

CRITICAL FACTORS WHICH HINDERING OR FACILITATING  
P.R.C. STUDENTS PSYCHO-SOCIO ADJUSTMENT  
TO STUDYING AND LIVING  
IN CANADA

by

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## ABSTRACT

This was an exploratory study which used Flanagan's Critical Incident Technique to find out the factors which hinder or facilitate the psycho-socio adjustment of students from The People's Republic of China to Canada. The 21 subjects for the sample were drawn at random from a name list provided by the Chinese Visiting Scholars and Students Association at University of British Columbia. All of the subjects were graduate students or visiting scholars and had been in Canada for 9-12 months at the time of the interviews.

All subjects were able to identify incidents which hindered or facilitated their first year psycho-socio adjustment to Canada. The total of 385 incidents, 175 facilitating and 210 hindering incidents, were reported. The average number of incidents reported per student was 19.2. Ten major categories which facilitate or hinder PRC students' psycho-socio adjustment to Canada have been found through this research.

Considering the number of incidents reported by the participants, Academic Study & Research was ranked the first place among 10 categories. According to the rate of participation, Language Barriers & Improvement was listed

the highest among 10 categories. Considering the number of facilitating incidents reported by the participants, Initial Settlement was placed the highest. In the number of hindering incidents, category of Language Barriers & Improvement was listed the highest among the 10 categories.

The explanation of the research findings and suggestions for how the findings might contribute to the understanding PRC or other Oriental international students are included in the discussion.

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## DEDICATION

To my dear parents who nourished me  
with their love.

To Lou Lou, my dear wife who mentally  
and financially supported me  
to finish my study.

To the great Chinese people and  
the great Canadian people  
from whom I learnt  
so much.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The end of 1970 marked the sixth historical wave of Chinese students studying abroad. This overseas student movement has increased to such an extent that it has been referred to by one Chinese scholar as "a real cultural revolution" (Li, 1988). Recent reports state that in 1988 there are more than 70,000 P.R.C. students in over 70 countries around the world, and most of them are in North America and Western Europe (Li, 1988; Wu, & Wang, 1989).

A recent report from the International Education Association (I.E.A.) showed that in 1988 the student group from The People's Republic of China (P.R.C) is ranked first (42,481) compared with other foreign students in the world (Chong, 1989). The report also revealed that Canada ranks in second place (2,456) to the United States (25,100) as host to P.R.C. students. This means that about 63% of P.R.C. overseas students reside in North America. Statistic data also show that the number of P.R C students in Canada has increased rapidly in the last few years. The 1989

National Report on Internaitonal Student in Canada observes that the increase in P.R.C. students alone accounted for more than one-third of the general increase recorded in 1988-89 at the universities (Stewart, 1989).

The National Report on International Students in Canada 1989 (Stewart, 1989) provides the data about international students including P.R.C. students in Canada since 1974. For a summary of the statistics on PRC students in Canada see Appendix A.

The number of P.R.C. students in Canadian universities has increased rapidly in the last a few years and that P.R.C. students are now ranked in the top position as foreign graduate students in Canada. The tables of Appendix A also indicate that the majority of P.R.C students in Canada are graduate students.

The P.R.C. overseas student movement creates a very important and noticeable change in the contemporary world. It is the first time in history that so many students from a "Communist"/"Socialist" country have come to a "Decocratic"/"Capitalist" country to study. As a result, many scholars are now beginning to turn their attention to this growing population. In 1988, at the joint conference of the Canadian Bureau for International Education and the American National Association for Foreign Student Affairs,

held in Winnipeg, two sessions were specifically concerned with P.R.C. students' experience in North America. As well, some empirical research has been done and continues to be done on the setting up of a social support program to facilitate P.R.C. students' adjustment to studying and living in Canada (Westwood, 1988, 1989). Although these recent conference concerns and empirical studies provide us with valuable information as to the whereabouts of P.R.C. students and are helpful in determining the benefits to be derived from social support systems for P.R.C. students, they do not address the psycho-social adjustment process inherent in the P.R.C. students' experience of a cross-cultural exchange.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the last 30 years, social scientists throughout the world have focused their attention on the socio-psycho adjustment of particular foreign student groups while they have been living in culturally different environments (Akhun, 1961, Akka, 1967, Al-Shama, 1959, Anumonye, 1970, Bailyn, 1962, Banham, 1958, Beals, 1957, Bennett, 1958, Berry, 1983, Bhatt, 1984, Bourne, 1975, Chang, 1973, Cheng, 1978, Chu, 1971, Coelhom 1958, Davis, F.J. 1961, Davis, F.J. 1963, Davis, F.J. 1971, Davis J.M. 1961, Fong, 1969, Gandhi, 1970, Gazi, 1961, Gezi, 1959, Hill, 1966, Ibrahim, 1970, Jammaz, 1973, Jarrahi-Zadeh & Eichman, 1970, Kang, 1971,

Keats, 1970, Kelman & Bailyn, 1962, Klein, 1971, Lamber & Bressler, 1955, Pruitt, 1977, Scott, 1956, Sewell & Davidsen, 1956, Sewell & Davidsen, 1961, Sharma, 1969, Singh, 1963, Veroff, 1963, Yeh, & et al., 1978, Zaidi, 1975). The purpose of these studies has been to find more detailed characteristics of the adjustment process experienced by certain foreign student groups in certain host cultures. Although there have been several studies devoted to Chinese students, they were from Taiwan (Bourne, 1975), and Hong Kong (Chang, 1973). To date, published research on the socio-psycho adjustment of P.R.C. students is not available. Hence, how P.R.C. students adjust to Western cultures and societies and what are the major hindering and facilitating factors in their adjustment process is still a mystery to both Chinese and Western peoples.

Nonetheless, the Model of Culture-Distance posited by Babiker, Cox, & Miller (1980) informs us in general terms of the amount of distress experienced by students of one culture who leave their homeland to study in another. Babiker and his colleagues observed that the degree of alienation, estrangement and concomitant psychological distress experienced by students in a culturally different environment was a function of the distance between the students' own culture and the host culture. Through using the instrument--culture-distance index to do correlational

analysis, they found that culture distance was significantly related to anxiety during the Easter term and the total number of medical consultations during the year.

It is obvious that there is a tremendous historical and cultural difference between China and the Western world. As well, there is also a tremendous disparity between Mainland China and Western countries in their political, economic and social ideologies. Furthermore, the fact of that Mainland China's 30-year (1949-79) isolation from the Western world enlarges the culture distance between Mainland China and the West.

According to Babiker, et al's (1980) culture-Distance Model and the fact of historical and cultural difference between China and Western world, it can be anticipated that P.R.C. students do experience greater social-psycho adjustment problems in Canada than those students from the cultures which are closer geographically and culturally to Canada. It can also be speculated that P.R.C. students will experience "culture shock" more profoundly than some other culturally different students who come to North America. The term of "culture shock" was first coined by Oberg in 1960 to describe the experience of entering a culturally different environment. He describes culture shock as "an occupational disease suffered by people who are introduced suddenly to a culture that is very different from their

own". Oberg pointed out that culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, such as customs, gestures, facial expressions or words. Regretably, some extreme cases of culture shock among P.R.C. students have already been reported. In 1988 in Japan, two newly arrived P.R.C. university students, committed suicide (Sing Tao; 1988, Xu, 1988). The reasons cited for these two cases of death were: one was due to the student being culturally misunderstood and the other was due to a conflict between the different value systems. Another suicide occurred in Canada in 1984. A P.R.C. student at the University of British Columbia was found dead by self-inflicted hanging while living and studying on campus. The case was covered up immediately and no media report has been made available to the public. Although these suicidal cases are very extreme, they strongly indicate that many P.R.C. students do face tremendous challenges and obstacles in their social-psycho adjustment to culturally different environments. These tragic deaths further point to the need for research into the adjustment difficulties of P.R.C. students in order to determine the causes and extent of their feelings of anxiety, depression and suicide. Only by knowing what the factors are which either hinder or facilitate P.R.C. students' adjustment to a culturally-different and culturally-distant environment can we begin to offer help, understanding and support.



Having worked at U.B.C. International House as a student counsellor & advisor for the past one and one-half years, I have found that many new arrivals from the P.R.C. experience varying degrees of depression for varying lengths of time. It is my contention that if both the Foreign Student Services in Canadian universities and the orientation programs in China have more knowledge of the process of P.R.C. students' psycho-socio adjustment to Canada, they could provide more useful and helpful information to the every increasing number of P.R.C. students who are leaving their homeland to study abroad.

The purpose of this study is to explore the significant and concrete incidents which either hinder or facilitate P.R.C. university students in their psycho-socio adjustment to studying and living in Canada. The results of this study will be used to identify critical factors which might contribute to a theoretical model of P.R.C. student psycho-socio adjustment in Western countries. Either from a theoretical point of view or from a practical point of view of counselling psychology, the research on P.R.C. students' adjustment to Canada is very important and necessary. Theoretically, it will be useful and helpful to our understanding of cross-cultural adjustment, so that discovered variables can be researched generally within a wider spectrum. Practically, it will be useful because the

number of P.R.C. students in the Western world is continuously increasing and the knowledge gleaned from this study may be useful to social scientists and educators in Canada, the United States and many other Western countries who host P.R.C. students. These findings may also be useful not only for understanding P.R.C. students, but other Chinese students from other parts of the world. As well, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a broader theoretical model which will enable us to understand the psycho-socio adjustment of all students when they enter a culturally new and different environment.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Some special terms have been used to describe the foreign students psycho-social adjustment in this study, and the definitions of these terms are provided as following;

#### **(1) SOJOURNER ADJUSTMENT/ PSYCHO-SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT:**

Sojourner adjustment is interpreted in terms of the removal of positive reinforcements (e.g., customary food, approval and other social rewards, usual friends and entertainment) and the presentation of aversive stimuli (e.g., novel situations, language difficulties, unfamiliar and anxious social encounters). Being placed in a new culture results in new reinforcers, new discriminating and aversive stimuli, and changes in response-reinforcement

contingencies. Transfer of home culture learning, both positive and negative, will depend on the similarity of the home and host cultures.

**(2) CULTURE SHOCK:**

Cultural shock was first termed by Oberg (1960), viewing it as an "occupational disease" suffered by people who are introduced suddenly to a culture that is very different from their own. Oberg pointed out that culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, such as customs, gestures, facial expressions, or words.

**(3) U CURVE AND W CURVE OF ADJUSTMENT:**

Lysgaard (1955) first named U curve to described the sojourner's level of adjustment as function of time in the new culture. The U curve depicts the initial optimism and elation in the host culture, the subsequent dip or "tough" in the level of adjustment, followed by a gradual recovery to higher adjustment levels.

Based on Lysgaard research, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) proposed a W curve to indicate that sojourners often undergo a reacculturation process (a second U curve in their home environments similar to that experienced abroad).

**(4) FACILITATE FACTORS:**

The factors which make a difference to the planned outcome or chosen goal in a positive way.

**(5) HINDERING FACTORS:**

The factors which make a difference to the planned outcome or chosen goal in a negative way.

**(6) SELF-SUPPORT STUDENT:**

Those are sponsored by themselves, through working as Teaching Assistants and/or Research Assistants in their departments; and/or sponsored by their relatives and other private organizations. They expect to stay Canada for a quite long time. Many of them even expect to be immigrants in Canada.

**(7) GOVERNMENT-SUPPORT STUDENT:**

Those are sponsored by either the Chinese government and/or the Western foundations, such as World Bank, The United Nation, or CIDA and/or WUSC. They expect to stay in Canada for three to five years or longer. A few might hope to become immigrants, but many of them expect to go back China in the future.

**(8) SHORT-TERM TRAINEE OR VISITING SCHOLAR:**

Those are sponsored by either the Chinese government and/or foundations or the Canadian government and/or

organizations such as CIDA and WUSC. These are visiting scholars or special program trainees who are expected to stay Canada for around one year. Most of them expecte to go back China once they finish their short-term training.

Since this research is focused on P.R.C. university students in Canada, P.R.C. students studying at various colleges and language institutions are excluded in this study. However the number of P.R.C. college students in Canada is also rapidly increasing and the problems they are facing might be more serious. Further study on this population will be recommended.

The next chapter reviews the relevant literature in the area of cross culture adjustment among overseas students.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### INTRODUCTION

Although there is a great body of literature regarding foreign students adjustment in host countries, a clear definition of foreign students' psycho-socio adjustment is difficult to find. Most authors' understand that the adjustment of foreign students is a part of a broadly defined acculturation and adaptation process which is present when any human being adapts to a new situation or environment. Nevertheless, in studying the literature on this subject, it becomes apparent that foreign students' adjustment and foreign students' adaptation are often used as one concept. In the following discussion, I too shall combine the two terms, adjustment and adaptation, in one concept: the coping mechanisms of foreign students in terms of their behavior mode, knowledge structure and thinking patterns.

Many factors have been found to impact, in either negative or positive ways, the procedure of psycho-socio

adjustment and adaptation of foreign students in the host country.

The following research focuses on the various factors which impact on foreign students' adjustment in their host culture. Klineberg and Hull IV (1979), who conducted an international study of foreign students' adaptation and coping in the host countries, found the following factors affect the foreign students adjustment negatively: 1) financial problems; 2) language facility; 3) academic failure; 4) adapting to life in the new environment; 5) the return home; 6) culture shock; 7) preparation; 8) entrance.

Hull (1980) pointed out that the following variables influence the foreign students adjustment: 1) Academic variables; 2) age and sex; 3) country, culture and sub-culture of origin; 4) prior international experience; 5) duration of the sojourn and expectations.

Another researcher (Huang, 1977) found that communication barriers, shifting cultural gears, replacing a support network, and multiple accountability were 4 major hindering factors for foreign students regarding to their psycho-socio adjustment in host country.

The salient findings of Sharma's (1973) study of international students in the U.S. were: 1) The most severe

academic problems for international students are giving oral reports, participating in class discussion, taking notes in class, understanding lectures, taking appropriate courses of study, and preparing written reports. 2) The most severe personal problems foreign students face are homesickness; finding adequate housing; insufficient funds and food; and finding companionship with the opposite sex. 3) The most severe social problems international students experience are: becoming used to American social customs; making personal friends with American students; being accepted by different social groups; and inhibited participation in campus activities.

A recent study investigating foreign students' adjustment in America found that several variables have a significant impact on foreign student adaptation to the host culture (Surdam and Collins, 1984). The variables are as follows: 1) interaction with hosts and peers; 2) English language facility; 3) students parental education; 4) religious participation and attitudes; 5) Western and Non-Western students; 6) perceived student discrimination; 7) participation in activities and use of student services.

In the search for generalized guides to factors which promote or inhibit foreign students' adjustments to the host country during a period of study abroad, Bois (1956)



discovered the following major factors: 1) language facility; 2) age and academic status; 3) duration of sojourn; 4) alienation; 5) freedom of choice; Knowledge of the host country; 6) interpersonal relations; 7) reference groups; 8) status and self-esteem.

Porter (1972) conducted research in order to determine the problems of foreign students' experience in their adjustment process to a host country. By investigating 108 international students at Michigan University, 11 categories of problems were ranked, from the most important to the least important: 1) academic records; 2) English language; 3) placement services; 4) financial aids; 5) living-dining; 6) social-personal; 7) health services; 8) orientation services; 9) admission and selection; 10) student activities; 11) religious services.

The results of Porter's (1972) research also indicated that: 1) females perceive a larger number of problems and concerns than male; 2) undergraduates perceive a larger number of problems than graduates; 3) foreign students on campus for thirteen months or more perceive an average of more problems than students on campus for twelve months or less; 4) foreign students who do not speak English as a language of first choice perceive an average of more concerns than those students who speak English as a preference; and 5) foreign students from non-Western

backgrounds perceive a higher number of problems and concerns than those students with Western backgrounds. His research also showed that 1) no significant differences exist between the perceived problems of foreign students according to marital status, and 2) no differences exist between the problems of foreign students according to age.

Through using questionnaires to research the problems facing foreign students in the University of Cincinnati, Berte (1972) found that most foreign students often experience the following difficulties: -In order of severity- 1) not being together enough socially with members of the opposite sex; 2) not finding practical training or a summer job; 3) not feeling a part of the U.C. student body; 4) not having the foods they were used to; 5) feeling painfully lonely for home and family; 6) not having enough time to study; 7) not having enough money; 8) not knowing enough English; 9) having to take courses that probably will not apply to future work.

#### **GENERAL FACTORS IN FOREIGN STUDENT ADAPTATION**

Because so many common difficulties are experienced by foreign students in their adaptation to a new and culturally different environment, specific research has been conducted in the following areas: social interaction; financial concerns; status conflict; daily living; educational

experience; language proficiency; and other situational variables. Before discussing the various attempts that have been made to help diminish the difficulties experienced by international students, I will present the research findings in each of the areas mentioned previously.

### SOCIAL INTERACTION

Over the past three decades, various studies have examined that the effects of social interaction with host nationals has had on foreign students. The development of friendly ties with local people had been found to greatly facilitate the adaptation process of students away from their homeland. In the research of Hong Kong students in University of Toronto and York University, Mickle (1984) found that successful adaptation for Hong Kong students is related to the number of the Canadian and Chinese Canadian friends they have and the amount of participation in activities with Canadians and Chinese Canadians.

Based on their research in both Canada and Australia, Westwood and Barker (1990) discovered that there is a positive relationship between foreign students' participation in peer pairing with local students and their academic achievement. A similar program conducted in the United States also found that foreign students who associated with local peers were better able to help

themselves and resolve various problems and engage in directed behaviors which enhanced their own adaptation (Williams, 1981).

Research aimed at studying various dimensions of social contact between American and foreign students found that the greatest sources of discomfort for foreign students when in contact with American students was their lack of understanding of the language and unfamiliarity with American customs. For American students, discomforts are: 1) unfamiliarity with foreign customs and misinterpretation of actions; 2) dislike of particular national groups; 3) dislike of personal characteristics; and 4) lack of common interests (Penn, & Durham, 1978).

The results of Surdam & Collins' research (1984) suggests that foreign students who spend most of their leisure time with Americans were significantly better adapted than those who spent most of their free time with fellow citizens.

Claire and Cook's (1962) study of international students determined that an association could be made between those students who developed some close host friends and the development of a positive attitude towards host nationals. Heikinheimo & Shute (1986) found that isolated Asian students reported more problems related to cultural,

academic, and social adjustment than did students who had interaction with Canadians.

Other studies draw the same conclusion as Claire and Cook's. Antler (1970) concluded that students who interacted more frequently with fellow citizens were less satisfied in their adjustment to life in the United States. Hull's study (1978) clearly indicates that those foreign students who are most often in the company of American students are most likely to feel satisfied with their adjustment in America, while those mainly in the company of their ethnic peers reported an unsatisfactory adjustment experience in the host country.

### **FINANCIAL CONCERNS**

In their vast international investigation, which combined the efforts of experts from 11 countries, Klineberg and Hull (1979) determined that financial problems were reported as the "most frequently mentioned problem which causes the greatest trouble" for international students.

In their research, Hendricks & Skinner (1977) found that financial pressure is a critical factor for self-supporting foreign students' adjustment in America. Though the self-supporting students can work on campus or off-

campus, the jobs they find typically involve few technical skills and tend to be manual and menial.

Another research project which focused on foreign students' academic and non-academic needs during their adjustment to the host country determined that there were five major categories of needs, with financial need ranking highest (Deressa & Beavers, 1986).

### STATUS CONFLICT

Many foreign students who were professionals in their homeland and become students in their hostland struggle to deal with the role conflict their new circumstances creates. Vanegas (1980) points out that those professionals who became students again have much more difficulty than those students who do not have to cope with a conflict of status-- a status which unconsciously they did not want to accept.

### DAILY LIVING

Some research indicated that daily living in a new country was a big challenge for most foreign students. Johnson (1971) did a survey of 214 foreign students at the University of Tennessee, and found that 47% of the respondents reported housing to be a problem.

Jensen & Jensen (1983), in their study on newly arrived Asian students, pointed out that there were many differences between Western culture and Oriental culture in daily life, such as eating habit, cooking, shopping, sitting, hygiene, employment practices and neighborliness. In his research on Latin American students' adaptation problems in the U.S., Vanegas (1980) found that daily tasks were a big challenge for most Latin American males, since they are used to having their mothers, wives, girlfriends, sisters or maids to take care of them.

#### EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN HOST CULTURE

Researchers have found that education is considered as a main goal of international students (Han, 1975, Lee, 1981). Therefore, academic achievement or failure is considered as a major factor which affects adaptation of foreign students in host culture. Klineberg and Hull (1979) indicated that "the courses taken, success or failure in fulfilling the requirements, relations with the academic staff, degree of satisfaction with the quality of the teaching, may be regarded as the crucial issue of our investigation, and the attitude of the foreign students toward the instruction they are receiving is the key to the success of the whole enterprise" (Klineberg & Hull, 1981, p.107-108).

Deressa and Beavers (1986) determined that foreign students faced tremendous challenges in their academic study when English is not their mother tongue. They wanted faculty members to consider foreign students' language difficulties, when they were asked to take essay, exam and listening to lecture.

White and Brown (1983) did a survey in order to find how academic factors affect the scholastic performance of foreign students. They found the following factors influenced foreign students academic performance: 1) verbal or oral skill in the class report and discussion; 2) study techniques, included study habits, study skills and time management; and 3) English usage, mainly included vocabulary, English grammar, spelling, sentence structure and writing compositions and essays.

Sharma (1973) analyzed the three major problems for foreign students--academic, personal and social. Academic problems were found to be more severe than the other two types and took longer time in their resolution. The academic problems included giving oral reports, participating in class discussion, taking notes in class, understanding lectures, taking appropriate courses of study, and preparing written reports.

#### LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY



The studies in this area determined that language proficiency was one of the major factors which influences students at a foreign university (Deressa & Beavers, 1986; Dunnett, 1981; Surdam & Collins, 1984; Ursua, 1969; White & White 1981;). White and White (1981) indicated that English language proficiency might play a more important role in foreign students acculturation during the beginning of a foreign students' stay in a foreign country. In their research, they found that there is a positive relationship between foreign students' TOEFL scores and their acculturation. The evidence for the relationship between foreign students' language skills and adjustment also supported by Ursua (1969).

Surdam & Collins's study (1984) found that Foreign students with adequate English adapted to the host country much better than those with inadequate English. Deressa and Beavers (1986) found those who took Intensive English studied in the United States had an easier time adjusting in their Academic, personal and social performances in America.

In Heikinheimo & Shute's (1986) research on the adaptation of foreign students in Canada, they found that Asian students have usually had less practice using English than have Africans when they enroll in Canadian universities. There are serious problems reported by Asians

students in understanding lectures, taking notes, answering questions, and writing essays.

Johnson (1971) found that most serious problem was most frequently mentioned by foreign students was English language proficiency, which was listed the toppest on the thirteen major problems for foreign students' adjustment to The United States.

#### OTHER SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

Klein, Alexander, Tseng, Miller, Yeh, Chu & Workneh (1971) pointed that situational factors have a powerful influence on the students' adaptation and behavior in the United States. The situational variables determined by Klein and his colleagues include: the quality and role-expectations of previous educational or occupational settings; demands and expectations of parents, sponsors, and supporting agencies; career opportunities and specific openings; family events; and political trends both at home and abroad.

In their research on the adaptation of foreign students in Canada, Heikinheimo & Shute (1986) found that the family expectation seemed to be an very important facotor in Hong Kong Chinese students' attempts to be successful and to perform well in their academic study.

Hendricks and Skinner (1977) found that off-campus and on-campus employment or assistance is an important factor affect foreign students adjustment to The United States.

#### ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

Many studies have determined that it is very beneficial for foreign students to be provided with an orientation program before leaving their homeland or after arriving in a host country (Cook, Havel & Christ, 1957; Dubois, 1956; Dunnett, 1981; Klein, Alexander, Tseng, Miller, Yeh, Chu & Workneh, 1971; Schram & Lauver, 1988; Selltiz & Cook, 1962;). Through a survey of 266 international students at a large southwestern university in the United States found that orientation programs encourage international students to become acquainted with local people. Orientation programs which are given in the students homeland prior to departure help them understand why establishing relationships with their hosts is important for them. These programs also help students in the host country can get to know the newcomers (Schram & Lauver, 1988). Klein and his colleagues set up a orientation program in Taiwan to teach those soon-to-depart students specific techniques for overcoming interaction difficulties with Americans.

Cook, Havel, & Christ (1957) found that Asian students who had participated in an orientation program in their homeland showed greater ease of adjustment to American society and in the relationship with Americans than students who had not participated in such a program.

### RESOURCE PERSONS

Several research studies have been aimed at finding out where foreign students could go to look for help when they needed it (Pedersen, 1981; Stecklein, et al. 1971). Stecklein, et al. (1971) did a survey among 781 foreign students at the University of Minnesota and found following resources available for university foreign students 1) fellow countryman (31%); 2) faculty advisor (17%); 3) international student advisor's office (15%); 4) Boyfriend/girlfriend (12%); 5) host family (4%); 6) American brother/sister (1%); 7) other (20%). From the study, it was decided that the catalog of country fellowman is the most important resource for those newly arrived foreign students. The research also found that the students who participate in student organizations are more likely to seek out fellow countrymen for help and are less likely to rely on faculty advisors. It seems that those organizations provide a valuable counselling support system for foreign students.

## RESEARCH ON SPECIFIC GROUPS OF FOREIGN STUDENTS'

### ADJUSTMENT

Pruitt (1980) did a research on African students adjustment in the United States and found the following major problems: 1) areas of climate; 2) communication with Americans; 3) loneliness and homesickness; 4) discrimination; 5) financial problems; 6) food; 7) dating; 8) housing.

Based on his research, Pruitt also pointed out that there were several factors which influence African students adjustment to the United States. First, prior knowledge about the United States results in a better adjustment. Secondly, assimilation with American culture brings a successful adjustment, especially among those students who have more contact with White Americans, who like American culture and American food. Thirdly, extensive contact with other African students appears to be counter-productive to adjustment. Forthly, maintenance of religious commitment results in a good adjustment.

Vanegas (1980) was able to determine that there are several major factors which affect Latin American students' adjustment to the United States: 1) Missing family

connection is assumed as a major factor, since family life is an intrinsic part of the Latin culture. 2) Daily life tasks is another factor significantly influencing on Latin American male students adjustment, because the Latin American male is strongly dependent on the women for most everyday tasks. 3) Interpersonal relationships are also a major factor for Latin American students' adjustment. 4) Language barriers are another major factor affect the process of adjustment. 5) expectations about the host country and the host culture is another major factor. Vanegas also pointed out that for those who had been professionals in their homeland adjustment was impaired by a conflict of roles.

In his research focusing on Middle Eastern Arab students in America, Gezi (1959) found several major problems that Middle Eastern Arab students faced during their adjustment to America: 1) social problems, such as ignorance of American social manners; 2) economic problems, such as lack of funds; 3) academic problems, such as inability to answer speed and objective tests; 4) language problems, such as unfamiliarity with the American way of speaking English; and 5) personal problems, such as shyness and frustration with American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Another study conducted by Hodgkin (1958), which focused on Asian students in Western Australia, found that the following important variables are related to Asian students adjustment in Australia: 1) English language facility; 2) type of education; 3) students from rural or urban residence; and 4) student's family social economic status.

The factors hindering Japanese students' adjustment to America had also been researched (Michii, 1981). In his study, language barriers were found to be key factors of the problems of adjustment for those students. The result of this research also indicates that interaction with Americans influences favorable toward America and make Japanese students' adjustment easier.

An early study on the adjustment of Scandinavian students in America (Swewll, 1961) found that the following factors affect students adjustment experiences in host country: 1) academic study, Scandinavian students found it quite difficult to adjust to the relatively rigid routine of registration, the advisement system, required courses, compulsory class attendance, frequent examinations; 2) daily life; 3) student's motivation; 4) role perceptions; 5) return expectations; 6) language facility; 7) extent of contact with Americans; 8) previous contact with other cultures; 9) personality characteristics; 10) informational

guidance. The researchers believed that students' motivation, role perceptions and return expectations were "most unmistakably important" (Sewell, 1961).

Another recent study concerned with the psychological adaptation of Malaysian students in Canada (Berry, 1983) found that the levels of stress in the Malaysian students are surprisingly high when considering the sample as a whole. Furthermore, the study found that not spending a lot of free time with Canadians and not being close friends with Canadians are both correlated with high stress among Malaysian students. The study also found that a low preference for talking to Canadian friends about problems is associated with high stress.

#### **CHINESE STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT**

In 1984, Mickle conducted a research study which focused on Hong Kong students' cross-cultural adaptation experience in Eastern Canada (1984). By sending a questionnaire to Hong Kong undergraduate students in both York University and the University of Toronto, the researcher got 139 students responses. The finding of the research indicated that following factors strongly facilitate the successful adjustment of Hong Kong students in Canada: 1) the number of Canadian friends a Hong Kong



student has; 2) the number of Chinese-Canadian friends a Hong Kong student has; 3) the amount of participation in activities with Canadians; 4) the amount of participation with Chinese-Canadians; 5) the length of stay in Canada; 6) the tolerance of ambiguity; 7) a lack of perceived discrimination and a positive impression of Canadians; 8) less strongly identified with traditional values.

Two major hindering factors found in this research were the pressure of school work and the language barrier. Factors such as sex, birth order, number of siblings, religion, place of matriculation, future plans, number of dialects, program major and former travel were not significantly correlated with those students' adjustment in Canada.

Another research was conducted which focused on the acculturation of Chinese students from Taiwan and Hong Kong at an American campus (Kang, 1971). The research focused on the correlation between a student's name change and their acculturation process and found: 1) changers associated significantly more with Americans than non-changers; 2) the proportions of American coinhabitants was significantly higher for changers than for nonchangers; 3) changers read Chinese publications significantly less than non-changers; 4) changers were substantially between adapted to the cultural tastes of the host society than nonchangers.

Bourne (1975) interviewed twenty-four Chinese students in The States universities. He found parental, personal and other demands for excellence, which meant that Chinese students worked harder and for longer hours than most other students. He found that Chinese male students tended to be unassertive, shy and socially passive; Chinese female tended to be less isolated but felt guilty about dating non-orientals. General speaking, Chinese students have few non-Chinese friends and are ill equipped to deal with the Caucasian campus population.

A comparison study on foreign students coping responses and outcomes among Chinese, French and English students in Canada was conducted by Chataway & Berry (1986). They compared 43 Chinese students from Hong Kong with 32 English-Canadian students and 43 French-Canadian students. The research found that 1) the Chinese scored higher on the Cawte scale, indicating lower psychological and physical health; thus the Chinese students had lower coping satisfaction, and higher marks; 2) the Chinese had higher general anxiety levels than the French or English. This is highly related to negative adaptational outcomes; 3) the Chinese reported less intimacy and less support from their friends. This was found to statistically predict lower physical and psychological health for the Chinese; 4) the Chinese reported less work experience than the French or

English. Work experience and other forms of experience may help an individual to learn adaptive methods of coping; 5) the Chinese reported more acculturation problems, and higher acculturative stress measures than the French and English. They also reported more of the standard difficulties, which occur when two cultures come in contact, such as prejudice, communication difficulties; 6) the Chinese exhibited a tendency to engage in less emotional support seeking behavior (although not significantly), and positive thinking, and tension reduction (significantly). The Chinese reported using fewer tension reduction techniques (including exercising, eating, and taking drugs). They found that Chinese students also engaged in less positive thinking than the other groups. There was also some indication that the Chinese use more passive than active forms of coping; 7) the finding indicates that Chinese visa students suffer more stress than French or English students while at Queen's university and that they tend to socialize mainly with other Chinese students. The Chinese also tend to be less active in clubs at Queen's.

Another comparison research paper which studied the adjustment problems of Chinese, Indian and other foreign students was conducted at the University of Georgia (Perkins, Perkins, Guglilelmino & Reiff, 1977). The finding of this study indicated that 1) with respect to "English proficiency", Chinese rate it as a more important problem

than the other two groups; 2) with respect to "educational preparation", Chinese perceive it as a more important problem than the Indians did; 3) In rating the "racial or religious discrimination", the Chinese found it to be a more important problem than the other two groups; 4) with respect to "unfriendliness of people from the community", the Chinese rated it as a more important problem than the other two groups; 5) With regard to "homesickness", Chinese rated it to be a more important problem than the Indians; 6) both Chinese and Indians perceived climate as a more important problem than the other group. The research also found that both the Chinese and Indian groups had less frequent interaction with members of other community.

On his research on adjustment problems of international students, Forstat (1966) did a research on 201 international students at Purdue University in The United States. Thirty-seven countries were represented, the top six being Canada, China, Turkey, India, Norway and Venezuela. The research found that the ten most frequent problems were related to country of origin and it was found that country of origin is significant for students from China, Venezuela, and Turkey in eight of the ten most frequent problems, but not significant for students from Norway, India, and Canada. Forstat stated that students from China and Turkey may have more problems, as well as different types of problems, than students from Norway, Canada, and India.

A research on Attitudes of Chinese students in the United States (Chang, 1973) indicated that a Chinese student's attitude toward the United States was positively associated with the degree of his contact with Americans, and negatively associated with the degree of authoritarianism. The research also stated that a U-curve hypothesis concerning attitude changes through time was partially supported by the finding of the research.

In their research on the adaptation of foreign students, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) found that parents expectation seemed to be an important factor in Chinese students' attempts to perform well, since all the Chinese students in that study were supported by their families. The research also pointed out that Chinese students seemed to speak much more their own language than other foreign students.

A survey of graduate students and visiting scholars from the People's Republic of China at the University of Alberta (Jiang, 1986) found that the problems PRC students and scholars encountered were identified in three areas: 1) academic, 2) housing and financial 3) social and cultural adjustment. In the academic category, the language problem was found to be the most obvious difficulty for PRC students and scholars. The difference is teaching methodologies and

styles between China and Canada is another problem. In the housing and financial category, going shopping was found a problem for Chinese students, because goods are expensive for them (from textbooks and stationery to clothing). It is also difficult for a new comer to find a place to live. In the social and cultural adjustment category, many Chinese students felt lonely and had no local friends. Although there are some social activities available to them, it was found difficult for the Chinese students to participate, due to transportation, time and money difficulties. The survey also indicated that because of the different consuming concepts between the Chinese and others, most Chinese refuse invitations to social activities, e.g. drinking at pub, having dinner at restaurants, etc.

In another survey on those Chinese students returned to Taiwan after their America study experience, Wei (1971) found that 34.6 percent of returned students indicated that they had problems of adjustment to America.

In 1981, a research team of psychiatrists did a study on Chinese students' cross-cultural education experience in The United States (Yeh, Chu, Klein, Alexander, & Miller, 1981). Forty students from Taiwan and Hong Kong were studied, through intensive interviews and/or questionnaires about their social adaptation. The research indicated that few Chinese student had made close, warm contacts with

members of the host culture. Social isolation from Americans was a fact of life for the Chinese students. They associated almost exclusively with their own country fellows. Their relationship with host nationals rarely went beyond superficial pleasantries. Thus they formed a strong subculture within the university. Such kind of isolation becomes so accepted by the Chinese subculture that there is great resistance to changing the pattern.

The methodology and the procedure of this research will be discussed in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

##### SAMPLE

##### SUBJECT SELECTION

Twenty-one graduate students and visiting scholars who came from The People's Republic of China in 1988 to study at The University of British Columbia participated in this study. At the time of this study, there were approximately 100 PRC students and visiting scholars who came to study at The University of British Columbia in 1988. The subjects were chosen randomly from a name list provided by the U.B.C. Chinese Students and Visiting Scholar Association. All the subjects were well informed about the nature, focus and purpose of this research by a letter written in both Chinese and English before they agreed to participate.

##### DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS

All of the subjects had been in Canada for 9-12 months at the time of the interviews. All but two subjects had no previous experience of studying abroad. One of the two exceptions had studied in Japan for several months in 1986, and the other had been a student in The United States for



one year before she came to Canada. Nineteen participants are male. Two are female. Six of the subjects are visiting scholars and fifteen are graduate students. Seven subjects are in Master's programs and eight are in Ph.D programs. Fifteen of the subjects are married and six are single. Regarding to the age of the subjects, there are 10 subjects between 25 to 30 years old; 9 subjects between 30 to 40; and one subject under 25; and one subject above 40. Twelve students are sponsored by the Canadian university and by their relatives and friends in Canada. Nine subjects are sponsored by Chinese government.

Most of the subjects study in natural sciences and applied science, and their major areas are as follows:

Civil Engineering	4
Computer Science	3
Chemistry	3
Physics	2
Mechanical Engineering	2
Electrical Engineering	1
Geological Science	1
Geography	1
Architecture	2
Commerce	1
Health Care & Epidemiology	1

## METHODOLOGY

### METHODOLOGY INTRODUCTION

The critical incident technique has been described in research literature as a reliable and valid research method, especially as an exploratory qualitative research focusing on comprehensive and detailed description of a content domain. This technique was initially developed by Flanagan (1954) in World War II, in order to identify effective pilot performance. Since then, this technique has been widely used in various social science research areas (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964, Dachelet, et al, 1981, Woolsey, 1986,).

The critical incidents technique consists of collecting a comprehensive list of observed behaviors from individuals who are most competent and in the best position to make judgments about the particular activity being investigated. Critical incidents are collected through structured interviews. Analysis of the critical incidents collected allows one to begin to formulate the critical requirements or elements of an activity. Woolsey (1986) describes the two basic principles of this technique as: 1) factual reports of behaviour are preferable to ratings and opinions based on general impressions; 2) only behaviors which make a

significant contribution to the activity should be included. She also generated five steps for using this technique: 1) determining the aim of the activity to be studied, 2) setting plans, specifications, and criteria for the information to be obtained, 3) collecting data, 4) analyzing the thematic content of the data, and 5) reporting the findings.

### SELECTION OF METHODOLOGY

Since this research is an exploratory qualitative one, I selected the critical incidents technique to be the best research method available for soliciting depth and concrete information in order to find the hindering and facilitating factors for PRC students adjustment in Canada. Other methods have considered but seemed less appropriate due to the nature of the research question.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### INITIAL CONTACT PROCESS

Once the subjects had been selected, a letter written in both Chinese and English was sent to every subject to explain the nature, purpose, form and procedure of this research. The subjects were also well informed of how much time they might spend by being involved in this research.

They were also informed that the interview would be audio-taped and the audio-tape would be highly confidential in nature. Later, the researcher made a further contact with them to arrange the interview schedule.

### PILOT RESEARCH STUDY

Two subjects were chosen in order for the researcher to conduct a pilot study. The two subjects were interviewed and asked to recall the specific incidents which facilitated or hindered their adjustment to Canada. From this initial pilot study, the researcher was able to determine specific criteria for every incident; the instructions to be given to future subjects; and the kind of questions to posit to the subjects.

### THE INTERVIEW

From April of 1989 to August of 1989, the twenty-one chosen subjects were interviewed at a very quiet office in the International House of The University of British Columbia. The formal interview was conducted in a private one-to-one session with each subject. Before the formal interview, all the subjects were asked to read two separate copies of Informed Consent in both Chinese and English and to sign them, thus giving their consent to be involved in

this research. The Informed Consent clearly and plainly states the purpose and the procedures of this study. The Informed consent also clearly states that the subject's agreement is voluntary and that they are under no obligation to participate. Participants were also informed that that the data collecting from the interview would remain highly confidential, and that they need not necessarily answer specific questions in the interview.

After signing the Informed Consent, the subjects were asked to fill in a simple demographic form in order to provide the researchers with biographical information of the subjects.

Because Mandarin is the mother tongue of both the researcher and the subjects, interviews were conducted in Mandarin. This enabled the subjects to openly and precisely express their experienses and feelings. The single interview with each subject lasted approximately 50 to 60 minutes.

The procedure of the interview was audio-taped and the reasons for audio-taping were carefully explained to the subjects. The Informed Consent also stated clearly that the interview would be audio-taped.

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher made the following brief statement to emphasize the focus of the interview.

"I would like to ask you to think back to the days you have experienced since you came here until now, and to find which events had a significant effect, in either positive or negative way, on your adjustment in Canada. Please give me very specific events which include the persons involved, the circumstance, and the outcome. Feel free to tell me the events in any order, in other words you may recall the critical things which happened to you from the day you arrived and moved forward to the present time, or you may tell the events based on different aspects, such as academic study, life style here and/or social gathering etc."

Once the subjects began to speak about his/her experience of adjustment to Canada, the researcher simply listened to his/her talking. Sometimes, if the interviewer found the events were too general or vague, he asked some questions to help guide the subjects to talk about more specific events. If the subject deviated from the focus of interview, the researcher would interrupt and pull the interview back on the desired focus.

Specific criteria for every incident was established. A pilot interview conducted to help in better specifying the categories of incidents and the criteria of drawing a incident, etc. The subjects were interviewed and asked to recall the specific incidents, which facilitate or hinder their socio-psycho adjustment to Canada.

### DATA COLLECTION

In the data collecting procedure, the incidents were traced from the taped transcripts. The pilot study enabled the researcher to catagorize each specific incident under following three critaria: (1) the agent, (2) the event--what the agent has done, and (3) the consequence--what the effect is. Following this, each incident was separately transcribed onto a index card with the I.D. number of the subject who reported it. Later the incident cards were sorted into several basic categories by the interviewer.

### RELIABILITY AND CREDIBILITY

After the categories were formed, the cards were mixed together before being sorted by other experts in order to check the reliability of the formation of categories.

Since the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, experts familiar with that language were asked to check

whether the English transcripts matched the Chinese original audio-tape. The result of this examination determined that the English transcripts were perfectly matched with the original Chinese audio-tape.

### **CONCLUSION**

The results of these interviews will be showed in the following chapter. The cretical incidents will be summarized.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In five months, 21 subjects were interviewed at the International House of University of British Columbia. The results of the study were achieved by using the critical incident technique. The critical incidents were selected and 10 basic categories were formed through sorting out the critical incidents.

The 21 subjects in the study reported a total of 385 incidents, 175 facilitating and 210 hindering incidents. The average number of incidents reported per student was 19.2. The fewest incidents that any one student reported was 11, while the most was 29. The most common number of incidents reported was 21 or 22.

#### DESCRIPTION OF BASIC CATEGORIES

A description of the basic categories will be presented with an introduction and two examples of each hindering and facilitating category.

#### Academic Achievement

**Definition.** Facing the academic pressures and problems and receiving support and encouragement related to academic study and research.

Range. The incidents in this category include taking courses and exams, attending seminars and doing assignments; completing registration; selecting program and supervisor; relationship with supervisor, instructors, other faculty members and classmates; the expectation of supervisor and program; using library and other educational facilities; working, teaching and doing research in laboratory; adjusting to the local educational system, supervision and teaching style in host country; previous academic background and research experiences; learning skills and strategies; study time and research achievement.

There are some examples of both facilitating and hindering incidents to illuminate the nature of this category:

- F. When X. J. first got in the lab, some local students gave him an introduction of the facilities in the lab and showed him how to gain the research devices and materials. If he couldn't get them, they would like to lent them to him. Though these seemed the trifle things, he felt that it was very important to him to start his research and academic work.
- F. The first semester, L. B. took a statistics course. The instructor had taught in China for two years, so the he was very nice to L. B. Every time L. B. asked the instructor questions, he would be very patient to answer L. B.'s question. The instructor also gave L. B. a lot self-confidence for his academic study.
- H. The first semester, L. Y. took 4 courses, plus doing teaching assistantship and research assistantship. She found that was really too much for her in the beginning stage. Too much pressure from the courses hindered her academic adjustment. She felt overwhelmed and frustrated in that period.

- H. Q. J. found there was a huge differences in education system and teaching style. He wasn't used to the teaching style here, such as group discussion and seminar. He found that these different instructing forms increased the difficulties he encountered and brought more challenge for him.

### Family Issues

Definition. Receiving support from family members or relatives or experiencing difficulties or stresses with family members in both China or Canada.

Range. The incidents in this category include concern the spouses, kids and other family members in China and elsewhere; planning for spouses and children come to Canada; helping spouses adjust to the host-culture; getting various kinds of support from spouse and family members in both China and Canada, or elsewhere.

- F. Z. X. had difficult to take one course without computer knowledge. Fortunately, his wife came Canada that time, she had a strong background of computer science. So she helped him a lot to finish this course.
- F. In his parents' letter, every time they asked X. W. to study hard, to focus on his study, don't concern them too much. He knew they had a high expectation for his academic achievement. Their letters always encourage his academic study.
- H. After her husband arriving Canada, L. Y. had to spend a lot time on helping him to adjust to this culture. So she didn't have enough time to do her research and academic study. Especially, when he failed in job hunting and was depressed, he got angry with her. Then she got mad with him, she was depressed when she saw he was depressed.
- H. When Z. S. left China, his baby daughter was only 6 month old and his wife was sick. One month after he

arrived here, he got a letter from his wife saying that the baby-sitter had left and she was still sick. His wife asked him to go back China as soon as possible. It made him have a very hard time to concentrated his mind on study and work for several weeks. He was very annoyed and vexed and his mind had always been gone all way back to China, to his wife and his family.

### Culture Learning and Social Gatherings

**Definition.** Learning and understanding the codes of the host culture, attending and joining parties and social gatherings, and making friends, or facing the barriers and problems concerning the host culture and social gatherings.

**Range.** The incidents of this category include reactions to host culture; understanding local law, customs and norms, such as income tax, medical exam, medical insurance and traffic regulations; interpersonal relationships with other people; hunting for a job; general information gathering; making friends (including Chinese, local and other foreign friends); feeling accepted or rejected by the local people; involvement in social gatherings, such as bible study, Christmas camp; attending entertainment and sports.

F. Y. D.'s friends Frank and Nicky often took him out for movies or fun. They became his best friends. When his wife came, they drove him to airport to pick up her. They also helped him moving out. Whenever, he need some help, they were always willing to help him. Because of having such nice friends, he found life here was much better.

F. Social gathering is an important to M. G. to adjust to this culture. He was apt to attending various free parties and making more local friends. He thought his English had been improved a lot mainly

through social gatherings and contacting with local people.

- H. The first party Q. J. attended was organized by his dept. called Profession Night. He was lonely there, because nobody approached him and he felt lost. He was very upset and suffered for being there without being noticed. So he left the party after a while. It brought some negative feelings to him. It hindered his later relationship with local students.
- H. The first time S. L. went to McDonald and asked for a burger. The service person asked him "what salad do you want?" He was confused, just said salad. Then he was asked what kind of dresser he wanted. He didn't know there were five different dressers. This was an embarrassed moment for him. Because he didn't know anything about the burger dressers. It was culture barrier and language barrier that made him feel scared shopping and eating out in Canada.

### Language Barriers

Definition. The problems facing studying in using English for communicating with others, or receiving encouragement and support from others for improving her/his English ability.

Range. The incidents of this category include speaking English, reading, writing and listening, such as taking notes, writing term papers, asking questions and following the instructors in the class and the seminar; familiarizing with special terms; communicating with others under daily living circumstances and social gatherings, such as phoning others, greeting to classmates, understanding slang and idiom.

- F. Y. L. found that doing teaching assistantship was a good way to improve her English, especially oral English. Because she had to speak English and tried

to explain the problem clearly and understandably.

- F. L. B. joined the Language Exchange Program organized by UBC International House and contacted with two local people--an old gentleman and a doctor. He taught them Chinese, while they corrected his English writings.
- H. Language was a big barrier for Z. S. to communicate with others, to attend the social gatherings. For example, when he came here, for a couple months, he never talked with his classmates. Every time he wanted to talk with his supervisor, he would think about for a quite long time to make sure what he wanted to say and how to say. He felt he was so stupid.
- H. The first a couple weeks in the school, X. J. couldn't understand what an instructor was talking about in the class. And taking exam, he had to use mechanical memorizing, because of language problem. He didn't have enough time to translate the content from Chinese to English. Language barriers slowed down the speed of his thinking and hindered his ability of comprehension.

### Initial Settlement

**Definition.** Receiving help and support from local people and sojourning compatriots (other Chinese students) to help meet immediate needs and settling down in a new country, and having trouble with initial settlement. The period of initial settlement lasts first one or two weeks in Canada.

**Range.** The incidents of this category include arriving at airport; staying in a home-stay or finding temporary accommodation; joining orientation program; hunting for a place to live; field trip, such as guiding to various stores to know how to shopping here; facilities

familiarization and introduction to faculty members and staff; short-term loan to meet immediate financial needs.

- F. When Y. D. arrived Vancouver, Nicky (a volunteer help who is local people) came to the airport to pick up him. He stayed Nicky's house for several days, Nicky took him out to see movies and to watch tennis game. Nicky also told him how to buy a used bicycle and provided many useful information for him.
- F. When Z. X arrived in Vancouver, one of his friends, who had been studying at UBC for a while, picked up him at the airport and drove him to UBC Chinese Scholars and Students Associate (CSSA). Then his friend took him to Saveway, Produce-city, China town and other cheaper foods stores. Some other Chinese students helped him to find a cheap room. Though these things looked trifling, but he felt it was very useful and helpful to him to adjust to this new environment with limited money.
- H. The first day Q. J. arrived at UBC CSSA house, the Chairman's wife told him that he could only stay there for two weeks, then he must move out. It gave him an impression that she was very impolite, cold and rude. Especially he just came here from thousands miles away. He didn't feel secure staying there and was afraid that they would ask him to move the next morning.
- H. W. D. found it was very hard to find a suitable room for him in Vancouver. He and his friend called many places, it took him a week to find a place.

### **Activities of Daily Living**

**Definition.** Receiving actual aids for adjusting to the daily living in the host country and facing challenge and difficulties for living in a new country.

**Range.** The incidents in this category include shopping, laundry and cooking; hunting for a place, the living

condition and relationship with roommates, landlord and landlady; going to bank; eating-out; moving out and in; transportation; past living experience.

F. S. W shared with other two Chinese visiting scholars in a house. They often chanted about the letters received from the families and discussed about the things happened in school. She found it was helpful to her feelings and emotions, at least could reduce her lonely feeling.

F. C. X.'s first landlord was a single old man, who was a retired pilot. He bought a lot TV program channels and color TV set was available in every room. Sometimes he watched TV programs with the old man and the old man explained something to him, such as the election and the different parties' policies. He found it was a good experience to live with local people. It was very helpful for his adjustment to this culture. He understood more about this culture than those who were living with other Chinese students.

### **Financial Concerns**

**Definition:** Receiving financial aids from various sources and experiencing financial pressure and facing financial challenge.

**Range:** The incidents of this category include sources of money; the amount of money coming from department or some other agencies or any sources; the expenses of daily life, such as rent, food, buying clothing; expenses for school, such as tuition, buying textbooks, references and research and class supplies; having debt in China or left an amount of money in former unit in China; spending money for entertainment, leisure and social gatherings.



- F. Q. W.'s supervisor gave him both teaching assistantship & research assistantship. His supervisor also told Q. W. that he would financially support Q. W. and asked Q. W. to focus on his academic study and research. His supervisor's financial support helped the student adjusting to studying and living in this country.
- F. When Q. J. arrived at Vancouver, he didn't have enough money with him, so he wrote a letter to UBC Graduate School telling them about his financial problem. Fortunately, they gave him \$ 800 in advance as his research stipend, which made him survive for two months. Their support was very helpful to him, he could not image how he could adjust himself without this amount of money.
- H. W. Y. felt very sad that he came here for study, but finally he had to be a cheap labour. But this was a real life. The Chinese government only gave him \$ 430 a month. The inflation in Vancouver was soaring, he could hardly live on this amount of money. He had to save every cent and always felt financial pressure.
- H. The financial pressure also made Z. S. avoid social gathering. His peer partner was a very warm and friendly person. The first a couple time, his partner took Z. S. out touring around and then went to restaurant. It coasted his one week food expense for the dinner. So the third time his partner asked him to go Aquarium and had dinner out, he politely refused. He felt very embarrassed. He thought that his peer partner didn't understand his financial situation.

### **Agency Plicies & Emergent Events**

**Definition:** Facing the problems and barriers due to the various agencies' policies and regulations, or receiving support and help from various agencies and their policies.

**Range:** The incidents of this category include both Chinese and Canadian agencies' policies, such as passport and visa requirement; Chinese government policies about

studying abroad; immigration and employment policies in host country; policies of university in Canada and former working-site in China; political events happening in both Canada and China, especially the students' reaction towards the Beijing Students Demonstration and June 4th Massacre; traffic accidents and unexpected serious health problems (students and their family members here).

- F. During the June of 1989, Q. W. received a letter from International House (I.H.), which express their concern for China situation and Chinese students' situation. So he went to I.H. to see Iris. She told him the toll-free line. Then his wife called Shanghai and finally connected with his parents. Once he knew his parents were fine, he felt much relieved.
- F. L. Y. found that I.H. provided many services for foreign students. Whenever she had problem, she could go there and ask them for help. One time she asked them about tax, but they couldn't answer her question immediately. They phoned other institute to get the information and told her. She found this organization was always very supportive to her.
- H. Y. L.'s husband supposed to come before last Christmas, and she prepared everything for his coming. Then the night before he supposed to come, he phoned her and told her that her unit in China didn't allow him to come to Canada. It was a big strike to her. She felt hopeless and depressed and got angry with Chinese government. She also felt a sense of lost. During that time, she couldn't concentrated her mind on study.
- H. The UBC graduate school sent X. G. the acceptance letter was quite late. He got the letter in July. He had to go through the whole procedure dealing with Chinese government and Canada Embassy for various documents. Finally he got his passport and visa in Sep. He arrived in Vancouver in the middle of Oct. He found coming school so late brought a lots problems for his academic adjustment. He missed half of a semester and some instructors didn't let him to get in their classes at that time.

## Personality & Emotional Issues

**Definition:** Experiencing the emotional periods and psychological adjustment of being new in the country and getting support from others during this emotional period.

**Range:** The incidents of this category include students various feelings and emotions, such as homesickness, depression, loneliness, frustration, over-stressed, anxiety; emotional crisis periods; study motivation and various personal desires; self-validation, such as self-esteem, self-confidence; and personality, disposition.

- F. Z. S. was depressed after he arrived here for a couple months, then he went to UBC International House to see a counsellor. The counsellor is also a Chinese student and the counsellor gave him a lot help and suggestions. He felt much better after seeing the counsellor for several sessions.
- F. When W. J. got a poor score in the mid-term exam, one of his classmates from Hong Kong approached him and told him that it was common for a foreign student to fail the first exam. The Hong Kong student also told him how to cope with exam and gave him some productive suggestions about his thesis. He found the Hong Kong student's suggestions was very helpful and W. J. finally got a very good score in the final exam.
- H. After arrived here for a month, Z. S. was in depression. He had no interest in study and work, fooling around and fearing the holidays and long weekends. During the depression period, he couldn't study and had a hard time. He felt very disappointed about his academic arrangement and felt hopeless about his future.
- H. W. Y. is a very active person and have a strong sexual desire. But he couldn't satisfied his such needs before his wife came. Such desires also barriered his study and living here. He felt that it

was so difficult to struggle with such kind of desires. Sometimes he even thought to go back China immediately.

### Preparation for Study Abroad

**Definition:** Receiving certain training or preparation before coming to Canada and being lack of preparation or late arriving due to various reasons.

**Range:** The incidents in this category include language and cultural learning before leaving for Canada; academic preparation; critical information in advance of coming to Canada; late arrival due to various reasons.

- F. Before Z. S. came to Canada, he was trained at a Preparation Program in China. He was not only trained in English, but also was quite well informed about Western culture and customs. For example, the teachers told him about how to open an account and how to use cash stop card, how to go for Dutch, etc. He found the information he got from this program was very useful when he came here.
- F. Before L. F. came to Canada, one of his friends told him that he had a friend at UBC. So L. F. contacted with this person and asked him to find a cheap room for L. F. and asked this person to told him how to prepare to going to Canada. Since this person gave him a lot useful information and help, L. F. didn't feel nervous and anxious about leaving for a foreign country.
- H. Y. L. had to work to make some money in U.S.A. until Aug. 31, So she didn't have enough time to prepare her study or organized her life in Vancouver in advance. She felt tremendous pressure from both academic and daily life, when she just arrived in Vancouver.
- H. S. W.'s unit told her about studying in Canada in the last minute. She only had a couple months to prepare her English. She felt it was too rush to prepare for everything in such a short time. Since

her English was poor, she found it was hard to communicate with local people. It hindered her adjustment.

### RELIABILITY OF THE BASIC CATEGORIES

One female rater, who is a full-time master program student from Department of Counselling Psychology of the University of British Columbia, was asked to determine the reliability of the basic categories. The rater majors in Cross Culture Counselling Psychology program and is personally interested in this research. According definition and ranges of ten basic categories the researcher provided, the rater first read through all 385 cards then sorted out the all cards to form into ten basic categories. She achieved the reliability scores of 78%. After discussing with the researcher, the rater sorted out the cards again and achieved the reliability score of 92%. The incidents were miscategorizeed at first time due, either to lack of understanding of the category defination, or to reading the incidents incompletely.

### BASIC CATEGORIES PARTICIPATION RATE

The participation rate indicates the strength of the categories by showing the extent to which different participants in the study reported the same kind of

incidents as hindering or facilitating their psycho-socio adjustment to living and studying in Canada. Table 5 shows the participation rate by percentage of students reporting incidents in each category. As well, the actual number of incidents which the percentages represent are shown.

**TBALE 5.**

**Basic Categories Participation Rate**

	% of Students reporting in- cidents in each category	Number of Incidents Facili- tating	Hindering
1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	81%	26	34
2 FAMILY CONCERNS	81%	17	34
3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL	81%	31	19
4 LANUGUAGE	90%	10	38
5 INITIAL SETTLEMENT	86%	39	6
6 ACTIVITIES OF DAILY	71%	18	15
7 FINANCIAL PRESSURE	66%	12	20
8 AGENCIES' POLICIES	71%	4	24
8 PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL	43%	10	18
10 PREPARATION	38%	8	2

**HINDERING AND FACILITATING INCIDENTS GENERAL TENDENCY**

TBAL 6

**THE NUMBERS & RATIOS OF FACILITATING AND  
HINDERING INCIDENTS IN 10 CATEGORIES**

	FACILITATING HINDERING		TOTAL
1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	26 (14.86%)	34 (16.19%)	60 (15.58%)
2 FAMILY CONCERNS	17 ( 9.71%)	34 (16.19%)	51 (13.25%)
3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL	31 (17.71%)	19 ( 9.05%)	50 (12.99%)
4 LANUGUAGE	10 ( 5.71%)	38 (18.10%)	48 (12.47%)
5 INITIAL SETTLEMENT	39 (22.29%)	6 ( 2.86%)	45 (11.69%)
6 ACTIVITIES OF DAILY	18 (10.29%)	15 ( 7.14%)	33 ( 8.57%)
7 FINANCIAL PRESSURE	12 ( 6.86%)	20 ( 9.52%)	32 ( 8.31%)
8 AGENCIES' POLICIES	4 ( 2.29%)	24 (11.42%)	28 ( 7.27%)
8 PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL	10 ( 5.71%)	18 ( 8.57%)	28 ( 7.27%)
10 PREPARATION.	8 ( 4.57%)	2 ( 0.95%)	10 ( 2.60%)
TOTAL	175 (100%)	210 (100%)	385 (100%)

The Table 6. shows the number and ratio of hindering, facilitating incidents and all incidents of one category among all categories. 10 categories or major factors, which strongly influencing PRC students psycho-social adjustment in Canada, have been found in this table. The 10 categories or major factors are following: 1) Academic Study and Reserch; 2) Family Concerns and Support; 3) Culture Learning and Social Gathering; 4) Language Barriers and Improving; 5) Initial Settlement; 6) Activities of Daily Life; 7)

Financial Pressure and Support; 8) Agencies' Policies and Emergency events; 9) Personality and Emotional Issues; 10) Preparation for Studying Abroad.

TABLE 7

**THE NUMBER AND RATIO OF HINDERING AND  
FACILITATING INCIDENTS IN EVERY CATEGORY**

	FACILITATING HINDERING		TOTAL
1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	26 (43.33%)	34 (56.67%)	60 (100%)
2 FAMILY CONCERNS	17 (33.33%)	34 (66.67%)	51 (100%)
3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL	31 (62.00%)	19 (38.00%)	50 (100%)
4 LANUGUAGE	10 (20.83%)	38 (79.17%)	48 (100%)
5 INITIAL SETTLEMENT	39 (86.67%)	6 (13.33%)	45 (100%)
6 ACTIVITIES OF DAILY	18 (54.55%)	15 (45.45%)	33 (100%)
7 FINANCIAL PRESSURE	12 (37.50%)	20 (62.50%)	32 (100%)
8 AGENCIES' POLICIES	4 (14.29%)	24 (85.71%)	28 (100%)
8 PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL	10 (35.71%)	18 (64.29%)	28 (100%)
10 PREPARATION	8 (80.00%)	2 (20.00%)	10 (100%)

The Table 7. shows the number and ratio of hindering and facilitating incidents in every single category.

TABLE 8

**5 POSITIVE & 5 NEGATIVE PRIMARY FACTORS**

FACILITATING	NUMBER & % OF INCIDENTS	HINDERING	NUMBER & % OF INCIDENTS
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1 INITIAL	39(22.29%)	1 LANUGUAGE	38(18.10%)
2 CULTURE	31(17.71%)	2 ACADEMIC	34(16.19%)
3 ACADEMIC	26(14.86%)	3 FAMILY	34(16.19%)
4 DAILY LIFE	18(10.29%)	4 AGENCIES'	24(11.42%)
5 FAMILY	17( 9.71%)	5 FINANCIAL	20( 9.52%)
<hr/>			
TOTAL	131(74.86%)		150(71.43%)
<hr/>			

The Table 8. shows the number and ratio of incidents among the five primary facilitating and hindering categories or factors.

TABLE 9

**6 HINDERING PORTION DOMINANT FACTORS VS  
4 FACILITATING DOMINANT FACTORS**

	FACILITATING	HINDERING	TOTAL
1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	26 (43.33%)	34 (56.67%)	60 (100%)
2 FAMILY CONCERNS	17 (33.33%)	34 (66.67%)	51 (100%)
4 LANUGUAGE	10 (20.83%)	38 (79.17%)	48 (100%)
7 FINANCIAL PRESSURE	12 (37.50%)	20 (62.50%)	32 (100%)
8 AGENCIES' POLICIES	4 (14.29%)	24 (85.71%)	28 (100%)
8 PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL	10 (35.71%)	18 (64.29%)	28 (100%)
3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL	31 (62.00%)	19 (38.00%)	50 (100%)
5 INITIAL SETTLEMENT	39 (86.67%)	6 (13.33%)	45 (100%)
6 ACTIVITIES OF DAILY	18 (54.55%)	15 (45.45%)	33 (100%)
10 PREPARATION	8 (80.00%)	2 (20.00%)	10 (100%)

The Table 9. shows the comparison of the number and ratio of incidents between 6 hindering portion dominant

categories or factors and 4 facilitating portion dominant categories or factors.

**TBALE 10**  
**PRIMARY 5 FACTORS VS OTHER 5 FACTORS**

	FACILITATING	HINDERING	TOTAL
1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	26 (14.86%)	34 (16.19%)	60 (15.58%)
2 FAMILY CONCERNS	17 (9.71%)	34 (16.19%)	51 (13.25%)
3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL	31 (17.71%)	19 (9.05%)	50 (12.99%)
4 LANUGUAGE	10 (5.71%)	38 (18.10%)	48 (12.47%)
5 INITIAL SETTLEMENT	39 (22.29%)	6 (2.86%)	45 (11.69%)
SUB-TOTAL	123 (70.29%)	131 (62.38%)	254 (65.97%)
6 ACTIVITIES OF DAILY	18 (10.29%)	15 (7.14%)	33 (8.57%)
7 FINANCIAL PRESSURE	12 (6.86%)	20 (9.52%)	32 (8.31%)
8 AGENCIES' POLICIES	4 (2.29%)	24 (11.42%)	28 (7.27%)
8 PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL	10 (5.71%)	18 (8.57%)	28 (7.27%)
10 PREPARATION	8 (4.57%)	2 (0.95%)	10 (2.60%)
SUB-TOTAL	52 (29.71%)	79 (37.62%)	131 (34.03%)
ALL-TOTAL	175 (100%)	210 (100%)	385 (100%)

The Table 10. shows the comparison of the number and ratio of incidents between 5 primary categories or factors and the rest categories or factors.

TABLE 11

**THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS BETWEEN  
THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED SCHOLARS  
AND SELF-SUPPORTED GRADUATE STUDENTS**

	Government Sponsored Scholars (8)		Self-Supported Graduate Students (13)	
	Numner of Inci.	% of Inci.	Number of Inci.	% of Inci.
<b>FACILITATING</b>	63	44.68%	112	45.90%
<b>HINDERING</b>	78	55.32%	132	54.10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	141	100.00%	244	100.00%

The Table 11. shows the comparison of the number and per cent of facilitating and hindering incidents between government sponsored visiting scholars and self-support graduate students. The result indicates that there is no significant statistic difference between these two categories of PRC students regarding to the number and per cent of incidents reported.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### STATEMENT OF RESULTS

The findings of this research address the following points: 1) the participants can identify the significant concrete incidents which either hindered or facilitated their first year psycho-socio adjustment to Canada. 2) the significant factors found in this research can contribute to the development of a model of PRC students' psycho-socio adjustment to Canada. The finding of this research could also be applied to the research of PRC students in the United States and in Western Europe. 3) the findings of the study can also contribute to the development of a psycho-socio adjustment model of international students, especially students from the developing countries.

#### ANALYSIS

#### NEGATIVE INCIDENTS & POSITIVE INCIDENTS

The results of the research indicate that among the 385 critical incidents, there are 210 negative incidents (54.55%) and 175 positive incidents (45.45%). There is no significant difference statistically between the negative and the positive incidents.

Through analyzing the individual categories, there is significant statistical difference between the negative and the positive incidents among Language Barrier & Improvement; Cultural Understanding and Social Gathering; Family Concerns and Support; Initial Settlement; Financial Pressure; Agencies' Policies & Emergency Events; Personal & Emotional; and Preparation categories. There is no significant statistical difference between the negative and the positive incidents among the two categories: Academic Study & Research, and Activities of Daily Life.

Among 8 categories which have a significant statistical difference between the negative and the positive incidents, the negative incidents have significant statistically higher than the positive incidents in 5 categories: Language Barrier & Improvement; Family Concerns and Support; Financial Pressure & Support; Agencies' Policies & Emergency Events; Personal & Emotional. The positive incidents have significant statistically higher than the negative incidents in 3 categories: Cultural Understanding and Social Gathering; Initial Settlement; and Preparation.

### PRIMARY CATEGORIES VS OTHERS CATEGORIES

The differences between the 10 categories are obvious. First, the research finds that the larger 5 categories contain 254 incidents which cover 65.97% and almost two thirds of the total incidents. Therefore these 5 categories, which are called primary factors, have been shown to have a very important influence on PRC students socio-psycho adjustment to Canada. Table 10 compares 5 primary factors with other 5 factors.

Among the 10 hindering categories, the incidents of 5 categories--Language Barrier; Academic Study & Research; Family Concerns & Support; Agencies' Policies & Emergency Events; and Financial Pressure & Support, contain 150 incidents and cover 71.43% of all negative incidents (see table 8). These 5 negative categories are called primary negative factors.

Among the 10 facilitating categories, the incidents of 5 categories--Initial Settlement; Cultural Understanding & Social Gathering; Academic Study & Research; Activities of Daily Life; and Family Support, contain 131 incidents and cover 74.86% of all the positive incidents (see table 8). These 5 positive categories are called primary positive factors.

## THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED SCHOLARS AND SELF SUPPORTED GRADUATE STUDENTS

The results of this research showed that there is no significant statistical difference between the government sponsored scholars and self-supported graduate students regarding to the ratio of hindering and facilitating incidents reported by both groups of participants. This finding indicated that in terms of the general socio-psycho adjustment to Canada, both government sponsored scholar and self-supported graduate students faced the similar challenges and got similar supports. Although there might be a difference between two groups regarding to the supporting resources, type of difficulties and degree of difficulty. For example, a government sponsored student might get more support from Chinese Students and Scholars' Associate (CSSA) at the University of British Columbia and local Chinese consulate, while a self-supported student might get more support from local Canadian students and local Canadian and Canadian Chinese people. Further research to find out more subtle differences between these two groups in terms of 10 basic categories would be recommended.

## ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

### Academic Study and Research

The category which was ranked in first was academic study and research, in which 81% of the participants reported incidents. In total, 60 incidents were reported, 34 of which were hindering and 26 of which were facilitating (Table 5.). This finding is consistent with the finding of other research on international students adjustment to a host country (Han, 1975; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Lee, 1981; Sharma, 1973). These researchers also found that academic study and research was regarded as the crucial issue by the international students.

This finding can be interpreted to mean that academic study and research is a primary task for most PRC students coming to Canada, therefore whether they can succeed in their academic study strongly affects their general procedure of adjustment to living and studying in Canada. Most PRC students at the University of British Columbia had finished their Bachelor or Master degrees in China, and had been doing professional work and research in their area for a while before they came to Canada. Therefore they typically have strong academic background and research experience. Academic study is always placed the first priority in their life, no matter where they are in China or in Canada.



The success of academic study and research is also related to students' financial situation, because most PRC students get a teaching assistantship or/and a research assistantship from their department. If they fail at academic study and research, then it means they might lose the financial support from their department. Although it is a rare case for a department to suspend a foreign student's financial aids due to his/her academic failure. Most participants mentioned they felt tremendous pressure to show their supervisors that they had a strong academic background, because of the financial aids they received.

There was no a significant statistical difference between the hindering and the facilitating incidents in category of Academic Study and Research (Table 5.). The study indicates that although students face a tremendous challenge from academic study and research, students also get lots of support from various resource persons, including their supervisors; faculty members; classmates including local students and other international students; country fellows; instructors.

### **Family Concerns**

The category of Family Concerns was listed in second place, 81% of participants reported the incidents. Among total of 51 incidents, 34 were hindering and 17 of were

facilitating (table 5.). It was a surprise to find that Family Concerns placed second in this research, as the Chapter 2 Literature Review showed that family factor had never been considered as a major factor affecting foreign students' psycho-socio adjustment to a new environment. Although some research (Hodgkin, 1958, Mickle, 1984) pointed out that Chinese or Asian parents' expectation may affect the Chinese or Asian students' adjustment to a new country, the factor of family concerns found in this research was primarily related with students' spouses and their children rather than their parents. This finding constitutes one of the unique characteristics of PRC students' psycho-socio adjustment to Canada.

The possible explanations for this phenomenon are as follows:

- 1) Most PRC students in Canada, as well as in other Western countries, are above 25 years old and are married before they come to Canada. There are many cases of students who have come to Canada and other Western countries just after their honeymoon. Since the husband and wife could not come to Canada together, they strongly miss their new-married partner. In many cases, students start to go through the procedure of applying to have their spouses come to Canada shortly after they have settled here, this is obviously very time consuming and stressful process.

2) The present unstable political situation in the People's Republic of China is another reason students feel concerned about their spouses, child(ren), parents and other family members. During the interviews, a majority of participants mentioned that they were extremely concerned about their family members during the Spring of 1989 Democracy Moment in China. After the June 4th Massacre at Tiananmen Square (hundreds or even thousands people were killed by the armed troops on June 4th 1989 at Tian-an-men square of Beijing China, where thousand university students were sitting in and fasting peacefully), more and more students were making their efforts to speed up the procedure of application of having their spouses, children and other family members come to Canada.

In the Family Concern category, most incidents are negative ones. The negative incidents occupy 66.66% in this category, while positive ones shared a 33.33% portion of this category. There is a very significant statistical difference between the hindering and facilitating incidents in this category. The finding suggests that the family concerns are more apt to disturb students' regular academic study and research than negative influences of other factors. Although the students reported that they also received some support from their spouses, parents and other

family members, in most cases, such support appeared to be spiritual support or daily life support.

### Cultural Understanding and Social Gathering

The category of Cultural Understanding and Social Gathering has also been defined within the 5 primary categories. In total, 50 incidents were reported, 31 of which were facilitating and 19 of which were hindering (Table 5.). Among all participants, 81% of them reported incidents (Table 5.). There are many research studies which widely support the point that this category is of primarily importance when considering a foreign student's psycho-socio adjustment to a new country (Mickle, 1984; Surdam & Collins, 1984; Westwood & Barker, 1990; Williams, 1981).

The finding of this research also showed that there were many more facilitating incidents reported than hindering ones in this category. A very significant statistical difference had been found between the facilitating and hindering incidents in this category (Table 5.). The finding indicates that international students have a more positive outcome when they connect with local people. Some participants in this research pointed out that they would like to be involved with local students and local people more frequently. But they also complained it was quite difficult to deepen such kind of a relationship. Most

of their relationships with local people remained at a superficial level. Some participants stated that the more contact they had with local students and local people, the better their understanding of Canadian culture; and the more able they were to understand Canadian culture, the more successful their study and their adjustment to the Canadian context.

A Peer Program, which is based on Dr. Westwood's Model and organized by the University of British Columbia International House has been proved a very successful program for PRC students to approach local students; to make friends with local students; and to understanding Canadian culture (Westwood & Bakker, 1990). Many participants mentioned they were involved in the Peer Program and found that the program was very helpful and productive in terms of increasing the volume of connection with local people and understanding Canadian society and culture. The good relationship with local people speeded up their psycho-socio adjustment to living and studying in Canada.

### **Language**

The category with the highest participation rate was 'Language' (90% of participants reported the incidents of this category). In total, 48 incidents were reported, 38 of which were hindering and 10 were facilitating (Table 5.).

This finding is consistent with the finding of many other researchers, in which, the language has been found as a crucial factor influencing the process of foreign students' adjustment to a new country (Dressa & Beavers, 1986; Surdam & Collins, 1984;). In this research, the category has been ranked as fourth among the 10 categories, according to the number of the incidents reported by the participants. A notable finding in this category was that hindering incidents contained almost 80%, while facilitating ones only covered a small portion. This phenomenon could be explained as that language is a big barrier for most PRC students' adjustment to Canada and they have little help to improve their language ability.

There are many reasons to explain why there are much more hindering incidents than facilitating incidents in this category: 1) compared with students from Europe, Hong Kong, India, and English speaking African countries, the English level of PRC students is much lower. Because they had a limited English atmosphere in their home-country. Although some PRC students get very high TOEFL score, they still have tremendous difficulty understanding native English speakers talking when they first came to Canada. 2) Students are often too busy to have time to improve their English, especially those newly arrived students, who have to spend more time on academic adjustment or daily life adjustment than to study to improve their language. 3) Compared with

European students, PRC students have a limited English atmosphere in which practice their English, because many of them live with their Chinese peers in order to survive economically. 4) Once International students have passed the TOEFL exam and have attended in programs, their departments and the university have paid little attention to the international graduate students' English level. Therefore PRC students, as well as other international students, have little support from their department or university in terms of improving their English.

Several participants mentioned that when they did their teaching assistant work or tutorial work they had a difficult time with their undergraduate students due to their language barriers, hence increasing personal stress.

Another factor is that because the majority of PRC students have already applied for permanent residence (PR) status, they have to improve their English and mingle with mainstream people. Both PRC students and university or other government agencies have to realize that PRC university students' academic achievements may be hindered by their language weakness. This could cause many potential big problems for their development in Canada right now or in the future.

### Initial Settlement

This category had a participation rate of 86%, which ranked as the second place after Language. Of the total of 45 incidents reported 39 were facilitating and 6 were hindering. Although Initial Settlement has always been listed as a factor which affects international students' psycho-socio adjustment to a new country. Initial Settlement has never been considered a primary factor in many similar study on international students' psycho-socio adjustment to a host country (Dunnett, 1981; Schram & lauver, 1988; Selltiz & Cook, 1962). The results of this research shows that the number of incidents in this category ranked fifth place among all 10 categories. Considering the number of incidents reported, this category has been considered one of 5 primary categories which strongly influence the process of PRC students' adjustment to Canada.

An interesting finding in the current study is that the highest ratio of facilitating to hindering incidents was reported in this category (13 to 2). The majority of the incidents in this category are facilitating ones. A very significant statistical difference has been found between the facilitating ones and hindering ones among this category. The number of facilitating incidents in this category was ranked the first place in the 10 facilitating categories and has the highest facilitating (more than 86



per cent) portion among all categories, while the hindering incidents in this category were placed the second to last place in the 10 hindering categories. The fact that most incidents in this category are facilitating ones and this category ranks the first place among the facilitating factors can be explained by the fact that most PRC students have been taken care very well and have received varied support during their initial adjustment to Canada.

Most participants highly praised International House of the University of British Columbia for the very important role it plays in helping them to settle down in this country. International House organized several programs to help new arriving international students: Reception Program (welcoming international students at Vancouver Air Port and offering free driving service), Homestay Program (finding a local family to host international students for a couple days when they first arrive in Vancouver); and Orientation Program (providing general informational talk, sight touring and connection with local students and other international students for the new international student). These programs had been proven to be very helpful for PRC students during their initial settlement.

Faculty members also were mentioned as sources of help for new PRC students, especially their supervisors. The help mainly related to their academic study, such as

choosing courses, registering, making decision on research focus and also with financial support, such as giving the students opportunities to become teaching assistants or research assistants.

Fellow country men and women from PRC who had come to the University of British Columbia early also provided tremendous help for the new arrivals. The help they provided mainly related with daily life, such as hunting for a room, how to shopping in the PRC students' way, where to buy cheap foods, how to find a garage sale; also with academic study how to take courses properly. These help mainly related with new students' initial settlement and their basic survival needs.

### Activities of Daily Life

This category had a participation rate of 71% and of total of 33 incidents. 18 were facilitating and 15 were hindering (Table 5.). Although there were more facilitating incidents than hindering ones, there was no significant statistic difference between the facilitating and hindering incidents in this category.

In some research, the Activities of Daily Life has been generated as one of the important factors which influences

the procedure of international students' socio-psycho adjustment to the host country (Jensen & Jensen, 1983; Johanson, 1971). In Vanegas' (1980) research on the adjustment of Latin American students to The United States, daily life was found to be one of the most important hindering factors among Latin American male students, because they were so heavily dependent on their mothers, wives, girlfriends, sisters or maids. But in this research, the Activities of Daily Life had been proved to be a non-primary factor. Another interesting finding is that there is even more facilitating incidents than hindering ones in this category.

As some students pointed out, it was not so challenging and difficult to adjust to daily life in Canada. The hunting for a room was mentioned as a big hindering issue, but most of the participants finally found a cheap place through their fellow countryman's help. Their daily life is very simple and thrifty, which is what they are used to when they were in China. As many students stated they are focused on academic study and research so much that they pay very little attention to daily life in Canada. This could be the main reason why this category is a non-primary ones for PRC students' adjustment to Canada.

### **Financial Pressure**

Financial pressure was placed as the seventh among 10 categories, considering the total number of incidents reported by the participants. In total, 32 incidents were reported in this category, 20 of them were hindering and 12 of them were facilitating. The rate of participation in this category was 66 and a significant statistic difference between the hindering and facilitating incidents in this category has been found (Table 5.).

Financial pressure is considered to be the biggest barrier for foreign students in research by Klineberg & Hull (1979). It was also the researcher's original assumption that financial pressure would be one of the primary factors hindering PRC students' socio-psycho adjustment to Canada. The finding of this research, however, showed surprisingly that financial problem was not a primary factor for PRC university students' psycho-socio adjustment to Canada.

There are some reasons to explain this finding:

- 1) In Canada, most PRC university students are graduate students. For example, there were 275 PRC graduate students and only 11 PRC undergraduate students at the University of British Columbia. As graduate students, they needn't pay the differential tuition fees which would be 2.5 times more than the local students' tuition fees.

2) Also, most graduate students are involved in research projects or teaching assistantships. This is the main financial resource for them. Financial aid from their departments at least meet their basic living needs. Some students are even able to send money back to their families in China. Thus PRC graduate students' financial situations are much better than PRC undergraduate students and those studying at language institutes and colleges. The PRC undergraduate students and PRC students in language institutes and colleges have to pay highest tuition fees without financial resources from the schools. I believe, in the future, another research could be done on socio-psycho adjustment of PRC language students and college students to fill this research blank area.

#### **Agencies' Policies & Emergent Events**

The rate of participation in this category was 71%. In total, 28 incidents were reported, 24 of them were hindering and 4 of them were facilitating. There was a significant statistical difference between hindering and facilitating incidents in this category (Table 5.). The highest ratio of hindering to facilitating incidents (6 to 1) was found in this category (Table 5.).

Although this category was not listed as a primary factor, the number of hindering incidents was placed fourth

among 10 hindering categories. Therefore the results of this research indicated that Agencies' Policies are one of the primary hindering factors.

The explanations of this phenomenon are:

1) The policies of dealing with PRC students coming to Canada both the Chinese government and the Canadian government have been very changeable and unstable in the last a couple years. Some students complained that it was often a difficult lengthy procedure to get their passports from the Chinese government or to get visas from the Canadian Beijing Embassy.

2) Since many students wanted to bring their spouses to Canada, they had to deal with various agencies, including the local immigration office, the Canadian Beijing Embassy, the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver, the Public Security Bureau in China and their former unit in China. The bureaucratic structures among these agencies made the students feel very upset and frustrated.

3) Some students also pointed out that some university policies or department policies also made their academic adjustment to this campus more difficult. For example, the foreign students had to take more courses than some same level local students. Because the department determined

that some credits on PRC students' transcripts could not be the equivalent to the credits of the University of British Columbia, and the heads of departments assumed that international students were lacking in certain academic background, which later was often proven to be incorrect.

4) Most students mentioned that one of the major events, which hindered their academic and daily life adjustment in Canada during 1989 to 1990 academic year, was the Chinese university students democracy movement which began Spring of 1989 and ended June 4th of the same year in China. Many students paid so much attention to the event, and they were so emotionally involved in the situation in China that they could not sit down to their studies and their research for several months. When the June 4th of 1989, the massacre of Tiananmen square happened, PRC students started to worry about their family members in China. This is a typical example of an emergency event which hindered some PRC students' psycho-socio adjustment to studying and daily life in Canada.

Another interesting finding is that the facilitating incidents in this category ranked in last place among the 10 facilitating categories. The results of this research indicate that it is necessary for both the Chinese government and various agencies in China and the Canadian government and various agencies in Canada to think of

improving their services to help the students' socio-psycho adjustment to Canada.

### Personal & Emotional

28 incidents were reported in this category, 18 of them were hindering and 10 of them were facilitating. A significant statistic difference between the facilitating and hindering incidents was found in this category. The rate of participation in this category was 43% (Table 5.).

Though this category is not a major one, it does not mean that personal and emotional issues are not an important issue among PRC students in Canada. One explanation of less responses in this category is that because the family concerns are a very big factor, the researcher decided to divide the Family Concerns from the Personal and Emotional category. We can assume that if the researcher put both the Family Concerns and Personal & Emotional categories together, this category would no doubt be the largest one among 10 categories.

Regarding the fact that hindering incidents were significantly statistically higher than facilitating ones in this category, it is consistent with same tendency in the Family Concerns category. Most students mentioned that their country peers, their supervisors, and counsellors from



International House gave them help when they sought it. Several people complained that it was hard to find the right person and a safe place to discuss about their personal issues in Canada.

### **Preparation**

Regarding the number of incidents reported and the rate of participation, this is the smallest category among the 10 categories. Only 38% of the participants reported incidents in this category, and in total, 10 incidents were reported, 8 of which were facilitating (Table 5.). There is a significant statistical difference between the facilitating and hindering incidents in this category (Table 5.).

Most incidents reported in this category were concerned with the help students received to prepare properly to go abroad. They reported help receiving from either the orientation programs in China or pre-arrival information kits before they left the PRC or pre-arrival contact with UBC International House or their department in Canada. The students' friends, including local Canadians or their country peers, also play an important role in preparing them to live and to study in Canada.

### **SUMMARY**

1. Ten major categories which facilitate or hinder PRC students' psycho-socio adjustment in Canada have been found through this research. Among the 10 categories, the top 5 of them are considered as primary categories. They covered 66% of all incidents. The range of rate of participation among these 5 categories was from 81% to 90% and was much higher than the rate of participation among remaining 5 categories. The 5 primary categories are: Academic Study & Research; Family Concerns & Support; Cultural Understanding & Social Gathering; Language Barriers & Improvement; Initial Settlement.

2. Considering the number of incidents reported by the participants, Academic Study & Research was ranked first place among 10 categories. According to the rate of participation, Language Barriers & Improvement was listed the highest among 10 categories. Considering the number of facilitating incidents reported by the participants, Initial Settlement was placed the highest; in the number of hindering incidents, category of Language Barriers & Improvement was listed the highest among the 10 categories. The highest ratio of facilitating to hindering incidents (13 to 2) was reported in the Initial Settlement; the highest ratio of hindering to facilitating incidents (12 to 2) was reported in the Agencies' Policies & Emergent Events.

3. Family Concerns, which to date, few researcher have determined are among primary factors influencing international student adjustment to a host culture, has been found to place the second highest among 10 categories, according to the number of incidents reported by the participants. The major family concerns were related to PRC students' spouses and children rather than their parents.

4. Financial Pressure, which had primarily been considered as one of the most primary factors to affect international students' adjustment to a new culture, was not included in the 5 primary categories. Only 66% participants reported the incidents in this category.

5. Language Barrier placed the highest among hindering incidents. This finding is consistent with most other research on international students' socio-psycho adjustment. There is a noticeable higher ratio of hindering to facilitating incidents (19 to 5) in this category.

6. Initial Settlement was listed as the highest among facilitating incidents. It is the highest ratio of facilitating to hindering incidents (13 to 2) among 10 categories.

7. Agencies' Policies & Emergent Event, which few researcher consider to be a major factor of influence on international students' adjustment in a host country, had been found to be one of 10 major categories. It is the highest ratio of hindering to facilitating incidents (6 to 1) among 10 categories.

### SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the hindering incidents of Language Barriers ranked the highest and only a few facilitating incidents had been found in this category. It is recommendable that university provides more language training services for PRC students, or to encourage them to take more English courses. The result of this research indicates that limited English language ability hindered PRC students in their academic study and their teaching and research assistantship. So it will be very helpful and useful to provide a regular English course provided for PRC and others graduate students who are not native English speakers.

2. It is also recommendable that university provides more effective counselling services for PRC students and other foreign students. A surprising finding from this research was that none of the participants had been to the Student Counselling Centre of the University of British Columbia. In fact, many of them had never heard of the

service before. But PRC students and other foreign students did come to International House of the University of British Columbia to seek advising and counselling. There were two part time international students Advisors, who were also international students, and one of them was native Mandarin speaker. The fact that PRC students sought these two advisors seems to indicate they do need counselling services which are based on cultural understanding of PRC students problems.

3. The result of this research indicates that PRC students have got lots of help during their initial settlement stage. PRC students also pointed out that associating with local students and local people was very helpful in improving their English and adjusting to the new culture. Peer program was highly praised by most participants. But they also mentioned that there were many cultural and language barriers which prevented a deepening of their relationship with local students and local people. Most participants stated that they wanted to develop a deeper relationship with local students and local people. But once they felt they were excluded from local circles, they would withdraw and went back to their own cultural circle. Therefore, it would be helpful for PRC or other foreign students if more programs or social gatherings were provided to help them to mingle with local students and local people.

4. There are more and more PRC students coming to North America almost immediately after their marriage or the birth of a child. Most of these PRC students lack awareness of how feelings of longing for their spouses would affect their adjustment to a new culture. The research found that missing their spouses and/or their child seemed to be a problem for many PRC students. Some suggestions might be useful: 1) It is important to tell PRC students in advance how long it usually takes to bring their spouses and children to Canada with them. 2) It might be useful to provide group counselling for those PRC students to share their emotions and feelings of missing their spouses and children. 3) It also would be useful to provide some programs for those students before leaving China in order to let them be aware of how they will miss their spouses and children; and to prepare them psychologically and emotionally for the separation.

#### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

1. This is exploratory research and the researcher tried to get a general picture of PRC students adjustment in Canada and to find out what the major factors are which affect PRC students psycho-socio adjustment in Canada. There are many areas which have not been focused on in this research, such as the difference in their adjustment between

Arts students and Science and Engineering students; the difference in their adjustment to Canada between the government sponsored PRC students and self-sponsored PRC students; the different phrases of PRC students socio-psycho adjustment to Canada.

2. The research only focused on PRC university students, and excluded the PRC students in language institutes and colleges. The population of PRC students in language institutes and colleges in Canada is also a large, even bigger than the population of PRC university students. In Vancouver there are more than 1,500 PRC students in language institutes and colleges. The population of PRC college students so far has gained very limited attention from the professional helping and research. Further research focusing on this population would be recommended.

3. This research only focuses on PRC students at the University of British Columbia, therefore the sample has its limitations. For example, in this research, the climate of B.C. does not constitute a major category affecting PRC students' adjustment to Canada, because the climate in Vancouver is very mild. But it might form a category among PRC students studying in Edmonton or Winnipeg.

The number of female participants is only 2 to 21, less than 10%. The figure is a little below the rate of PRC female students in Canada (Vries & Richer, 1988).



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## APPENDIX A

## TABLES

Table 1. Full-time Internationals Student Enrollment at  
Universities in Canada for the Top 5 Countries of Origin  
Selected Years 1975-76 to 1988-89  
(Stewart, 1989)

Country							% Change 87-88 to 88-89
	75-76	80-81	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	88-89
1 H.K.	3,850	4,993	7,198	6,138	5,370	5,084	- 5.3
2 U.S.A.	4,046	2,987	2,219	2,330	2,330	2,608	11.9
3 P.R.C.	213	187	865	1,233	1,701	2,456	44.4
4 Malaysia	441	2,956	1,977	1,326	1,116	1,205	8.0
5 Singapore	132	613	1,003	1,023	982	1,007	2.5

Table 2. Full-time International Student Enrollment at  
the Master's Level in Canada, for the top 5 Countries  
of Origin, Selected Years, 75-76 to 88-89.  
(Stewart, 1989)

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Country	% Change						
	87-88 to						
	75-76	80-81	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	88-89
1 P.R.C.	20	52	414	607	793	1,015	28.0
2 U.S.A.	777	517	342	323	307	341	11.1
3 India	244	272	283	283	277	329	18.8
4 H.K.	124	297	333	333	336	307	- 8.6
5 France	144	170	160	160	155	196	26.5

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Table 3. Full-time International Student Enrollment at  
the Doctoral Level in Canada, for the top 5 Countries  
of Origin, Selected Years, 75-76 to 88-89.

(Stewart, 1989)

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Country	% Change						
	87-88 to						
	75-76	80-81	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	88-89
1 P.R.C.	6	14	259	462	719	1,220	69.7
2 U.S.A.	452	536	418	397	374	388	3.7
3 India	134	223	346	331	307	334	8.8
4 U.K.	89	214	176	171	155	171	10.3
5 Morocco	4	13	82	87	88	117	32.0

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Table 4. Full-time International Students Enrollment at  
The University of British Columbia for the Top  
5 Countries of Origin

Country	1988-89				1989-90			
	U/Grad	Grad	Total	% of UBC IS	U/Grad	Grad	Total	% of UBC IS
1 P.R.C.	6	191	197	17.73	11	275	286	22.03
2 U.S.A.	57	119	176	15.84	50	114	164	12.63
3 U.K.	22	81	103	9.27	32	74	106	8.17
4 H.K.	12	44	56	5.04	33	41	74	5.70
5 India	1	43	44	3.96	3	40	43	3.31

APPENDIX B  
FROMS & LETTERS

APPENDIX B--I  
PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

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NAME:

DEPT. AND PROGRAM:

DATE OF BORN:

MARITAL STATUS:

DATE OF ARRIVING CANADA:

THE PROVINCE AND COUNT CAME FROM:

STATUS: GRADUATE STUDENT OR VISITING SCHOLAR

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APPENDIX B--II  
INFORMED CONSENT

April/1989

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY:

This investigation is being conducted to find out what factors facilitate or hinder adjustment of students from The People's Republic of China at university.

**PROCEDURES:**

As a participant you will be asked to: a. Participate in an interview (approximately 50 minutes) b. Complete a biographical information sheet. The interview will be taped and no names will be with the transcripts of the interview.

This is to certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to voluntarily participate in this investigation on adjustment. I understand that I do not have to participate in this study, that I am free to withdraw my consent and my terminate my participation at any time, and that this will not jeopardize my standing at UBC. Anything I say or data that are collected will remain confidential with regard to my identity. I understand that I am free to not answer specific items or question in the interview or biographical sheet.

I have had a chance to ask any questions I want about this study, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I have also been told that I may ask any questions I have at any time during the study and that they will be answered to

## APPENDIX C

## SUBJECTS NOUMBER AND THEIR INCIDENTS

SUBJECT NO. 01TOTAL INCIDENTS 29POSITIVE INCIDENTS 12NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 17SUBJECT NO. 02TOTAL INCIDENTS 26POSITIVE INCIDENTS 10NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 16SUBJECT NO. 03TOTAL INCIDENTS 18POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 11SUBJECT NO. 04TOTAL INCIDENTS 15POSITIVE INCIDENTS 5NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 10SUBJECT NO. 05TOTAL INCIDENTS 17POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 10SUBJECT NO. 06TOTAL INCIDENTS 16



POSITIVE INCIDENTS 8  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 8

SUBJECT NO. 07

TOTAL INCIDENTS 18

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 6  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 12

SUBJECT NO. 08

TOTAL INCIDENTS 19

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 9  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 10

SUBJECT NO. 09

TOTAL INCIDENTS 15

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 8

SUBJECT NO. 10

TOTAL INCIDENTS 18

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 10  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 8

SUBJECT NO. 11

TOTAL INCIDENTS 15

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 5  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 10

SUBJECT NO. 12

TOTAL INCIDENTS 14

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 7

SUBJECT NO. 13

TOTAL INCIDENTS 20

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 9  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 11

SUBJECT NO. 14

TOTAL INCIDENTS 22

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 10  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 12

SUBJECT NO. 15

TOTAL INCIDENTS 22

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 11  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 11

SUBJECT NO. 16

TOTAL INCIDENTS 14

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 7

SUBJECT NO. 17

TOTAL INCIDENTS 21

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 14  
NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 7

SUBJECT NO. 18

TOTAL INCIDENTS 22

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 10

NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 12

SUBJECT NO. 19

TOTAL INCIDENTS 21

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 10

NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 11

SUBJECT NO. 20

TOTAL INCIDENTS 13

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 7

NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 6

SUBJECT NO. 21

TOTAL INCIDENTS 11

POSITIVE INCIDENTS 5

NEGATIVE INCIDENTS 6