded an important opportunity for personal reflection and consideration of how it influenced my practice. However well-intentioned our actions and decisions, we all bring our personal histories and experiences to bear when designing courses or interacting with students. Especially relevant when dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds, this study highlighted my ethnocentric perceptions of education and the danger of preconceived ideas not checked for accuracy with the students themselves. Not only was hearing the student voice essential and at the forefront of this thesis, it is also essential when designing a course. Although

course designers may not know who their students will be, they should seek access to other students from similar backgrounds to obtain helpful input.

From visiting SINO-U and other travels in China, I learned the importance of first-hand experience of the students' home-culture. However superficial that knowledge may be, experiencing the environment and cultural dynamics of their home-society is vital. It highlighted cultural differences, but also demonstrated similarities between people from different cultures, helping to reduce that feeling of 'otherness' and building empathy.

This study revealed the importance of individual personality traits and the interwoven nature of different aspects of the sojourning experience. Relevant for all students transitioning to university-life, the challenges are amplified for sojourners.

Although I can never presume to stand in the students' shoes, seeing the course through their eyes enabled me to implement many changes to the Programme for their cohort and those who followed. Therefore, this study yielded direct benefits for other students before its completion.

I was privileged to hear aspects of the sojourners' lives that lecturers do not normally get to know, their joys and triumphs and their sadness and despair at times. I understood the interviews' value for building confidence in speaking English, and being a source of help and support they could tap into that they might not otherwise access. Following Olivia's comment that all sojourners should take part in the interviews because they build confidence in English, I implemented a series of three interviews with Personal Tutors, so all students benefitted. This also provided more support for mental health that Liam felt would be useful. The ability to implement changes addressing issues participants identified, may have improved the preparation and confidence of the next cohort and contributed to the 12-student increase in 2019/20 sojourner numbers.

The opportunity to research a Programme which was an important part of my professional life inspired an even deeper love for the field. It fed the fire that was already burning to improve sojourning students' experience in particular, but also for all students transitioning to university life. I developed an enhanced appreciation for the complexity and interwoven nature of the factors affecting student transition and experience throughout their course; and the importance of the influence in their lives of their family members, cultural background and motivation for sojourning or entering higher education.

The importance of the students' parents and considering how much universities interact with them, the appropriateness of doing so, and the impact this might have on student health and

wellbeing is an interesting dynamic. It also highlights the cultural nature of issues such as data protection and how a 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not be appropriate; for example, interacting with students' parents is acceptable from my experience in China, but is not in the UK.

7.5 Final Remarks

There is a danger with studying areas in isolation – as evidenced by the interwoven aspects of this study. Although valuable sojourn preparation is built into this course, some aspects can be applied to those coming into the first year of an undergraduate course or sojourning on a top-up course to prepare them more effectively. If the students are coming together from a variety of sources, building a cohort identity may help to build the community evident in this study. This could be achieved by a residential some months prior to the course starting and/or through social media groups to bring people together.

If the prospective students are known far enough in advance, arranging a Winter or Summer Camp in the host-culture may boost familiarity with the sojourning social and academic environment to reduce the strangeness and 'shock' felt on first arrival. The participants who previously visited UK-U felt familiarity with the environment allowed them more mental space to adjust quickly, than those who had not visited previously. Either through summer or winter camps, or other methods of interaction, building relationships with host-culture students before the sojourn is also beneficial for students who may not build new relationships with host-culture students when they arrive.

It is clear the opportunity to prepare students throughout the pre-sojourn years on a programme specifically designed for this purpose, impacted positively on their adjustment to the host culture.

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Appendix A – SINO-U Questionnaire

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

Survey Questions

The survey will be conducted using Bristol Online Surveys – this is a requirement of my employer university due to the data protection measures associated with using this system.

A short introduction will be featured at the beginning of the survey – the Participant Information Sheet will also be attached to the survey containing more detailed information should the students wish to read it.

Introduction

Hello to all our Law students in [Sino-U city]!

My name is Beth Richards-Bray and I work at [Employer university name withheld]. Part of my job is to look after the [UK-U] course that you are studying. As you know, you can choose to spend your final year at the [UK-U city] Campus in the UK and some of you have said that you would like to do that.

We are interested in making sure that we can prepare students well for their year abroad and would be interested to learn about your experiences – I have chosen to focus on this for my doctorate thesis. I would be grateful if you would help me with this study by completing this short questionnaire.

You do not have to do this if you do not want to, it is your choice and this questionnaire is not part of an assessment on your course. I have attached some documents which explain this in more detail in case you want to read them. If you have any questions about this study or this questionnaire, you can email me on [researcher's UK-U email address]

If you are happy to take part, please answer this questionnaire in English.

Questions

1. I have read and understand the above information/the information provided and I consent (agree) to take part in the questionnaire survey; or I do not want to take part in this questionnaire (if the latter answer is chosen, the student is directed to a screen thanking them for their time and wishing them luck with their studies).
2. Are you male/female?
3. Type the name of your home town in China
4. What is your IELTs score?

5. In the box below, tell me which job or career you would like to have when you finish university.
6. Do you intend to work in a country outside China?
7. If the answer to the previous question is no, students will be directed to this question - Do you hope to work for a company that is involved in international business?
8. Have you chosen to study your final year in [UK-U city]?
9. If the answer to the previous question is no, students will be asked – Why did you choose to stay in China for your final year? Write your answer in English in the box below.
10. If the answer to Question 8 is 'yes' – students will be asked – Would you like to take part in my study when you are in [UK-U city]?
11. If the answer to the previous question is 'yes' – students will be asked – Type your [SINO-U] email address in the box below so that I can contact you with more information.
12. Students who answered 'yes' to question 10 will then receive this message – Thank you for completing this questionnaire. I appreciate you taking the time to help me with this study. I will be contacting you with more details about the study soon.
13. Students who answered no to 10 will be directed to a screen thanking them for their time and wishing them luck with their studies.

Appendix B – SINO-U Questionnaire Route Map
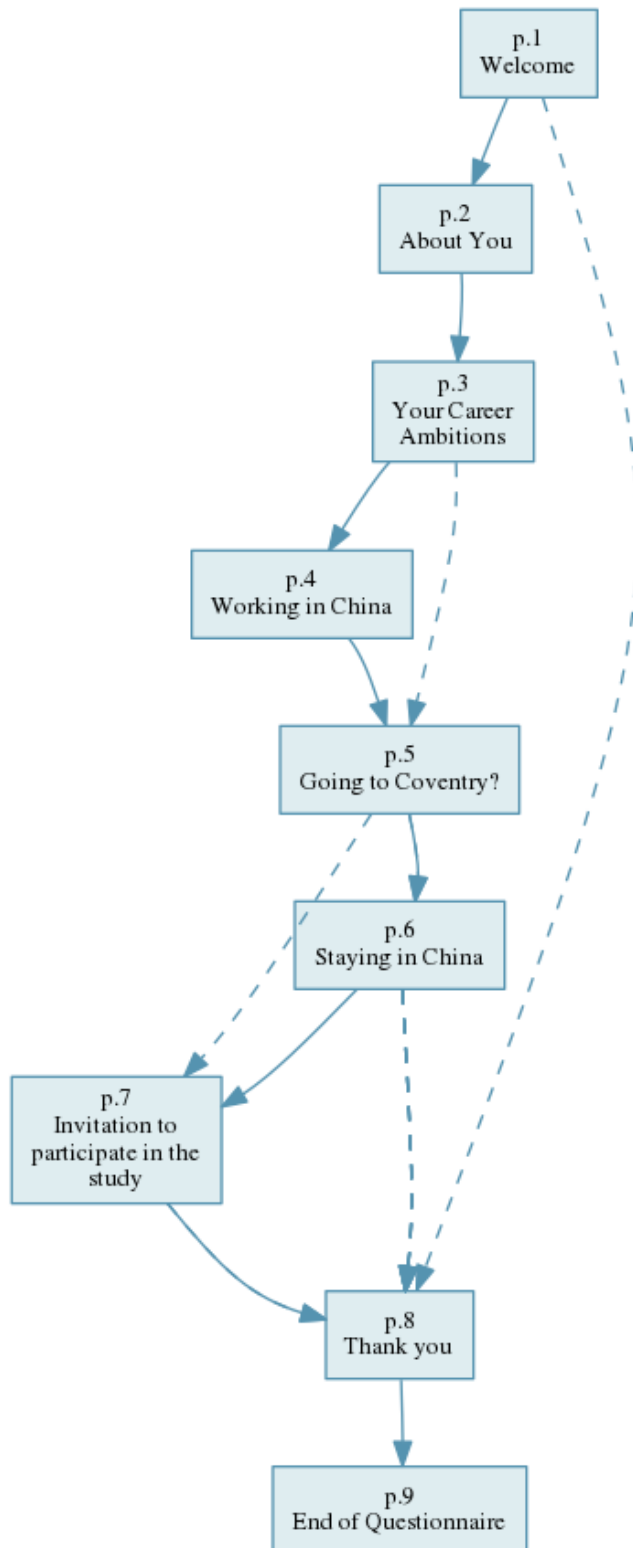
Appendix C – Notebook Inserts

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

University of Reading

Student:	Beth Richards-Bray
Email:	fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor:	Dr. Daguo Li
Email:	d.li@reading.ac.uk

About this notebook

Thank you for coming along to the first interview, it was lovely to talk to you about your first few days in England. We will be meeting again at the end of January or beginning of February 2018, I will contact you in the next couple of weeks to make appointments for the second interview.

It is not always easy to remember everything that you would like to talk about, especially when those things happened a few weeks ago. That is why this notebook has been given to you. It will give you a place where you can write things that you would like to remember for the next interview.

What should I write in the notebook

- The things that you notice are different about living or studying in the UK, compared to your life in China

- Anything that you noticed was exciting about studying or living in the UK

- Those things that you found difficult about living or studying in the UK

- Advice that you would give to other Chinese students who are thinking about coming to the UK for a year.

Each time you write about something in the notebook, make sure that you write the date that the event happened.

Do I have to write in the notebook every day?

No, you do not have to write in the notebook every day. You only need to write when something happens that you think you might like to talk about at our next meeting.

How much should I write?

When you write about something, it does not have to be very long. You only need to write enough for you to remember what the event was and how you felt about it at the time.

You can write as much or as little as you like. This is not meant to be a lot of work for you – so it is nothing to worry about. It is there to help you with the things that you would like to talk about when we meet.

I am looking forward to seeing you again in January. If you need to see me before then, would like to talk to me, or ask any questions, you can email me at any time on the email address at the top of this page, on my [UK-U] email address [email address withheld] or call at my office – [office location withheld].

University of Reading

Student:	Beth Richards-Bray
Email:	fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor:	Dr. Daguo Li
Email:	d.li@reading.ac.uk

Taking Photographs/Videos for this study

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

As you know, during your year in England, you will take part in three interviews with me (Beth Richards-Bray). To help us when we sit down to talk in the interviews, you may wish to have some photographs or short videos that you have taken on your mobile phone giving examples of those things in life that you find interesting or different about living and studying in China and in England.

It would help if you could bring some photos or videos with you from China to show what your life is like there. These could be a photo of your classrooms at the University or the room that you live in at University. If you are not at the University any more, these could be photos of the town where you live or your home. You might like to take photos of typical meals that you eat or food/drink that you like.

When taking photos, please be careful to make sure that you do not put yourself in a dangerous situation and that you do not take photographs of other people without asking their permission first. If taking photos of, or in, shops or restaurants, you may need permission of the owner to do that. If taking photos in your University, do not do so when a class is in progress – you must not disturb classes.

If you have any questions or you would like more information, you can contact me on the email address at the top of this page or at [UK-U email address]

Appendix D – Interview Guides

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

University of Reading

Student: Beth Richards-Bray
Email: fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr. Daguo Li
Email: d.li@reading.ac.uk

Questions/Areas to be covered during Semi-Structured Interviews. The following are not prescriptive but will give guidelines for areas of discussion.

Interview 1

Summary:

General interest in the student's experiences on arrival in the UK. Specifically, looking at the similarities and differences they have noted. Looking in particular at challenges and how well-prepared they feel and the level of support they perceive to be available. Examining the students' expectations for the year abroad.

Areas of Interest:

1. Focus on your experiences since arriving in the UK, tell me your thoughts on what you have found. Starting with the photographs/pictures taken – tell me about those.

2. Classroom:

   a. What have you noticed about classrooms and your experience in classes?
   b. Are there any changes in class delivery between Chinese and English universities?

3. Daily life:

   a. What have you noticed about daily life in the UK?
   b. Specifically – shopping?
   c. Eating?
   d. Accommodation?

4. Preparedness:

   a. How well do you think your experiences at [SINO-U] prepared you for your year abroad?
   b. What support would you like to have?

5. Expectations for the year ahead – exploring what the students expect from the year in the UK.

6. Any other comments.

Interview 2

Summary:

Focus on the experience in semester 1 – experiences so far. Relating this to experiences noted in interview 1; expectations and nothing how this had developed.

Areas of Interest:

1. Photographs/videos

University of
Reading

Student: Beth Richards-Bray
Email: fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr. Daguo Li
Email: d.li@reading.ac.uk

   a. If you brought videos or photographs with you – tell me what they mean to you.
2. Diary

   a. Do you have any diary entries that you would like to share with me?

3. Life in the UK.
   a. Did you bring any photographs or video
   b. Reflecting on the experiences noted in interview 1 – how have things developed since you first arrived?
   c. What are the challenges that you identified? Did you overcome them? If so, how did you overcome these?
   d. Have you noticed any new challenges? What are they? How will you try to overcome them?
   e. How do you feel about the support you received? What other support would you like?

4. Life in the classroom
   a. Focus on the same areas as above

5. Results

   a. Tell me about your results from semester 1 – how do you feel about those.

6. Expectations

   a. Were your expectations for semester 1 met?
   b. What are your expectations for semester 2?

7. Any other comments?

Interview 3

Summary:

   Final interview in the series to reflect on the UK experience. Noting the transition from arrival in the UK to this interview.

Areas of Interest:

1. Photographs/videos

   a. If you brought videos or photographs with you – tell me what they mean to you.

2. Diary:

   a. Do you have any diary entries that you would like to share with me?

3. Events since last meeting:

   a. What would you like to tell me about your experiences during semester 2?

Student: Beth Richards-Bray
Email: fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr. Daguo Li
Email: d.li@reading.ac.uk

4. Expectations/Preparation:

   a. Were your expectations for the year abroad met?
   b. How well did your 3 years at [SINO-U] prepare you for your year in [UK-U city]?
   c. Is there anything that could have been done to prepare you better?

5. Strategies to deal with challenges;

   a. What strategies did you develop to help you to adjust to life in the UK and a UK university?
   b. What advice would you give to others thinking of coming to the UK for a year abroad?
   c. Did you experience any challenges that you did not expect to? What were they?

6. Career Goals

   a. Have your career goals changed after coming to the UK?

7. Any other comments.

Appendix E – Interview Prompt Cards

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

Have you travelled outside China before?

Before travelling to [UK-U], I would have liked more information about…

Did you take another IELTs test after May 2017? If so, what was your score?

How different was life in your home town from life in [SINO-U City]?

Think about when you moved to [Sino-U]…were you nervous about moving?

Did you feel the same or different about moving to [UK-U]?

Were you more worried? Less worried? Or about the same? Why?

How much contact do you expect to have with students who are not Chinese?

Did you have as much contact with students from other countries as you wish?

Which nationalities did you have most contact with? Other international or English students?

Would you describe any of the non-Chinese students as good friends or just people that you talk to?

Are you still in contact with any [UK-U] students that you met when they visited [SINO-U]?

Are you still in contact with any students that you met when you came to the [UK-U] Summer Camp?

Are you still in contact with the Summer School students now?

Do you think you will be treated differently because you are from China?

Let's talk about your photographs or videos that you took in China...

My first thoughts on arriving in the UK are...

My feelings about being in classes in [UK-U] are...

What have you noticed about daily life in England? E.g. shopping, eating, accommodation?

How well do you feel that your experiences at [SINO-U] prepared you for your year in [UK-U]?

My expectations for the year at [UK-U] are that....

Things that I would like to tell you about are.....

Let's talk about the things you wrote in your diary...

How did you feel that your first semester went?

Thinking about how you felt when you first arrived in [UK-U]—how do you feel now?

Let's talk about your photographs or videos you took since we last met...

Living in England...my biggest challenges were.....

How did you try to overcome these challenges?

Have you noticed new challenges? What are they? How will you overcome them?

How do you feel about the support that you received? What other support would you like?

Tell me about your results from semester 1...How do you feel about those?

Were your expectations from semester 1 met?

What are your expectations for semester 2?

Other things that I would like to tell you about are....

Tell me about the photographs/videos you took since we last met

Let's talk about the diary entries that you made since our last meeting...

Were your expectations for the year met?

How well did your 3 years at [SINO-U] prepare you for your year in [UK-U]?

What strategies did you develop to help you adjust to life in England and an English university?

What advice would you give to other students thinking of coming to England for a year?

Did you experience any challenges that you did not expect? What were they?

Tell me about your career goals. Have they changed since you came to England?

Thank you

Other things that I would like to tell you about are....

Appendix F – Coding Table

Axial Code	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Diaries
Biographical	Hometown			
	Family/Parents	Parents - independence	Parents – changing relationship	Parents
	Friends/Social – China & UK		Social – UK	Social/Friends
	Prior Travel			
	Summer School		Summer School – friendships	
	Personality			Personality
TNE/I@H & Transitions	Home to SINO-U			
	Culture gap – China			
	SINO-U to UK-U			
	Preparation		Preparation	Preparation
Academic Culture/ Adjustment	Academic Culture	Semester 1 v Semester 2		Semester 2
	Difference to SINO-U	Library	Exams	Exams
	In-class experience	Practical Legal Skills	Coursework	
	Foreigner Interaction	Grades	Grades	
	Work Culture	Internship	Seminars	Internship
		Different Legal Systems	Different Legal Systems	
Social Adjustment	Intercultural Competence			
	Homesickness/ Loneliness Y/N	Homesickness/ Loneliness Y/N	Homesickness/ Loneliness Y/N	Homesickness/ Loneliness Y/N
	Social Culture UK	Coping Strategies	Coping Strategies	
	UK Friends	UK Friends		
	Recycling	Relationships		
	Shopping	Online shopping		
	Banking	Banking		
	Cinema	Food & Cafes		
	Mailing	Mailing		

Category				
	Religion	Bars		
	Architecture	Healthcare		
	Accommodation	China v UK Difference		
	Politeness	UK attitude to disability		
	Multicultural UK			
	Weather	Weather		
	Safety & crime			
	Learning to cook			
	Foreigner Interaction	Foreigner Interaction		
	Culture Shock			
Sojourn experience	Motivation (Sojourn)	Reflections so far	Loss/Sadness (sojourn end)	
	Goals/Expectations		Goals/Expectations	Goals
	Travel Plans	Travel	Travel	Travel
	Language Proficiency	Group Identity	Language Proficiency	Language Proficiency
		High Points	High Points	High Points
		Low Points	Low Points	Low Points
		Support available		
		Challenges		
Self-Development		Independence	Independence	Independence
		Resilience	Resilience	Resilience
		Taking responsibility for oneself	Character Building	
		Problem-solving	Freedom	
		Maturity	Reflections (on own purpose)	
			Time Management	
			Cooking	
			Cultural identity change	

Appendix G – University of Reading Ethics Application

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one:

Staff project: _____   PhD _____   EdD __X__

Name of applicant (s): Julie Elizabeth (Beth) Richards-Bray

Title of project: Can pre-departure activities impact positively on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students?

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr. Daguo Li and Dr. Alan Floyd

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO	
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants ~~and/or their parents/carers~~ that:			
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X		
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X		
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X		
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X		
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X		
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	X		
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results ~~and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this~~	X		
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email. If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	X		
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	N/A	N/A	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: "This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	X		
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X		
Please answer the following questions			
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	X		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X	
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	X		
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	X		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			X

8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?			X
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			X
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	X		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			X
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?	X		
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?	X		
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		X	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			X
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		X	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes". My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			X
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			X

Please complete either Section A or Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the "accepted custom and practice of teaching" but I consider that this project has no significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	X
Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc. **It is anticipated that this study will involve between 6 and 10 students, depending on the number of relevant characteristics displayed by those answering the questionnaire.**	

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:
  1. title of project
  2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
  3. brief description of methods and measurements
  4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
  5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
  6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.
  7. estimated start date and duration of project
 	
Title: Can pre-departure activities impact positively on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students?
 	
Project Purpose and Academic Rationale: To evaluate whether pre-departure activities impact positively on host-culture adjustment for students choosing to study in the UK for one year, and how further improvements to be made.	

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[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

Methods and Measurements: A brief questionnaire and 3 interviews. Ethnographic case study featuring a constructivist interpretive approach when analysing interview data and some data from the questionnaire. Respondents will also be supplied with a diary in which they can record notable events and may take photographs or record short videos in accordance with the advice given.

Participants: Approximately 6 -10 students - will be selected on the basis of gender; English language capability; location of home town in China; career aspirations and willingness to participate.

Consent and Participation Information -see attached sheets. Consent will also be obtained via questionnaire.

Ethical considerations -Support for students experiencing difficulties; consent from all universities involved; participant confidentiality and anonymity; data protection; power relationship issues considered but not thought to pose significant issues as I will not be teaching/assessing the students; consent for audio recordings to be made; interviews to be conducted on university premises.

Estimated start date and duration of project: Start - January 2017; data collection - expected to start May 2017. End - approximately end of January 2020.

B: I consider that this project may have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.
1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: _____ Print Name J. E. Richards-Bray Date 10th February 2017 (amended 10/3/17)

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: .... Print Name...Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen. Date...25/04/2017....

Appendix H – Participant Information Sheet

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

University of Reading

Student: Beth Richards-Bray
Email: fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr. Daguo Li
Email: d.li@reading.ac.uk

<u>Participant information sheet</u>

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about international students studying in the UK.

What is the study?

The study is part of my thesis on a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D) course that I am taking at the Institute of Education, University of Reading. It aims to examine the experiences of international undergraduate students who choose to study for one year in the UK, and to look at how tutors can prepare their students better for their study abroad. As part of this study, I will be interested in learning about your experiences; how well-prepared you were, and how you adjusted to life in the UK.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in this study because you are studying on a course taught by a UK university in China, and have the choice to study for one year in the UK. Between 6 and 10 people will be asked to take part in the study and they will be chosen from the students on your course who decide to spend a year in the UK and are happy to take part. Even if you do not take part in the study, I will still be interested to hear about your experiences of your year abroad.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely your choice whether you take part. This study is separate from your degree studies and nothing that you say or do as part of this study will affect your grades on your degree course.

What happens if I change my mind?

If you choose to take part in the study, you may also withdraw at any time before the second interviews begin on January 29th, 2018, withdrawing would not affect you or your studies in any way. To withdraw all you would need to do is to contact the researcher using the email address at the top of this page.

What will happen if I take part?

The study will begin with a short questionnaire while you are still studying in China. This would take you about 10 minutes to complete. During your year in the UK, there will be 3 interviews lasting about 40 minutes each time. One would be held soon after your arrival; the second interview would take place in January 2018 and the final interview would take place just before you return to China at the end of your year in the UK. During these interviews, you will talk with the researcher about your experience as an international student. With your permission, the interviews will be recorded and a written record of the interview will be made. You may also be asked to take some photographs of your daily life if it would make it easier for you to explain things; and you will be given a notebook so that you can write down things you would like to talk about at the interviews.

Student:	Beth Richards-Bray
Email:	fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor:	Dr. Daguo Li
Email:	d.li@reading.ac.uk

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and her supervisor. You will not be identified in the final study report although some of your responses will be used in a way that does not personally identify you. This may include using some quotations from our interviews or from your diaries or photographs (as long as they do not include people). Information will not be shared with others.

The results of this study will be used within my thesis for my Doctorate in Education and may form part of external research publications in the future. A copy of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting me or my supervisor on the email addresses at the top of this page. It is hoped that the study will help us to understand your experiences as international students and how to prepare students on your course for the year in England; as well as helping other international students at this, and other universities.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the student researcher, Beth Richards-Bray, and the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Li, will have access to the records. In line with the University of Reading's policy on the management of research data, anonymised data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use.

The data will be presented in my study. We do hope that you will agree to take part in the study. You can let me know whether you would like to take part by answering the relevant question on the electronic questionnaire.

This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee; the Ethical Approval process at [UK-U] and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The [SINO-U] has also given permission for me to conduct this study. The University of Reading has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I want more information or if something goes wrong?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this research or would like more information, please contact Beth Richards-Bray on either the email address at the top of this page, or on [UK-U email address]. In the unlikely case of concern or complain you can contact my Supervisor, Dr. Daguo Li at the University of Reading on the email address at the top of this page.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing about your year in the UK if you choose to take part.

Beth Richards-Bray

Appendix I – Supplementary Information Sheet

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

University of Reading

Student: Beth Richards-Bray
Email: fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr. Daguo Li
Email: d.li@reading.ac.uk

<u>Photographs/Videos</u>

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

As you know, during your year in England, you will take part in three interviews with me (Beth Richards-Bray). To help us when we sit down to talk in the interviews, you may wish to have some photographs or short videos that you have taken on your mobile phone giving examples of those things in life that you find interesting or different about living and studying in China and in England.

It would help if you could bring some photos or videos with you from China to show what your life is like there. These could be a photo of your classrooms at the University or the room that you live in at University. If you are not at the University any more, these could be photos of the town where you live or your home. You might like to take photos of typical meals that you eat or food/drink that you like.

When taking photos, please be careful to make sure that you do not put yourself in a dangerous situation and that you do not take photographs of other people without asking their permission first. If taking photos of, or in, shops or restaurants, you may need permission of the owner to do that. If taking photos in your University, do not do so when a class is in progress – you must not disturb classes.

If you have any questions or you would like more information, you can contact me on the email address at the top of this page or at [UK-U email address]

Appendix J – Participant Consent Form

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

Student:	Beth Richards-Bray
Email:	fj857247@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Supervisor:	Dr. Daguo Li
Email:	d.li@reading.ac.uk

<u>Participant Consent Form</u>

Please tick the boxes below as appropriate:

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and understand what it says. ☐

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what you want me to do. All my questions
have been answered. I agree to take part in this project. ☐

I understand how the diary that I write and photographs/videos that I may take will be used in this
study. ☐

I understand that it is my choice to help with this project and that I can stop at any time before the
second interviews begin on January 29th, 2018, without giving a reason or without it affecting me
or my course. ☐

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the Information Sheet. ☐

I am willing to take part in an interview where Beth Richards-Bray will take notes ☐
I am willing to take part in an interview which will be recorded. ☐

I give my consent for photographs (which do not include people), my questionnaire and interview
answers to be used in this research in a way that will not identify me (delete any that do not
apply). ☐

Name:

Signed:

Appendix K – Risk Assessment

NB – the text has been amended to preserve anonymity.

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014

Select one:

Staff project: ☐   PGR project: X   MA/UG project: ☐

Name of applicant (s): **Julie Elizabeth Richards-Bray (Beth)**

Title of project: **Can pre-departure activities impact positively on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students?**

Name of supervisor (for student projects): **Drs Daguo Li & Alan Floyd**

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	**Interviews with individuals (conducted in the UK in a safe campus environment at [UK-U]). Paper/Pen/Digital Audio Recorders will be used (which may run from battery or be attached to the mains).**

Where will data be collected?	**On my employer's university premises in the UK (interviews) and possibly in China (completion of online questionnaire) as part of an overseas working trip. Such trips must go through a risk assessment process prior to authorisation being given.**

Significant hazards:	**None identified. My employer university and our employer university in China employ safe working practices. The hotel in China is part of the partner university and close to the main gate of the university.** **There are no specific hazards presented by travelling to [SINO-U city] – other than the general background information which applies to travelling in China. I am aware of the need to carry my passport at all times; have addresses of locations that I need to travel to printed in Chinese; and of the climate in [SINO-U city], the risk of air pollution is not as great as in cities such as Beijing or Shanghai. I keep abreast of FCO recommendations and have these alerts sent directly to me by email. I also check the Red24 website before making travel arrangements.** **If mains power is required for the audio recording, I will ensure there are no trailing wires which may present a hazard to anybody present in the room. If students wish to present photographs as part of their interviews/focus groups, they will be counselled to only take photographs as part of their daily activities and not to put themselves in any dangerous or risky situations when they do so.**

Who might be exposed to hazards?	**N/A**

Existing control measures:	**All premises which will be used are part of either my employer's or our Chinese partner's university.** **[SINO-U] provides a car to collect from, and deliver to, the airport complete with an English-speaking guide.** **No transport is needed to the campus as the University's hotel is next to the campus gate. If a city centre hotel is provided, car transportation would be arranged.** **The contact details for [SINO-U] (the Chinese partner university) are:** ■■■■■■■■■ **Tel: ■■■■■■■ is the extension for the [UK-U] staff at [SINO-U].**

	Keeping in touch with [UK-U] during a stay in [SINO-U] is achieved by the following means:
	-**Daily work with the 3 permanently [SINO-U]-based [UK-U] staff –** ███████, ███████ **and** ███████████;
	-**My [UK-U] mobile (which can be used in China)**
	-**Access to the [UK-U] network via VPN;**
	-**Facetime via University supplied iPad.**
	-**Direct contact with [UK-U]'s [Faculty] Internationalisation Office and the Chinese Partnership Manager in the APU for any travel issues which need to be resolved.**
	If a face-to-face introduction to the questionnaire is conducted in China, this will be done during a whole-group session in a [SINO-U] lecture theatre. If any individual clarification is needed on a one-to-one basis, these meetings will be conducted in [UK-U]'s conference room at [SINO-U] in the [UK-U] teaching area. A visit may not be conducted if the introduction to the questionnaire is delivered online via our [UK-U] at [SINO-U] Moodle. The students are familiar with blended-learning and online module evaluation questionnaires so this is an option; if that choice is used, there will be an opportunity for the students to ask questions about the survey through Moodle online chat.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes No ☐	

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have read the Health and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.
I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed: *J.E.Richards-Bray*   Print Name **J. E. Richards-Bray**   Date 1**0th February 2017**

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) **OR** BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: ……………………………   Print Name………………………   Date…….

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Guidance notes for the completion of the risk assessment form

Significant hazards:
- Only list those that you could reasonably expect to cause significant injuries or affect several people
- Will the work require the use of machines and tools? How could you or anyone else be injured? Will injury be significant?
- Will the research take place in a high-risk country?
- Will the work require the use of chemicals? Check safety data sheets for harmful effects and any exposure limits?
- Will the work produce any fumes, vapours, dust or particles? Can they cause significant harm?
- Are there any significant hazards due to where the work is to be done, such as confined space, at height, poor lighting, high/low temperature?

Who might be exposed?
- Remember to include yourself, your supervisor, your participants, others working in or passing through the work area.
- Those more vulnerable or less experiences should be highlighted as they will be more at risk, such as children, people unfamiliar with the work area, disabled or with medical conditions e.g. asthma.

Existing control measures:
- List the control measures in place for each of the significant hazards, such as machine guards, ventilation system, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), generic safety method statement/procedure.
- Existing safety measures and procedures in place in the establishment
- Remember appropriate training is a control measure and should be listed.
- List any Permits to Work which may be in force.

Are risks adequately controlled?
- With all the existing control measures in place, do any of the significant hazards still have a potential to cause significant harm.
- Use your judgement as to how the work is to be done, by whom and where.

Additional controls:
- List the additional control measures, for each of the significant hazards, which are required to reduce the risk to the lowest so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Additional measures may include such things as: increased ventilation, Permit to Work, confined space entry permit, barriers/fencing, fall arrest equipment, etc.
- PPE should only be used as a last resort, if all else fails.

Appendix L – Statement of Original Authorship

Institute of Education

University of Reading

Statement of Original Authorship

Student ID: 23857247

Assignment Title: What impact does pre-sojourn preparation have on host-culture adjustment for sojourning students? A case-study of a SINO-UK Joint Programme

Date of Submission: 14th January 2020

- Students who feel they need assistance in writing appropriate English should, in the first instance, seek guidance from their programme director, who should refer the student to the University's Study Advisors.
- Students who use software for assistance with proof-reading or with editing their work, or who seek assistance with proof-reading or with editing from third parties, should be alert to the major risks associated with such intervention, including the distortion of intended meaning and the failure to use technical terms appropriately.
- Students are warned that any use of third part proof-reading or editing services must not compromise their authorship of the work submitted and, in particular that the substance of work must remain the student's own. Students are also warned that they will be held responsible for work which they submit, and that the use of third party services will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies in the work.
- The use of any third party proof-reading or editing must be acknowledged in a written statement accompanying the work on submission.

☐ I confirm that I have agreed with my tutor that this assignment falls within the normal custom and practice of teaching and my methods of investigation have been agreed in advance with my tutor.
　　　　　OR

✔ I confirm that I have agreed with my tutor that this assignment falls outside the normal custom and practice of teaching and I have obtained ethical approval (see attached form).
　　　　　OR

☐ I confirm that this work is library based and does not include the collection and reporting of data collected from human participants.

✔ I agree to an anonymous copy of my assignment being shared with future students as an exemplar.

I certify that this is my own work and that the use of material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged in the text. I understand that the normal consequence of cheating in any element of an examination, if proven and in the absence of mitigating circumstances, is that the relevant Faculty Examiners' Meeting will be directed to fail the candidate in the Examination as a whole.

Number of words: 620572　　　　　　　**I have not been assisted by a proof reader .**

Signed:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Date: 14th January 2020**