WALKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH TWO CULTURES:

NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF LONG-TERM, BICULTURAL ASIAN IMMIGRANT

ADULTS

by

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Abstract

Research literature on cultural adjustment has generally shown that immigrants who integrated both home and host cultures have the most favourable outcomes relative to those who have avoided interacting with either or both of the cultures. Yet, cultural integration may occur in many different ways, and the literature is scant in examining how individuals integrate the two cultures over time. This study focuses on long-term immigrants (five males and one female; total n=6) from East and Southeast Asian countries, who transitioned to Canada as adults and subsequently integrated their heritage and receiving culture over the course of 10 years or longer. The research question explored for this research was: how do long-term, bicultural immigrants narrate the process of integrating the two cultures (i.e., their culture of origin and the receiving culture)? This qualitative research aimed to address the gap in the literature using narrative inquiry and thematic content analysis to study how individuals personally made sense of living in and integrating the two cultures. The following five themes emerged: (a) building cultural knowledge, (b) distance from heritage culture and lifestyle, (c) incorporating multiple cultures into own world, (d) application of cultural competency, and (e) developing a personal balance of the cultures. The research results revealed the complexity of achieving and maintaining a balanced cultural integration, and seemed to suggest important directions for future cross-cultural research. Limitations of the current study as well as theoretical, clinical, and methodological implications were discussed.

Preface

This is an original unpublished intellectual work by the author. This research was approved by the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board on October 27, 2014. The certificate number of the Ethics Certificate was H14-02088.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to recent figures on immigration in Canada and some research on immigration and well-being, and the mediating role of acculturation on these factors. In particular, the healthy immigrant effect and the immigrant paradox are discussed in describing the relationship between immigration and well-being. The introduction is followed by a description of the purpose of the study and the research question.

Background

According to Statistics Canada (2011), the annual number of immigrants admitted in the last 40 years has more than doubled from less than 140,000 in the 1970's to more than 280,000 in 2010. This reflects the changes in the Immigration Act in 1976 (Boyd & Thomas, 2002). Particularly notable is the recent increase in intake of immigrants from Asia and Africa, and the decrease in immigrants from Europe and the US. The surge in immigrant population has stirred interest among scholars in examining how cultural transitions affect people.

There are mixed findings among studies that examine long-term health of those who transition to a new country. Several studies in the immigration literature have found that those who migrate to Canada as adults report to be physically and mentally healthier than the Canadian-born population (Ali, McDermott, & Gravel, 2004; Gee, Kobayashi, & Prus, 2004; Wu & Schimmele, 2005; Xu & McDonald, 2010). The effect attenuates with the length of time that immigrants spend in Canada, and eventually the reported health level becomes on par with the Canadian-born population, with the greatest health advantage seen in most recently arrived individuals (Ali et al., 2004; Wu & Schimmele, 2005). Similarly, the probability of immigrants reporting mental health concerns increases with their age (Chen, 2010; Malenfant, 2004).

Previous studies attribute the diminishing healthy immigrant effect to the initial cultural differences in the understanding of mental health and well-being (Akutsu & Chu, 2006) and subsequent adaptations to the Canadian culture (Ali et al., 2004; Fang, 2010; Flores, 2005; Simich, 2010). Researchers have studied a number of mostly behaviour- or practice-based cultural adaptations and its effect on immigrant health in the long-run, such as the acquirement of the North American concept of physical and mental health and well-being (Ali et al., 2004; Simich, 2010), positive and/or negative lifestyle adjustments (Flores, 2005; Jang & Chiriboga, 2011), acculturative stress (Berry, 2009), and experiences of being subject to stereotypes and discrimination (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011).

Outcomes of the studies described in the previous paragraph implicate that in the long-term, immigrants who have acculturated to Canada report lower levels of health. In fact, in some cases, lower acculturation to the North American culture has been found to be associated with better health outcomes (Flores, 2005). However, a different picture emerges when the focus is shifted from the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect and the role of acculturation in it, to various acculturative orientations and its effect on psychological outcomes. In other words, individuals may differ in their degree of interaction towards their home culture and the culture they currently live, and these preferences may impact their eventual physical and psychological health. Berry's model on acculturation describes the extent to which individuals maintain their original cultural identity and seek immersion with the new culture (Berry, 2009). Many studies in the past have confirmed that those who integrate both cultures, in fact, report better psychological outcomes, relative to those who choose one or neither of the cultures (e.g. Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012; Bhui et al., 2004; Chae & Foley, 2010; Khanlou, 2010). To the best of

the author's knowledge, there have been no studies examining the healthy immigrant effect that accounts for various acculturative orientations.

The discrepancy in previous research findings suggest that a more complex and nuanced understanding of acculturation itself is first necessary in order to better understand its relationship with mental and physical health. Berry (2009) stated that acculturation in the field of psychology may be viewed from the cultural/group level and a psychological/individual level. Evidence from group-scale studies such as the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect confirms the association between acculturation and reported health. As stated in the previous paragraph, what appears to be less studied is the relationship between acculturation and health in the psychological/individual level.

The association between acculturation and health and well-being warrants investigation for every long-term immigrant group, but particularly for Asian immigrants who have been reported to seek less help from professional mental health services relative to the white, Canadian-born and immigrant groups (Chen, 2010; Tiwari & Wang, 2008). According to Cheryan and Monin (2005) and Gupta, Szymanski, and Leong (2011), Asian immigrants in North America in particular experience what is called the Model Minority stereotype, a positive stereotype of being hard working, intelligent, self-disciplined, well-adjusted, and having no problems in their new environment. Endorsement of the Model Minority stereotype has been discussed as one of the reasons that Asians ignore or minimize their own psychological difficulties and hold negative attitudes towards seeking mental health help (Gupta et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, some researchers suggest negative consequences of endorsing the Model Minority stereotype. Gupta et al. (2011) confirmed that Asian Americans who endorse positive stereotypes indeed were more likely to report somatic symptoms and psychological distress, and

were less likely to show positive attitudes towards seeking help from mental health professionals. The expectation, perception, and reaction to these stereotypes are associated with distress (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2008). A study by Wei et al. (2007) on Chinese international students confirmed that acculturative stress, maladaptive perfectionism, and length of time in the United States predicted depression. Furthermore, discrimination and neighbourhood quality have been found to negatively affect immigrant families' help-seeking behaviour (Beiser et al., 2011; Fang, 2010; Ng & Omariba, 2010). These findings suggest complex relations among cultural group membership, stereotype, discrimination, and acculturation on mental health and help-seeking behaviour, particularly for those in the Asian ethnic group. Understanding cultural integration may help understand the association between acculturation and mental health for this group.

For the purposes of this study, acculturation was defined at the individual level as the degree to which cultural ideals and practices of the receiving culture are adopted and that of the heritage culture is retained (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Schwartz et al. (2006) defined cultural identity as the synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions that acts as a guide for self-regulation. Cultural identity, which underlies the process of acculturation, is an individual's sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group and may broaden to include different cultural groups through the process of acculturation (Schwartz et al., 2006).

This study examined how bicultural Asian immigrants integrated their two cultures once they transitioned and settled in Canada. The research question for this paper was: how do long-term, bicultural immigrants narrate the process of integrating two cultures? The aim of this thesis was to fill some gaps in the literature by focusing on long-term immigrants' narrative accounts on integrating two cultures over the course of their lives and thus deepen our understanding of the complexity and process of bicultural identification. Examining how bicultural individuals have

learned to integrate two cultures over time may provide (a) implications towards adaptive

components of cultural integration, and (b) indications on how to better assist individuals who

are settling into or have settled into a Canada.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I first situate my experience in the topic of interest, and then describe the current relevant literature. My aim is to describe how my experiences have shaped my initial topic of interest as well as my focus for this research topic. Specifically, I outline how my multicultural background has led me to be curious of others' experiences of being bicultural or multicultural. Then, I examine the literature on what is known about the healthy immigrant effect and the role of acculturation. I further examine current understandings of acculturation and cultural identity, and then attempt to elucidate the limitations of the current understandings. I subsequently shift the focus to my research topic and discuss the subpopulation immigrants who have transitioned in Canada and have lived in the country for over a decade.

Positioning the Self

My curiosity to study and learn more about cross-cultural psychology heightened during my undergraduate years. I had always been fascinated by learning about various cultures as I have experiences moving to different countries with my family as a young child. I had opportunities to participate in research studies during my undergraduate years like most other students in psychology, and signed up for numerous studies specifically related to cultural psychology. While I found it intriguing to be part of current studies on cross-cultural psychology, I sometimes felt that the scales being used did not adequately differentiate individuals in the "bicultural" group. It occurred to me that many studies were not distinguishing individuals with diverse cultural experiences, for example differences between intercultural marriages, individuals who travel to different countries throughout their lives, and families who have transitioned to a different country and have re-established their lives. The items asked in many studies seemed too superficial, such as whether I followed the media from my country of origin

as well as in the current country. I further noticed how many of the items tapped into behavioural aspects of culture, which I felt was potentially misleading. For example, I had very limited contact with my country of origin, and based on my responses to the items, I was keenly aware that on paper, I seemed to be portrayed as an individual very much out of touch with my own cultural roots. It made me question whether, based on my responses, I would be viewed as an individual assimilated into the Canadian culture. I also became curious to know others' perceptions of what it means to be "bicultural." These thoughts propelled my interest in studying further about cultural identity.

Literature Review on Immigration and Acculturation

Healthy Immigrant Effect

The healthy immigrant effect has been discussed increasingly in Canada in the last decade. It is described as the tendency for immigrants to self-report better health compared to the Canadian-born population (Ng & LHAD, 2011). This phenomenon has been observed in self-reported levels of both physical and mental health (Ali et al., 2004; Ng & LHAD, 2011; Wu & Schimmele, 2005). Mental health is a term used to describe either a level of cognitive or emotional assessment of well-being or the absence of a mental disorder (Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, 2008).

Interestingly, the healthy immigrant effect has been observed to attenuate with the length of time immigrants spend in Canada, even after adjusting for age, gender, marital status, income, and education (Ali et al., 2004; Ng &LHAD, 2011; Wu & Schimmele, 2005; Xu & McDonald, 2010; Gushulak et al., 2010). These research results indicated that length of time since transition and the changes that occur after the transition may play a role in the decline of the healthy immigrant effect.

Factors affecting mental health post-immigration may be studied by examining individuals themselves, their interactions with the surrounding environment, and the influences that larger systems have, such as availabilities of individual services, policies regarding healthcare access, and experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Khanlou, 2010). At the individual level, factors such as being older at the time of immigration (Gee et al., 2004; Khanlou, 2010), being female (Kobayashi & Prus, 2012; Samuel, 2009), and being a visible minority (Kobayashi & Prus, 2012; Ng & LHAD, 2011), among others, have been confirmed to be associated with poorer self-reported mental health. There is further evidence that changes in family dynamics (Samuel, 2009), lack of social networks (Dow, 2011; Khanlou, 2010; Kwag, Jang, & Chiriboga, 2012) and culturally appropriate healthcare services (Flores 2010; Khanlou, 2010) negatively influence mental health.

Many studies have attributed acculturation to the merging of immigrant individuals' mental health to that of the Canadian population (Flores, 2005). Some researchers have suggested that the attenuation may be a result of immigrants adopting more Westernized health beliefs and behaviours, both in positive (Gushulak, Pottie, Roberts, Torres, & DesMeules, 2011; Jang & Chiriboga, 2011) and maladaptive behaviours (Ali et al., 2004; Flores, 2005). Other studies have found correlations between acculturative stress and anxiety and/or depression (e.g., Berry, 2009; Hernandez, 2009; Jibeen & Khalid, 2010; Samuel, 2009; Wei et al., 2007). While different hypotheses have been suggested, what is apparent is that during the time immigrants transition to a new country and go through the process of acculturation, their mental health status also begins to converge with that of the Canadian-born population.

One limitation for all of the above mentioned researches is that they use cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data, and the possibility of a cohort effect have often been acknowledged

(Tiwari & Wang, 2008; Wu & Schimmele, 2005). For example, Gee et al. (2004) concluded that when adult immigrants of 45-64 years of age are separated into those who have immigrated less than 10 years ago to those who immigrated 10 or more years ago, the latter resembled health statuses similar to the Canadian-born population. At the same time, the authors also acknowledged as a limitation that the data of the long-term immigrants may be more biased towards immigrants with European backgrounds, and that today's immigrants, which is largely made up of non-European backgrounds, may be healthier.

It is clear from these studies that understanding the attrition of the healthy immigrant effect is complex, and there are methodological limitations in making causational claims. The role of acculturation on the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect is difficult to determine, particularly because the process of acculturation is multidimensional and yet to be fully understood. These studies have elucidated the complexity of acculturation and have suggested that an examination of acculturation itself may be warranted before endeavoring to understand its impact on the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect.

Acculturation

Acculturation, broadly speaking, is the result of two or more culturally different individuals, groups, and social influences meeting (Gibson, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2010), and it may be defined as the degree to which cultural ideals and practices of the receiving culture are adopted and that of the heritage culture is retained (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). It is an adjustment process that occurs over time, and several models in the past have been suggested to understand cultural adjustment that individuals undergo, including Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg's (1960) U-shaped cultural adaptation curve, and Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) W curve. Many of these models have been critiqued for their use of cross-sectional research

methodological design and ambiguous definition regarding the term "adjustment" (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998); nevertheless, the studies have affirmed that individuals exposed to multiple cultures generally go through a process of exploration and identification to the values and practices of each culture (Anderson, 1995; Phinney, 1990; Schwartz et al., 2006). Schwartz et al. (2010) proposed that acculturation can be viewed across three dimensions: practice, values, and identification. Each dimension acculturates in varying rates, and intercultural conflicts may occur between or within each of the three dimensions (Anderson, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2010). Acculturation is closely linked to the term "adaptation," which Sam and Berry (2010) referred to describe the individual's psychological well-being and how they manage socioculturally as a result of transitioning from one culture to the next.

Cultural identity. One process involved during this time is the shift in an individual's identity, which Schwartz et al. (2006) defined as the synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions that acts as a guide for self-regulation. Cultural identity, which underlies the process of acculturation, is an individual's sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group, which, through the process of acculturation, may broaden to include different cultural groups (Schwartz et al., 2006). Bicultural identity is one of the results of acculturation described as identities held by individuals who have been exposed to and have internalized both cultures (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007). Further discussion on bicultural identity will follow in the next section. Schwartz et al. (2006) discussed how changes in ideals, values and behaviours that follow transitions impact individuals' well-being. This literature review discusses two prominent models: Berry's acculturation strategy and Phinney's ethnic identity exploration model.

Berry's acculturation strategies. Berry's theoretical framework on acculturation is well-known in the cross-cultural psychology field. It theorizes the relatively immediate and long-term

cultural and psychological adjustment strategies for those who come into contact with a new culture (Berry, 2009). Based on Berry's model on acculturation, there are four strategies and processes that individuals can explore when they are introduced to a new culture (Berry, 2009): (a) assimilation, when individuals do not maintain their original cultural identity and seek immersion with a new cultures, (b) separation, when individuals maintain their own original culture and avoid interaction with other cultures, (c) integration, which is a merging or alternating between two cultural ways, and (d) marginalization, when individuals maintain little interest in their own culture and have little interest in interacting with other cultures.

Generally, results from many studies have confirmed that individuals who integrate the cultures report better psychological functioning (Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012; Bhui et al., 2004; Chae & Foley, 2010; Khanlou, 2010). While Berry's model has been used extensively in the cross-cultural psychology literature, there are some limitations to the implications made from the findings. Most researchers have agreed that acculturation is a multidimensional, interactive, and complex negotiation process between the individual's original culture and the host culture on factors such as values, behaviours, language, and cultural identity (Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Chen, 2008; Hernandez, 2009; Phinney, 1990; Thomas & Choi, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). For example, even those who are categorized as integrated based on Berry's theoretical model may experience intercultural conflicts that affect their identities in the long-run (Ishiyama, 1995). Schwartz and Zamboanga (2008) conducted a confirmatory latent class analysis to examine whether Berry's acculturative strategy model was supported among Hispanic young adults in Miami. The results partially supported Berry's acculturative strategies, but also suggested that there were multiple variants of biculturalism with differing comfort-levels in

heritage and host cultural contexts (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Berry (2009) acknowledged that integration may take various forms, such as alternating and blending two cultures.

Many studies showed discrepant outcomes when measuring cultural integration and its association with well-being (Schwartz et al., 2010), which may partially be a result of oversimplifying items asked about the construct. Studies using quantitative measures have been critiqued that they often study acculturation from a single, behavioural dimension that undermines its complexity (Phinney, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2010). Furthermore, many previous studies were based on a unidimensional model of acculturation (e.g., Kwag et al., 2012). The bidimensional model of acculturation separates the degree of preservation of and involvement in the country of origin and its culture, to the involvements in and learning of the new culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). As such, researchers such as Kwag et al. (2012), Phinney (2010), Schwartz et al. (2010), and Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) have critiqued that current researchers may be over-simplifying the cultural integration process or basing their studies on outdated measures, thus producing inconsistent results.

Ethnic identity formation. Schwartz et al. (2010) described that changes in ideals, values, and behaviours following cultural transition also affect individuals' identities. Restated, the process of acculturation has an impact on how identity is formed, revised, and maintained. While identity may constitute various dimensions of an individual such as gender, age, sexual-orientation, and family role, this paper focused specifically on cultural identity. Many models in the literature have suggested different processes by which individuals become aware of their cultural identities (Phinney, 1990). Phinney (1990) reported that her theorized stages of ethnic identity formation follow a process akin to Erik Erikson's ego identity formation. While acculturation has often been a discussion on the group-level, ethnic identity places the focus on

individuals and how they come to relate to their own cultural group as a subgroup of the larger society (Phinney, 1990). It involves individuals sorting through positive and negative attitudes about their cultural differences in relation to their environment as they mature over time (Phinney, 2006). The ethnic identity exploration has three stages: 1) unexamined ethnic identity, 2) ethnic identity search, and 3) achieved ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). Phinney (1990) described how the final stage does not indicate high involvement in their ethnic group, but rather the degree of certainty individuals have over their decisions, and that individuals may cycle through stages.

An overwhelming number of studies on acculturation have focused on behavioural acculturation (Schwartz et al., 2010). Yet, as previously mentioned, cultural integration encompasses several dimensions, including shifts in identity (Schwartz et al., 2010; Cote, 2006). There is variability in the dimensions of acculturation and cultural integration, and numerous theoretical models have been suggested to understand the constructs. Some areas in the literature on cultural integration have begun exploring variations of cultural integration in order to understand the adaptive and potentially challenging aspects of cultural integration. For example, some recent studies found that bicultural individuals perceive their identities in different ways, as compatible or oppositional (Bazuin-Yoder, 2011; Haritatos & Benet-Martinez, 2002). One landmark study indicating evidence of variations of integration methods was by Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) on bicultural African American and Mexican American adolescents. Their qualitative study results indicated that there are at least two ways of integrating two cultures, either by blending the two cultures, or alternating between them depending on the situation. Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) extended the findings and conducted a research to show that individuals can identify with both cultures while feeling different qualities of tension

between the two cultural orientations that leads to a sense of internal conflicts (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Their study also found quantitatively that the ability to be strongly and equally involved in both cultures was unrelated to the sense of cultural conflict, described as feeling caught or trapped between the different cultural orientations. Bazuin-Yoder's (2011) qualitative case study portrayed how bicultural identities can be perceived from very different lights depending on whether it is examined objectively or subjectively, and further the subjective components affect whether the narrators choose to transmit their bicultural identities to their children. These studies suggest that bicultural competence (i.e. the behavioural ability to adapt in different cultural environments) may not necessarily be related to the level of distress bicultural individuals experience internally (Ishiyama, 1995; Schwartz et al., 2006). These findings underlined the importance of examining not only the level of adaptation, but also the internal meaning-making process that parallels the ethnic identity formation.

Meaning Maintenance Model

According to the Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), humans rely on relational structures more than other species, and as such, the importance of being able to understand the socially constructed environment and have cultural skills to understand intention was integral for survival. Thus, MMM posits that that humans have the innate capacity to examine the relation between people, places, objects, and ideas in order to create an expected and predictable link or meaning between them. When people perceive inconsistencies to their meaning framework, they have a tendency to compensate and seek meaning again. This effort increases relative to the personal salience of the disrupted meaning framework. However, MMM argues the point of fluid compensation, that the effort to restore

meaning may be directed in different areas that may or may not be related to the initial source of uncertainty.

Heine et al. (2006) discussed that meaning can be sought in domains that are most easily recruited. MMM discusses that humans seek stable relations in three domains: (a) the external world or relationships between people, places, objects, and events, (b) the self, or consistencies in oneself across time in their roles, contexts, actions, beliefs, and perceptions, and (c) the self in relation to the external world, or the desire to avoid feeling alienated from the outside world. According to the model, when a disruption occurs in one of these domains, fluid compensation process of affirming meaning may be observed in other domains.

Immigrants who transition from their country and settle into a different country experience disruptions in many areas of their lives. In other words, they experience disruptions in many areas of their meaning frameworks. The fluid compensation concept may be applied to explore shifts in meaning for immigrants as well. Ishiyama (1995) discussed how people are motivated to affirm one's meaningful personal existence, and suggested the validationgram be used for clients to explore significant sources of validation prior to immigrating and following the transition.

Age at Transition

The age at immigration and length of time spent in the host country are both important factors to be considered for older immigrants and bicultural adults. Bicultural individuals need not to have lived physically in two countries. They can be first generation immigrants, second generation immigrants, children with parents from different cultures, and sojourners (David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009). Based on Erik Erikson's identity development theory, Phinney (1990, 2000) argued that identity exploration begins during adolescence to early adulthood. Fewer

studies factored in the age at which individuals transitioned (i.e., whether the migration happened during infancy, childhood, adolescence, or adulthood). Studies that have examined age at transition suggest that there are differences between different age groups. Those who transition as a child adopt the host country's cultural practices, values, and identifications more readily and thus resemble second-generation migrants than those who migrate as adults (Cheung, Chudek, & Heine, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010). Many of the studies mentioned in the previous sections have used relatively young participants, mainly those in high schools or universities (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). These individuals are often pre-exposed to two cultures from a young age, and their perceptions and experience of integrating two cultures may be significantly different to those who grew up in one culture and subsequently integrated their second culture at adulthood.

Fewer research have studied immigration and well-being while attending to developmental or life stages of the individuals (Khanlou, 2010). Yet, being placed into a new culture with differing language, beliefs, values, behaviours, practices, and the like is followed by profound and long-term adjustment processes for immigrants, particularly for adults who have already developed their language, social network, values, and identity from another culture (Cote, 2006; Khanlou, 2010; Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2010). Many researchers have acknowledged that acculturative stress hinders the well-being for immigrants (e.g., Sam & Berry, 2010; Costigan, Hua, & Su, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2010). Acculturation is a life-long process for those who permanently transitioned to a new country, and the barriers and opportunities in the new culture may affect the well-being of immigrant adults (Lai, 2004).

Decreased sense of well-being, commonly studied in the form of depression, is a large concern for older adults undergoing social and personal changes related to their age. Abu-Bader, Tinnazi, and Ross-Sheriff (2011) reported that high levels of identification to the original culture predicted higher rates of depression. Some studies reported that older adult immigrants have a higher risk of experiencing depression if they are isolated (Lee, Moon, & Knight, 2008; Tummala-Narra, Sathasivam-Rueckert, & Sundram, 2012), participate in less social activities (Lee et al., 2008), have less education (Lee et al., 2008), and have lower perceived physical health status (Lee et al., 2008; Tummala-Narra et al., 2012). Lai (2004) conducted a study on depression in elderly immigrants who have lived in Canada for an extended period of time and found that 24.2 percent of his sample was experiencing mild levels of depressive symptoms. Tummala-Narra et al. (2012) found in their qualitative study that some of the older South Asian immigrants felt, among other findings, that they were separated from their social and cultural networks from their country of origin, felt more dependent on their children, and feared losing their independence. Their study consisted of older South Asian adults who had immigrated to the US between the ages of 24 and 35, and those who had immigrated after the age of 49. There was a wide range of length of residence in the US. The healthy immigrant effect attenuates with the length of time in North America (Ali et al., 2004; Wu & Schimmele, 2005), and the degree of well-being reported by those who have recently arrived and those who have lived in North America for some time are likely to be significantly different. The implication from these studies was that age at immigration plays a contributing role on the immigrants' acculturation experience, as it affects how much ability individuals have to establish themselves in the new environment. Yet, current literature has not adequately examined how developmental and life

stages affect acculturation and identity. This thesis aimed to investigate and fill in such gaps in the literature.

Summary

The literature review highlighted the gap in the understanding of the bicultural immigrants. The majority of the studies on the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect have used quantitative approaches based on cross-sectional census data (e.g., Ali et al., 2004; Ng & LHAD, 2011; Wu & Schimmele, 2005). Researchers noted the potential correlations between acculturation or cultural integration and the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect. In the acculturation literature, the integration strategy has been found to be associated with favourable mental and physical profiles (Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012; Chae & Foley, 2010; Khanlou, 2010). Yet, integrating multiple cultures happens in the practice, value, and identification dimensions, non-linearly, and in varying rates (Schwartz et al., 2010).

A limited number of studies offered qualitative insight into the meaning that individuals make in integrating two cultures over time (Benet-Martinez & Harritatos, 2005; Cheung et al., 2011; David et al., 2009; Ishiyama, 1995). Examining such subjective experiences of cultural integration and how long-term immigrants make sense of their bicultural identity may provide a basis to address adaptive factors in integrating cultures. The literature review revealed that understanding the process of acculturation in the long run was necessary before examining its association with the healthy immigrant effect. Phinney (1996) argued that qualitative studies allow details to understand the psychological processes that underlie the phenomenon that quantitative studies cannot.

Finally, this literature review discussed the importance of examining age at transition as it affects how individuals settle to their new environment. While immigrant children often travel

with their family and thus continue to learn their heritage culture after transitioning, it is less likely that they would have the same understanding of the culture as had they had grown up in their country of origin. Further research was warranted to examine the experiences and perceptions of bicultural immigrants who transition to another country as adults.

Based on the literature review, this research took a qualitative approach in asking how long-term Asian immigrant adults in Canada have integrated the two cultures into their identity. The research question for this paper was: how do long-term, bicultural immigrant adults narrate the process of integrating two cultures?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter details the design of the research. Specifically, the reader is introduced to the rationale for using a narrative inquiry. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of participants are provided next, followed by a description of the steps for the interview and data analysis. Then, methods of tracking the quality of the study will be elaborated. The chapter concludes by a discussion on ethical concerns and ways to address these concerns.

Methodology

Berry's model of acculturation has been used extensively in the cross-cultural psychology research, but limitations of the quantitative research methodology used in such acculturation research have been pointed out (e.g., Bazuin-Yoder, 2011; Berry, 2009; Bhatia, 2007; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009). Quantitative methods on acculturation often take a post-positivist theoretical perspective, as acknowledged by Berry (2009). Many researchers using quantitative measures often use acculturation scales that overlook the complex internal process that individuals experience in the process of transition or use scales based on outdated models of acculturation (Cote, 2006; Ryder et al., 2000; Schwartz et al., 2010; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009). On this matter, Berry (2009) argued that the field of cross-cultural psychology becomes limited when researchers fight for either a positivist/post-positivist approach or a constructionist approach, and instead advocated for both theoretical perspectives, depending on the focus of acculturation at the level of cultural groups or individuals. There is still a lack of understanding of acculturative experiences at the individual level. Based on the research question, how immigrants negotiate their bicultural identities in their stories, at the individual level, acculturation is highly variant and strongly dependent on the meaning made from their experiences.

An overwhelming number of current studies in the literature have looked at the universality and commonality of the acculturative experience and the strategies that individuals take based on Berry's model of acculturation, but there are also researchers that have argued for more depth and studies on the heterogeneity within the acculturative strategies (e.g., Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris., 2002; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2010). Acculturation occurs through interaction among individuals, groups, and social influences, and the effects of these interactions have been shown to have lasting effects on individual health (Schwartz et al., 2010).

However, there is relatively limited research on *how* individuals integrate or create distance between the cultures in themselves (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). The internal process is complex and difficult to capture with quantitative studies (de Korne, Byram, & Fleming, 2008; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009), which by nature is deductive and revolves around identifying and verifying causes (Creswell, 2009). The nature of the research question shifts the focus from the role of acculturation on the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect, to focusing on the process of cultural integration. Nonetheless, this study aims to fill the gap by understanding subjective experiences of the acculturation process prior to identifying how it affects the well-being of immigrants.

Narrative Inquiry

One way to address the complexity of culture and identity is by closely examining how individuals communicate their internal cultural identity to others. Based on the previous findings that suggest large variations among bicultural immigrants, narrative analysis was chosen as an appropriate method to shed further light into the content of the

story as well as the manner that it is told. This method of inquiry and analyses allows a way to better understand how the narrator attends to and makes sense of experience, constructs the self narratively, and communicates it to others (Chase, 2004; Riessman, 2002), and has been determined to be an effective method in cross-cultural and social work (Fraser, 2004; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009). It allows researchers to access different dimensions of acculturation, such as internal shifts that happen over time and influences of others such as family members and peers (Cresswell, 2008; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009) that the narrator chooses to share. Moreover, narrative analysis offers an alternative approach to quantitative research by investigating the phenomenon and experience of individuals who are integrating multiple cultures through their story construction. The intention of individuals can be seen in the language and words that are voiced (Cresswell, 2008). Language and words helps us understand spoken and unspoken intentions, and provides ways to understand interactions that occur among individuals, groups and societies (Fraser, 2004; Riessman, 2002).

This study investigated how long-term, Asian bicultural immigrants connect their heritage culture and North American culture as expressed through their narrative accounts. My research took a constructionist worldview which emphasizes understanding individuals' subjective, varied, and multiple meanings of the world they live in and experience (Creswell, 2009). The term experience derives from the Latin term *experientia,* or "to try," which implies participation in the event (Gilbert, 2006). During the time that the individual is experiencing, there is no analysis of the bodily perceptions being experienced (Riessman, 2002). Becoming bicultural through the process of acculturation assumes the following: a) it is a long-term process, and b) it is tied to the shifts in perceptions and meanings that individuals have made

through their interactions with the host and heritage culture. Narrative inquiry asserts that people participate in the construction of their own identities, and that they establish their identity positions by through stories (Hiles & Cermak, 2008; Murray, 2003). In this method, the researcher listens to experiences that are intentionally communicated by narrators about the phenomenon (Riessman, 2002). In narrative inquiry methodology, human experiences are considered to be socially- and culturally-based, which is also a key process for immigrations integrating two cultures (Hiles & Cermak, 2008).

According to Leiblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998), there are two intersecting dimensions to be considered when selecting a particular type of narrative analyses. The first dimension concerns the unit of analyses, which is categorical or holistic. Categorical analysis involves analyzing sections of the complete text, while holistic analysis involves examining the entire text. The second dimension is whether the content or the form of the story is analyzed. A content-oriented approach examines the narrative from the standpoint of the story teller by asking about the details and meaning of the story. On the other hand, form-oriented approach examines the structure of the plot, event sequence and its relation to time, the story's complexity and coherence, feelings evoked by the story, the narrative style, etc. This thesis explored how long-term immigrants have integrated two cultures over time and how their views changed through the process, if at all. As such, it took a holistic-content approach. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic content analysis was used in the latter analysis in order to understand commonalities across the participants' narratives. Further description of the thematic content analysis is described in the procedures section.

Participants

The typical sample size for narrative research studies falls between five to eight participants (e.g., DeMik, 2014; Endo, Reece-Miller, & Santavicca, 2010; Frankland, 2014; Jones, 2013; Wilson, Saggers, & Wildy, 2013). Six participants were recruited in this study, initially through posters on local websites and social media (see Appendix C for poster), and then through snowball sampling. Individuals interested in participating contacted the co-investigator via email.

This study focused on East and Southeast Asian immigrants in particular because some studies (e.g., Bhatia, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2010; Tiwari & Wang, 2008) have highlighted the importance of considering the ethnic and cultural background of immigrants, not only for their various historical, political, and cultural differences, but also because the receiving country can have different attitudes towards them. According to Statistics Canada (2010) East and Southeast Asian countries include the following: Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

Potential participants were screened to ensure the following criteria were met: (a) being first generation East and Southeast Asian-Canadian adults born in an East or Southeast Asian country (see end of paragraph), (b) having lived in that East or Southeast Asian country for 19 years or longer, (c) having lived in Canada for 10 years or longer, (d) being able to communicate comfortably in English, and (e) self-identifying with both their culture of origin and the Canadian culture. The exclusion criteria at this point are those who (a) moved to Canada over the age of 60, and (b) came to Canada as humanitarian migrants, sojourners, or as internationally adoptees.

The exclusion criteria were based on two points: (a) significant differences in acculturation have been found among those who moved prior to the age of 60 and those who moved after (e.g., Ali et al., 2002; Diwan, 2008; Gee et al., 2004; Lee, 2007), and (b) significant differences have been found in the experiences between voluntary migrants and humanitarian migrants (e.g., Dow, 2011; Preibisch & Hennebry, 2011).

Procedure

One important process in narrative inquiry was for me, as the interviewer, to do a reflective inquiry process to understand my relation to the research phenomenon (Clandenin & Caine, 2008; Fraser, 2004). This was done by taking notes and journaling my own experience, in particular, of the time, place, and emotional climates in the interview (Fraser, 2004). Fraser (2004) further suggested noting down points of agreement and/or disagreement during the interview to help aid the data analyses. This was an important process, given my own experience of transitioning to a new country that had similarities as well as differences to the experiences shared by the participants in this study.

Conducting the interview. Participants were asked to dedicate 3 hours in total for the study. Individuals went through screening via email (see Appendix A for screening protocols and Appendix D for consent form). Selected participants were invited to do their interview in a private environment of their choice, for example, the participant's home, a quiet corner in a cafe, or a research lab in the university.

Polkinghorne (2007) discussed how experienced meaning is sometimes not readily available in a person's awareness, and that interviewers can help interviewees dig deeper into their experience by providing an initial time and space to reflect. Thus, following their consent, participants were asked to take up to 30 minutes to try one or two exercises, namely, a lifeline

and/or the validationgram (Ishiyama, 1995), which have been found to aid individuals with the self-reflection process (Chen, 2006; Ishiyama, 1995). Participants were invited to continue the reflection exercise until the next meeting, which was the interview.

The participant and interviewer met on the next agreed-upon time and date for a 60-90 minute interview (see Appendix E for interview script), which was audio recorded. In addition to the audio-recording, as Fraser (2004) suggested, non-verbally expressed emotions during the interview such as body language and verbal fillings were noted to help during the data analysis. Participants were invited to share their stories on how they came to see themselves as being bicultural. While the interview was largely directed by the participants themselves, as Ford (2006) suggested, some general probes were prepared to facilitate the interview (Appendix E for interview script).

Fraser (2004) cautioned that for some participants, recalling previous experiences may involve revisiting painful memories. Although no participant found it necessary, local resources support and counselling resources were prepared (see Appendix B for a list of counselling resources). Participants were notified during the consent process that they were free to discontinue and/or drop-out at any point of the study and would be given $20 for their time regardless of their decision to continue or discontinue their participation in the research.

At the end of the interview, participants were notified that they would be contacted again twice, once to read over the summary of the stories they shared and to make any changes or additions, and then to read over themes that emerged across the participants and provide input. They were given the choice to do this face-to-face or via email. Once participants felt their stories accurately captured their experience, the data was used to conduct a thematic content analysis. The following subheadings describe the process that was followed in this research.

Phase 1: Familiarize self with the data. This thesis followed the thematic content

analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This stage involved actively reading the

data for meaning, patterns, and possible codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 2: Generate initial codes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this stage is

marked by creating codes that help identify a feature of the data and organize it into meaningful

groups. Coding was done on a computer manually. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested the

following: (a) code the data in its entirety, (b) code for as many patterns as possible, (c) keep

some relevant surrounding data, and (d) if necessary, give sections of the data multiple codes.

Phase 3: Search for themes. Once the data was coded in its entirety, the next phase was

to consider how different codes may combined to create an overarching themes and subthemes.

Use of visual representations of the themes and sub-themes, such as tables and mind-maps, were

used during this stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 4: Review themes. In this stage, generated themes were refined (Braun & Clarke,

2006). First, the extracts within each theme/sub-theme were read through to determine whether

they are coherent. Revisions were made through redefining the theme and/or creating new ones

until there was some form of internal consistency. Subsequently, the same refining process was

applied to the data set as a whole, to see whether the themes worked with the entire data set.

Phase 5: Define and name themes. The purpose of this phase was to "[identify] the

'essence' of what each theme is about" (Braun & Clarke, 2006; p. 92). The theme definition

identified what was of interest about the theme and how it related to the research question. Braun

and Clarke pointed out that the end of this phase is marked when a description what a theme/sub-

theme is and is not can be articulated in a few sentences.

Phase 6: Write up the report. The final stage of thematic content analysis described by

Braun and Clarke (2006) was to write a "concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account" (p. 93) of the data to convince the reader of the value of my analysis. It involved making an argument for the response to the research question and providing sufficient data extracts that illustrated the generated themes. The authors provided the following guiding questions to help in this process (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 94):

- What does this theme mean?

- What are the assumptions underpinning it?

- What are the implications of this theme?

- What conditions are likely to have given rise to it?

- Why do people talk about this in this particular way?

- What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic?

Acculturation involves social interactions in that it is the internal shift that happens over time when two or more culturally different individuals, groups, and social influences meet (Cresswell, 2008; Gibson, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2010; Tardif-William & Fisher, 2009). As such, data analysis included understanding the psychosocial context that the story is told (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Hiles & Cermak, 2008; Riessman, 2002/2008).

Data Representation

There were two sections to report research findings. Data representation began by presenting each participant's condensed interviews in a 5-7 page narrative. Narratives are condensed versions of the participants' interviews that attempt to capture the essence of their experiences from their standpoint, as it relates to the research question. This was followed by describing themes emerged from the narratives across all participants, using thick descriptions to communicate a holistic picture of the participants' experience and the

meanings they attach to them (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) discussed that qualitative

write-ups often have the following elements: 1) extract themes from the data, 2) present the

themes with its descriptions using multiple perspectives from participants and their settings.

The themes were then compared to other studies in the literature. This comparison with

existing literature, demonstrated by Riessman (2003b), provided weight to the trustworthiness

of the study.

Trustworthiness

Unlike quantitative studies that examine the reliability and validity of the study,

qualitative studies are concerned with the trustworthiness of the research when they are

examining the quality of the data (Mertler & Charles, 2011). Trustworthiness was defined as "the

accuracy and the believability" of the data (Mertler & Charles, 2011, p. 199 Polkinghorne, 2007).

The trustworthiness of narrative research was dependent on the sufficiency of the evidence and

persuasiveness of the argument to support it. Persuasiveness was defined as the degree to which

theoretical claims support informants' accounts, and include consideration towards alternative

interpretations. Searching for theories was an ongoing process through data collection and

analysis. In narrative research, sections of texts are extracted and presented as evidence for

narrative truths rather than factual truths (Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 2002). Creswell and

Miller (2000) discussed three procedures within the constructionist paradigm to enhance the

trustworthiness of the research: examining for disconfirming evidence, prolonged engagement in

the field, and using thick descriptions.

Disconfirming evidence. This procedure involved examining whether the initially

created themes were consistent with the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The importance of

interpretation of the dataset based on thoughtful elaboration of the meaning, as opposed to

selective interpretation without regarding counterevidence, was also a pertinent issue that affected the trustworthiness of the research (Clandenin & Caine, 2008; Haverkamp, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2007). Riessman (2002) discussed how ideally, narrative analysis looks for the coherence or consistency in the following levels: (a) goals that a participant is trying to accomplish by narrating his/her story, such as justifying an action, (b) how the narrator strings together the stories and what she/he is trying to relay, such as use of contradicting stories, and (c) the patterns or themes that come up from the narrative. Member checking, which involved corresponding with participants to check the accuracy of their summarized stories and the meanings they wish to convey, was an integral process during data analysis to ameliorate the risk of selective interpretation (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, regular supervisions was scheduled to lessen the chances of the researcher's selective interpretation.

Prolonged engagement in the field. In the constructionist worldview, the credibility of the study is strengthened by building a holistic case of the participants' world (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This is done by developing an in-depth understanding of the interviewee's shared stories (Creswell, 2009). Participants filter their narratives and may be resistant to reveal their feelings and experiences when the trust has not been established with the interviewer (Polkinghorne, 2007). Extended times spent with the participants allow for rapport to build with the interviewer, which enhances the understanding of the context of the participants' views (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2007). Having the screening interview and two interviews helped establish rapport with the participants and allow them to share their stories more readily.

Use of thick and rich description. Creswell (2009) stated that the value of qualitative research is that it examines themes and descriptions within the context of that particular situation

or site. Providing detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, and themes enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of the interpretations being made (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 2002).

Member checking procedure. Member checks are emphasized as an integral component that enhances the trustworthiness of the research (e.g. Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Riessman, 2002; Tracy, 2010). This study conducted two member checks with the participants. The first was to check the narratives that were prepared for each participant, based on his/her interview. Each participant was emailed her/his interview and invited to provide feedback based on the following two criteria: (a) the comprehensiveness of the summary (i.e., whether the summary covered the participant's full experience), and (b) the accuracy of the summary (i.e., how true they felt the summary covered their experiences. All six participants reported that the narratives fulfilled the two criteria for the first member check after minor edits, and no further follow-up checks of the narratives were necessary.

The second member check involved the themes and subthemes that emerged across the participants. Descriptions of the themes and subthemes were emailed to all participants, and they were invited to provide feedback regarding the resonance, comprehensiveness, and pragmatic use of the study.

Tracy (2010) described resonance as the degree to which a research meaningfully reverberates with its audience. This is achieved through accurate and rich descriptions of the participants' experiences. Josselson and Lieblich (2003) stated that "the final quality of narrative/qualitative research is largely a function of the skill and creativity of the researcher" (p. 271). In addition to discussing the degree of resonance through peer review and supervision, participants were asked whether the themes resonated and/or overlap with their experience.

The comprehensiveness of a study addresses whether the interpretations represent the participants' realities fully (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Demonstrating this aspect of trustworthiness requires correspondence, or going back to the participants regularly and asking for their reflections about the themes and categories (Reissman, 2002; Tracy, 2010). Specifically, participants were asked to read their stories and themes, and asked, "Does this story/themes represent your story well enough, and what would you change or add?"

The criteria of pragmatic use attempts to identify the extent to which the research extends, builds, and/or modifies the current understanding of an existing theory or concept in the academic world and to the community (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003; Tracy, 2010; Riessman, 2002). In the member checking process, participants were asked to comment on a) whether they felt that the findings improve current understandings of long-term, bicultural individuals, and b) whether they felt others with similar experiences may find the themes to be useful.

For the second member check, two participants replied with clarifications that the second theme that emerged, distancing self from their heritage culture, was not purposeful for them, but rather something that occurred over time. One participant elaborated the intentionality behind the same theme. Further edits were made to incorporate the participants' comments. All participants otherwise affirmed the trustworthiness criteria relative to the themes and subthemes.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical considerations necessary to conduct this research were regarding the interaction with participants and conducting data analysis. This study received approval from the Research Ethics Board.

Use of a narrative inquiry in this research required high levels of involvement from the participants as well as use of participants' quotations for illustration. Extensive use of quotations

risked violating the principle of beneficence by breaching confidentiality (Clandinin *&* Caine, 2008; Haverkamp, 2005). A careful, on-going review of the quotations in the final thesis was done. Additionally, like many qualitative procedures, interviews can be invasive for the participants, and participants may have felt discomfort in discussing challenging experiences of resettling into a different country. No such discomforts were expressed by any of the participants, who appeared comfortable and open during the interview.

In order to protect the participants' rights, an informed consent detailing the research objective, data collection method and devices, and use of data were provided to the participants at the initial meeting. The data was kept in a password protected folder, with the participants' names were kept separately. Identifying information was modified to protect the anonymity of the participants. Finally, the participants' rights, interests, and wishes were prioritized with regards to the reporting the data. Two participants asked for their ages to remain undisclosed, and their wishes were honored, as per the Code of Ethics (Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2007; Canadian Psychological Association, 2000).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This section describes the study's findings of the process of bicultural identity integration for long-term, bicultural, Asian immigrant adults. The section begins with a summary of the demographics of participants who agreed to participate in the study, and proceeds to a summary of the interview.

Participants Summary

Six participants in total shared their stories for this study. Of the participants, five were male and one was female. The following table offers a summary of the participants' demographics. Participants' age when they moved to Canada ranged from 19 to early thirties. Two participants requested their specific ages not be revealed. The range of years since transition was from 12 to 24 years ($M = 18.6$). All participants were employed at the time of the interview and had a degree from a post-secondary institution. Participants spoke English comfortably and did not appear to have difficulty communicating in English.

Table 1: Participants' Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status at Transition	Country of Origin	Age at Transition	Years Since Transition
Andy	Male	Single	Malaysia	19	14
Ben	Male	Married	Hong Kong	Early 30's*	24
Catherine	Female	Married	Hong Kong	Early 30's*	24
Dean	Male	Married	Taiwan	33	20
Eric	Male	Married	People's Republic of China	30	12
Frank	Male	Single	Japan	19	17.5

*Note: Participants expressed for their specific ages not be revealed.

Participants' Narratives

The following are summaries of each of the interviews prepared by myself based on each of the participants' audiotaped interviews. Narratives are condensed versions of the participants' interviews that attempt to capture the essence of their experiences from their standpoint, as it relates to the research question. In order to shorten the transcribed interviews, first, filler words, false-start sentences, detailed descriptions of locations, people, recollection of specific dialogues, were either taken out or abbreviated. Multiple sentences that conveyed similar points were joined together, using as many of the participants' original spoken words. Thus, while the interviews were condensed and could not be called a transcript, each summary used as much of the participants' actual stated words during the interview, unless modified by the participant him/herself during the member-check. I took sentences that best seemed to capture the participant's point.

Participants were asked at the end of the interview whether they preferred to correspond further via email, phone, or face-to-face. All participants opted for email exchanges. The following narratives are the final versions of the summaries that were approved by the participants, who also gave permission for their narratives to be reproduced in this section of the thesis and be used for thematic content analysis.

In each narrative, the italicized sentence in provides a brief description of that individual, prepared by myself. Words in in hard brackets were inserted to help the reader better understand the context and meaning of the sentence.

Andy's Narrative

Andy grew up in Malaysia. He moved to British Columbia, Canada, 14 years ago. He shared the following story about coming to Canada.

I was exposed to a mix of different cultures from an early age. I received some English education as well as local Malaysian education in private school, my parents taught me the Chinese culture, and I was born and grew up in Malaysia with friends and people outside. It eased my transition to Canada.

The decision to move was unexpected and happened quite fast. I was fascinated by the Western culture. I had only gone to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur while I was in Malaysia. I was around grade 10 and 11 when we decided to move. My uncle and aunt lived in Canada, and they adopted me and my sister. My parents, uncle, and aunt wanted to give us a better future. I was excited to go. I had read about the Western culture through books and movies. [Until then,] I expected to work in Malaysia. I didn't expect that to be reality, so I was super excited to move. My friends and I grew up together from kindergarten, and before I came to Canada, some of my friendship started to go sideways. They were making my life a little bit miserable, and I was happy to start from scratch and make new friends in Canada.

When I moved to Saskatoon, in a span of a year, I was going back and forth, where I was learning the Canadian culture, and I'm missing my family and friends. I hadn't expected to, but I met my girlfriend in the last year of high school in Malaysia. It was tough to leave [her]. I didn't think it was possible she would come here, but a part of me was hanging onto that part of my life. We kept a long distance relationship for five or six years. I never felt fully connected to my life here [in Canada] at that time.

My family there was my aunt, uncle, their son, and my sister. Living with [my] family worked in two ways. Having the family connection helped transition the life from Malaysia to Canada. But it may have also slowed down my sense of connection to the Canadian culture because my aunt and uncle are ingrained in their Chinese or Malaysian culture, apart [for] certain things, like the barbecues, road trips, and trips to Cosco. I enjoy road trips, and even today I like being able to hop in the car and drive anywhere. I learned it from my uncle. It's neat to see and experience different places.

I thought it was good starting in a smaller city like Saskatoon, where people would say hi as you walk around. I thought, wow, people here are really nice. Also, part of me is still stuck in my upbringing, where in Asia, people are not supposed to look directly while talking to older people. It's intimidating. I still can't look at people in the eyes unless I make a conscious effort to, and I would occasionally get that comment from coworkers or friends.

My high school here was almost the way I had imagined through watching Western shows in Malaysia. I thought it was cool that I could wear anything I wanted, having my own locker, and moving from class to class. I didn't like wearing uniforms at school.

The education here focuses on different things. They focus not only on grades, but also the social side. I was also really shy when I first came here, and I didn't know what to say when I was asked for my opinion. It's not that I have a language barrier, I understand English. It didn't occur to me that it's ok for me to say my opinion until my teachers encouraged me to. It took me a while to voicing my opinion and not be scare of others judging me. I'm getting better at voicing my opinion, but even today I am more on the reserved side in meetings at work.

I learned that I couldn't goof off from my parents. It was ingrained in me that I have no option to fall behind. So I did get the good grades. But maybe in some ways, I shut myself out by

focusing too narrowly on finishing my program. I only went to parties once in a while, and I didn't spend much time with friends, and so because of that, I didn't have many close friends. I was focused on completing my program and getting a job, so I felt a bit more disconnected from the Canadian culture.

I moved back to Malaysia for six months after graduating because I missed having a bigger family members, my childhood friends, the food, and I didn't feel like I'm fully into the life here. I had more freedom [in Malaysia], more fun, and for a moment, I thought it could work, I could be reasonably happy. I found work and met someone there, and it was easy to fall back to my life before Canada, but I had a different perspective, I thought something was missing. I missed my life back here, the road trips, the barbecues, and the four seasons. Road trips here are more convenient, whereas over in Malaysia, you want to plan the trip properly. I did some camping in Malaysia, but I thought it's a very Canadian thing. The Western food in Malaysia didn't feel authentic, and I missed that too. I had everything I was used to growing up, but I missed Canada.

My sister was studying at a university in British Columbia, and she encouraged me to come, so I decided to move to Vancouver. I thought I'll spend the summer in Vancouver in figuring out what I want to do but never expected to land a job in Vancouver. We're pretty close. I was nervous that I took a gamble on my decent job in Malaysia, but I was happy to come back to live in Vancouver.

I found it challenging to find a job. It took me about six months because I didn't have a lot of experience, and no one want to hire someone with minimal work experience. [So] I felt like I was ingrained in the Canadian culture when I found a job, when I became independent, self-sustainable. I felt I really belonged here because I had a good start at my first job. I had a

horrible boss in my next job. And now, I have a boss who is complete opposite, which helps me feel solidified in my place.

I felt like I had a permanent home [in Canada] when I purchased my first home. The way I decorate my home feels more Western. If you went into my home today, and you didn't know that was my home, you didn't think that I lived there because it's more Westernized. You wouldn't know that an Asian person lived there if you didn't know it was my home.

I lean towards the Canadian culture more than my own Malaysian culture, for anything other than cooking my own food. I occasionally cook Western dishes, but my preference is to cook Malaysian or Chinese food. My Malaysian food gives me most comfort, and when things aren't going well, I want to go back to that culture. So I cook a lot of my comfort food because it reminds me of when I was growing up. When I see Malaysian products such as curry and durian cake, I feel proud that it came so far, and I feel connected to my home.

I keep in touch with my friends [in Malaysia], but it's tough trying to keep in touch because we have our own lives. But whenever I go back and reach out, it feels back to normal, like time stood still and nothing has changed. We have that foundation because I grew up with them. I can't get that here. Friends here feel more, one day you can be friends, and next you may not be.

One of [my] ex-colleague introduced me to dance and UBC Dance Club and from the moment I join the dance club, I felt truly immerse in the culture. It is through the dance club that I met my girlfriend in Canada, but when the relationship didn't work out and we broke up, I felt disconnected. My friends helped me get my life together. Each year, I felt closely connected to my group of friends. After my last break up, they brought me back from my darkness. I feel like somebody cares, and their support helped. My sense of security here in the last two years feel

exponential. Now I have a group of friends that I hang out with. I feel I've made stronger connections with my friends [in Canada].

My friends tell me I'm more white-washed. Most of them are from Hong Kong, and they speak in Cantonese. They switch to English only because I don't understand a lot of Cantonese. I don't practice a lot of my culture here nowadays, and my friends hang onto their own ways. [For example,] my friends always choose Chinese or Hong Kong food whenever we go out, but I like to vary it more.

What's unique about growing up in Malaysia is, we mix and jumble words like English, Chinese, and Malay together. It makes perfect sense to us, but I don't do that here because no one will understand me. I converse with some of my friends in Mandarin, and I speak Mandarin with my family, so that helps me keep it. But I don't know anyone here who speaks Malay.

I think in English, and when I speak in Chinese, I have to translate that. So it's slower and not as comfortable. If I were living in Malaysia now, conversations would be slower, and more challenging. I have an accent that I can't hide when I speak Malay, so people can tell I'm not from there. It feels weird to be regarded almost as a foreigner. I don't sounds local there, and I don't sound local here. It's so much a negative thing, but I feel like I don't belong anywhere. I blend between two worlds, but I can't blend completely into Malaysia or Canada. It doesn't bother me too much. I have come to terms with my differences because people are accepting of the differences in Canada.

I am always aware of both cultures, although it won't be strictly 50-50, and there will be moments when you're one way or the other. It's important for me to keep my Malaysian passport for my identity, even if there's no additional benefit. I still regard myself both Canadian and Malaysian.

Right now, I would lean more towards the Canadian culture because I haven't been back to Malaysia for a few years. I think I'm slowly shifting more towards the Canadian culture. But overall, I still regard myself as Malaysian. If I were to go back to Malaysia and stay there for a period of time, my identity may shift, little bit. It feels weird, like I switch my mindset. It's slightly different, I have an accent, my mindset shifts, and I converse like an Asian.

BC is my home now and indefinitely. I can say as a more broad statement that I've become accustomed to the culture here. In terms of activities, I feel I'm more Canadian. Ways of driving in Canada, being courteous on the road, shoulder checking, saying sorry, are very Canadian. I put a Canadian flag up in front of my house on Canada Day because I feel proud to be Canadian. On Remembrance Day, I attend the ceremonies, partly because my previous girlfriend felt strongly about remembering the soldiers.

My sister here and cousin [living nearby] remind me of my own culture. We're pretty close. It's good to have close family to fall back on. I have a neighbour who is Malaysian. When they invite me to dinner or give me things from Malaysia, it reminds me of life back there. I know my sister and her kids are not going to move anytime soon, and that helps solidify my place here.

In terms of relationships, friends, and food, I feel Malaysian. If things are not going well, I feel like I want to go back to my Malaysian culture because it gives me comfort. I occasionally look back at photos from the past, and it reminds me of home, my culture, and relationships. My clothes when I was a teenager in Malaysia makes me feel that that life is still very much part of me. [The name of my home town], directly translated, means cats. So, whenever I see cats around here, in peoples' homes, it reminds me of home.

As I grow older, now that I feel more comfortable being Canadian, I want to get back closer to my Malaysian culture, because it's an important part of my identity and I feel like I'm losing it. It's harder living on my own and not having many Malaysians around, because there's no one to interact with in terms of language or things we do. I don't take offense when my friends say I'm white-washed, but I wish I can teach them who I am and what I do as a Malaysian. I'm proud to be Malaysian. If I have a chance to go back a little bit longer, I might pick up a book in Malaysia that helps remind me of the culture and lifestyle back there.

Ben's Narrative

Ben was born in Hong Kong and moved as an adult to British Columbia, Canada, 24 years ago. Here is his story about coming to Canada and integrating cultures.

I hated that in the Chinese culture, they are always superstitious. I'm not a rebellion, but I don't agree. And besides working in Hong Kong is very stressful, no friends, we work like a zombie with low brain and no enjoyment, and the living environment is so congested. In Hong Kong, not really have enough resources for myself, so if you don't grab, you lose everything. I know I didn't like the system when I was a kid. I was young, but you can imagine, growing up in such an environment, it's not fun. I think the majority [of why I moved] is from the bottom of my heart. I always wanted to get away. But Canada, you can relax, and you can share with a lot of other people. A lot of people really need to share with you.

1989, June 4th, they [the government in China] use a tank to calm down the student asking for democracy. It was scary. I want my boys to live in an area that they like, not living in somewhere that they have tanks, guns, and social unrest. So when I saw the chance to move because of 1997, I saw an opportunity for myself. My aim is try to get away from Hong Kong, whichever the country that want me. Canada is comparatively easier to move. Of course, there's some Caribbean country, but we do some research, it's hot and humid and then politically unstable. And the third thing is, I'm thinking about my boy's education. Some other country I'm not familiar with, so I don't want to risk for the whole family. So when the Canadian government contacted me for the interview, we were so eager to go. [My image of Canada at that time was] it's really big. But economically, we heard very little, so it's quite new to us.

This is exactly the feeling, when I first land; the fresh air, [that it was] huge, and [there were] not many people. You won't feel lonely but you feel that you have so much of your own space to move around. It's totally different. This is wonderful.

After the good things, the bad things happen. After we settle down and take a rest, I have to find a job. The companies related to my job in Hong Kong say I'm overqualified. Then others say I don't have Canadian experience. So after many frustrations, I stop finding a job and beginning to search around to what happen in this country, that such a big area, so much space, but can't accept a foreigner. So we watched people and try to talk to some strangers. I talk to my wife and say, we're not born here, we're not study or raise in here, we start like middle age, so we are a bit late from what the local Canadian start. And back then, my English wasn't that good, I had too much accent, lack of confidence, it was an issue for me to communicate. But I won't say this is the end of the world. Some of my friends, they go back to their homeland. I say, if you want to survive, you have to put yourself right in to the Canadian society. To learn more. I told myself, okay, I have to put myself involve in the Canadian way, so I know what their, their life would be, and if that's suitable for me. Why not become a typical, local Canadian?

I chose to be a Certified Financial Planner because I like planning for people's future and its world-wide recognized profession. I spent about three years, then I get my designation. And by that time, I'm totally involved in the Canadian lifestyle. I drink coffee, talk to people in English, of course talk to some people in Chinese, but we talk about hockey games, basketball games in Vancouver. Whereas some of my friends were talking about English soccer, Hong Kong operas, and the Chinese channel. The first thing to me was to cut the Chinese channel. We might understand 10%, 20% of some people on the [English] talk show, we don't laugh. I want to [get] involve[d] like a Canadian, learn more English, and I want my sons to understand and the

Canadian culture. Why people, they like hockey game, right, why they like baseball. I lived in such a good environment, talking to a lot of people [who are] so encouraging, so my health is getting much, much better.

I feel happy to be bicultural because that means I have one more culture than the local Canadian, so it's an advantage. It's good to know that Canada is quite open, generous, and most people like to share. This is very impressive. We learn from the ancestor in the Asian culture is that if anything is good, use it, utilize it, and combine and become yours. And anything you find which is no good, try to get rid of it as soon as possible. I pick up a lot of information from local Canadians. Some may be good, some may be bad. But, hey, you can make your own decision, good things you can take it, combine, and then it's become mine. Bad things you can say, hey, thank you, [and] just simply drop it. They say, you don't restrain from learning. Learning don't have like a timeline. I see that the local Canadian and Chinese culture share the same attitude. Every day when I open my eyes, will be a new day, there's some challenge we have to overcome, and some knowledge we might detect. Not all the Chinese culture is bad. They still have good things for us to learn.

Being bicultural is not me who make the decision. If I stay in Hong Kong, there's isn't a thing called bicultural. If you're thrown from an old culture to a new country, now you become bicultural. There's an advantage to be bicultural. I think it's the environment, make me to be bicultural. I would say bicultural is a) right, is an advantage for me. I can share my culture with some different ethnic people. And b) they offer me a chance to open my eyes to see different things. If you inside an area that is only one culture, how far can you learn? You learn from your own culture. That's it? But if you are in an area that is so many different ethical backgrounds, people, you learn a lot. Or you share a lot. I like to share.

Some people might be putting a limitation on learning. They think they have enough knowledge and experience. So, for some reason, they come to Canada, but they still want to remain intact with their original culture. They watch Chinese TV, go to Chinese supermarket, buy Chinese food, always go for dim sum, they never try cakes, the local Western fruits or foods or whatever. I don't agree with the idea of spend too much time on things on the news happening on the motherland. To me, it's quite risky and daunting. Risky because you lack flexibility to learn something from the local. Risky and daunting because if you lack in those experiences, and if you decide to stay in Canada in the long term, that might be a problem. It's about your attitude. Physically, you block out everything, and then eventually you don't like Canada because you don't get yourself involved. How can you like Canada? I simply am in Canada. You can't ignore everything happening in Canada.

I have a young family when I first land here. They might have a huge potential here. I just want to prove [to] myself and the family that I can survive in the new environment. It's quite personal. I tell myself, okay, nobody point a gun to my head and say, look, you go to Canada. It's me, myself, who make a decision to come to Canada. I have to prove that it's still okay, it's a good place to live. These are kind of saying to get myself involved, to raise my bar, including my family. The only reason why we come here is we want to have a new life, have a better environment for my kids. So I give up a lot of my home. And eventually, my kids told me that they want to stay here, they want to develop here. I feel a bit relief.

[My cultural identity] depends on the environment. If I mingle with some Canadian, we talk about Canucks, hockey games or the Winter Olympics in Canada. [I feel Canadian] especially during the elections, right, okay we have to exercise our right as a citizen to vote. But if I mingle with Chinese people, we talk about the history in China, the current situation in Hong

Kong, whatever. So it pretty much depends on who I mingle with. Yup, [I feel fully Canadian when I mingle with people from Canada]. [I don't feel fully Chinese talking with my Chinese friends]. A lot of the Chinese friends that I still mingle with have more information about the Chinese, but they're not entirely even Chinese. So we have a new term, we say that we are Chinese-Canadian. So we're not Canadian, we're not Chinese, we're not a hundred percent Chinese, but we talk about things and event happening in Vancouver, but we also chat about things happening in Hong Kong or Taiwan. But, those are not the major subject.

Sometimes, people tend to force the traditional Chinese way. But I never ever come across people in Canada that force you to follow the Canadian way. So I think that in the Chinese culture, they want you to follow them. Whereas Canadian is fairly free. You're free to join, or you're free to chat or, you're free to go, doesn't matter. You like that? Fine. You don't like that? It's also fine. But from some Chinese-Canadian or Canadian-Chinese, you like that? Good. You don't like that? Out.

I don't go back [to Hong Kong], and I don't have too many Chinese or Hong Kong friends. If I come across some new Hong Kong people or Chinese people, we start talk to each other, I still learning from them, if I have the chance. If I don't it's not the end of the world. Canada is multicultural, people may be from England, Australia, Sweden, Vietnam, or even Japanese. I used to [know] people from Iran. We learn from each other. It's so much fun to make friends with a different nationality backgrounds people and learn from a different culture. Even though we classify as Canadian, our nationality is still in our home country. They offer you so much choices. It's uncountable depth to mix up with some people. My neighbour from Poland, the next neighbour from Yugoslavia or Czech, we're talking about their home country change

and whatever. You hear about those people. So I like Canada. Not just local Canadian. Under

Canadian umbrella, we have a chance to mix and mingle with different culture. Why not?

Catherine's Narrative

Catherine was born in Hong Kong and moved to British Columbia 24 years ago. Here is her story about coming to Canada and integrating the two cultures.

Chinese people, very traditional. My father is quite strict. When we are young, boys always superior than girls. And also, because we are young, our treatment is that we have to listen. When I know my husband and we start dating, we are happy, and we get married. And then we have our eldest son, we are own family and home. It's a happy life at the time. Only because of the revolution in 1989, June 4th. I cannot say I'm forced to be here. Because my sons are so young at that time. So we want them to have a better education, better environment.

What we see in Hong Kong about Canada is, not many news. Canada news, never really in Hong Kong. Canada people, we doesn't encounter too much. We looked into different countries, but Canada was our best suit. And we start applying. [The timing] worked out so well for both of us. When I [arrived] in Canada, I'm excited because new places. The first moment is, oh, finally we landed in Canada. Oh, I'm so happy. And also because we want to come.

After arrival, I take downhill [because things were] changing so fast. At that time you can say I'm not really Canadian. My husband went back to Hong Kong to his work, I'm staying with a big family, and my sons are so young and they don't understand. We still watching Chinese TV here. So our family are like, from Hong Kong. Only we move our house in Canada. We talk in Cantonese, eat Chinese food, go to Chinatown to do grocery shopping to get Chinese veggie, Chinese food. Everything is Chinese.

I'm forced to involve [myself in the Canadian culture] sometime because my sons have education here, I go to the school to talk to the teachers. And then we have language barrier to talk to people. It's like quite stressed because we have to talk in English. Although I study in

Hong Kong, we never speak in English. So when we have to talk to the teachers, [they] just talk in English. My sons also don't know English. So I have [to be] the one that translating for them, talking. My English is also like, British English, so it is different from them. And they just talk fast and very local hard English. So sometimes even I can't understand. So what we have to do is we have to ask one or more times, and in what I can see by those peoples' appearance or body language. But, because my son likes to play soccer and has to play in the game, and he has to understand what the coach is saying, I will be a translator for him, to know what the coach wants him to do. It's hard [to communicate in English], but still, it's not a job. If you don't got paid, people don't require too much from you.

At the time I go to the supermarket, I don't speak, of course. And the people are very nice because I'm the customer. And also, at that time, my sister, she's running a fish store. Every morning once I settle my sons to school, I would go and give her company, and helping around. At the time, [the location of her store] doesn't have many Asian face. They are all Caucasian, and [the store is] selling Caucasian fish. So at that time we have, yeah, [I had opportunities to practice my] communication. And the people here are, very nice. So sometimes, after they pay the bill and then they still talk to you. But at that time, we still don't really watch the local news and everything.

[Eventually,] my husband quit his job and move [to Canada]. Then we moved to this house. My youngest son, he go to elementary, so I've got more time for myself, and my husband encouraging me to get back to work. So I [started working at a] local tax agency. I take the course over there, and then this is stress, because, I cannot say I'm good in English. I used to read and study English in Hong Kong. Only, to communicate, to listen, to do the quiz every lessons, and have a midterm and final test. This kind of job, people will not be um, working too long. But

I just [work] three or four months a year and get all the rest of the time with my family [and the work] the time is flexible. Luckily I got the job. [The only people who come to the tax office are] old Caucasian or some people from Montreal, they move to Vancouver. So at that time, I learned faster. I can say I encounter all my coworkers, they are Canadian or people from other country, but still we all communicate in English. Of course I cannot say I'm like being a Canadian, no I still like a silent worker. I feel I'm not Canadian because I'm no understand the talk show, the fun, what they talk about, this man, how they make fun of each other. We cannot understand because we don't grow together with them.

I've been, one time, refused by a senior couple because they don't want me to do their tax, uh because they don't trust me. I don't take it personally. At that time, they have no choice, I'm the only one in the office. So they are forced with me. But I think I do a very good job. After I finish the job and then the lady, old lady. She just said so appreciate. Then she go back to the reception and say highly recommend me. Or a couple from Montreal, one year to do the tax, the next year they come back to the office for me. And they go to the same office, but I move to another office, they just, go back to my office and come to me. I'm so, touching. So, at that time, it's like, job satisfaction. Especially when you are Asian, you talk simple English, or you just talk them like now, because my English isn't improve a lot.

I have to talk like Canadian, and of course it's very hard in the beginning because I know nothing. But, slowly, I being morphed in Canadian. [I felt bicultural] when I start working [at this tax agency]. When I work, I have to face so many Caucasian people, so many different people, and I have to adjust myself, my culture. And of course, my sons, they watch hockey, from the very beginning [when we arrived]. At the time, we come here not long, we doesn't understand the rules. But slowly, we watch the hockey games together, [this was how] we have

like, family time. And because when my husband came back to Canada, he cut out the Chinese channel. I was so depressed. He got good excuse that our sons need English because now they are in an English environment. So he cut out Chinese channel. [But] I was quite depressed because, when we go for talking to people from Hong Kong here, they're talking about, oh what is now [on] TV. And I have no idea. I just sit there. So I just get knowledge or the news from the Chinese newspaper [because we still subscribed to that]. That is how I linked back myself to Hong Kong. Not because I want to go back to Hong Kong, but it's my hometown. We got some news from multiculture channel, so I watch that channel for the news and then I put [on] the local news, because I'm here.

When my [youngest] son go to high school, I go to a different tax agency, [which was] a seasonal full-time job. There were many, many people in that building, Caucasian, Chinese, Asian. So people, they can speak in different languages. But when you're working, we all communicate in English. And at that time I got two Caucasian ladies, they are--we sit in a table. They are very nice, they make friends with me, and more and more again they teach me a little bit like, Caucasian English. And that period, when I go home, I'm like a Chinese mom. When I go work, I feel myself like, Canadian. I don't feel very comfortable. When I go home I change to my Cantonese, and then I have to work [in English].

I think my challenge is that every year, I have to start thinking to talk in English because this is a seasonal job. When I talk, I sometimes have to think in my Cantonese word, to translate to English. So usually it take longer for me to figure out, what I'm going to say. Especially sometimes, I don't know the vocab. [But] for us, we just work to get pay. They understand you, and then you can do your job, finish your job, and the requirement. And then you are fine.

I quit my job [at the tax agency] after my husband got a surgery for [removing a] kidney stone [and it led to some complications]. I studied insurance to get licensing so the company allow him to employ me as assistant. And after the examination, I'm not sitting there, I have to talk, I have to find clients. Now, you are wanting business from people. You have to present yourself to get something. For Chinese client, we go for dim sum. Chinese style. Or afternoon tea, coffee. For Caucasian people you have to present yourself like Canadian. People are nervous that you are just doing it for fun, will you just do it for one year and leave. I try to make myself like, I am Canadian because I been very involved in all those Canadian news, I know the weather, what is changing, hockey, football. I even know more than my husband because I read it in the newspaper. And that makes me easier to talk to people. If my client, they are guys, they are very, very happy that I can communicate with them in their own culture. I wouldn't talk about Hong Kong and the revolution because, they don't care. I think Hong Kong and Canada are so far away.

[I kept in touch with my Chinese culture through] phone calls with a friend [in Hong Kong]. And I also [used to] have a sister [who] lives in Hong Kong[, although] now she's in the States. And I email my coworkers in Hong Kong. We are all busy with our lives. It's good because we don't break the relationship. We still know each other, right, I know you. But we communicate less and less. Now I only talk to my sister and my friend.

[I don't feel like I've gone home when I go back to visit Hong Kong]. I can answer you, no. Because, first of all, my parents and my husband's parents are all gone, they are not in Hong Kong. Secondly, we sell our house before we come here. So we don't have any living location, or any home we can say, in Hong Kong. So when I go back to Hong Kong, I just stay in hotels. So I don't have any link. I don't have anything left behind. No belongings. My fist three years because

my husband stay there, we have a home there, I just think that I go back to home. But now, I can say is, Canada is my home.

In my heart, of course I'm Chinese, I'm Cantonese. Because, my lifestyle here, still keep mostly Chinese style, because we usually cook Chinese food. I watch Chinese news. Yeah, more Asian than Caucasian. Usually convenient is Chinese lifestyle, but I will easily adapt to all those Canadian people, anything. In home, you can see we have coffee, we have sandwich, [Western] snack, yeah. We don't eat rice in the midday. When I watch the weather, sometimes I would watch the English channels. I like to watch [English] movies at home because I can have closed caption. In HK, our activities, our enjoyment is go to watch a movie. But here, because my language, avoid me to go see the movie because, I don't understand. So as a biculture, basically, inside is like, Chinese because I understand every word and everything. Normally, lifestyle biculture because I have to communicate, I live in Canada, I treat myself as a Canadian, I will not say I am a Hong Kong, I got a Canadian citizenship, so although we have multi-citizenship. But I am Canadian.

The activities that I do are half and half. If I have Chinese friends, we go for dim sum. Depends on who I'm with, what they want. To be more like Canadian culture, we like to travel around. I know many Canadian, they don't usually fly, they usually drive. So we have short trips to hot springs, to the inside like Calgary, Edmonton, Banff. The Stampede. So, our lifestyle is very flexible. Only language is one of the things is, sometimes, when you meet some people, they talk so fast and use complicated words, so it's hard to understand. But when people talk simple English, we can communicate.

[This is what being bicultural means to me]. When people look at you, you are Chinese. But when people talk to you, then you can show them that you understand so many things in

Canada. So they know, you're really staying here, you really want your life to be here. And then, they will talk to you with confidence. Even when we go for shopping, we can communicate with the people who work there, and then we can talk so happy.

I think we are more lucky. Because we move from Hong Kong to here. We can have two culture. We can communicate with so many different countries, people. We have to know this country, we have to learn this country because we want to be in the same pace as our kids. We don't want to just sit back. If we fall back, we only suffer because they won't wait for you.

I love to be here. I got Caucasian friends here, our neighbours are all Caucasian so we can talk. We have Poland, Italian, Slovakia, Caucasian, and then Korean, Chinese, yeah we are here like a small community of biculture people. All from different country. I love it because, having multiculture, you can learn different kind of things. Different culture's things. And you can also enjoy different country's food. We go to the Japanese restaurant, order those rolls, and then we go to the ramen restaurant, order those noodles, but that's the top service food. But then, because of them, we know the local ramen or Japanese food. That is like, why not, like multiculture? So far so good. We are happy.

Dean's Narrative

Dean was born in Taiwan and moved to British Columbia 20 years ago. Here is his story about coming to Canada and integrating cultures.

When I determined on immigrate to Canada, it's for the children's education. In Taiwan, it's very competitive. You have to send them to schools, you had to send gift to the teachers to get a better grade. Then, after school, you sent [them] to tutoring that the teachers were teaching in. If you did not go there, you lose certain advantage. Why need to do this? For normal competition, yes, but for this kind of competition, it's not the right way to do. And also you will give the bad example to your children. Say why, [because of what the parents did or did not do,] they go the better graded. It's not so right.

After my first daughter turned one, we [made a trip] to Melbourne, Australia. [I noticed that Australia has], the internal situation, it's a different style of leader in Taiwan. And the living environment. The air, street, so clean. The first day, we went on the bus, we go to the beach, and we saw all the garden around each house. We asked the tour guide, can we stop. We go to the wall. And two or three hundred meter, that goes to the stream. To enjoy this kind of feeling. Then, after the ten days in Australia, we go home.

I never think about immigration at the time. In the tourist group, [we met some couples who were immigrating]. One time we have some gathering, they just mention, you also can apply for immigration. In these days, I was feeling stressed with my company. After getting married, [I got together with] three others and we set up our own company. We went around the Taiwan island, installing, going back to maintenance. But problem is, I don't know when I'm coming back [home]. I need to go to the work during the weekend too, so it's very stressed. At the time,

Canada start to have opportunity for professional group, so I applied for that. After half a year, we got the approval. They said that the job market is not so good, so you need to prepare for that.

So we come to Canada, and for the first half a year, we were happy, we got nothing to do. After half a year, I start to find a job, but, for the first three months, I cannot find job. Problem is, I don't have any experience in Canada, so I cannot [find a job]. My confidence very low at the time. So that was three months, I got panicked, I say, I cannot stay like this, and I go back to Taiwan and import an industrial PC [to Canada]. People [in Canada] were interested, but [not many actually purchased it]. It's very hard because it's not only you, your whole family look to you [to support them]. So I start looking for a contract jobs. After that I got a full-time job at a pager company. [I felt that I had established myself in Canada] after I have the full-time employment in '99. I feel more comfortable. We can start to enjoy your life in Canada, don't have too much concern. I left the company when the company started to go down, and go to another mobile switch company. My career started pick up because it's a full-time job now. Then, my current company acquired my previous company. This company is big.

Unfortunately, for the immigrant, the age difference for come to Canada will make up for the language barrier, different. Some, the accent, the word we using. So, that's the problem to us, but, for the most company, it's okay because they have the way to educate to fall into the same culture. The whole company is in Sweden. We become the certain culture they use [there]. Even we have the, side of China, in India, they also use the same culture. So this become, it's not difference now. The project is owned by the certain site. But [other] people will be working to support the site. Sometimes, you will go to their site, or people come from other office. Of course, the locals, they have certain way they are different. But, in general, it will be the same process because the company require you to follow it. So that's the good thing. So, they don't

really care about say, we're good speaking in English or not, but for other thing, you are the same.

So in Canada is a good thing, you can have a chance to get [to know] other people's culture. They are from the radio, or the TV program, or they will sometimes introduce between the culture on certain day. Even in the office, [they say] oh today's certain day, the background is blah, blah, blah. And locals [in the company] can interact, for the lost and found, for sale, for anything. You can ask for certain contractor, for good reputation. We ask around. So here, you can ask them for anything. That's the good thing.

In general, of course [the Taiwanese restaurants here are] similar as Taiwan. But there are some differences. Mostly we complain about the food service is small portion. In Taiwan, it cannot be such small. Actually, will be very contrasted. We'd rather go back to Taiwan. Just like the, eat sushi, you just got to, sushi, [it wouldn't be the same as if they] send us the sushi in Japan or in Tokyo. Because those kind of the predefined image about the food. [I also got exposed to different types of cuisines that I previously did not know about.] For example, in Taiwan, everybody go to a Vietnamese restaurant. We never eat Pho. Because we don't know. We just, every time we go there, we order like the, pork chop over rice. I don't remember I ate any Pho in the Taiwan. Oh come here, Oh there's Pho here.

But, starting from [when we moved] here we cook a lot for my children, for the different kind of food the Taiwanese food, Chinese food, Korean, Japanese food, even Thai food, Singapore food. We know how to cook it, and we prepare at home. So it's not only the regular dish we eat in Taiwan. Right now we eat a lot of variety. For example, I cook a lot of the Singapore Laksa noodle. That one, it's easy to make.

I think the most thing I lost, is the relationship. Because in Canada, all my friend is living in the very far, it's apart. Then, another thing is, I'm working in Canada. Most of my friend, they come here, they're almost retire. So they don't really need to work. Now it's like, if I go to work, they don't work, we don't really have any interception. So, certain topic, just repeatedly for the same, like, go to hunt the bear, again. And also, I cannot really make the friend [here], like the same I done in Taiwan. Maybe the culture is different, you cannot make very deep [friendship]. I know that, for those people who come to Canada, if they cannot expand their market, to all the people in Canada in the Eastern region, they have to start [expanding their business] with the friend, in the small circle. But, most people they understand [when that happens]. Every time they hear about it, they know. What will happen. So, sometimes very hard to maintain. [My friends in Taiwan] were more pure, just the friend. [Also,] in Taiwan, they will be the family to family, but here [we don't have family friends]. My wife, she has her own side, I have my side.

[The interactions I have with those born in Canada are] just co-worker. I maintain a good relationship with my previous co-worker. Actually, most of the time, I organize the gathering, like in the Chinese new year or before Christmas. But that's only the certain level, so not very deep. For the normal life, we do not hang out. I just hang out during the weekday. I left all my time to my family on the weekend or holiday.

The entertainment or activity, the way I did in Taiwan and in Vancouver, also very different. Most of the outdoor activity here, you can have in Taiwan, just limited. Here, pretty good. Taiwan is very small place. So you go there, see place is full with people. Even you have car, no place to park. And it's not so close around you. You have to go certain place to enjoy it. Here, just very close. You have park, you have everything close by. So, it's very easy for you to

have that. Even you can't find parking, you just need to be patient. Right, and nobody will fight with you. That's another good thing in Canada. Because in Canada, when you driving or doing anything, you will sense what's the other people they will do, as same as you. In [Canada], you don't--when you want to made the turn, press signal. People will yield to you. In Taiwan, you had to fight for you, for yourself. Otherwise, you will stay there, for a long time. And I really enjoy, wash my car or do the lawnmower, because in Taiwan, never have this chance.

I think most of the immigrant, they will be proud of themselves the region they come from. We are part of our origin, we accept we are part of our origin. If you just travel, tourist, no problem. But the thing is, once you become a citizen here, you have to fit into their society, the way they are living, the way they are, for the common part. You have kind of an obligation, otherwise you're still the foreigner. For certain parts, we cannot do that, you don't need to force yourself. I believe Canada pretty good they did not really force the different culture to need to adapt to one single stuff. But, you need to adapt, I mean you have to understand, you can adapt.

For example, maybe we did not participate Halloween every year. But at first we do. Because, we take our children go to the Halloween. My wife stay at home, distribute the candy. Then after my kid grow up, become teenager, they don't want to go. So, they will start to distribute the candy. I mean, you have to participate at a certain level.

A lot of things we do in [Canada], Taiwan, also do, for example, the monthly production for the charity, or like other donation. It's very common. In Taiwan, I think that the most they say, okay, just everybody, donate the same amount of money. It'll be easier. In [Canada], it's not really say that they won't care result. It's just that they want the people have chance to participate. I think that's another thing. They don't want you contribute your money, they want you

contribute your effort. That's different. You need to understand what's the real meaning. If you understand, then you won't, too afraid or reject.

Eric's Narrative

Eric was born in Mainland China and moved to British Columbia 14 years ago. Here is his story about coming to Canada and integrating cultures.

My life is, I would say, relatively, smooth, I don't have much up and downs in my life in considering moving to Canada. [I went to a top tier university and] went into one of the best employer in China [that] provide you potential for career growth and also the compensation was very good. So I was happy, and then I got married around 2000. My wife wanted to immigrate to Canada [after her sister, and later her mother immigrated to Canada]. My wife, she's pulling me to decide.

For me, certainly there's lots of forces that is driving me to the different direction. Initially, I was not very interested. I didn't think that my parents would support this, they don't want me to go. Also at that moment, in terms of my career everything was good. So if you go here, you have to start over everything again. But there's another side of me, is that, I have this kind of curiosity or desire to explore and experience the Western cultural lifestyle. So then in 2000, I said okay, maybe we can go to Canada and try for half a year or one year, and if something doesn't work or doesn't like, we can still come back. And uh, so I told my parents, and they' were definitely not willing to let me go, but they were not as, strong in their position as I expected, which was comforting.

Before I immigrate to Canada, I knew very little about Canada, quite frankly, but there's no bad things towards Canada because in Mainland China, Canada was portrayed as very friendly country. Plus my sister-in-law and family live there. So, we started the [application] process, yes.

We signed kind of a service contract with one of the consultants and so they provided all the information, and they helped us with all the paperwork. And also, for me, did not have the very strong desire to immigrate. So for me, it's just like, if they can do it, fine, if it doesn't work, it's won't hurt. So that kind of attitude, right, [but] the immigration process took, for us less than one year. So, by end of the, 2001, we received the landing paper.

Actually, my wife was kind of happy and excited, but for me, psychologically, [I was thinking,] oh this has really come true. This is real, I have to go, because at that moment, we didn't have kids but we had home there and lots of stuff. There's lots of things that's conflicting. But, since we've paid the fee, and my wife was expecting that, so for me there's no way out. But I managed to negotiate like a long-term leave because at that time I was not quite sure if I'm going to first, I will be able to settle down here, and second if I was going to like life here.

When we arrived here, the weather was actually not as cold as I expected. And the first few months, we lived with my sister-in-law. First few months, we went to Vancouver area and Victoria, and White Rock. Nearby places. Before we came here, our sister-in-law told us to get a driver license in China, so that's what I did. And then, [when I arrived, I] had my driver license translated. And there's lots of [tasks we needed to do to settle, such as getting] social insurance, health card, and in spring, [and we also] went to free workshops for new immigrants to prepare your resume. I think it was useful because here, the format is different, the information is different, the focus is different [from resumes in China]. And we also went to free English training for new immigrant.

In spring, we moved to a rental home. That time, we've been there for half a year, we have to figure out, how to get a job, or, we can't rely on our savings for the rest of our time. We're starting to feel kind of a pressure, psychologically and also financially. At that time, the

IT sector [, the area of my career,] was down totally here, so it's really hard to find a job. At that time, I wasn't sure I was going to stay here. I was still thinking of going back, in the first year. For us, [we were] lucky [because] we hang out with other, new immigrant from Mainland China from local church group and also we have relatives here, so we know if we are in need they would help us. The first year didn't go as well as we hoped, but we still got to know some new people, so you had this kind of group that you can talk to, and share stories until you find out, everyone had same kind of experience or same difficulty at the beginning, so you don't feel as much stressful or as uncertain, or painful, as you would if you didn't have this kind of groups. And also people would share information, they shared some kind of tips, on things like how to make progress. And, there're things that I liked about [Canada], the natural environment here, and also I experienced [that] the society and the government is more transparent and more accountable compared to China. By the end of the year, [my wife] got a job. At least, we didn't feel as much pressure as before.

In 2003, one of the people I know introduced me to one of the local produce store. I went there, worked as a stock person. Basically, you put the vegetables and fruits on display. I felt that you have to take work available because you realize that, probably things will not be as good as you expected. In fact at some point I enjoyed the work as a stock person. I got along with other people, and most of them, they're immigrants, some of them share similar kind of background with me, and [the job] made me feel a little bit energetic. Because you have actually a lot of exercise, you're always working in fresh air, and I enjoyed employee discount on fruits and vegetables. I was there for about 3 or 4 months, and then, my brother-in-law, he has a friend who needed some people to do software testing, and I happened to be in that field. [So I started that

job.] I think, even I started that job, from time to time I was still thinking probably, going back to China, but my wife, basically, she was not going back.

[After] we bought our first car, the summer of 2003, we drove to Banff and Jasper for ten days, and by that time I was starting to enjoy the life here. We drove all the way, stayed in some of the camps in interior cities, and it was quite a very positive experience, 'cause we met people along the way. It was nice to get to know the Canadian way of life. Before this trip we didn't know, what's a tent, so we just needed to experience this and, okay this is kind of healthy way of life and how you enjoy your spare time. Along the trip I talked to strangers and they were quite nice and friendly. So that enhanced the perception of the experience about life here.

By the end of 2003, I thought we find that, we started to feel like being in home. Especially sometime we went down to the States, and you came back. When you approach the border and you feel, okay this is the place that you can stay. You have this feeling, it's not that you have that kind of strong longing for hometown, but you still feel kind of something that you can go there, rest. So this kind of feelings, they gradually formed over at least two years.

I think for me, the reason [why I decided to stay] is that, I see something that I like about here. Also I think for the first year I had more frequent contact with the friends and colleagues and family back in China, but after one year I still made contact with them but not as frequent as it used to be, because one is that you start a regular job, and you don't have that kind of attention. And also, I think when you, away for some period of time, there's not much of a new conversation you can start, and only you just talking about something that happened before. So at the end of 2003, I was thinking that it was a time for me to make a kind of a permanent decision. If you leave your home country for too long, the longer you're away, the harder you get back. As I made the new friends here, and had lots of hopes, and lots of new activities going on here. I

think you know, what does work most for me [to decide to stay was that there was], no major setback or hardship. My wife, her family's here. And that's played a big role for us to settle down quickly here. I know some of the folks, I know they stay there, works in the factories before they are able to move on to find something that they can utilize their educated skills.

I started the MBA program in 2005, and by 2007, I finished MBA. And that's by 2007, my first daughter was born, so it made harder for me to go back to China. It took us about seven years [from] when we first entered, arrived here, for us to settle down here and feel comfortable. So then, 2009, we bought our first home here. Everything transitioned to more stable, and you feel, you now have local experience and also along the way, I have more exposure to the cultures and also how to interact properly, and also learn some customs here.

I think education alone is not a guarantee of your job, but also you need local cultural and social [experiences], it's very important for you to interact, to make advance in the social environment. And another thing is the personal commitment. I see that people coming back and forth [between Canada and their home country] and, in the long-term, I think actually, lose both end. If you come here intent to stay, then you have to put in the hard work, and also if you have commitment, you have to look at the long-term, you can't just expect things to change overnight.

Before 2007, you still don't have the feeling that you are, Canadian enough or confident enough that you can call Canada a permanent home. Family is one of the bigger, very important consideration we call Canada home. I think when you have kids here, that becomes one of major factors, because once you have family you kind of have a sense of responsibility, you don't want to give them conflict, take away something from them.

[Being bicultural means] I can comfortably enjoy both sides. I think that is the advantage. For example, I have university classmates or friends [in China] who have quite good living in

China, but it's not just about the money. This has to be a part of you. You can't buy this kind of bicultural experience. For example, I enjoy Chinese food and other, different style of Western foods, but lots of people, they don't have this kind of exposure, and they can't enjoy Westerner cuisines. For me, I can enjoy both sides, it's one of the beautiful things.

Frank's Narrative

Frank was born in Japan and moved to British Columbia 17.5 years ago. Here is his story about coming to Canada and integrating cultures.

When I was 13 years old, my mother [saw an article in the newspaper about] two Mormon, missionaries from Utah looking for a cultural exchange. So my mother told me, do you want to learn English? And I said yeah, I'd like to learn English. I felt, that was very special. Because, at that time, it's like, what, 1989. And you get two private, English speaking tutor coming to your house once a week. I will call that beginning of my journey to be multicultural.

I then got very interested in the mechanics of English. So I went on to high school, and at the high school, I was learning words and idioms, every day, to the end of high school. So, by the time I graduated with a high school degree I finished university [level] syntax and grammar. I decided to go to a university in Japan, specializing in English.

When I was first year of junior college, one of my friend says there is a scholarship that they are calling for you to go to Canada. I was like, why Canada. Canada didn't have, the first appeal to me. I didn't have any negative, impression, I just had a zero impression. I just knew that they probably speak English there. But that's the only options that was available for me as a scholarship opportunity, for the junior college, and I applied for it, and fortunately got accepted to come to Canada, and study for a month and a half, at a summer language institute [at a college].

I went there with least expectation, and I think, I was pleasantly surprised by it. First of all, the, airport and air, the exact impression of me of Canada, oh fresh, beautiful air, crisp and spearmint. So that changed me, about oh Canada has nature, its beautiful nature.

The first time I landed in Canada, uh the first week, determined, moved me. I was 19 when I came here, I extended my stay. When I went back to Japan I think my heart and brain was left in Canada. Yeah, so I went back, finished my degree, and saved money. My heart was decided. Uh, so, second time I was here, [it was] my permanent move. That was um, so in terms of purpose of me moving here, I thought that it serves two purposes, I can continue to polish my English skill and I can pursue a career. And, after I came back, I lived with my home stay family for a year and a half.

Everything [about Canada was] so new and fresh for me, it's so different for me. Like, the way they think, the way they talk, they use the different language, of course English. When I was in Japan, in the junior college, I didn't have the environment that I could fluently use my English. So, I was quite, frustrated and dissatisfied, then. So finally, I get to be in an environment. Everybody speak English. Very fluently. I felt really liberated. I think I'm a strange person, when I went [through high school and university in Japan], I always felt some different, I'm not conforming to, other Japanese kind of common-sense customs and, so I didn't I didn't fit in, so much. I think I'm selfish, quite, and I'm kind of rebellious too, and I think that was not good, if I have to continue living in Japan. I felt quite suffocated, by that. When I came to Canada, the experience told me, no, you don't need to do that. I just expressed slowly, slowly, and people accepted me. I think my home stay family accepted me for who I am, as I am. So I was quite reassured, quite validated, liberated.

So the second time, I was much focused, and I just devoted my time to study. I remember I was studying like, straight, Monday to, uh, Friday. Saturday until 5 o'clock. Sunday I study all through. For two years I um, I prohibited, Japanese. So I want to forget my mother language. 'Cause until then, I have something that I want to say in Japanese, I translated to

English and I said it. So I say I can't do this I don't have time for this, [so I said,] maybe I can give myself a birth again, and just collect English words and, I really completely immersed myself to live as a Canadian English speaker. I didn't watch any Japanese show, nothing has a Japanese character on it. I didn't, think that I need them anymore, at that time. I just wanted to be purely, this culture.

It was a challenge, but it was a very pleasant challenge. I was immersing myself to Canadian culture. My home stay family took me in as their son, so I was lucky enough to experience of living in a Canadian family, eating Canadian food, Canadian culture, customs, this tradition. And that's the first moment that was introduced to so-called "Canadian" culture and, I think I learned a lot from home stay family.

I played a lot too. At that time I had a group of friends, I'm the only Japanese, out of the group of six. And I only allocated Saturday, for that playtime. But, they taught me a lot. At the very beginning I didn't really understand them. But, as the time goes, I got to joke with them, I got to hang out. I got to experience in first hand, that's what friends do, and this thing called, hang out and, they hang out at each other's apartment, and have a party. That's how I learned. The word that I wanted to choose was more naturally and contextually valid here because of course I just picked it up from home stay family or what my friends said. That's how it was, I was, absorbing. Not only language, but culture.

So I did two years at Douglas College, and I transferred to SFU to finish up my bachelor's degree in psychology. I was in SFU, almost finishing SFU. And I was looking for my signature, area of research. So that's the time that I started fostering that bicultural, academic identity, I think it began as a way to, distinguish myself, appreciate this, Japaneseness that's living in my heart and I haven't paid much attention to. I brought it back and wove, those

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Japanese cultureness into my academic work and into my identity. And Master's program here at UBC is where that really bloomed and blossomed.

I graduate with Master's degree, I was working as family therapist for three plus years. And that time I could maneuver different culture really well. When I was working with families, I got fascinated by resilience that a family allowed me to witness. [I wanted to see,] if I could see this shining piece, in the midst of, this much of magnitude of suffering, what more shiny hope do I get to witness, from the people who have experienced war. So I went, backpacked, dozen post-conflict zone. [Afterwards, for my PhD dissertation topic,] I ended up developing a program, brought it back to Rwanada living here, implementing it. But throughout that one year, I was allowed to live, really as one Rwandan citizen. I shut all the contacts with the local Japanese or expat community, and I was immersing myself in the Rwandese culture, I ate the dinner always at, so what we call slum. I was looking for, what does local live? And I wonder, I say give me a Rwandese, breakfast. It just what is it, they call it Sosomat. It's um, sorghum, soy, and maize flour, and they actually make a porridge. It was delicious. So I like that. So when I travel, I always want to eat, what local people eat.

So I really understood what it means to be an average, Rwandese citizen. I never felt alone. There's one person who did assistant for me, for a year. He as a family and they, took me as their brother, and they introduced me to the local culture, where they shop, where they go in their leisure time, where they can go, and where they can't, because of their financial situation as well. I was really included, I felt like. I dressed really meager, as well. I joke all the time, and they invited me, to be part of them. It taught me a lot of things because they don't have a concept of time, of private space, and they don't have a concept of I own this food, and they share.

UK, I went straight from Rwanda to do clinical internship for a year. I used to say to my British colleague, hey you guys have chivalry like we have a samurai code, and they have principles, like honor, loyalty, humility, care for the ladies is what they called. I really understood UK culture and what it means to be a gentleman, and what it means to be a lady, and what it means to be, high in etiquette, politeness, courtesy, respect. I actually buy that. And also food. I absorbed, British food, kind of, yeah, beans and toast, or egg and soldier, high tea, as well marmite. Uh, Devon cream tea.

And the UK Rwandese, and Japanese culture, I found it quite similar. So, if I was in Rwanda and UK behaving Canadian, American, kind of free-spirited, individualistic, assertive manner, they didn't like it. I had to really acquire back the Japanese etiquette in order for me to be received well in Rwanda and UK. And when I was in Rwanda, I acquired bit of Rwandese accent, and when I was in UK, I acquired lots of British accent. I had to speak, intonate, in a very different way, otherwise they don't they don't understand, so, you're shaped, naturally. Otherwise I couldn't function.

 Putting on this, continuum of me being bicultural, it's really interesting, because, my Japanese stops at the age of 19. Where myself was, in a particular phase, teen years, enjoying lots of party scenes. Since I came to Canada, although I have a two three years of very beginning, the rest is just dedicated to academic work and study. So, depending on the phase that I lived in either the countries and the language that I spoke, I seem to emit this funny self in Japanese, and serious self in English. I just feel I'm a little bit more complex than, if I'm Japanese, then I'm easy, light, and English I'm always serious. Formally I can balance well.

I don't think my body distinguishes the, serious things done in English, light things done in Japanese, I think my body is capable of both. When I was staying in Africa, for a year, I had to

speak English. I was saying nothing but jokes, because I had to do that to form a relationship with local people. Also, like academic setting, if it's already serious, I tend to make a lot of joke. So it's quite um, yeah I think part of my personality and culturality is, the result of how I had to live, my life, to it.

Personally, I think, I'm more light, in Japanese, and I get more serious in English. My body tend to resort to and use this Japanese channel to wind down. Because my work is mostly in English. So let's say if I move to Japan, and my work shifts to Japanese, and I might be looking for a British, or a Canadian game shows or something. To restore my homeostasis or something like that. Otherwise I literally feel that my head is going to explode.

If I'm immersing myself too much in this culture, I feel the crave to absorb and digest, chew, more Japanese, culture. It happens in the literal food that I eat, too. I swing back and forth, mostly Japanese, but sometimes I crave Western food, I like barbecue, rib, chicken wings with beer, pizza, McDonald. So I do actually live in two culture or two cultures are balancing me, out. And beyond, like I said I had stayed in Rwanda and stay in UK, so certain things I just had to have it. So, those four culture, actually balance me out. That's what it feels like.

I do feel Canadian. For me, Canadian is, when you go to UN, it has huge flags collection. That's Canada to me, it was immigrant countries. I don't think anywhere in the world, you feel like you're validated as saying, I'm Canadian, but with a roots of Japanese. Bit of Rwandese and UK. I feel very proud of that. It's almost like, anybody can be Canadian, and Canada is a globe, and my personal globe, represent the one country and I feel proud of that.

When I [met the friend from Utah who taught me English], I became bicultural. I became multicultural when I moved to Canada. I chose both. But not without other peoples' support, giving me options and chance. First time my mom. And the first time I arrived here is my friend

who says hey there's a scholarship, you should apply. Every corner of my life, going to Rwanda, or UK, there's always people around, who enabled me that option. So, very thankful. And looking back, I could choose, choose to stay in Japan, choose not to go. When you take responsibility, I think you can take responsibility for the challenge you'd face, do you face.

[Being bicultural or multicultural,] it's a collection, I think. Collection, and synthesis. I think. I think it has to have two components, to be bicultural, multicultural, one you have to have 'you,' I think. What does it mean to be 'me.' Sometimes good, sometimes bad, but I do have a character, and I hold onto that. I cherish it, and I accept that, and I want to hold onto that. I have a core self, and a character description set, for myself. But that 'me' seems to be collecting all these culturalities. Culturality, by that it means that everything existent in every culture, people, things, my memory, activities and experience, things that I did I seem to collect, different culturality and I cherish it hold on to it, use it sometimes. It's culture habit, custom, tradition, food, values. People. Families. So, it is like a pirate's, treasure box, you open collecting this, jewellery pieces. It's functional, it helps me to live my life. I love living my life multiculturally. That makes me want to collect more culture. I'll get more functional, and it will be more and more fun. No matter where I'll be, I'll be able to get my life-mission completed. I'm excited to go at various other places too. Because of my multicultural background, I should be able to maneuver really well around the globe.

Themes among the Narrated Experiences

This section describes themes and subthemes generated following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic content analysis. Themes and subthemes were extracted using participants' narratives that presented in the previous section, looking for similarities between the participants' narratives. The reader is reminded that the narrative analysis, while similar in procedure to other qualitative methods, is not aimed to generalize to the population. Rather, the aim of this section was to provide a picture of similar experiences that arose within participants in this study, providing thick descriptions using excerpts of the narratives. The themes were based on the purpose of the study, to describe the process of cultural integration, as narrated by long-term, adult immigrants.

Five themes emerged from the participants' narratives: (a) building cultural knowledge, (b) distance from heritage culture and lifestyle, (c) incorporating multiple cultures into lifestyle, (d) application of cultural competence, and (e) developing a personal balance of the cultures. Each theme had up to three subthemes, for a total of 14 subthemes. The following table summarizes the themes and subthemes with their description, and provides an example of each of the subthemes. The examples are quotes taken from the participants' narratives and follow their exact wordings as closely as possible.

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Theme/Subtheme Name	Description	Example (verbatim)
1. **Building cultural knowledge**	**Gaining new cultural knowledge and improving communication**	
1a. Initial limitation in communicating in English	Initial limitation in communicating in English, and gradually improving skills in a culturally and contextually relevant way	*At the very beginning I didn't really understand them. But, as the time goes, I got to joke with them, I got to hang out. I got to experience in first hand, that's what friends do, and this thing called, hang*

Theme/Subtheme Name	Description	Example (verbatim)
		out and, they hang out at each other's apartment, and have a party. That's how I learned. (Frank)
1b. Commitment to learning the Canadian culture	Commitment to immerse oneself in the local environment	*Once you become a citizen here, you have to fit into their society, the way they are living, the way they are… you have to understand, you can adapt.* (Dean)
1c. Limited exposure to Canadian culture due to family's low acculturation	Moving in with family/relatives in Canada and sense of disengagement with Canadian culture	*Moving in with my aunt and uncle may have also slowed down my sense of connection to the Canadian culture because my aunt and uncle are ingrained in their Chinese or Malaysian culture.* (Andy)
2. Distance from heritage culture and lifestyle	**Awareness of the increased distance between the self and heritage culture, actively disengaging themselves from their heritage culture in Canada, or passively noticing the distance with their heritage culture and lifestyle over time.**	
2a. Awareness of personal differences from heritage cultural group in Canada	Noticing differences among their heritage cultural group living in Canada, either through active disengagement from heritage culture in Canada, or awareness of the distance with heritage culture and lifestyle	*My friends tell me I'm more white-washed ... I don't practice a lot of my culture here nowadays, and my friends hang onto their own ways.* (Andy)
2b. Inaccessibility to authentic heritage culture in Canada	Not having access to own heritage culture, or one that was authentic enough	*In general, of course [the Taiwanese restaurants here are] similar as Taiwan. But there are some differences.* (Dean)
2c. Gradually losing touch with friends from heritage culture	Awareness that the frequency of contact with friends from the hometown had declined over time	*When you, away for some period of time, there's not much of a new conversation you can start, and only you just talking about something that happened before.* (Eric)

Theme/Subtheme Name	Description	Example (verbatim)
3. Incorporating multiple cultures into own world	**Actively adopting new ways of living as a result of gaining new cultural knowledge**	
3a. Incorporating new cultural practices	New cultural practices adopted into their lifestyles since moving to Canada	*I drink coffee, talk to people in English, of course talk to some people in Chinese, but we talk about hockey games, basketball games in Vancouver.* (Ben)
3b. Re-incorporating heritage cultural practices	Re-incorporating heritage cultural practices, post-transition	*I brought back and wove, those Japanese cultureness into my academic work and into my identity.* (Frank)
4. Application of cultural competence	**Applying and refining cultural competence through frequent practice, and coming to value the multicultural environment and cultural competence**	
4a. Refining cultural competence	The ability to make use of their skills to work in various cultural environments	*When I work, I have to face so many Caucasian people, so many different people, and I have to adjust myself, my culture … And that period, when I go home, I'm like a Chinese mom.* (Catherine)
4b. Valuing the multicultural environment	The appreciation towards the multicultural environment that Canada offered	*Canada is a good thing, you can have a chance to get [to know] other people's culture.* (Dean)
4c. Sense of advantage of having cultural competence	Sense that having cultural competence as beneficial, servicing a purpose, and a tool for continued personal growth	*It is like a pirate's, treasure box, you open collecting this, jewellery pieces. It's functional, it helps me to live my life.* (Frank)
5. Developing a personal balance of the cultures	**Finding a balance among the multiple cultures, being validated for who they are, and awareness of the short-term fluctuation of cultural preference**	
5a. Description of one's unique cultural identity	Unique cultural identities described by participants	*We're not Canadian, we're not Chinese, we're not a hundred percent Chinese, but we talk about things and event happening in Vancouver, but we also chat about*

Theme/Subtheme Name	Description	Example (verbatim)
		things happening in HK or Taiwan. (Ben)
5b. Affirmation and validation of own cultural identity in Canada	Feeling validated and accepted by others of own differences	*I have come to terms with my differences because people are accepting of the differences in Canada.* (Andy)
5c. Awareness of short-term fluctuation of cultural preference	Awareness of fluctuating needs in order to maintain a sense of well-being and a balanced lifestyle	*If I'm immersing myself too much in this culture, I feel the crave to absorb and digest, chew, more Japanese, culture.* (Frank)

Theme 1: Building Cultural Knowledge

One prominent theme generated in the experience of integrating multiple cultures was gaining new cultural knowledge and improving the spoken language that is contextually relevant over time. Subthemes under this theme are: (a) initial limitation in communicating in English, (b) commitment to learning the Canadian culture, and (c) Limited exposure to Canadian culture due to family's low acculturation

Subtheme 1.A: Initial limitation in communicating in English

Five out of the six participants in the study discussed how their cultural adjustment was hampered initially by their limited English skills and how it improved over time as they continued to immerse themselves in the local culture. Dean, for example, stated how "the age difference for come to Canada will make up for the language barrier ... So, that's the problem to us." However, the language barrier was not the only factor to cultural adjustment difficulties that arose in this theme. Andy described that the challenge he faced was not a result of language barriers, but rather of not "know[ing] what to say ... It didn't occur to me that it's ok for me to say my opinion."

As the participants continued to live in Canada and interacted in the local environment, they gained more knowledge about the local culture and acquired language skills that was relevant in that environment. This was described by the following quote by Frank, who described how he picked up cultural knowledge and language through spending time with his friends.

At the very beginning I didn't really understand them. But, as the time goes, I got to joke with them, I got to hang out … That's how I learned. The word that I wanted to choose was more naturally and contextually valid here because of course I just picked it up from home stay family or what my friends said. That's how it was, I was, absorbing. Not only language, but culture.

Subtheme 1.B: Commitment to learning the Canadian culture

The decision to immerse oneself in the local environment was a personal commitment shared by five participants. For example, Dean stated, "once you become a citizen here, you have to fit into their society, the way they are living, the way they are … you have to understand, you can adapt." For Catherine, the experience was narrated as a responsibility she had to take on for her two sons.

I'm forced to involve [in the Canadian culture] sometime because my sons have education here, I go to the school to talk to the teachers. And then we have language barrier to talk to people. It's like quite stressed because we have to talk in English. But, because my son likes to play soccer and has to play in the game, and he has to understand what the coach is saying, I will be a translator for him, to know what the coach wants him to do.

Catherine and Dean additionally incorporated cognitive processes they held on to in order to cope through these stressful periods. Catherine added the following coping mindset after the previous passage, "but still, it's not a job. If you don't got paid, people don't require too much

from you," which reflected how she coped by downplaying the importance of having to communicate in good English. Dean stated, "for the most company, it's okay because they have the way to educate to fall into the same culture ... Even if we [are in] China, in India, they also use the same culture."

Subtheme 1.C: Limited exposure to Canadian culture due to family's low acculturation

This subtheme was described by Andy and Catherine as how they initially moved in with their family or relatives when they arrived in Canada, and how they felt disengaged with the Canadian culture because of it. Andy explicitly stated this subtheme, stating how living with his relatives "may have also slowed down my sense of connection to the Canadian culture because my aunt and uncle are ingrained in their Chinese or Malaysian culture." Similarly, Catherine echoed Andy's experience, saying how when she initially came to Canada, she felt her lifestyle was very Chinese, and she and her family "Only we move our house in Canada. We talk in Cantonese, eat Chinese food, go to Chinatown to do grocery shopping to get Chinese veggie, Chinese food. Everything is Chinese." While only two participants shared this subtheme, it appeared to take a large portion of the participants' experience and emerged as a subtheme that may affect participants' process of gaining new cultural knowledge.

Theme 2: Distance From Heritage Culture and Lifestyle

This theme is characterized by the participants' awareness of the increased distance from their heritage culture, either through actively disengaging themselves from their heritage culture in Canada, or passively noticing the distance with their heritage culture and lifestyle over time. The former was seen in Ben and Frank's experiences of making a conscious decision to move away from their heritage culture, as narrated by Ben, "Whereas some of my friends were talking

about English soccer, Hong Kong operas, and the Chinese channel. The first thing to me was to cut the Chinese channel." The latter may be read through narratives by participants such as Eric, whose contact with friends from their country of origin gradually decreased. Eric noted, "I think when you, away for some period of time, there's not much of a new conversation you can start, and only you just talking about something that happened before." Participants gave examples of points when they became aware of the distance.

Subtheme 2.A: Awareness of personal differences from heritage cultural group in Canada

While it may be a given that participants noticed differences between themselves and those who originally grew up in the local Canadian culture, many participants also felt some differences among their heritage cultural group who also were born in Asia but were living in the country. Participants recognized how their personal preference and/or lifestyle did not necessarily match with others from their heritage culture. Some reflected on differences stemming from the timing that the transition took place in their lifestyles. For example, Dean reflected how many of his acquaintances from Taiwan living here transitioned to Canada at the age of retirement, and over time, he noticed, "we don't really have any interception. So, certain topic, just repeatedly for the same." Others noticed differences in their degree of cultural integration compared to others in their lives. Andy became aware of the differences through his friends in Canada, who told him "I'm more white-washed ... I don't practice a lot of my culture here nowadays, and my friends hang onto their own ways." Ben shared his observation of some of his acquaintances from China not trying "Western fruits or foods" and how he felt such strategy lacked "flexibility to learn something from the local."

Subtheme 2.B: Inaccessibility to one's authentic heritage culture in Canada

Two participants, Dean and Andy, expressed that they could not access to their heritage culture, or one that they felt was authentic enough. Dean shared that Taiwanese restaurants in Canada are similar to those from his heritage country, "but there are some differences." Andy shares his difficulty finding those who speak Malay.

> What's unique about growing up in Malaysia is, we mix and jumble words like English, Chinese, and Malay together ... I don't do that here because no one will understand me. I converse with some of my friends [and family] in Mandarin ... But I don't know anyone here who speaks Malay.

Andy was the only participant who explicitly described this subtheme. He had multiple experiences of missing aspects of his heritage culture, and of the Canadian culture when he moved back to Malaysia for a year. He shared for example, "The Western food in Malaysia didn't feel authentic, and I missed that too. I had everything I was used to growing up, but I missed Canada." He shared the following connection between his identity and having access to his heritage culture.

> I want to get back closer to my Malaysian culture, because it's an important part of my identity and I feel like I'm losing it. It's harder living on my own and not having many Malaysians around, because there's no one to interact with in terms of language or things we do.

Four of the participants did not mention this subtheme, on not being able to access their authentic heritage culture. Frank was the only participant in this study who did not live with his family or relatives when he first moved. However, he shared how he chose to disengage himself from his Japanese culture, and this subtheme was not observed in his narrative.

Subtheme 2.C: Gradually losing touch with friends from heritage culture

Participants were aware how the frequency of contact with their friends from their hometown had declined over time. Eric described his challenges of creating a lifestyle here that accommodates frequent contact with his friends. Moreover, he reflected that "when you, away for some period of time, there's not much of a new conversation you can start, and only you just talking about something that happened before." Catherine narrated a similar point, saying that while she kept in touch with her sister and some friends through email and social media, over time, she had lost contact with many of her coworkers because, "We are all busy with our lives." While their experiences bring up some limitations to staying connected across geographical distances, as Andy stated, "But whenever I go back and reach out, it feels back to normal, like time stood still and nothing has changed," some relationships crystallized and became a secure resource for participants over time.

Theme 3: Incorporating Multiple Cultures Into Own World

This theme is described by how participants actively adopted new ways of living as a result of gaining new cultural knowledge. It is composed of two subthemes that reflect the dimensions of bicultural integration: integrating new cultural practices, beliefs, and values, and maintaining, integrating, or re-integrating that of the heritage culture.

Subtheme 3.A: Incorporating new cultural practices

Most adults in this study shared in detail new cultural practices they adopted into their lifestyles. For example, Dean shared in the following narrated passage how he learned and began cooking cuisines of different countries since moving to Canada.

But, starting from [when we moved] here we cook a lot for my children, for the different kind of food the Taiwanese food, Chinese food, Korean, Japanese food, even Thai food,

Singapore food. We know how to cook it, and we prepare at home. So it's not only the

regular dish we eat in Taiwan. Right now we eat a lot of variety.

As seen from Dean's excerpt, most common examples participants communicated this subtheme

were through changes in their daily activities, particularly at home. Ben shared that he "[drank]

coffee, talk to people in English, of course talk to some people in Chinese, but we talk about

hockey games, basketball games in Vancouver." Similar dietary and hockey game examples

were given by Catherine, who further described how she gradually learned the game rules and

deepened her knowledge about the teams and their players. Andy indicated his degree of cultural

integration through his description of his apartment, saying, "You wouldn't know that an Asian

person lived there if you didn't know it was my home."

Subtheme 3.B: Re-incorporating heritage cultural practices

This subtheme emerged from two participants, Andy and Frank. The subtheme is

characterized by the experience of re-incorporating their heritage cultural practices, post-

transition. Frank, who led a local Canadian lifestyle during his home stay period and after he

moved out on his own, eventually brought "back and wove, those Japanese cultureness into my

academic work and into my identity." He reconnected with his heritage culture after collecting

new cultural practices into his lifestyle. Similarly, Andy shared his wishes to reconnect with his

heritage cultural knowledge "because it's an important part of my identity and I feel like I'm

losing it."

This theme described the cultural integration and adaptation process that adults who

transitioned over to Canada experienced as they acquire knowledge and begin to identify with

the cultural practice, belief, or value of two or multiple cultures.

Theme 4: Application of Cultural Competence

This theme describes how over time, participants applied and refined their cultural competency through frequent practice, most often through interactions at work, and how they came to value the multicultural environment and their cultural competence.

Subtheme 4.A: Refining cultural competence

As Eric stated, "I have more exposure to the cultures and also how to interact properly," in this subtheme, participants described their ability to make use of their skills to work in various cultural environments. Ben narrated that his cultural identity "depends on the environment... it pretty much depends on who I mingle with." Catherine describes her journey of learning to work in a Canadian environment, and having to switch her cultural identity depending on her clients, as well as when she went from work to home.

> I have to talk like Canadian, and of course it's very hard in the beginning because I know nothing. But, slowly, I being morphed in Canadian…When I work, I have to face so many Caucasian people, so many different people, and I have to adjust myself, my culture… And that period, when I go home, I'm like a Chinese mom. When I go work, I feel myself like, Canadian. I don't feel very comfortable. When I go home I change to my Cantonese, and then I have to work [in English].

As is evident from Catherine's passage, this was a gradual skill that formed over time, as participants adjusted their own behaviours, language, assertiveness, activities, conversation topics, and/or their personalities to match the context. Andy situated himself in his process of building cultural competency in the Canadian work environment as, "I'm getting better at voicing my opinion, but even today I am more on the reserved side in meetings at work." As indicated in

Catherine's and Andy's narrative, these experiences suggest some discomfort as participants learn to adjust their behaviours.

Catherine and Andy discussed how they built new cultural skills and had applied it in the new culture. Frank described learning to utilize previously-acquired cultural knowledge while exploring cultures that he had been to previously.

And the UK Rwandese, and Japanese culture, I found it quite similar. So, if I was in Rwanda and UK behaving Canadian, American, kind of free-spirited, individualistic, assertive manner, they didn't like it I had to really acquire back, the Japanese etiquette, in order for me to be received well in Rwanda and UK.

The quote describes how Frank explored how he learned to use his cultural competency skills in different countries, tapping into previously acquired knowledge to better interact with the environment. Similarly to how Frank became aware of overlaps in appropriate ways to behave across different environments, Ben also stated, "I see that the local Canadian and Chinese culture share the same attitude [in their view of continued learning]," reflecting on shared cultural values. Both noticed shared values between cultures and applied previously acquired cultural competency skills with the new environments, adjusting and refining it as he learned the new culture.

Subtheme 4.B: Valuing the multicultural environment

While describing their cultural competence, participants noted their appreciation towards the multicultural environment that Canada offered. As Dean stated, "Canada is a good thing, you can have a chance to get [to know] other people's culture," adults in the study expressed their value towards the multicultural environment in Canada, which allowed different alternatives from which to make daily life decisions and socially interact in different contexts. Ben added

how fun it is to have friends from different national backgrounds and culture. A similar point was made by Eric, who further added, "You can't buy this kind of bicultural experience." It was made clear by adults in this study who identified themselves as being bicultural that they place significant value in being in a multicultural environment in order to foster the skills and identification.

Subtheme 4.C: Sense of advantage of having cultural competence

Finally, four participants referred to their cultural competence skills as an asset, servicing a purpose, and a tool for continued personal growth. Ben and Catherine both discussed how learning and sharing different cultural knowledge with others with different ethnic background allow them to, "offer me a chance to open my eyes to see different things," and "learn "different culture's things." They felt a sense of advantage and happiness from the social interaction, as well as the concurrent building of cross-cultural knowledge. Catherine elaborated how having a cultural competency allows her to "show them that [I] understand so many things in Canada. Even when we go for shopping, we can communicate with the people who work there, and then we can talk so happy." Frank provided a metaphor in building his cultural competency as collecting a treasure.

> I seem to collect, different culturality and I cherish it hold on to it, use it sometimes. Its culture habit, custom, tradition, food, values. People. Families. So, it is like a pirate's, treasure box, you open collecting this, jewellery pieces. It's functional, it helps me to live my life.

Participants in this study shared their satisfaction of being able to apply their cultural skills and their growing excitement to continue enhancing their cultural competency as their knowledge and skills continued to expand and be refined.

Theme 5: Developing a Personal Balance of the Cultures

In this final theme, participants' shared stories on how they found a balance among the multiple cultures in themselves, that they are validated for who they are currently, and their awareness of the short-term fluctuation of their cultural preference. This concept was distinct from their cultural competence, which described the skillsets to adapt to the environment, in that it aimed to capture the participants' preferred balance of multiple cultures, irrespective of their skills and abilities.

Subtheme 5.A: Description of one's unique cultural identity

This subtheme emerged from the unique cultural identities described by the participants. It is evident from each participants' narratives that a description of their cultural identities requires more than a few sentences, and that every participant shared their unique blend and combination of the multiple cultures, highlighting different points. Catherine, for example, elaborated on her identity of being both Chinese and Canadian and how "Usually convenient is Chinese lifestyle, but I will easily adapt to all those Canadian people," thus emphasizing her ease of switching from one culture to another. Ben's narrative asserted his fused identity as Chinese-Canadian, which he described as, "we're not Canadian, we're not Chinese, we're not a hundred percent Chinese, but we talk about things and event happening in Vancouver, but we also chat about things happening in HK or Taiwan." At the same time, Ben also implied that he did not always identify everybody in the group, particularly when they "force the traditional Chinese way." His narrative indicates Bens' more nuanced view of bicultural identity. On a similar note, Andy described his personal culture as follows.

It's so much a negative thing, but I feel like I don't belong anywhere. I blend between two worlds, but I can't blend completely into Malaysia or Canada. It doesn't bother me too

much. I have come to terms with my differences. I am always aware of both cultures, although it won't be strictly 50-50, and there will be moments when you're one way or the other.

Here, Andy described his cultural configuration and his perceived positioning as being part of, but not completely, Malay or Canadian. Bicultural identities shared by adults in this study portray the complexity of internal identities and the placement of themselves with the multiple cultures.

Subtheme 5.B: Affirmation and validation of own cultural identity in Canada

When I came to Canada...I just expressed slowly, slowly, and people accepted me. I think my home stay family accepted me for who I am, as I am. So I was quite reassured, quite validated, liberated.

Similar to Frank's reflection above, this subtheme was extracted from participants' shared experiences that they felt validated and accepted by others of their differences. Dean stated that what he felt was a positive point about Canada was that they "did not really force the different culture to need to adapt to one single stuff." Participants described feeling self-validated through the acceptance felt by people in Canada, as stated by Andy, "I have come to terms with my differences because people are accepting of the differences in Canada."

Subtheme 5.C: Awareness of short-term fluctuation of cultural preference

This subtheme indicated how two participants, Andy and Frank, through developing and understanding their bicultural identities, became aware of their fluctuating needs in order to maintain a sense of well-being and a balanced lifestyle. Andy shared his fluctuating preferences to access his Malaysian culture, particularly when "things go bad," and how his preference for cultural cuisines varies more than his friends, who always choose Chinese or Hong Kong cuisine.

This short-term fluctuations of their cultural preference was also echoed by Frank. Frank explained his need to balance out the two cultures depending on how much of each side is expressed or not expressed at a certain period of time.

> If I'm immersing myself too much in this culture, I feel the crave to absorb and digest, chew, more Japanese, culture. It happens in the literal food that I eat, too. I swing back and forth, mostly Japanese, but sometimes I crave Western food, I like barbecue, rib, chicken wings with beer, pizza, McDonald. So I do actually live in two culture or two cultures are balancing me, out.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the main findings of this study. Next, I discuss the participants' reflections of using the lifeline and the validationgram exercises as a way to reflect on their experiences, and its utility in future research. I then review the literature on the process of bicultural identity integration. In particular, I address contributions of this study to the literature by discussing what is similar and unique about the findings in this study to existing knowledge of bicultural identity integration. The next section proceeds to discuss the implications of the findings in cross-cultural counselling. Future research directions will be addressed next and followed by limitations of this study.

Summary of the Inquiry

This research qualitatively examined how six long-term Asian immigrant adults in Canada narrated the process of integrating multiple cultures into their identity. I met each individual twice directly, the first time to share with them the purpose of the study and provide two exercises to help reflect on their experiences, and the second to hear their narrative over a course of two hours. All participants shared their trajectories taken to reach their unique bicultural/multicultural identities. Using the thematic content analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006), I became aware of non-linear shared themes between participants. Member checking was done twice; once when each of the interviews had been condensed into a summary, and the second after the themes had been finalized. Overall, there were no major points of concerns stated by the participants.

The following themes emerged as a result of the thematic content analysis: (a) building cultural knowledge, (b) distance from heritage culture and lifestyle, (c) incorporating multiple cultures into lifestyle, (d) application of cultural competence, and (e) developing a personal

balance of the cultures. Following the transition, participants shared how they proceeded to acquire knowledge about the new culture, as they described several points that helped them cope with the new culture. Participants narrated their sense of commitment to settle in Canada, and some actively limited their exposure to their heritage cultural lifestyle in order to settle themselves. Others described that their ties from back home and/or with their heritage cultural group in Canada faded with time. As participants acquainted themselves to the new cultural environment, they incorporated practices and values of the host culture into their own lives, while maintaining or regaining their heritage cultural ties. They narrated how they developed and refined their cultural competence through interacting regularly with the local environment, and shared their satisfaction towards their ability to function in different cultural demands. The participants felt accepted for who they were in Canada, and conveyed their pride towards being part of the multicultural environment. Finally, the participants described their current balance of multiple cultures, stressing their identification to both cultures while noting moments when they felt detached from either cultural groups because of their differing values or practices. One subtheme that emerged was the short-term fluctuation of cultural preferences.

Lifeline and Validationgram Exercises

The participants viewed the validationgram and lifeline exercises positively. The participants in this study did not report difficulties using the lifeline or the validationgram exercises. Andy, Ben, and Catherine asked for copies of the sample of the lifeline and validationgram exercises to refer to during the week between the initial meeting and the interview. The participants stated during the interview that the exercises helped provide some structure to their reflections. Ben, Catherine, and Frank requested copies of both exercises to keep.

Participants were given the option to start from wherever they thought was the optimal place to begin, using the validationgram or the lifeline exercise where they felt would help. All participants had both exercises laid out in front of them, and opted to follow the lifeline exercises during the interview. Andy and Frank specifically took time to look at the validationgram during the interview, after exploring the lifeline. Ben and Eric stated that all the information in the validationgram had already been discussed during the interview as they followed the lifeline exercise.

Participants in this study preferred using the lifeline exercise as a way to form their narratives chronologically. Nevertheless, they also seemed to write down key information from the validationgram into the lifeline exercise. While the lifeline helped participants recall information over the years, the validationgram allowed them to reflect on different aspects of their lives during a particular time. Based on the participants' comments, the lifeline and the validationgram appear to be complementary exercises that help provide structure to individuals during the reflection process and during the interview.

The lifeline exercise and the validationgram proved beneficial for myself in a number of ways. First, the lifeline provided a visual for me to follow along with each participant. The lifeline in particular allowed me to understand the participant's sense of well-being and how it shifted through the course of their lives. Second, because the participants' experiences were laid out in the two exercise sheets, it allowed a way for the participant and myself to refer back to their lifeline or validationgram when the interview went off-topic, or when one topic ended. Finally, the lifeline and validationgram proved to be useful sources to compare and confirm or disconfirm the narrative and themes during the data analysis.

The benefits of using both exercises were confirmed in this study. The exercises allowed the participants to structure their unique narratives while offering different aspects of their lives to reflect on. Both the lifeline and validationgram were simple enough to be used by the participants. This study confirms the utility of both exercises for qualitative research on cross-cultural psychology.

Contributions to the Acculturation Literature

This section revisits the acculturation literature to compare research findings. This section is split into two sections. Findings from this study are compared with previous studies on (a) conditions that influence the acculturation strategy and (b) acculturation processes and current state of cultural integration. I then describe the contributions of this study on acculturation research.

Conditions Influencing the Acculturation Strategy

Navas, Rojas, Garcia, and Pumares (2007) reported that Sub-Saharan immigrants in Spain generally took an assimilation strategy at peripheral domains of their lives such as politics and work, but preferred a separation strategy in core domains such as family and social interactions. It is evident that contextual or environmental demands play a role in the acculturation strategy. Asian bicultural adults in this study also described their experiences of adapting to the host cultural ways of the work environment. However, Canada's orientation towards multiculturalism is well-documented (e.g., Berry & Kalin, 1995; Hiebert, 2003) and participants in this study also described switching cultural orientations depending on the context, even in the work context. This finding indicates that acculturation strategies indeed may differ based on the acculturation orientation of the host culture, a concept confirmed previously by

multiple researchers (e.g., Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry, 2005; van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006).

As with previous studies, this study also found that individual characteristics were attributable to the formation of a bicultural identity. A grounded theory study published by Barker (2015) examined the acculturation process for 50 American and Swedish adults living in Sweden and the U.S., respectively. Several themes in the current narrative study overlap with Barker's (2015) findings. The theme of gaining knowledge of the new culture and its sub-theme of personal commitment to do so in the results of the thematic content analysis shared similarities with Barker's (2015) finding that the majority of participants in the study showed willingness to acculturate to the host country. This theme also confirms the importance of having meaningful social interactions with host-country nationals in the acculturation process, as described by Barker (2015).

Progress of Acculturation and Present State

In examining the process of cultural integration, Berry et al.'s (2006) study found that individuals residing for longer periods in the new country were more likely to endorse the integration strategy. Berry (2009) defined integration as the merging or alternating of two cultural ways, while Phinney's (1990) achieved ethnic identity described the degree of certainty individuals have over their ethnic identity. Both of these were echoed in this study where participants learned to incorporate both cultures into their personal world over time, by identifying with both cultures, and by incorporating multiple cultural practices into their daily life. In other words, the participants' understanding of being bicultural reflected both description of cultural integration and ethnic identity achievement.

Barker's (2015) study described how participants chose to incorporate different host cultural knowledge, behaviours, or values based on, among other variables, whether it was complementary to their repertoire, and its necessity to function in the environment. Phinney (1990/2006) also described that ethnic identity formation involves individuals sorting through their positive and negative attitudes about cultural differences over time. In this study, participants did not detail their decision-making process on incorporating different cultures; however, several participants described that they incorporated various aspects of cultures that they learned, adopting what they were beneficial or helped them become functional.

Several researchers note the importance of developing cultural competence in fostering a cohesive bicultural identity (Korne et al., 2007; LaFromboise et al., 1993). This was also confirmed by all participants in this study, where bicultural adults discussed the advantages of having the skills and knowledge to effectively navigate between different cultures. It further confirmed studies that made a distinction between identity and behavioural domains of cultural adjustment (e.g., Benet-Martinez & Harritatos, 2005; Ishiyama, 1995; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Berry (2005) stated that "integration can only be 'freely' chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity" (p. 705). Unfavourable reception by the dominant group has been studied to have negative consequences on mental and physical health of the non-dominant group (Berry, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2010) as they struggle with being themselves. The theme of sense of validation that emerged from this study confirmed the importance of the host cultural group's orientation towards cultural diversity in the process of cultural integration. Main sources of validation described by participants were through co-workers and friends in Canada.

Barker (2015) identified three outcomes from the acculturation process: having a broader perspective, open-mindedness, and empathy. The findings in this research confirm that bicultural adults' worldview expanded following the acculturation process, that is, that they became aware of the different options available through being exposed to different cultures. Subtle differences emerged in the placement of "open-mindedness" between this study and Barker's (2015), on whether it was the contributing characteristic to integrate cultures, or the result of having formed bicultural competencies and identities. Specifically, participants in this study described open-mindedness as a contributing variable that helped shape the process of bicultural/multicultural identity formation.

One of the subthemes that emerged in this study was the concept of short-term fluctuations in cultural preferences within bicultural individuals. Several researchers have previously discussed how the integration strategy is manifested through alternating and adapting behaviours depending on cultural contexts (e.g., Berry, 2009; Korne et al, 2007; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). While the alternating refers to behavioural adaptations that occur in response to the cultural environment (Huynh et al., 2011), the fluctuation discussed by the participants in this research refers specifically to changes in preferences of cultural contact in attempt to maintain balance of their bicultural identities. This short-term fluctuation appears to be akin to the process of fluid compensation in the meaning maintenance model (Heine et al., 2006), in that the short-term fluctuations appeared to serve as a way to reaffirm the participants' experiences.

A number of distinctions from previous studies were also identified. Navas et al. (2007) found that Sub-Saharan immigrants in southeastern Spain generally preferred the separation strategy in the "core" domains of their lives, as defined as social interactions and in their home

environment and lifestyle. Asian immigrant adults in this study expressed different views, narrating how they had incorporated multiple cultures in their daily activities and at home. Further research is warranted to determine whether these differences exist, and what contributes to such different findings.

Barker (2015) found that some participants in their study felt a deep and inevitable sense of connection with their home cultural identity. While similar points were narrated by many participants in this study, different views were also expressed by a few. For example, Andy and Frank shared how they had become aware of shifts in their home cultural identity over their course of acculturation. Even though bicultural individuals categorize themselves as being members of both countries, the perceived degree of connection with the host culture and heritage culture may vary. It is unclear whether the different findings are a result of individual differences or research design, specifically, the use of the validationgram and lifeline exercise or the research question. Future research may examine this more specifically to determine the source of such differences.

Contributions of This Study

This study shared the experiences of bicultural immigrant adults in integrating multiple cultures. Several previous studies have confirmed the benefits of the integration strategy (e.g., Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012; Berry, 2005; Bhui et al., 2004; Chae & Foley, 2010; Khanlou, 2010). This study provided further insight into the implications of cultural integration, expressed by the participants who described the benefits of being having cultural competence, feeling accepted for who they are, and enjoying an expanded number of options in many aspects of their lives. The scope of this study was limited to the narratives of immigrant adults who had

integrated multiple cultures. As such, exploration of the various acculturative strategies on the healthy immigrant effect and its attenuation was not available.

As mentioned earlier, the findings in this study confirmed Berry et al.'s (2006) findings that the longer individuals reside in a new country, the more likely they are to endorse the integration strategy. A wide range of initial acculturative strategies were shared by the participants in this study. Participants' narrated experiences early on when they moved to Canada appeared to vary from assimilation, integration, and separation. This study elucidated how the integration strategy can form regardless of the initial degree of desire or motivation to adopt host-cultural beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours.

Finally, this study's use of narrative inquiry contributed to the cross-cultural psychology and acculturation literature. It allowed participants to voice their stories to the interviewer, thus allowing the reader to gain a fresh perspective on cultural integration, as experienced by the participants themselves. It was evident that bicultural adults who shared similar views in their cultural integration emphasize various aspects of their cultural integration process. Unlike some other research methods, narrative inquiry takes a constructionist paradigm, underlying the importance of subjective, varied, and multiple meanings of the participants' experiences. As such, this study offered further insight to cultural integration.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Some general characteristics of the adults in this sample were that they were healthy, well-educated adults with at least one degree from a post-secondary institution, who had a fairly stable financial background prior to transitioning. These characteristics may not necessarily be representative of the immigrant population or the East and Southeast Asian population living in Canada. Notably, five out of six participants were male,

which is less typical in qualitative studies in general. While this may have offered a different perspective to the acculturation experiences, it may have also limited the voice of other gender groups and affected the research findings.

Secondly, as mentioned in the research design, the quality of the narrative research depends on the skill and creativity of the researcher (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003; Riessman, 2001). Much of the interview and quality of the research depended on my relationship with the participants and the insight and conceptualizations to answer the research questions. Despite my efforts not to influence my participants' views, it was also important to recognize that the interviews and interpretation processes had likely been influenced by my personal characteristics (Reissman, 2002). Restated, as an individual who identifies as being bicultural and comes from a particular ethnic background, my views and biases have influenced the outcome of this research.

This study interviewed adults whose English was an acquired language post transition. Several participants mentioned their concern in articulating their views in English at the beginning of the interview. While none of the participants showed signs that they were struggling to continue speaking for the duration of the interview, most paused several times during the interview, presumably as they thought of appropriate words or sentences to convey their thoughts. A few participants also qualified their limited English skills initially during the first meeting. Their narrated experience may have shed a different light had they been given the opportunity to freely speak in their preferred language. Furthermore, while participants and the interviewer had opportunities to clarify the purpose of the reflective exercise and the interview through sustained direct contact, the two member checks were done over email. Participants did not state any confusion about either of the member check criteria in their emails, and some provided lengthy reflections about each. Nonetheless, it is unclear whether participants fully

understood the criteria, and thus, there may be some limitations to the integrity of the research findings.

Future Research

The findings of this research shed light to a number of directions for future research. In this study, participants showed various initial acculturative strategies that eventually all converged to an integration strategy. To the author's knowledge, while there is an abundance in the number of studies that cross-sectionally examine the relationship between acculturative strategies and well-being, fewer studies examine the longitudinal changes in acculturative strategies, as well as its association to well-being. Future research may have significant contribution to the understanding of the relationship between acculturation and health.

This study identified short-term fluctuations in preferences of cultural contact/interaction among few long-term, bicultural immigrant adults. The concept moves beyond whether individuals perceive their cultural identities as compatible or oppositional (Bazuin-Yoder, 2011; Haritatos & Benet-Martinez, 2002), to identifying how individuals maintain balance of the multiple cultures. Furthermore, it was clear that the participants did not feel conflicted in their multiple cultural identities as has been described by some researchers (e.g. Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Ishiyama, 1995; Schwartz et al., 2006). Studying these fluctuations in cultural preference and the effects on well-being in meeting or not meeting the preferences may provide some insight into acculturation, acculturative stress, and long-term well-being for individuals who transition to a new culture.

Another suggestion for the direction of future research returns to the beginning of this study, which was to better understand the role of acculturation on the attenuation of the healthy immigrant effect. The design of this qualitative research allowed stories of various initial

acculturative strategies and subsequent processes to be heard. One suggestion may be for future research to use narrative inquiry to study acculturation and acculturative stress, and its effect on well-being. Use of this research design may shed light into the phenomenon, allowing better understanding of the relationship.

Finally, this qualitative study took a narrative approach with the aim to provide a colourful illustration of cultural integration for the individuals in the sample. Conducting further narrative and qualitative studies on cultural integration on different immigrant group may deepen the understanding of acculturation and its process.

Implications for Cross-Cultural Counselling

Findings from this research have implications in the cross-cultural counselling field. In this section, I discuss points of consideration when interacting with clients and areas to explore based on the themes that emerged from this study. It is not an exhaustive list, but rather suggestions to help facilitate a richer, more in-depth counselling session.

As any area of counselling, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the client is a key component in cross-cultural counselling. Here, the focus is to understand how the client situates herself/himself prior to transition and over the course of transitioning to a new cultural environment to their present situation. One area to be explored in cross-cultural counselling is the client's motivation to live in Canada as they describe their background and decision to move.

In understanding a client's acculturation process, some important aspects based on research findings is to examine with the client (a) the degree of social interaction with the host and heritage cultural environment, (b) perceived optimal degree of interaction, and (c) the client's perception of how accepted they feel in the local host and heritage culture. These may

provide some indication of the acculturation attitude for both the client as well as the felt-acculturation attitude of the environment.

Findings in this study suggest that a client's acculturative attitude may shift over time as he/she gains experience, new skills, and refines her/his cultural competence. An individual's acculturation experience and development of culturally relevant skills have strong implications on her/his bicultural identity and social interactions. The counsellor and client may collaboratively discuss options for the client to gain new cultural knowledge, explore different ways of living, and to reflect on their own cultural upbringing. The client may benefit in understanding the difference between cultural competence and cultural identity, and discuss how they relate to one another for the client. It will be important for counsellors to validate a client's bicultural identity *as well* as his/her cultural competence, meeting the client where she/he is cognitively and affectively in both areas. Exploring and affirming the client's unique cultural identity with may allow the individual to better understand herself/himself.

Finally, participants in this study self-identified themselves as being bicultural/multicultural, that is, strongly identifying with two or more cultures. While there were individual differences in the degree that each culture was incorporated in their personal world and balanced, a key point here is that the participants have found ways to identify with multiple cultures rather having to choosing one. The client and counsellor may benefit from having a discussion on the client's awareness for such options, as well as his/her degree of acceptance towards identifying with the two cultures.

The following list provides a summary of this section:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the client
    - Client's background prior to transition

- o Client's decision to transition

- o Client's current situation

- Understanding the client's acculturation

  - o The degree of social interaction with the host and heritage culture

  - o The client's perceived optimal degree of immersion

  - o The client's perceived sense of acceptance from the host and heritage culture

- Discuss the difference between cultural competence and cultural identity

  - o Brainstorm ideas to build cultural competence

  - o Discuss the acceptability of both cultural identities

Final Remarks

The purpose of the study was to examine how long-term, bicultural, Asian immigrant adults narrate their experiences of integrating multiple cultures. This study aimed to give voice to those who successfully navigate within the various cultural environments, and have also integrated the multiple cultures into their personal world. The diversity of the acculturation experiences was highlighted through the participants in this study. Each participant shared a unique account of their past, beginning from before their transition, their decision to move, and their experiences of settling after transitioning. They shared various acculturation strategies from when they moved. Nevertheless, several shared themes across the narratives emerged, and all participants eventually identify themselves today as being bicultural after living in Canada for 10 years and over. The hope of this study was that it may contribute to, and promote future studies to help improve the experience and well-being of individuals who transition to a new culture.

Epilogue: Personal Reflections

The interviews with each of the participants and the subsequent data analysis gave me insight into each participant's unique stories prior to their transition up to the present day. In terms of the circumstance and life stage, I found myself relating most to Frank and Andy's experiences during their interviews, as their descriptions and nature of transition were similar to mine. Both had moved to Canada as students and shared student lives and struggles between social activities and academic work, many of which I found myself nodding emphatically to. Because of this, I reminded myself not to overly focus on their experiences throughout the data analyses.

While Eric and Andy's experiences related to mine, I learned most from the other four participants who were settling in a new environment with their family. Ben, Catherine, and Dean all had their partners and children when they initially moved, and it was remarkable to see their determination to successfully settle and establish themselves in the new country. Catherine's effort as a mother to help her son communicate during soccer practice reminded me of my own parents' effort to ease the transition for myself. Eric was also married at the time of the transition, although he did not have children until after he had settled into Canada. I felt moved by the tenacity and determination that the participants shared throughout their integration progress, and their current sense of achievement and self-efficacy shared in their narratives. I had a renewed sense of respect for adults who decided to start afresh in a new country. Ben, Catherine, and Dean's experiences resonated with me in that they echoed my own conclusion that the transitions I had made with my family brought everybody closer together.

During the interview, I was curious to know how these individuals coped with the challenges of interacting with the community that they knew so little about in an unfamiliar

language. I had expected that some participants might discuss their self-determination as well as support from their family and friends. Hence, I was somewhat surprised when two participants seemed to downplay their own abilities and credited others more. Catherine described how she was able to continue to socially engage with the English-speaking community as a mother, customer, or employee, because of the kindness of the people in Canada and their willingness to talk to her. Eric described how he only succeeded in settling in Canada because he did not experience many barriers.

Prior to the interviews, I had read countless numbers of articles in the immigration and acculturation literature on individuals' experienced difficulties of settling in a new country. I had also heard several anecdotes from my friends and family about their tough times in starting afresh in new environment. It seemed typical for individuals to face environmental, financial, occupational, and social barriers, and to reflect on it as "challenges." My previous experience and literature review had biased me towards filtering out the positive aspects offered by the host culture, environment, and community that already exist. Hence, my initial reaction when I heard Catherine and Eric was to interject and reflect to them about the role they played in their positive experiences. I could hear myself saying at the back of my mind, "I wonder if you can recognize how your perspective about the environment around you may have played a powerful role in your positive interactions with others in Canada."

Fortunately, that thought at the back of my mind did not get any further, and I was able to reflect more on Catherine and Eric's narratives after their interviews, which gave me deeper insight into my understanding on transition and acculturation. First, I became aware of my tendency to overly focus on the challenges that exist in the host culture without examining the support and opportunities that also exist at the same time. After all, Canada has been referred as

the cultural mosaic, reflecting its stance of acceptance and appreciation towards cultural diversity. Second, Eric and Catherine's narratives opened the door for me to consider the significance of such perception and cognition in the process of acculturation and cultural integration. Just as it is important for the individual to have confidence in their abilities and personal achievements and have a healthy distinction between the self and others, it may also be important for them to enjoy the culture and environment that they are in and to reflect on it in order to eventually identify themselves as part of that culture. These reflections gave me a better understanding of the intricate and dynamic process that occurs between the heritage culture and host culture, and an individual's meaning-making of the dynamic.

Many participants did not seem to be concerned about losing touch with their heritage culture. In fact, they seemed confident about their heritage cultural ties. For example, Frank described how he had taken for granted his Japanese identity while he was living with a Canadian family. Catherine and Andy described towards the end of their narrative summary how they identified strongly with their heritage culture. These experiences reminded me of studies that applied the concept of secure attachment to immigrants' view of their heritage culture.

What caught my attention was that my notes from the interviews stated that this group of individuals seemed to describe their strong conviction of their heritage cultural identity, and at the same time, describe the waning connection with their heritage culture. I struggled to reflect this in the themes during my data analysis as the participants seemed to contradict themselves in their own narratives. Intrinsically, the inconsistency made sense to me as I had felt it myself. My best solution was to create a subtheme to address the balances of multiple cultures, as well as a subtheme to address the fluidity or change of the balance of the cultural identities depending on

time and context. Going through the data analysis reaffirmed my understanding of the complexity of cultural identity, and the meaning-making process that people go through.

I take away two points that I feel were meaningful for me. First, I found it incredibly encouraging that these participants, despite leaving their hometown, stayed connected to their heritage culture and identified strongly with it. Second, I was exposed to the various ways individuals had incorporated multiple cultures in their lifestyles, had come to identify with them, and how the composition fluctuated over time. While individual differences may seem rather obvious, hearing the participants describe this was surprisingly validating for myself. In the past, I had struggled as a self-identifying bicultural individual to (a) find stability in my cultural integration and (b) find some way to incorporate both cultures equally in my lifestyle. Hearing the participants describe their journey seemed to normalize my experience and provide reassurance that the fluctuations naturally occur.

There were a few instances where participants linked their cultural connection to the friends and family who were related to the culture or country. For example, Catherine described how she no longer felt that Hong Kong was her home because her family all lived in Canada. Eric described that he communicated with his friend back from his home town less frequently since they moving to Canada. Andy commented that he felt more connected to Canada once he was able to build the friendship network. These comments reminded me of how connected I felt to a culture when I became acquainted with individuals from a country that I lived at the time, or when I reconnected with a friend from a country that I previously resided in. I recalled my excitement and sense of cultural connection when I was able to find a common topic about the country. I felt that my memories of and connection to that country had been validated.

In sum, I felt inspired, invigorated, and humbled by the participants in this study. The process deepened my appreciation towards the strength of individuals who choose to move to a different country. It allowed me to reflect on my own experiences, the privileges that I have had, and also to revisit some of my own experiences of living in different countries. I also saw the underlying shared value and respect that the participants expressed about living in a multicultural environment. Their stories gave me hope that, regardless of where individuals are born, through time and experience, they can learn to live with multiple cultures, both internally and externally.

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Appendix A: Screening Protocol

Thank you for expressing interest in participating in this study. The purpose of this research is to investigate the experience of cultural integration among individuals who immigrated to Canada. I would like to hear your story of how you came to see yourself as being bicultural since you moved to Canada. My name is Ayumi, and I will be the one conducting the interview. I am looking for participants who grew up in Asia and moved to Canada at or after the age of 19, who has lived in Canada for 10 years or longer.

The general overview is as follows:

1. We can meet at a location of you feel comfortable in that has some privacy. It can be a quiet corner of a coffee shop or library, I can book a room at UBC, or it can be in your home.

2. We will be meeting at least twice, and I will be recording our voices both times. In our first meeting, we will first go through the consent form, and you can ask any final questions about the study at this time. I will ask for 30 minutes of your time to reflect on your bicultural identity and will have some exercises ready to help you through this.

3. In our second meeting, I will be asking for an hour to an hour and 30 minutes to hear your story on how you view yourself as a bicultural individual, and what it's like to be bicultural.

4. After I have put together your story, I will contact you to go over what I think I have found, and you will have the opportunity to share your thoughts on the summary. We can do this either through email or do it face-to-face.

5. At a later date, I will contact you again to share what I think I have found generally among you and the other participants. I will invite you to give me any further input if there is anything that you think of. Again, we can do this either through email or face-to-face.

We can discuss a schedule that works for the both of us, but in total, I ask for a total of 3 hours of your time. I will be giving out a $20 Starbucks card as a token of appreciation for your time. Do you have any questions for me so far? Is this something you would be interested in?

(If caller expresses interest, continue)

I'd like to ask you a few demographic and background information. This information is for me to make sure that you are a match for this study, and it will not be shared with anybody else.

1. Which country were you born in?

2. How old were you when you moved to Canada?

3. What brought you to Canada?

4. How long you have been living here since?

(If participant fits in the inclusion criteria)

Thank you very much for sharing your information. I think you are fit for this study, and I would like to invite you to be a participant in this study.

Appendix B: **Counselling Resources**

UBC Counselling Services

604-822-3811

Crisis Centre

1-866-872-3311

CHIMO

604-279-7070

SUCCESS

Cantonese: 604-270-8233

Mandarin: 604-270-8222

Participants needed for an interview on bicultural identity experience among long-term, Asian immigrants

Do you fit the following descriptions?

- Identify yourself as being bicultural,
- Grew up in Asia,
- Moved to Canada at or after the age of 19, and
- Have lived in Canada for 10 years or longer

Then you may be eligible to participate in a study examining the experiences of cultural integration of long-term, immigrant adults.

You are invited to take part in the following study, <u>which requires a maximum of 3 hours of your time</u>: (a) An initial meeting which will take up to 1 hour, (b) A 1-1.5 hour interview at another date, and (c) 30 min in total to review and provide feedback.

A $20 Starbucks gift card will be given as a token of appreciation, and you will receive this token even if you decide to withdraw from the study.

If you have questions or would like to take part in this study, please contact <u>Ayumi </u>at _____(email address)_____ or (telephone number)**.**

Ayumi Sasaki (MA Student in Counselling Psychology, Co-Investigator)
Tel:
Email:
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<u>Experiences of Bicultural Identity among Long-Term Asian Immigrants</u>

<u>Informed Consent Form</u>

Thank you for expressing interest in participating in this study to investigate the experience of bicultural integration among Asian immigrants. Completion of this informed consent form is required to ensure that you understand the purpose of this study, nature of your involvement and time commitment, confidentiality and anonymity, and your rights as a participant. If you have any questions about the research or the tasks that are requested of you, please feel free to ask.

<u>Principal Investigator:</u> Dr. Ishu Ishiyama, Associate Professor, the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, Faculty of Education, UBC. TEL:

<u>Co-investigator:</u> Ayumi Sasaki (MA student) in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, Faculty of Education, UBC. TEL:

<u>Purpose:</u> To investigate how long-term Asian immigrant adults have come to identify themselves as bicultural and how they have incorporated different cultures within themselves

<u>Procedures, Time Required, Consent:</u> The study will take a maximum of 3 hours:

    (a) Consent and reflective exercise: Up to 60 min to review the consent and engaging in a reflective exercise

(b) Interview: 60-90 min audio-recorded individual interview in which you will be asked to discuss your bicultural identity

(c) Follow-up check #1: 15 min where you will have a chance to read a summary of your story, either face-to-face or on your own time, and offer additional comments or suggest revisions

(d) Follow-up check #2: 15 min where you will have a chance to read themes that come up across participants, either face-to-face or on your own time, and offer input

Token of Appreciation: You will receive a $20 Starbucks card for participating in this study.

Potential Risks There are no known risks associated with participating in this research. Recalling some experiences in the past may be difficult for some people. If you would like resources and support in this regard during your participation, please let us know.

Anonymity/Confidentiality: All information collected during this study will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear on any of the data collected and you will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed research. The data will be identified only by code numbers. This informed consent will be kept separate from the other data collected, and both will be stored in a secure and locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office on campus. Electronic data will be kept on a computer and password protected.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, without any negative consequences. You will still receive the token of appreciation even when you choose to withdraw from this study at any time before completion.

Important Information. You will be offered a copy of this informed consent sheet for your own file. If required, it is the responsibility of the investigators to produce the signed copy indicating

that you have consented to participate in this research. If you have any questions or would like

further information about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator (Dr. Ishu Ishiyama)

by phone at or via email. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as an interview

participant, please contact the UBC Office of Research Services and Administration by phone.

I have read the above description of the study, and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study and that I have been offered a copy of the consent form for my own records.

_____   _____

(Participant Name – Print)   (Signature)

_____   _____

(Researcher Name – Print)   (Date)

Appendix E: Interview Script

Part 1 (pre-interview activity): composing a story of the journey of dealing with cultural identity

I would like to hear your story of how you came to see yourself as being bicultural since you moved over here. I am not looking for a particular answer--I'd just like to hear your experience. Before we begin, I would like to give you some time to reflect on your experience of being bicultural. I would like for you to think about how you see your cultural identity now and the journey you took to identify yourself as being bicultural. To help you reflect in this process, I have two short exercises that I'd like to invite you to try on your own first as a short exercise. You can try one or both to help you think of different areas of your life. Let me explain both to you.

Exercise 1: Lifeline

The first one here is the lifeline exercise, which looks at how your life looks biculturally from when you were born until today. There are a many ways you can try this and you can use this in any way that you feel comfortable, but to help you give context, let me give you a few examples. The first example shows a division of when things are difficult, and when things were going great. You can see some life events that were happening during some of those times. The second example is an example of how the lifeline can look at your cultural identity and how comfortable you felt about the culture. This example sectioned the two sides to North America and Japan. You may choose to do your exploration like this, or you may even choose a different way to reflect on your cultural identity. Feel free to note anything you recall that was important during this time, such as places, objects, people or relationships, or ideas you had.

Exercise 2: Validationgram

The second activity here is called the Validationgram. This one looks at what was important for you; what used to give you the sense of who you are and how you used to experience the affirmation of who you were in your home country, and any changes or continuation of what gives you affirmation of who you are since you came to Canada. As you can see, it is sectioned into relationships, things, activities, and places. Here is an example of one from before the transition, and one after. Alternatively, you can also look at it in terms of your cultural identification. You can fill the two sheets out based on what is important for your Canadian identity and (country of origin) identity.

You may find these activities helpful in reflecting on your experience. Or, you may have a different way of reflecting. Whatever you choose, I'd like for you to bring in what you have reflected on in the next 30 mins so that we can talk about it. Do you have any questions so far? I will be nearby if you have any questions. Please let me know when you are ready.

Lifeline Exercise
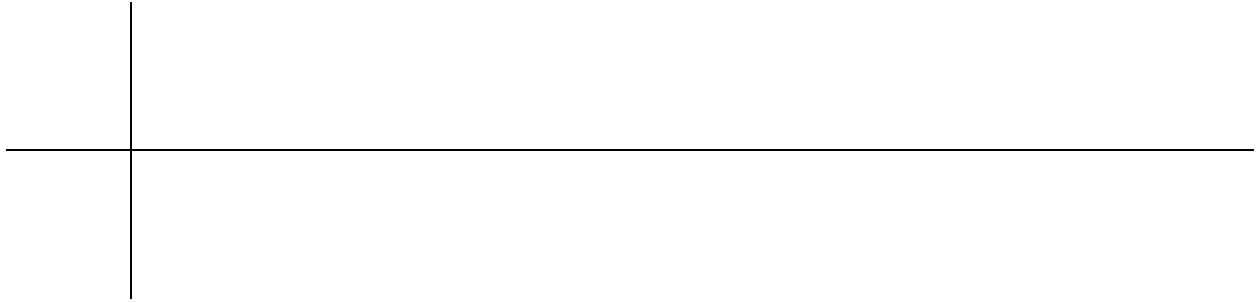
Validationgram (Ishiyama, 1995)
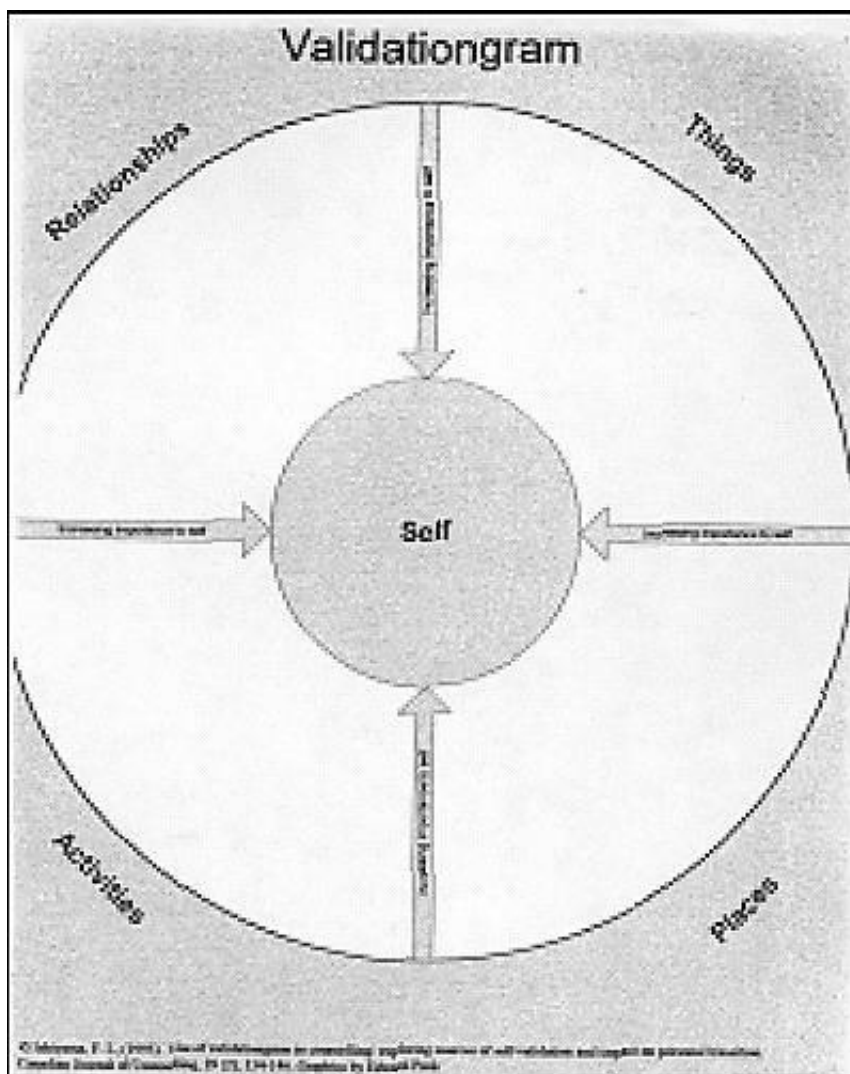
Interview Script

I'd like to hear the story of how you came to see yourself as being bicultural, how you have incorporated two cultures, and what it's like to be bicultural for you. Can you tell me your experience of growing up in (country of origin), moving to Canada, and settling here?

Additional Prompts

- Tell me what happened at this point in your life

- Can you remember a particular time when…

    o You felt as though you belonged in both cultures

    o You felt out of place

    o You realized you were bicultural

- Can you tell me how you have changed in understanding your culture/the Canadian culture over time?

- What do you think helped you become bicultural?

- Can you describe to me the parts of you that you feel are Canadian and what parts of you that you feel are (participant's country of origin)?