Young Chinese students' teamwork experiences in a UK business school – from a cultural perspective.

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YOUNG CHINESE STUDENTS'
TEAMWORK EXPERIENCES IN
A UK BUSINESS SCHOOL –
FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Declaration

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification at this or any other university, or other institution of learning.

Abstract

Using a qualitative approach, this study examines young Chinese students' (born post 1985) perceptions of teamwork and how these perceptions change as a result of their experiences, whilst studying at a UK university. Built from deep and rich data collected from in-depth interviews with an experimental group of students, the research establishes that through direct communication with students from various cultural backgrounds during teamwork, the Chinese students adapt psychologically, cognitively and behaviourally to varying degrees. The decreased wariness of local and other international students and British university staff, increased self confidence and sense of achievement may be categorised as psychological adaptation. Changes are also revealed in their open mindedness, decreased ethnocentrism, increased cultural awareness, and attitudes towards time and assessment, opinions on abiding principles, that is following ethical and moral aspects and regulations. These may be labelled as cognitive adaptation. Further, changes are shown in their ways of expressing opinions, holding ground, handling uncertainties, mixing with local and international students, and studying autonomously. These may be termed as behavioural adaptation. The research finds that the extent of adaptation is moderated by their individual learning approaches, namely surface, deep and achieving. It stresses that creating optimal cultural synergy with diverse cultural contacts/exposure not only facilitates but maximises cultural adaptation, namely fitting in with new social and educational environment. The results are triangulated by the findings from a comparison group of similar students in China, with respect to age, gender and learning approaches, thus aiming to discount any bias. Implications arising from the study suggest that the internationalisation of education should enhance 'cultural synergy' so that both the local and international students can enrich their learning experiences and develop intercultural competence.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The high number of international students studying in the UK has attracted the attention of researchers and educators. Prominent issues addressed include how to create an inclusive climate, promote positive intercultural learning and achieve cultural synergy in the higher education institutions (Russell, 2005; Robson and Turner, 2007; Kingston and Forland, 2008). Internationalisation of higher education promotes the students to achieve not only knowledge but also intercultural competence, equipping them to perform effectively in different cultural contexts (Summers and Volet, 2008). One of the biggest barriers in cross cultural interactions may be the different learning and teaching perceptions and approaches between East and West. Some researchers state that cultural inheritance affects students' learning approaches, as shown in the bi-polar orientations of Asian and Western students. The Asian students prefer doing reflective observation and memorising abstract concepts and theories, whereas the Western students have a preference for learning through active involvement and experiences (Yuen and Lee, 1994; Auyeung and Sands, 1996; Strohschneider and Güss, 1999; De Vita, 2001; Jaju et al., 2002). Other researchers, however, argue that these are misconceptions about Asian students studying abroad. Commonly held beliefs about Asian students' learning strategies, namely rote learners relying on memorisation, passive learners with little participation, sticking together with peers coming from similar backgrounds, lacking critical analysing skills, and that they do not easily adjust to a new learning environment are questioned. Watkins and Biggs (1996, 2001) adhere to the view that Chinese culture is advantageous to Chinese learners' academic learning and that Chinese students use memorisation as a strategy to achieve deep understanding. Such a view is supported in the research of Chalmers and Volet (1997)

who contend that learning information by heart allows them to understand. They further ascertain that many of these beliefs are stereotypical and not necessarily as simple as first portrayed when taking into consideration the cultural and educational situation. Also of importance is the Chinese students' learning approaches are not tightly predetermined by their cultural heritage and they adapt in order to fit in with the new learning and cultural context (Volet and Renshaw, 1996). Convergence of learning approaches amongst the students occurs under the influence of a different educational context (Charlesworth, 2007). More recent literature on integration of international students highlight that the traditional Western view of stereotypes of students from a Confucian heritage are less well founded. For example, Kingston and Forland (2008) state that the current generation of East Asian learners is becoming increasingly similar to their Western peers. Further, there is no right or wrong learning approach (Remedios et al., 2008; Valiente, 2008). As a consequence, educators should adopt an open minded attitude and make an effort to create a culturally facilitating environment to enable students to make adjustments and develop know how while studying abroad.

1.1 Significance of Studying Teamwork

The 21st century is about teamwork. Teams have become a common phenomenon in modern organisations, which have a flatter structure (Werner and Lester, 2001). In the business field, employees must be able to manage projects collaboratively and therefore it is crucial for students majoring in business programmes to work in teams in preparation for the world of work (Pfaff and Huddleston, 2003). In the light of this trend, educators have explored the benefits of team projects as a teaching mode to foster students' cooperative skills and to train them to become good team players. As a result, teamwork, or group learning, has become well established in Western universities, and

more recently is being incorporated within some universities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Wang, 2008b). Students are required to become active rather than passive learners, thus promoting student autonomy with the shifting of some of the learning responsibility to the students themselves (Bourner et al., 2001). The paradigm of university teaching is also in the process of change, from teacher to student centred learning (Machemer and Crawford, 2007). The best aspects of teamwork highlighted by Burdett (2003) include five main categories, which are generating ideas and sharing views, meeting people and building friendships, improved learning processes, sharing of workload, and improved grades. Counter to this, however, are the problematic areas. These are that individual efforts are not reflected in assessment, difficulties of accommodating different work schedules for meeting times and lack of commitment to meeting of some group members, and lack of support from tutors, who may just use group work as a work avoidance strategy, that is marking fewer assignments. Culturally mixed groups become an even bigger challenge for both host and international students. Researchers find that such factors as cultural-emotional connectedness, language, local students' work commitments, and stereotyping prevent successful cross-cultural interactions (Volet and Ang, 1998). A typical phenomenon is limited cultural contact between students from different cultural backgrounds, although universities have increasing large number of international students, including Australia (e.g. Summers and Volet, 2008), and the UK (e.g. Sliwa and Grandy, 2006), etc. Both international and local students hold a negative view about teamwork due to unstructured group work processes and culturally bound beliefs. Therefore, optimal contact between the students has to go a long way in achieving the positive attitudes towards teamwork (Holmes, 2004; Wong, 2004; Li and Campbell, 2008).

Regarding Chinese students' teamwork in Western universities, limited contact with local students discounts their learning experience. For example, in New Zealand, most Chinese report that their group work take place within groups that consisted of only Chinese students or eighty to ninety per cent of Chinese students, who communicate through Mandarin instead of English. Thus it is doubted that students could improve their English skills through group discussions in English, and widen their cultural perspectives (Li and Campbell, 2008). There are similar findings, which state that all too often Chinese students have largely kept themselves to themselves, or only mixed with groups of other Chinese students. Part of the international education process is thus lost through marginalisation (Sliwa and Grandy, 2006; McClure, 2007). A famous proverb states "Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand" (Confucius)[1]. Involving the Chinese students with those from different nationalities is thus an important way of developing the process objective. Having teamwork built into the course, and being involved with local and other international students on the team, is one way of achieving this. The impact of internationalization on learning, teaching and assessment standards in the UK HEIs has been addressed by Robson and Turner (2007). One important issue they consider is that the UK universities, while benefiting financially from the contributions of international students, should make more efforts to become internationally-minded communities and develop a constructive cultural climate. This implies strategic innovations in programme design and pedagogy; the need for practical staff development underpinned by action research; and enhancement of student induction and support in cognitive, affective and language aspects.

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[1] The source of the proverb is not clear but generally attributed to Confucius, 551-479 BC.

Furthermore, teamwork is one thing that Chinese students may have difficulty in getting on with when studying in the UK. A number of reasons are put forward for this.

First, it can be attributed to the social and educational environment in which they grow up. Chinese students have been brought up in a social environment and an educational system that attach great importance to individual academic excellence and achievement (Stevenson and Lee, 1996). The idea of working with others is less highly developed in formal academic situations. Phuong-Mai et al. (2006) argue that the reason why learners from a Confucian Heritage Culture find group work uncomfortable is related to their high uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation. They tend to prefer structured learning with precise and detailed instruction and objectives rather than open-ended discussions. Also, Cortazzi and Jin (1996) state that Chinese students may not want to learn errors from classmates during group discussions. Listening to the teacher is more effective in gaining knowledge and skills. "They do not expect to learn from their peers in groups" (Clark et al. 2007, p.5). Nevertheless, this is not to say Chinese students are completely unfamiliar with group or collaborative learning, for they enjoy group work where they can discuss academic issues (Li and Campbell, 2008). However, the preference is for collaborative learning in a more informal environment, e.g. after class, and they become hesitant in more formal situations among peers and teachers (Tiong and Yong, 2004). Their familiarity with respect for authority, classroom formality, group harmony, face saving and competition presents a real challenge when confronted with a constructivist approach of self regulatory learning, with active interactions with other group members, debating, etc. (Volet, 1999). In a Chinese classroom, confrontations and conflicts are generally to be avoided or, at least, not to hurt anyone or cause any loss of face (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). This is in line with other

research addressing the face and harmony issues. In Chinese culture, harmony with others is important to maintain interpersonal relations (Fan, 2000), and therefore strategies are used to avoid face to face conflicts, such as politeness (*keqi*), face saving strategies (*mianzi*), and implicitness (*hanxu*) (Gao et al., 1996). In cultures where harmony, cooperation, and public self-image are a priority, the value of critical thinking and cross-examination may be less relevant tools for learning (Valiente, 2008).

Second, Chinese students prefer assessments based on individual work, which indicates individual strengths and efforts, and tend to have a negative approach to group work, especially if such work attracts a group mark (Volet and Ang, 1998). Whilst Chinese students acknowledge the positive social benefits of working in groups, they often do not see the educational value promulgated by Western educators, for example, sharing marks, due to the competitive Chinese educational system which attaches great importance to grades (Clark et al., 2007). Evaluations of schools and teachers depend largely on students' academic achievement, i.e. exam results. This may be attributed to the Chinese elite educational system, which makes gaining individual success in studies become a priority in many students' lives. Schools and universities nurture, care and praise top students, while marginalising and tending to ignore the students with lesser grades (Wang, 2008a, b). Parents' *face* comes from their child's good grades. "Behind the individual's striving for academic success, and beyond any effort to seek recognition for themselves, is the image of the larger value their success would have for their family and society" (Stevenson and Lee, 1996, p.134). This may also be related to the greater individuality, which has become manifest in the young people (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996), and the fact that Chinese society lacks social spirit (Lin, 2004). Despite the fact that China ranks low in individualism in Hofstede's 'individualism – collectivism' cultural

dimension, a number of researchers find that individualistic and competitive spirit act as a hindrance to cooperative learning (Phuong-Mai, 2006). In terms of teamwork, though using it as a pedagogical tool to train their students to develop team spirit and skills has gradually filtered into Chinese universities in recent years, the idea is still in its infancy stage and time is needed for it to become more fully developed. The literature on teamwork in China, for example, Chen (2007), is mainly from moral educators and concerns extracurricular activities.

To sum up, teamwork, when students have the opportunity to work alongside others from a different culture and upbringing, is likely to become an important factor in the student development. Equality amongst group members, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support impact the nature and extent of intercultural contact and therefore international students' adaptation and development (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). As a result, it is vital to study the student experiences and outcomes from working in teams, and to understand what effect their cultural background may have when working with different nationalities. Previous researchers have explored general cultural influences on teamwork perceptions and behaviour, e.g. within organisations (Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Hassanien, 2007; Sackmann and Friesl, 2007; Schneider and Barsoux, 2003). A priori, teamwork and being involved with different nationalities, provides a certain condition that evokes or activates students' cultural knowledge. Students' cultural tendencies may be hidden or not obvious under certain service conditions, but becomes crucially important in others. It might be argued that no matter what cultural background students come from, they all find free riding, barriers in communication and non-participation equally frustrating. This is partially true. The argument adopted in this research is that students from different cultures may

approach frustrating situations in different ways, for example, they may have different approaches to face and to manage conflicts. Therefore, the research acts as a magnifier letting people see the cultural factors beyond the superficial phenomena.

The theoretical concept of teamwork in this study includes two kinds of learning groups, namely formal and informal learning groups. Formal teams might last for weeks during which the students carry out a specific assignment (e.g. group report and presentations) together until it is completed and assessed, and the students in the same group are expected to have two responsibilities: to maximise their own learning as well as that of their members. Informal groups are temporary or ad hoc groups that last for only one discussion or one class period, for example, group discussions during seminars (Johnson et al. 1991, pp.6-7; Hassanien, 2007). It is proposed to include both the formal and informal teams, although the initial idea had been to focus only on formal learning teams of one or two modules of study. The major concern is that the number of formal teamwork assignments may put certain restrictions to the extent of cultural exposure. This actually has been proven to work better since during the interviews the participants discuss extensively their experiences in teams at seminars.

1.2 Significance of Investigating the Young Chinese Students

The research centres on studying the young Chinese students (born post 1985) for two important reasons. First, they are the largest overseas student group in the UK. Statistics from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) show that 4,976 students from China started higher education courses at Britain's universities and colleges in the autumn of 2008, a 14.7 per cent rise on 2007. In total, about 75,000 Chinese students study in Britain (Beckford, 2008), with the UK taking the second

highest number after the U.S. Furthermore, with a total of 120,000 coming to the European Union (China Daily, 30 Oct. 2007), the UK is by far the largest destination in Europe. As a result, with expanded international programmes, and increasing intercultural encounters and communications, UK higher education in the 21st century has become more global. At the same time, the market for higher education has become more competitive. How to accommodate and integrate international students who are more diverse in ethnic, cultural and educational background has thus become an important issue. Increasingly, researchers have been discussing the changing nature of universities towards a more market-oriented approach (Ford et al., 1999). Education service quality has come to the forefront because students nowadays have far more options and choices (Mai, 2005). Second, they demonstrate a number of distinct and complex cultural characteristics. The concept 'Youth Post 1980's and 90's' has become a buzzword in Chinese media, literature, and daily conversations. They have captured the attention of society (Hu, 2006; Zhang, 2007).

Statistics show that studying abroad has obviously become one of the most important trends in China. The reasons for the Chinese to go abroad are numerous. Studying abroad is one of the most important aspirations of the students and their families. Sánchez et al. (2006) claim that the major motivations for Chinese students, who come from an emerging economy, to go to study abroad include: seeking advanced knowledge, learning about Western civilisation, learning to adapt to the unique culture of an overseas company, and working independently. The benefits to studying abroad also include searching for new experiences, liberty and pleasure. Living in a liberal environment, being far away from their guardians may be one of the dreams of the 'one child' generation. Further, having an overseas degree enhances future promising career

prospects, success and social acceptance. Thus there is a passion for business studies which is seen as a way to obtain a lucrative job. In the words of Eva Xu of the British Council, "It reflects the new China: now people value the rich" (in Gittings, 2002). Xue (2006) finds that the most popular choices regarding young Chinese students' career development and employability are, namely, working in joint venture companies, large or medium sized state owned enterprises, which enjoy profitability, and continuing further education to get a higher degree (e.g. a Masters or PhD degree).   The main attractions of studying abroad also include handsome scholarships, better job prospects and more opportunities to pursue further studies (China Daily, 13 August, 2007). The increased economical status of Chinese people with more disposable income is another obvious reason. Growing middle-class families have the ability to send what is usually their only child abroad to study (Huang, 2008). Further, the UK government has launched a series of initiatives to attract international students. For example, the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI) was launched in 2006, which aims to attract an additional 100,000 international students to study at British higher education institutions (Huang, 2008).   The International Graduate Scheme (IGS) launched in 2007, which aims to encourage graduates of UK further or higher education establishments to pursue a career in the United Kingdom (Home Office, 2009). Still another attraction for international students is the 'Education UK' brand, which maintains standard, quality and worldwide-recognised qualifications (Russell, 2005). It has earned UK HEIS global respect and trust. With English the foreign language of choice in China, more and more families are starting their children with private lessons from a young age, for English is viewed as providing them with social and economic mobility.   For many students English in England is seen as superior and as Gittings (2002) puts it the "Chinese respect for 'standard English' is as entrenched as the belief

in the superiority of 'standard Chinese' (Mandarin)." It is still an accepted view that UK Education has an excellent reputation throughout the world and that it will give a good return from the investment. Last but not least, the shorter length of many of the courses is an attraction, e.g. the one year top up degrees and the one year Masters. Consequently, the past decades have seen an enormous increase of Sino-UK educational cooperative programmes and debates about the advantages and obstacles involved, for example, the Agora report (2008). Nevertheless, this rapid rate of increase is not expected to last. Gill (2008) reports on a new modelling technique used by the British Council and Economist Intelligence Unit which forecasts that the Chinese students at UK universities is expected to rise to some 60,000 by 2011, at which point it will start to fall. Also projected to fall is the UK's market share of international students from China with the study envisaging a slide from 14 per cent of the market to 12 per cent by 2015. Major reasons are competition in tuition fees, living costs and university reputation from other English speaking countries, for increasingly Chinese students seek value for money when choosing which country to go to.

China has been going through enormous developments in the education sector over the past decade, with one of the most noticeable changes being the enlargement of university student enrolment (China Daily, 17 July, 2009). With this enlargement, part of the responsibility has shifted from government provision to the individual. Consequently, with the high value placed on education in China, it has become a main area on which Chinese parents are prepared to spend a large proportion of their income (Wang, 2008a, b). Coupled with this, the Chinese education authorities have been placing greater emphasis on internationalisation by allowing large numbers to go abroad. The Chinese government's relaxation of outbound travel has impact on overseas

study (Huang, 2008). In his recent speech (January 2009) about education reform in China, Premier Wen Jiabao stressed a number of key issues, which included providing equal access to education for the poor, and attaching more importance to vocational education to meet the demands of economic development, with those graduating from vocational colleges earning better respect and pay. Importantly, however, is a reassessment of the study burden imposed on students. Acknowledging that the teaching focus in China is still on instilling knowledge rather than to inspire, Premier Wen states that "Apart from imparting knowledge, teachers should also teach students to think, live and get along with others". Putting forward the new twelve year education plan, with a movement away from teachers just teaching and students who just listen and learn, is a challenge that will take time to mature (China Daily, 1 May, 2009).

Contemporary Chinese university students have presented various, complex, and even contradictory facets and values. For example, Chen (1985) finds that gender, the subjects that interviewees major in, and the geographical and social environments in which young people grow up, impact upon young people's moral orientation. The social environment has the most significant influence. For example, young people from urban China, particularly large and medium cities, put more emphasis on individual efforts, adaptation to the developing world, good life, and achievements, compared with those from rural areas, who desire to move up the social ladder and acquire social recognition by extra hard work. One prominent feature of young students is their over affirmation of individual efforts and planning. They no longer believe in the saying that individual is small, whereas collective is great. They regard individual persistence as the most important pathway to success. This is more true with boys than girls. The girls tend to

believe in opportunities and fate. Lai and Xie (2004) find that the young students in their college put self interests before that of the group. The majority of the students regard a successful career and self achievement as the most important goal in their life. The second important goal is to have a happy marriage and family. Still a small number of students consider becoming wealthy as the most important in one's life. Only a minority of students choose 'making contribution to the development and happiness of the whole society' as their most valued goal. They state that the market oriented economy, which has developed, has a certain negative impact on young students' judgement and value systems. X.J. Wang (2007) finds that the main stream of university students' morale is positive and follows the traditional respected virtue. For example, the meaning of life is to serve the people and the country, and show concern about others. They look down upon uncivilised behaviour such as spitting and littering in public. However, a certain number of students show superficial understanding of the fundamental political and social issues, such as socialism vs. capitalism; leadership of the Chinese communist party; and ownership of property, namely nationalisation vs. privatisation. This is reflected in their motivation to join the party, which they believe being a party member helps to find a better job. This is opposite to the findings of Xue (2006), who states that most students believe in communism, which is their motivation of joining the party. Regarding employment, most students put individual interests and development ahead of the needs of the motherland. Also, Xue notices the gaps between students' theoretical and practical criteria, that is, what they should and what they actually do. On the one hand, they agree with the virtue of fighting for a just cause; on the other hand, they are not really ready to put it into practice. They spend too much time on the Internet not for the purposes of studying and broadening views but for playing games and chatting. Further, it is pointed out that what the educators should not

ignore is that the students are under a lot of psychological pressures of studies, financial position, uncertainty about the future and employment. As a consequence, they feel frustrated, tired, confused, less motivated and lost. Having analysed the situation of young university students, for example, indulging themselves in materialistic pleasure and pursuing hedonism, lacking cooperative skills and social responsibility, Yang (2007) provides strategies for universities' management and teachers to educate and help students to build more advanced moral values. Such methods include educating the students with Marxism and Leninism, and the *Eight Honors and Disgraces,* a set of moral concepts developed by current President Hu Jintao (2009) for the Chinese citizens. The official translation of the eight socialist concepts reads as follows:

> "*Love the country; do it no harm. Serve the people; never betray them.*
>
> *Follow the science; discard superstition. Be diligent; not indolent. Be*
>
> *united, help each other; make no gains at others' expense. Be honest and*
>
> *trustworthy; do not sacrifice ethics for profit. Be disciplined and law-*
>
> *abiding; not chaotic and lawless. Live plainly, work hard; do not wallow*
>
> *in luxuries and pleasures.*"

Yang (2007) continues to stress that the education of social ethics, patriotism, collectivism, socialism should be enhanced. Furthermore successful education relies not only on teachers' imparting knowledge but also on the staff involved in management and administration. It is significant to build a civilised environment both on and around campus, which values advanced culture and morality.

Furthermore, the young Chinese students represent a distinctive cultural group, and they are the potential managers and leaders of the future. The young people of today, without any experiences of Maoist socialism, may be sharply contrasted to those of earlier generations (Scelzo and Lerman, 2009). According to Wang, Y. (2007), the younger generation in China develops a culture through interaction with three important entities: family, educational institutions and media. First, their parents and grandparents, who uphold traditional Chinese culture, have a great impact on their outlook formation (Wu, 1996). Second, the educational institutions, which promote the ideological communication campaign of the government and authorities, influence their behaviour and outlook. Third, a broader context (e.g. media, Internet culture, etc.), which advocates a variety of cultures and subcultures that are alien to older generations, has become more and more influential in the younger generations' lifestyle (Chan and McNeal, 2006). Consequently, the traditional values and the Chinese communist party's ideology have a lessening strength compared with the past. Chu (1985) considers that new Chinese tend to be more confident, more competitive and less subservient to authority figures. However, without doubt, ideological and educational campaigns still have profound impact on their upbringing, and on their behaviour to the outside world.

1.3 Contributions to Knowledge

The research's contributions lie in both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, it will extend the literature on cross-cultural studies by critically analysing Chinese students' teamwork perceptions, exploring the influence of young Chinese students' own culture and Chinese cultural inheritance upon their teamwork experiences, and investigating the impact of cultural exposure on perceptions and behaviour. Practically,

it will offer insights for international educators. Previous studies relating to students' experiences have been mainly in the following areas: (1) International students' motivations to study abroad and their evaluation of the service quality in higher education institutions; (2) International students from diverse cultural backgrounds differing in their learning behaviour from local students; (3) Influence of Chinese society, namely Confucian tradition, on Chinese students' conceptions of learning and their learning approaches; (4) Factors influencing team performance and satisfaction and factors that cause negative team experiences.

After reviewing these literature, the following gaps are identified: (1) Most investigations (e.g. service quality perceptions by Russell, 2005; Barnes, 2007) of international students' learning experiences adopt large-scale standard surveys to give UK HEIs insights into the motivations and expectations of its international students pre-arrival, and then how well those expectations are perceived by students. Using questionnaires, they tend to focus on discovering the existing differences rather than analysing learners' needs, behaviour and expectations from cultural perspectives. They answer the question *what are the differences in learning approaches?* Nevertheless, they do not answer the question *why and how are the students different?* (2) Regarding the limited amount of literature (e.g. second culture contact process by Sliwa and Grandy, 2006; psychosocial adjustment of Chinese students in the U.S. by Wang and Mallinckrodt, 2006; educational tourists by Huang, 2008) that does attempt to explore the reasons of Chinese students' cultural adjustment while studying abroad, they tend to categorise all Chinese students together as a homogeneous bunch. There has been little or no segmentation. Also, when analysing the reasons that lead to Chinese students' different learning approaches from those of Western students, the explanations are

mainly from, for example, a Confucian tradition. (3) Little research has been conducted to investigate the teamwork experience of young Chinese students from a cultural perspective.

This research is a longitudinal study of a selected specific group of young students, who come from a Chinese university, which has been attempting to apply certain innovative teaching approaches. The study notes how they manage, and also if and how they adapt and change over time. If any changes do happen, to what extent do they happen and how much may be attributed to the exposure to different cultures? Therefore, this research fills the gap in cross-cultural studies by focusing on exploration of cultural reasons, particularly the culture of the young students born post 1985, for example, how do they put forward their opinion when participating in teamwork and why? How do they resolve conflicts and why? How do they socialise or get along with team members and why? In other words, making generalisation of all Chinese students' (different age range, educational and social background, etc.) opinions of the UK education is not the intention of this research. The research aims to bring to light some of the hidden complexities of cultural undercurrents and attempts to make sense of Chinese students' experiences from both their cultural perspective and a larger cultural circumstance, that is, Chinese national culture. Both the narratives through which students explain their teamwork experiences and the social and cultural situations through which they live and study, provide the context for the research. This is the essential methodological principle called 'contextualisation' (Fetterman, 1998, p.19). In addition, the research attempts to give a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993, p.6) of how the Chinese students respond, act, and produce change when being exposed to a different culture. The research attempts to explore the process and results of the integration between Western

and Chinese cultures. In other words, the research intends to ascertain if in-depth exposure to different cultures helps accelerate any change. This is the intention as well as the contribution of the study.

A rather pragmatic view will be adopted and no attempt will be made to invalidate any of the previous work done in the field. While focusing on Chinese culture, the research does not intend to overestimate the cultural influences and play down the impact of many other factors on Chinese learners' experience in the UK. It is acknowledged that, 'learning outcomes' are complex results of students interacting with their environment and depend not only on situational but also personal motives and strategies.

1.4 Research Question

The basic question that this research sets out to answer is:

- Do Chinese students' perceptions of teamwork change as a result of study in the UK? If so, how and why?

This may be subdivided into:

- How does the cultural inheritance influence the ways in which young Chinese students tackle and handle problems especially in team or group situations?

- To what extent does exposure within a Western society influence them and to what extent do they change?

Figure 1 (overleaf) describes the research process.

Figure 1 Research Process

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│ Research questions          │
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│ Data collection             │
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│ Raising free nodes into     │
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│ Integrating tree nodes      │
│ into categories             │
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│ Synthesising categories     │
│ into themes or theories     │
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│ Writing up the paper        │
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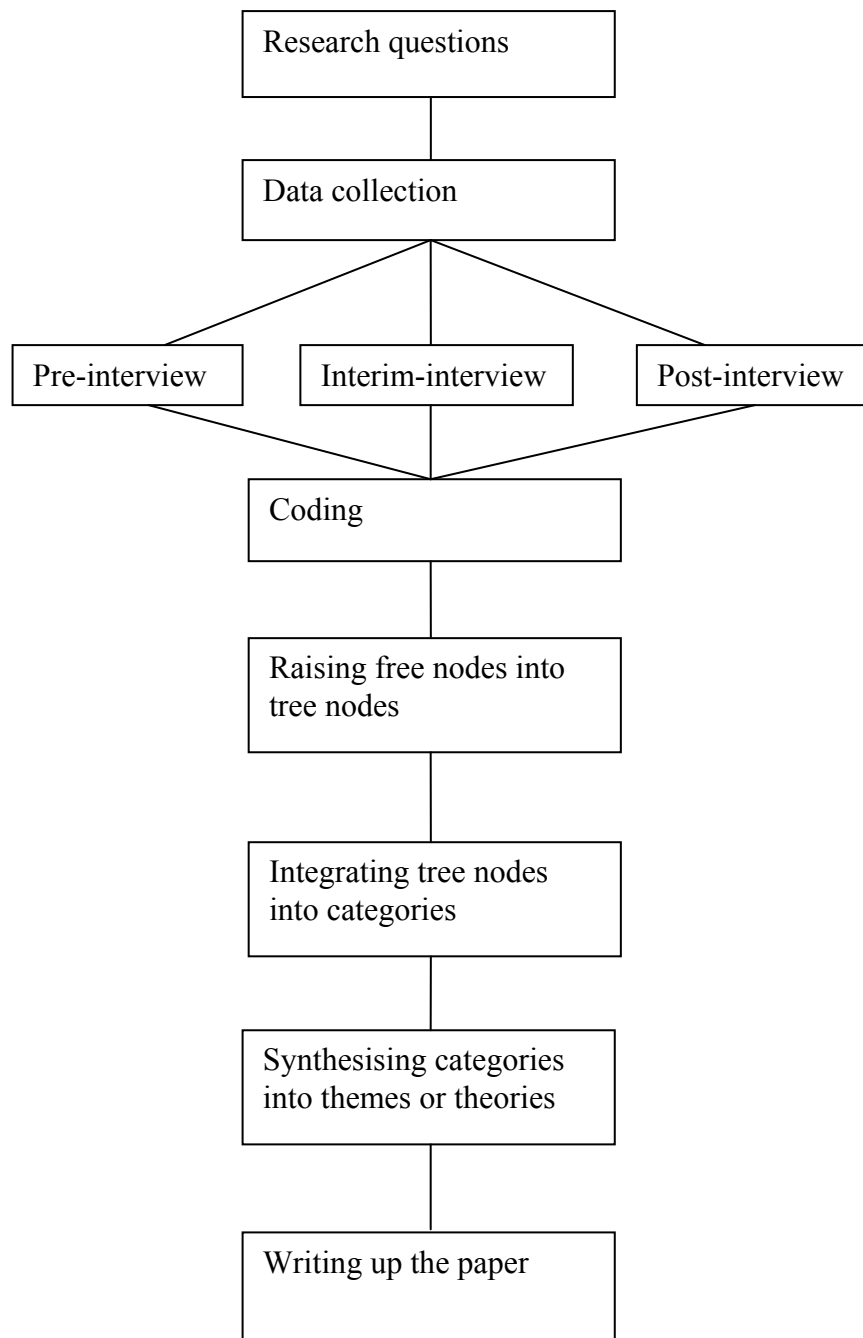
1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research takes the epistemological position which can be described as interpretivist, stressing the 'understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants'; and the ontological position as constructionist, believing that the nature of reality or 'social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.402). The interpretive sociologists' assumption of the social world is rooted in German idealism. Interpretive sociology embraces a wide range of philosophical thought with the common theme of trying to understand and explain the social world from the view of those directly involved in the social process (Burrell and Morgan, 2000). Other theorists have contributed to the notion of idealism, notably Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber, both of whom are concerned with the bridge between positivism and idealism. Dilthey's notion of *verstehen* (understanding), which draws the distinction between natural sciences and cultural sciences, underlies much of the position taken in this research. According to Dilthey, whereas the natural sciences investigate external processes in a material world, the cultural sciences are essentially concerned with the internal processes of human minds. The outward manifestations of human life could only be fully interpreted in terms of the inner experience which they reflect through the method of *verstehen* (Burrell and Morgan, 2000, p.229). Geertz's view of culture also influences the basis of this research position on the nature of Chinese culture itself. In his book *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz (1993, p.5) states: " I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical."

Social constructionism holds the view that the task of the social scientist is to appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience rather than measuring how often certain patterns occur. "The focus should be on what people, individually and collectively, are thinking and feeling, and attention should be paid to the ways they communicate with each other, whether verbally or non-verbally" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, p.30). Regarding the epistemology of social science, clearly the assumptions that social constructionists make about the 'reality' and the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world are in sharp contrast of those held by the positivists, and thus give rise to different methodological implications. In contrast to the positivist position, which aims to test pre-determined hypotheses through large scale surveys, the constructionist perspective adopts reflexive approaches to make sense of what is going on without assuming any pre-existing reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Hence, important implications for the current research are that students' interests, thinking and feelings are the main drivers, with the major aim to seek a deep understanding and view of the students' adaptation in the UK via cultural contacts during teamwork. As a general rule small numbers of cases are chosen for such an in depth study.

Grounded theory, which is under the social constructionist research designs, is utilised for this study. The emergence of grounded theory is attributed to Glaser and Strauss, who challenge the mid-century positivist assumptions of scientific method and knowledge which stress objectivity, generality, replication of research, and falsification of competing hypotheses and theories. The argument in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* "legitimises qualitative research as a credible methodological approach in its own right rather than simply as a precursor for developing quantitative

instruments." (Charmaz, 2006, pp.4-6)   Grounded theory is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998, pp.12-13) as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process…Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action." They stress that one of the essential ingredients of the method is that "it is both science and art". It is science because it bases its analysis in data; it is art in the sense that it allows researchers flexibility and creativity in naming categories, making comparisons, extracting innovative and integrated theories from masses of unorganised raw data. They want the grounded theorists to apply the procedures in creative rather than rote manners, to acquire a way of thinking about data and the world and thus to develop into a researcher who is able critically analyse situations, to recognise the tendency toward bias, to be open to helpful criticism, to be sensitive to the words and actions of respondents (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).   Grounded theory includes the following essential components: simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis, constructing categories from data not from deduced hypothesis, making constant comparisons, and developing theory from relationships identified. Memo-writing is often used to elaborate categories, and sampling size is decided aiming toward theory construction not for population representativeness (Charmaz, 2006). Whilst there have emerged different opinions amongst the founders of the grounded theory, namely Glaser and Strauss, the view taken in this study is more towards that held by Strauss. The Straussian view assumes that "pre-conceptions are inevitable", and researchers are recommended to familiarise themselves with prior research by being aware of previous work conducted in the general field. Also, time and resource constraints rarely allow non-specific or non-focused enquiry.   Furthermore, the researchers can use structured and somewhat mechanistic, processes to make sense of

the data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, pp.46-47). Grounded theory has been applied in the field of studying intercultural education and the adaptation of international students (e.g. Gao, 2006; Skyrme, 2007; McClure, 2007), showing that this is an appropriate approach for the current research. The researchers follow the essential components of grounded theory. Assumptions are not being made in advance; rather key dimensions emerge from the understandings and interpretations of the data (Skyrme, 2007). Meaningful categories are generated by making constant comparisons of different informants' data (Gao, 2006). Memo notes are used to list further questions that require following up on in the later stage interview. These questions are usually related to information in the first interview that need further clarification to ensure that the student's study experiences and coping strategies are fully understood and explored. By using the constant comparison method, recurring patterns and differences across the cases, as well as differences between and within the emerging categories are identified (McClure, 2007).

Grounded theory has not been without criticism in the literature in terms of its concepts, methodological limitations, and predictive and explanatory power, although it has been used in a wide range of research settings, and is especially highly regarded as a method of social analysis in fields such as education and health studies. As such it has contributed to the legitimate place of qualitative methods in applied social research. In the past four decades, researchers, for example, Thomas and James (2006, p.768) have challenged the "continuing legitimacy of grounded theory and the lofty place its methods have come to hold in social and institutional analysis." They summarise a number of limitations of the grounded theory put forward by researchers, which include "oversimplifies complex meanings and interrelationships in data; it constrains analysis,

putting the cart (procedure) before the horse (interpretation); and that it depends upon inappropriate models of induction and asserts from them equally inappropriate claims to explanation and prediction." The adoption of coding, analysing, interpretation and the explanation processes, explained in detail in 3.5 Data Analysis, and its successful use, serves to counter much of the above criticisms. Coding and analysing the data involves a continuous and repeated procedure in order to uncover the deep meanings in the data, which shows that during the analysing process, one continuously goes back to the raw data, coding, thinking, and getting new insights. Coding and more focused coding enables the reading of new ideas into the same data, instead of diverting the attention away from it. It is not simply looking *for* data; it is a process of looking *at* data in a fresh way and discovering new essences. Procedure and interpretation are not separated or isolated; instead they are interweaving in a mutually beneficial way. Rather than 'being limited by data and oversimplifying meanings', the research is guided by data and then the meanings are crystallised in abstract concepts. The author finds the statement of 'inappropriate models' unconvincing. How can this kind of careful, flexible, thoughtful involvement with the data result in 'inappropriate explanation and prediction'? Nevertheless, it is fully acknowledged that limitations in interpretations might arise depending on the individual researcher's understanding of the grounded approach.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

The organisation of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 addresses two important questions "why study the young Chinese students and why investigate their teamwork experiences". Then the gaps in the literature and the contributions that the study will make to the existing knowledge are explored. Further, the theoretical framework,

namely the social constructionist paradigm, which is adopted for the current research, is discussed. Chapter 2, 'Literature Review,' reviews the major texts in the literature in the following four fields, namely culture, Chinese culture, Chinese students' overseas learning experiences, teamwork experiences and perceptions, and Higher education and internationalisation. Reviewing the relevant literature is like standing on the shoulders of giants and thus enables one to look further and broader. By critical thinking, the gaps are identified and the critiques of the existing knowledge are put forward.

Chapter 3, 'Research Method' starts with the methodological position of this study, namely a grounded theory approach. It also explains the reasons why a qualitative method is appropriate and helpful to answer the research questions. Discussion continues with the pilot study, whose purposes, procedures (i.e. participants, data collection and data analysis), results, cultural implications, and implications for the current research design are included. Next, explanations of the detailed procedures on how to screen interviewees, how to carry out in-depth interviews and collect data, and how to analyse the results are provided. The chapter ends with a sample diagram describing the data analysis procedures by adopting qualitative data analysis software NVivo 8, which itself is developed on the basis of grounded theory.

Chapter 4, 'Findings and Discussions,' explores the adaptations that young Chinese students make as a result of cultural exposure in the UK. One of the main analytical concepts utilised to understand and interpret the informants' intercultural experiences and adaptations is 'culture and discourse systems' (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). It is a broad framework which captures the aspects of culture that are significant in intercultural communications. 'Culture and discourse systems' identifies four critical

aspects of culture in intercultural communications, which are ideology, forms of discourse, face systems, and socialisation. Ideology is people's worldview, including beliefs, values, and religion. Face systems are about the way a cultural group organises relationships among members, for instance, the kinship relationships, the boundaries between the insiders and outsiders of the group, and the concept of the self. Forms of discourse consist of functions of language, informational communication, group harmony and individual welfare, non-verbal communication (e.g. the use of space and concept of time). Socialisation includes both formal school learning and informal cultural learning processes, during which self identity is established. The culture and discourse system is useful to answer four basic questions in human interaction: What are the historical/social/ideological characteristics of the group? (ideology); How does one learn membership and identity? (socialisation); What are the preferred forms of communication? (forms of discourse); What are the preferred or assumed human relationships? (face systems). Discourse systems guide the analysis of the adjustments involved. Another important concept used is 'cultures of learning', coined by Cortazzi and Jin (1996). It means taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, etc. It is chosen to guide the understanding of the Chinese students' learning approaches, which might be in conflict with different teaching and learning cultures. The chapter aims to go beyond descriptions of anecdotes into the realm of explanatory theoretical framework by categorising concepts into themes. Diagrams are introduced for each tree node to establish clear logic explanations of the adjustments made by students due to the influence of other cultures. The adaptation variation between male and female students; and amongst students with different learning motives and approaches is explored in order to add explanatory power

to the discussions. 'Thick description' of the context within which the participants have undertaken teamwork is provided before juxtaposing the UK group and the China group to make comparisons and triangulate the results. Social-cultural theoretical framework (Gao, 2006) is adopted to categorise the differences between the two groups under three contextual mediation, including learning discourses, influential agents (team members, teacher, friends and parents), and assessment methods.

Chapter 5, 'Managerial Implications and conclusion,' discusses the findings which are relevant to teamwork and to bring about more rounded international experience for Chinese students; recommendations are made on the basis of these findings. It continues to discuss the contributions and limitations. It is also pointed out that factors such as intensity of contact, duration of contact, and the recognised social, educational and economic advantages upon acceptance, all act in influencing changes within students. Further it explores what needs to be done to develop the study. The chapter ends with a reflection of the author's research experience.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In recent decades there has been an extensive and influential literature on culture, cultural dimensions, and the impact of national culture on organisations and management (Hall, 1989; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2000), and also studies on how Chinese traditional beliefs and inheritances influence Chinese people's ways of communication and perceptions of the world, which demonstrate cultural contrasts (Bond, 1996; Fan, 2000; Lin, 2004, 2007). It has also witnessed a large amount of research on different learning approaches adopted by Western and Asian students as a consequence of various social, cultural and educational upbringing (Strohschneider and Güss,1999; De Vita, 2001 and Jaju et al. 2002). However, there are conflicting opinions and research results about whether learning approaches are culturally or contextually bound (Wong, 2004), and whether misconceptions exist about Chinese sojourners, and how their cultural heritage impact their learning (Watkins and Biggs, 1996, 2001; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Cho et al. 2008; Saravanamuthu, 2008). In terms of how to help international students taking most advantage of studying abroad and how to enable cross cultural adjustment to take place, researchers stress the importance of creating an inclusive, supportive and understanding climate in Western universities and to promote cultural contacts amongst students to avoid marginalisation (McClure, 2007). Furthermore, teamwork has seen a large scope of studies ranging from teamwork process and strategies to international students' behaviour and evaluations of such a collaborative learning method, which focuses on developing students' self autonomy, high involvement and cooperative skills (Johnson et al., 1991; Volet and Ang, 1998; Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Li and

Campbell, 2008; Volet et al., 2009). Such research has come to more positive conclusions on the benefits of teamwork but note that problems do exist. The gaps uncovered in the existing literature are: little research has been undertaken to explore how Chinese students' cultural and educational backgrounds influence their behaviour and perceptions during teamwork, and whether in depth cultural exposure during teamwork promotes any change in their actions and beliefs. Therefore, the present research aims to highlight the experiences of Chinese students from a particular age range in a particular UK university. The results can be used by future researchers who study this phenomenon within other unique settings. With the efforts of all researchers, further contributions will be made to the existing literature.

2.2 Concept of Culture and Cultural Dimensions

There is no commonly agreed definition of culture. Anthropologists find "culture too soft, too vague and too difficult to grasp", and disagree about its precise meaning, and over 164 different definitions of culture have been proposed (Schneider and Barsoux, 2003, p.21). The definition of culture that has been widely used by cross-cultural researchers is by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p.4):

> "Culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly
> shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment,
> which is where it was learned. Culture consists of the unwritten rules of
> the social game. It is the collective programming of the mind which
> distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from
> others."

In trying to explain how we may become complacent within our own culture, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000, p.20) use the metaphor of a fish only discovering its need for water when it is no longer in it. "Our own culture is like water to a fish – it sustains us." Furthermore, they go on to add that what may be regarded as essential in one culture, such as a certain degree of material wealth, may be less vital to others.

Hall (1989, p.69) emphasises the 'hidden' feature of cultures, which may cause misunderstandings. He states that the linearity of language and the deep biases and built-in blinders that every culture provides are the two things that get in the way of cross-cultural communication. One's own cultural roots frequently inhibit and obstruct in the understanding and integrating of new cultural experiences. "If one is to really understand a given behaviour, one must know the entire history of the individual. Understanding oneself and understanding others are closely related processes. To do one, you must start with the other, and vice versa." Therefore, an important inference that can be drawn is that cultural competence includes understanding of one's own culture and other cultures. "Used properly, intercultural experiences can be a tremendous eye opener, providing a view of one's self seldom seen under normal conditions at home" (Hall, 1989, p.212).

Another inspiring work on cultural differences is Hsu's schematic picture of man, society and culture. According to Hsu's (1985) schema, there are four layers of society and culture: layer 3 intimate, layer 2 operative, layer 1 wider, and layer 0 outer world. Layer 3 is the part of the external world with which each individual has strong feelings of attachment, which often seem to people of other cultures as quite irrational. In other

words, it is the world that gives one support, comfort and sympathy, and where one can freely express his or her emotions. Layer 2 is featured by role relationships, where one finds people and ideas meaningful. Layer 1 consists of human beings, cultural rules, knowledge, and artefacts which are present in the larger society but which may or may not have any connection with the individual. In layer 0 are people, customers, and artefacts belonging to other societies with which most members of a society have little or no contact. The implication is that different cultures may have different human beings, ideas and materials in each layer. For example, in Chinese culture, grandparents are more likely to be in the individual's layer 3, but in layer 2 for an American individual.

What becomes apparent is that cultural studies have become more complex and extensive, embedding the studies of the subcultures within a society, which is defined as the characteristic traits that possessed by a group and which set apart and distinguish it from others within a larger society (Chaney and Martin, 2007).

2.2.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions of China

There are many studies of cultural differences. However, one of the most influential is that of Hofstede. His study has become one of the most widely used among international management scholars. Although initially developed over 30 years ago based on IBM employees around the world, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are by far the most influential. Hofstede proposes five such dimensions, namely Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Term Orientation, to distinguish the cultural differences among 74 countries and regions. The following are definitions of the five dimensions quoted from Hofstede and

Hofstede (2005). Power distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p.46). It focuses on the degree of equality, or inequality, between people in the country's society. High power distance ranking indicates higher levels of inequalities. Low Power societies stress equality and opportunity for everyone. Individualism "pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (p.76). It focuses on the degree the society reinforces individual or collective achievement and interpersonal relationships. Masculinity refers to a society "when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life." "A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life" (p.120). A High Masculinity ranking indicates the country experiences a high degree of gender differentiation, whereas a high femininity rating indicates overlapping social gender roles. Uncertainty avoidance is defined as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules" (p.167). A High Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. A Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a variety of

opinions. Long-term orientation "stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards – in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present – in particular, respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligations.

According to Hofstede's cultural value scale, China has a significantly higher Power Distance index (PDI) of around 80 compared to a world average of 55. By comparison the UK's score is 35. This is indicative of a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the Chinese society. The Chinese rank low in the Individualism (IDV) index, at 20 compared to an Asian average of 24, and a world average of 43. The UK score for IDV is 89. This indicates that loyalty to one's close and committed member 'group', i.e. a family, extended family, or extended relationships, is paramount. Chinese society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. China and the UK have the same Masculinity Index (MAS) of 66, compared to a world average of around 50. China used to be a society where males dominate a significant portion of the society and power structure, with females being controlled by male domination. However, in the past decades, due to economic and social development in modern China, the social status of Chinese women has been greatly improved. Although differentiation and discrimination between genders still exist, contemporary Chinese culture can be said as neither masculine nor feminine but a blend of both (Fan, 2000). In terms of Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), China has a low score of 30, which is close to the UK score of 35. By contrast, the world average is 64. The index itself is derived as a 'by-product of power distance' and based on country mean scores for three items, namely job stress, rigidity of following company rules and intentions to remain with a company for career prospects (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005,

p.166). Later Hofstede puts the UAI into the different contexts of family, health, education, workplace and purchasing of goods, but such extrapolations, based on average country values for the three items above, may well give misleading results within an individual context. With a relatively low UAI score of 30, Chinese people are presumed to have high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity i.e. unstructured situations and to accept a variety of opinions, and do not stick to established regulations or rules. This might be true with business organisations and government institutions, with privileges given to superiors, seniors and close friends in the social network in terms of following rules. Furthermore, the interpretation of regulations is also in the hands of the person in power. In terms of education, however, Hofstede finds that in Germany (high UAI) most people favour structured situations, precise objectives, strict timetabling, detailed assignments with one correct answer which they could find and rewards for accuracy. In contrast, countries with a low UAI, such as the UK, are epitomised as preferring less structure, vaguer objectives and rewards for originality. The Chinese school and university models follow the former, where students are expected to follow strict rules, expect to get the right answers from teachers and where they tend to feel more comfortable in a structured learning environment. China has a high Long-Term Orientation (LTO) index of 118, which ranks as the highest, amongst a world average of 45 and compared to UK's score of 25. This indicates that China attaches great importance to the values of long-term commitments and respect for prudence and saving. In this culture, change occurs more slowly, as long-term traditions and commitments tend to be impediments to change. Again a lot of evidence is available to argue against this. China's LTO culture has not stopped it to emerge as the fastest changing nation in the world over the past decades. In more recent years it is not uncommon that whilst Chinese people are good at saving money, they are also known

for extravagant consumption of luxury goods and services. The Chinese and UK cultural dimensions are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Chinese and the UK Cultural Index

PDI: Power Distance Index
IDV: Individualism
MAS: Masculinity
UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance Index
LTO: Long-Term Orientation
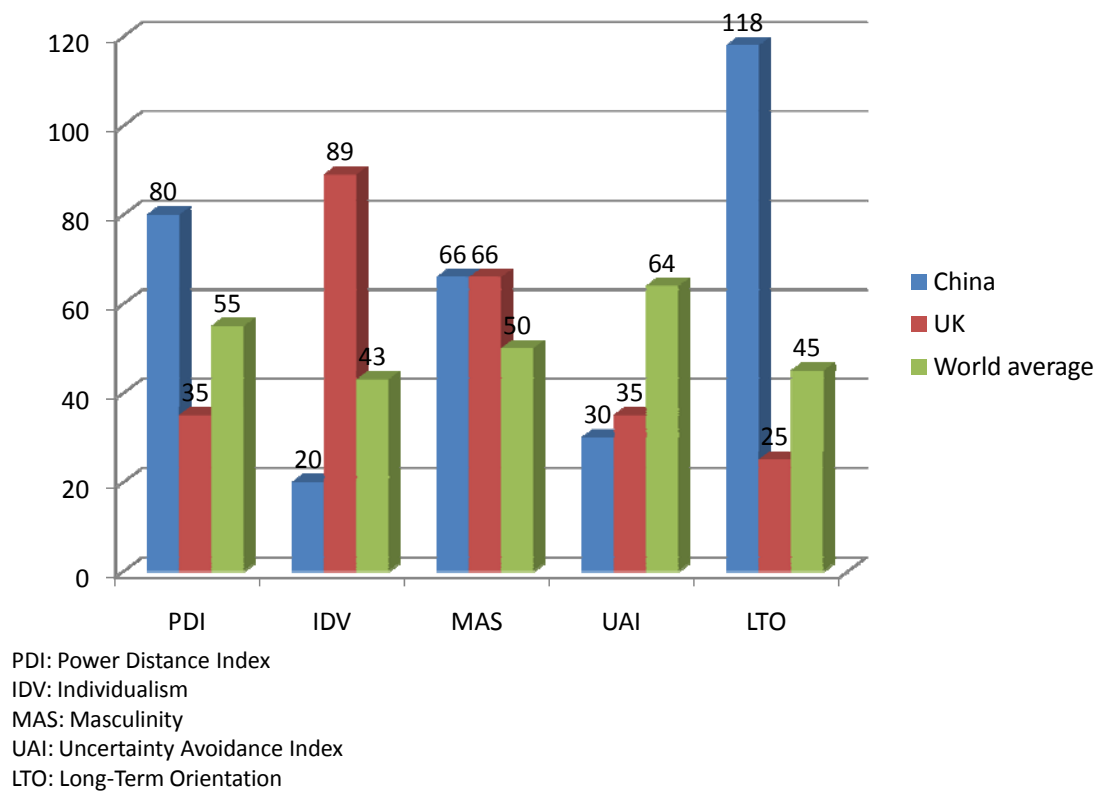
Source: Based on Hofstede and Hofstede (2005)

The most noticeable differences between Chinese and British cultures lie on the Long Term Orientation, Power Distance and Individualism scales. Those with a high LTO tend to favour persistence and long term relationships, whereas those with a short term orientation towards changing events tend to expect quick results from one's actions. Lustig and Koester (2010), note that the Chinese even mark time in longer term increments, e.g. as in the year of the Ox as against the European tendency in terms of astrological months. With a high PD culture, the Chinese are more likely to be cautious as to how they present their own proposals and ideas as well as more accepting to

definitions and meanings passed down in a hierarchical fashion. By contrast, those from low PD cultures are more likely to at least question the views of others. Coupled with high IDV, as in the UK, it is likely to produce a situation where one values one's thoughts, ideas and interpretations equally to those of others. By comparison, the Chinese with low IDV and high PD are more likely to have actions more orientated towards deference, pleasing others, giving and maintaining face, and maintaining harmony. With these differences of culture, it would be reasonable to believe that there would be differences in behaviour to dealing with others and to problem solving. Although Hofstede's five dimensions concerning Chinese culture and values have undergone varying degrees of globalisation over time, they can still be used to analyse the underlying basis of mainstream Chinese culture and still provide useful insights into the analysis of such culture.

It is acknowledged that Hofstede has his critics, although his work has never been fully challenged. The bipolarised approach used by Hofstede does not embrace the "diversity, complexity and dynamism" within cultures, undervaluing the impact of such factors as "institutional frameworks, competitive environment, corporate cultures and industry imperatives" (French, 2010, p.59). It oversimplifies the complex social phenomena in the way that the managers might think they hold the values, which do not necessarily translate to actual behaviour. Also, it does not allow for diversity within cultures, dealing with averages from one large global employer. Hofstede's model is characterised as being static and conservative by Linstead et al. (2009), underestimating the extent to which young people have access to such social networks as Internet and mobile phones, which also play an important role in their socialisation apart from family, school and workplace. Furthermore, there are other diverse aspects of culture,

such as vocation, class, geography, philosophy, language, and biology proposed by Jameson (2007). She advocates that the individual identity together with the traditional focus on collective identity can help to reveal the hidden cultural dimensions fully and effectively.   In recent years scholars move towards interactionist studies of culture, such as conducting a discourse analysis of the interactions between people from different cultures (Aritz and Walker, 2010). However, they do point out that the critics limit themselves due to the breadth of their studies and the difficulties of replicating such a large scale study as carried out by Hofstede.

2.2.2 Chinese Traditional Beliefs and Inheritances

The writings of Confucius (b.551 B.C.) underpin much of the Chinese way of thinking and philosophy. For over 2,000 years, knowledge of Confucian texts has been the primary requisite for a position in government, and it still serves as a foundation for Chinese education and individuals' position in a society. Such rules of behaviour, it is argued, are instilled in Chinese children, even if explicit reference is not made to Confucian texts (Crookes and Thomas, 1998). It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider a few of the main beliefs that Chinese students will have been brought up with and the cultural values associated with them.

2.2.2.1 Role of Education

The motivation to do well and the large amount of time devoted to educational pursuits derives from the time honoured emphasis on education as the route to social and economic advancement, as well as for the improvement of the person.   Chinese children spend an average of 251 days per year in school compared with a school year of 180 days in the U.S. (Graham and Lam, 2003) and 190 in the UK. The core of the

purpose of education lies in Confucianism, with the notion of education as changing people for the better. This is viewed as important not just at the personal level, but also for the development of society. Some authors, e.g. Jin and Cortazzi (1998) believe that all education in mainland China has its roots in Confucian principles, even though the educators and students may be unaware of the source. Whilst there was a movement away during the Cultural Revolution, with the blindness and violence in action and thinking at the time, the traditional ways were never fully discarded, and more recently have come to the fore. Yu (2008) examines what he refers to as 'the back to tradition' movement in Chinese schools and the government support for the moral education which it serves. Starting in 1989, following a perceived moral decline and rising crime rates, the movement seeks to reintroduce Confucian values such as love and respect for parents, respect for teachers, hard work and honesty. The government support is epitomised by a key slogan used by the current President Hu Jintao, when he emphasises 'Building a harmonious society', which has the Confucian values of harmony and balance.

The Confucian view of education is shown in the opening sentence in Analects (1.1) where Confucius refers to both the joy and significance of learning, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application." Here it is clear that Confucius emphasises the necessity of constant effort to learn and to him it is impossible for a person to become virtuous without a constant desire to learn more. Confucius also believed that a good education would change men for the better. His remark "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart" (Analects 17.2), supports the efficacy of schooling. In the Confucian tradition there is the presumption that everyone can be educated, and his practice was to use education to overcome socially generated differences. Furthermore, education and learning are always associated with

effort. If one perseveres in 'plodding along' one will succeed. Self determination and will power are thus a driving force of efforts: "If another man succeeds by one effort, he will use a hundred efforts. If another man succeeds by ten efforts, he will use a thousand. Let a man proceed in this way, and, though dull, he will surely become intelligent; though weak, he will surely become strong" (Doctrine of the Mean).   Leung (1996, p.252) refers to the importance Chinese parents put on hard work and effort, and less on the importance of innate ability and notes that a famous adage of students is "genius comes from hard work and knowledge depends on accumulation."   Thus the rate at which one acquires knowledge may differ, but the ultimate level comes through effort, and this Confucian tradition clearly shows how education is viewed by the majority of Chinese learners. This is not to say that information gathering is privileged over analysis but an essential precondition.

2.2.2.2 Social Behaviour

The fundamentals of social behaviour in China are based on Confucian thinking in that individuals should abide by three principal ideas in their social interactions, namely *ren* (benevolence)*, yi* (righteousness)*,* and *li* (propriety or courtesy).   In particular, attentiveness and sensitivity to other people's needs, usually anticipating without asking or being told, are considered as interpersonal obligations and desirable social skills (Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996). Furthermore, there are five constant virtues, namely propriety, righteousness, humanity, wisdom and faithfulness, which instil the main teachings of Confucius and govern the whole range of human interactions in society. In addition, structural harmony is achieved through the management of key relationships, identified as *Wu Lun,* which give the obligations and duties of hierarchical social

relations (Yu, 1996). Five fundamental human relations are laid down (Table 1), which are:

Table 1 Basic Human Relations

Five Basic Human Relations	Principles
Ruler to ruled	Loyalty and duty
Father to son	Love and obedience
Husband to wife	Obligation and submission
Elder brother to younger brother	Seniority and emulating
Friend to friend	Trust

Source: Adapted from Fan (2000)

Fan (2000) believes these relationships are structured to bring optimum benefits to both parties. The central three depict the importance of the family in Chinese society, and account for its paternalistic nature. The first and fifth relations go a long way in explaining the paternalistic nature of the Chinese management style.   With role positions clear, it is evident that Confucian teachings place a high value on social control, harmony and respect for authority.

Leung (1996) considers this belief in individual morality may explain the lack of a consistent legal system in traditional Chinese societies. Furthermore, he notes that the Chinese, unlike Westerners, do not regard the existence of explicit rules as being so important. Furthermore, the Chinese tend to favour fewer rules and a higher level of flexibility in those rules that exist, which indicates a high tolerance of ambiguity in the business world. In this respect it may be noted that until recently, Chinese property rights and contract law were virtually non-existent, and are still considered inadequate

by Western standards. A contract is still considered as the start of a relationship, which has the flexibility to be altered and changed. To the Chinese way of thinking it is the forging of a long term relationship that is considered by far as the most important (Graham and Lam, 2003).

2.2.2.3 Face (*mianzi*)

The Chinese idiom "A person cannot afford to lose his face, just like a tree cannot afford to lose its bark" vividly explains the utmost importance of face in Chinese culture. It regulates human relationships and social communications (Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996). Lin (2004, pp.195-196) gives the exposition of what face is all about in Chinese culture: "It is more powerful than fate and favour, and more respected than the constitution. It is that hollow thing which men in China live by." The example given by Lin further illustrates how powerful face can be in China. A person, who has an important father, naturally gets a 'big face', which allows him to get away with driving at sixty miles an hour, while the traffic regulations allow only thirty five. The incorrigible little policeman, who insists on taking the chauffeur to the station, can be dismissed by ruthlessly or ignorantly disregard of face in the Chinese social interaction. Where does face come from and how is it measured? It comes from a person's social status, wealth, power, age, achievement, personal connections (Graham and Lam, 2003). Face can be described as a social prestige, which means it is bestowed and acknowledged by society rather than the individual. Gao et al. (1996) discuss the concept of face, which has strong influences on communication strategies within Chinese culture. The researchers state that much is to do with harmony and the avoidance of conflict situations. To gossip (*yilun*), indicates conversations are ritualised behind people's back to avoid face threatening situations. The researchers refer to the

concern to what is known as 'the other face' which leads to a non confrontational style of conflict management, that is avoiding, obliging and compromise. Also the compliance strategy, requires one not to argue or disagree overtly with others in public in order to 'give others face'. Finally, it may be noted that the use of an intermediary in any formal deals, has as one of its main purposes to protect the face of each party involved in any potential interpersonal conflict.

For the individual, there is not only his/her own ambition for striving for success, but the image such success would have for their family or society. In this respect, Gabrenya and Hwang (1996) considers two aspects of the self. The greater self (*da wo*), which is orientated towards family and society, and is considered as the dominant force in Chinese student motivation, and the smaller self (*xiao wo*), which relates to the individual. Stevenson and Lee (1996) consider that in Chinese societies, where the orientation is assumed to be towards the larger group, a student's motivation is assumed to be based on social values or parental expectations, rather than on simply a desire for self-advancement. Whilst success enhances family status, a poor performance will lead to a loss of family 'face' which is considered far more critical, and a student will seek to avoid this at all cost.

2.2.2.4 Humility

It is commonly accepted that humility is a basic norm in Chinese societies, with the origins again going back to Confucianism. It is found that Confucius is gladly accepting of humble circumstances rather than giving up his principles. "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with a bent arm for a pillow, there is still joy. Wealth and honour obtained through injustice are as remote from me as the clouds that

float above" (Analects 7.16). The traditional Chinese values require that a person who wishes to make a favourable impression avoids being personally assertive and self congratulatory, and is somewhat modest with regard to their personal capabilities and/or experience. "He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good" (Analects 14.20). This modest pattern is epitomised by the Chinese who tend to make external attributions for success, and internal attributions for failure (Leung, 1996; Chiu, 1986). Leung (1996) quotes studies on this behaviour pattern, and notes that Chinese employees consistently evaluated their performance behaviour less positively than did their supervisors. A similar study by Chiu (1986) compares Chinese and American children using an Achievement Responsibility questionnaire and Taiwanese and U.S. undergraduates with an Attributional Style questionnaire. In these cases the American children and undergraduates selected a larger number of internal explanations for successful as against failure situations, whereas the Chinese selected more internal explanations for failures than successful situations. However, more recent research (Tong and Wang, 2006), has identified changes in this pattern of behaviour.

2.2.2.5 Attitude towards Risk

An old adage adopted at Harvard Business School is to ask "Which is better – a bad decision or no decision" (Hupert, 2009). It is reported that nearly every Western student replied, "Bad decision" whereas every student who grew up in a Chinese household (either in the U.S. or China), said "No decision." For the Western students, the concept that a bad decision is better rests on the notion that it will lead to more information and progress, and is based on the American concept that inertia and indecision leads to failure. The Chinese, however, are brought up differently. With a confusing choice of options, their view is that the best course is to defer until the whole

picture becomes clearer. Whilst the writers relate this to the negotiating situation, it does pinpoint the different assumptions being made about risk and decision making. Therefore, taking these views into account, it may be concluded that they are likely to view the world differently. Crookes and Thomas (1998) believe the Confucian teachings imply a conservative stance towards risk taking and innovation in problem solving. Their study shows differences in problem solving behaviour amongst Chinese and expatriate managers, and they call for more awareness training within organisations to understand the sensitivities of other cultures when dealing with problems. Leung (1996) reinforces the idea that Westerners and the Chinese have different views on risk and decision making, when he reviews the beliefs about uncertain events. He finds Westerners tend to adopt a probabilistic view of uncertainty whereas the Chinese tend to view situations more in terms of certainty or uncertainty, and less likely to make probability judgements to risks. They believe in fate to a greater extent. Leung suggests that the probabilistic view, and the extensive use of facts and figures in reaching a decision stems from the logic of low power distance. On the other hand, the non-probabilistic view of the world may be influenced by the more extensive influence of intuition in Chinese culture, and he gives an example to illustrate this from Hong Kong where tycoons are noted for their *yanguang* or foresight, "Major business deals are based on the intuition of these tycoons rather than on meticulous calculations based on extensive facts and figures." Similar views on probability assessments as the basis of traditional Western scholarship are found by Yates and Lee (1996, p.347), who consider that it would be quite surprising if, over time, the Chinese had not evolved some different decision making mechanisms. They also consider the more widely discussed differences between Chinese and Western decision processes in terms of social relations. Largely based on collectivism, as against Western individualism, they

consider that the resolution of a decision problem that Chinese decision makers' go through will be affected by social issues. For instance, Western decision makers would give less consideration to behaving in a status appropriate manner compared with their Chinese counterparts. A further point noted is of an implied shared value on risk aversion, especially when working in groups – "cautious shifts towards less risk taking". Such risk aversion is considered to stem from their collectivist nature, "Chinese decision makers are especially hesitant to decide precipitously." The background is again likely to be Confucian in origin, "A gentleman desires to be slow in speech but prompt in deed" (Analects 4,24), has two underlying connotations. First, caution in approach, with the reputation of Chinese organisations being slow in reaching decisions, and second the aspect of hierarchy that is once the decision problem actually reaches the person in the highest authority, action can be taken quickly.

2.2.2.6 Communication

Clearly the way one communicates is a function of one's upbringing, with people conditioned by their culture in the communication processes of what, when and how to say something as well as various behaviours such as listening, politeness and various turn taking within the conversation. Rather surprisingly, there is no one single term in Chinese which reflects the understanding of the communication process as understood in the West. Gao et al. (1996) state that many Chinese would consider communication as the same as talking, and those who have the gift or skill at talking would be regarded as good communicators. The closest Chinese expression to the Western understanding is *Goutong*, which implies an interactiveness with the ability to connect and the process by which people understand and are understood by others.

The general character of Chinese communication may be identified via both the classifications used by Hall and Hofstede. Within Hall's high and low context scheme, the Chinese, with high context communication, would be expected to pass much of the information more indirectly, implicitly and with non-verbal expressions, with less in the coded and explicitly transmitted words. Hofstede's scheme of individualism - collectivism places China firmly on the collectivist side with a 'we' identity. Thus the beliefs of the in-group and meeting the needs and expectations of others are valued more highly than those of the individual. In contrast, the individualistic or 'I' identity emphasises individual initiatives and achievement more. Two further aspects which underlie the communication process in general are the concepts of '*He*' and '*Li*'. The former refers to harmony and peace while the latter refers to hierarchy and role relationships. Any communication event is influenced by both of these.

Gao et al. (1996) refers to five characteristics of Chinese communication, namely implicitness (*hanxu*), centred on listening (*tinghua*), focusing on insiders (*zijiren*), politeness (*keqi*), and face saving strategies (*mianzi*). The first four, plus 'face' or *mianzi*, discussed in 2.2.2.3 provide a convenient starting point for understanding the basic values behind the communication process.

Implicitness (*hanxu*)

This is consistent with Hall (1989) when he considers Chinese communication places more emphasises on the non verbal aspects. Thus if one is said to be *hanxu*, one does not reveal everything, but leaves an unspoken part, and is in line with a Chinese idiom which implies if things are left unsaid there is room for 'free advance and retreat'. This is in accord with what many Westerners observe when working in China, that due to the

more indirect and non verbal behaviour they never know directly what the intentions or goals are. Graham and Lam (2003) refer to suspicion and distrust characterising all meetings with strangers, and that ambiguous phrases may be used which sound basically positive but which have subtle negative implications, e.g. *hai hao* (seems fairly all right!). This is in contrast to a Western style which is more explicit and where one tends to trust others until given reason not to.

Centred on Listening (*tinghua*)

The Chinese idiom that many misfortunes arise from the mouth (*huo cong kou chu*) is consistent with the importance of listening and the non-confrontational style in Chinese culture. According to Gao et al. (1996), a spoken voice is often associated with authority, experience, and expertise. This gives rise to certain preconditions associated with speaking, such as one's knowledge, education or power position. This cultural belief explains why traditionally, in class students are expected to hear what the more knowledgeable teachers have to say, with more emphasis given to listening rather than expressing one's own ideas (Cho et al., 2008; Remedios et al., 2008)

Insider Effect (*zijiren*)

Gao et al. (1996) argue that the communication process is affected by the 'in-group' concept which is important in Chinese and other collectivist cultures. The inside group may be family, long established friends or those in the same work place, and is the unit of socialisation for the individual. This more closed system of communication creates difficulties for the Chinese in their interactions with strangers, and especially those with a different cultural background, since they tend to feel uncomfortable in dealings with those outside of the group. Because of this, interactions with those outside of the group

are often initiated by an intermediary (*zhong jianren*), or third person, preferably one who is known to both. Graham and Lam (2003, p.86) emphasise the importance and role of the intermediary in any negotiation process. "Business deals for Americans in China don't have a chance without the *zhong jianren*."

Politeness (*keqi*)

With its roots in the concept of the self and concern for others, politeness is an everyday principle the Chinese observe in their communication and social networks (Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996). Whilst the word *keqi* is translated simply as courteous or polite, the connotations are much more. Courtesy in China often requires a ritual in which self deprecation plays a crucial role, such as being modest about your preparation or the ritual of 'offer – decline', before eventually 'offer – accept' as commonly seen in the interactions of host and guests (Gao et al., 1996). Hu and Grove (1999) note that during conversations the Chinese can maintain silence for a much longer time than Westerners, who feel uncomfortable and will say anything to continue the dialogue. Amongst the Chinese, junior people will have learned to wait for their seniors to continue talking, and more discomfort occurs if a junior speaks out of turn.

2.2.2.7 Attitude to Time (Chronemics)

The terms monochronic and polychronic, referring to attitudes towards time, derive from the work of Hall. Hall (1989) refers to monochronic time and polychronic time as to how different cultures may use time and space as reference frames in organising activities. Monochronic cultures focus on one thing at a time, are committed to and concentrate on the task to hand. They take time commitments seriously and value promptness, and are accustomed to short term relationships. The U.S. is generally

considered the extreme in monochronic culture. Hall writes about how Americans prefer to do one thing at a time, and that this requires some kind of either implicit or explicit scheduling. Time may be considered as something tangible, lineal and manageable, with people talking about wasting or losing time. The U.K. and Germany are also considered to be high on the monochronic scale, with schedules and the keeping of appointments, consistent with their values. By contrast, polychronic cultures, which have the countries from Latin America as the most extreme, are well adapted to doing several things at once, with people being considered more important than schedules. The result is a lifestyle that tends to be more unstructured. Time is not seen as a resource or as an opportunity cost that equates to money. As well as doing many things at a time, typical of polychronic people is that they are highly distractible, consider time commitments more casually with promptness based on the relationship, and are more committed to building lifetime relationships.

The mainland Chinese are considered to be a polychronic culture. Morden (1999) suggests a monochronic - polychronic demographic scale where he places the Chinese firmly on the polychronic side. Much of the literature concerns issues relating to business and negotiations. Morden (1999, p.23) suggests that 'established agreed modes of cooperation and coordination' are necessary in order to avoid 'a constant clash and disagreements'. Bond (1990) explains how the Chinese fit Hall's description of the polychronic pattern of scheduling. With the Chinese stressing the involvement of people and completion of transactions as against adherence to preset schedules, and how frustrating it can be to monochronic Westerners when there are late arrivals for appointments, and interruptions of prearranged activities. Kiger (2003) considers the Chinese orientation toward polychronic, or 'many-timed' thinking aids Chinese

managers in juggling many tasks simultaneously, rather than giving priority to some and tending to neglect others, as might an American or monochronic manager. Poon et al. (2004) make a comparison of the management styles of marketing managers in Australia and the PRC, and amongst others find significant differences in information utilisation, complexity in decision making and risk acceptance. PRC managers score significantly higher in the complexity management style dimension than their Australian counterparts. This implies that the Chinese managers tend to incorporate many variables (complex) into their decision-making, while Australian managers tend to consider far fewer. As well as incorporating Hofstede's cultural dimensions, they consider the support for the differences are mainly developed from the polychronic / monochronic nature of the Chinese and Australians respectively. Gong (2009) investigates the impact of monochronic vs. polychronic cultures on consumers' online behaviour. Whilst monochronic cultures, like the British, emphasises schedules and promptness, a polychronic culture, like China, stresses involvement of people and are end-oriented. Consumers from monochronic cultures find waiting for the product to be delivered discounts the efficiency and promptness of the service. Consequently, the adoption rate of B2C e-commerce in countries with a monochronic culture is slower than that in countries with a polychronic culture. This would be supported by Lee et al. (2005) who find some evidence to suggest that polychronicity is positively associated with both Internet use and with Internet perception. Interestingly, Lee points out that some studies are not fully supportive of Hall's observations on Asians being polychronic. For example, Gong (2009) places the Taiwanese as monochronic and considers their adoption of B2C commerce more in the saving of time, whilst for mainland China it is more to do with the door to door delivery service.

2.2.2.8 Control Factors

The dimension of control runs from internal to external, with internal persons being those who tend to take responsibility for their own actions and destinies, and external persons as those who view control as residing elsewhere, and tending to attribute success or failure more to outside forces. It has been widely thought that Chinese would have a much stronger belief in external control because of the collectivist orientation and the Confucian and Taoist traditions. However, there is now some doubt emerging. Leung (1996), although able to quote studies where the Chinese are clearly considered more externally orientated, believes it to be an over simplification. He considers the externality of the Chinese is likely to be more context specific. For example, the humility aspect is important when accounting for success and failure situations, and such aspects as humility may assume a high degree of importance when considering internal / external control. Furthermore, the lower level of self esteem he finds amongst the Chinese is likely to be related to the higher values given to external control. Tong and Wang (2006) report that today's Chinese have a more internal locus of control, suggesting changes away from external, as compared with earlier research. This they attribute to social and economic changes, with the Chinese having more choices and decisions about their own lifestyle. However, it is found that samples of employees reported more internal aspects as compared to samples of students. This they put down to the limited range of life experiences of the latter, without much independence. Two further conclusions are reached which, a priori, might be expected. First, older people are more external in their locus of control, and second, men reported more internal aspects compared with women.

A further, and perhaps more relevant, aspect of control is attributed to Rothbaum et al. (1982) who make a distinction between what they refer to as primary and secondary control. They note that there are two kinds of perceived control, namely primary control, attempting to bring the environment into line with one's wishes, and secondary control, changing oneself into line with environmental forces. In a later study, Weitz et al. (1984) suggest that cultural differences are apparent in what they term the primary-secondary ratio, when comparing certain Eastern and Western cultures. In particular, they find differences when comparing the cultures of America and Japan. In the former they find primary control is heavily emphasised and highly valued. By contrast, in Japan, primary control has been less highly valued and secondary control has assumed a more central role in everyday life. In the East, the cultivation of skills in maintaining harmony or 'goodness of fit' with others is such a strong theme that people show a stronger tendency to fit in with the environment. Rothbaum et al. (1982, p.8) explain this as "attempts to fit in with the world and to flow with the current," and suggest that those characterised by primary control may experience more extremes in success and failure, whereas secondary control is viewed as safer and leading to less extreme highs and lows.

Leung (1996) considers it likely that the Chinese find secondary control a more effective means in attaining their goals and quotes studies where American respondents score higher on primary control statements, and lower on secondary, compared with Chinese Americans. Such findings are confirmed by Ji et al. (2000), who attribute such perceptual differences to social structure, and note that societies, such as China, have been until relatively recent times based on agricultural economies in which co-operation is crucial, and the tight social structures require the individual to be accommodating to

social requirements.   Western culture, by contrast, encourages the personal pursuing of goals and the development of personal autonomy (primary control).   To these researchers, the Chinese sensitivity to the environment and the American (Western) sensitivity to being given control are fundamentally the result of adapting to quite different social environments and different orientations towards the world.   One conclusion they reach is that East Asians and Americans are likely to respond differently to being given control.   East Asians may appreciate control less than Americans would assume.   Americans, on the other hand, would resent lack of control far more than Asians would assume.

Lim and Ang (2006) examine control beliefs amongst university students in Singapore and their attitudes towards seeking help, including psychological help when under stress.   Their findings show that those with secondary control beliefs, have a more positive attitude towards help, more confidence in professional helpers, and more willingness to reveal personal issues.   Interestingly, however, whilst there may be a more positive attitude to receiving help, no relationship is found between secondary control beliefs and the perceived recognition to go for help in the first instance.

Although Lin (2004) argues that the family system and the complete absence of established classes attribute to Chinese cultural stability,   Chinese culture has been changing and evolving due to the political, economic, and social changes, especially since China opens up to the outside world.   Due to globalisation, increasing cross-cultural communication, and migration, Chinese culture like other national cultures has become more and more complex.   Fan (2000) explains that the contemporary Chinese culture consists of three major elements: traditional culture, communist ideology and,

more recently Western values. Nevertheless, it may be argued that the three major Chinese cultural elements embody the following aspects: traditional culture (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism), communist ideology (Mao Zhedong's thoughts, Deng Xiaoping's theory and the current 'Construction of Harmonious Society' advocated by the Party), and the global cultural interpenetration (Wang et al. 2008). However, some prominent changes have taken place in the past decades. For example, China has evolved from an impoverished but largely egalitarian society into one with distinct income classes because of rapid economic growth. Generally speaking, five different classes by annual income exist: 'global affluent', 'mass affluent', 'upper middle class'; 'lower middle class'; and 'poor' (Farrell et al. 2006). This evolution is already creating a widening gap between rich and poor, and also more complex consumer segments and spending patterns, which are closely linked with consumers' social, political, educational, and economic positions. Therefore, Steenkamp (2001) argues that culture at the national level is not the only level at which culture can be operationalised and studied. Micro cultures preserve important patterns of the national culture but also develop their own unique patterns of dispositions and behaviour. Since societies have become less homogeneous, it becomes increasingly important to study within-country cultural heterogeneity.

2.3 Cultural Orientation and Learning Approaches

Researchers have found that there is a relationship between students' cultural orientation and their learning approaches. For example, Jaju et al. (2002) state that higher education is a service industry that prepares students for their future lives and careers. Quality training involves a good understanding of the students' educational needs and tailoring educational information to the students' learning approaches. Their

study links Hofstede's four cultural dimensions and Kolb's experiential learning model to examine the cross-cultural differences in the learning approaches of business students from three countries, namely the US, Korea and India. They find that students from the US, which has a low power distance culture, expect instructors to treat them as equals and allow the students to make decisions. Further, the individualistic characteristic of the US students motivates them to use a more 'learn-by-myself' approach. In contrast, students from Asia, which have a high power distance culture and low uncertainty index, expect the instructors to provide the 'one and only' truth. They seek facts and figures, and specific instructions. Students from Korea, for example, with low masculinity and individualism scores, have a much greater tendency towards stability, order and continuity. Strohschneider and Güss (1999) find that university students from different nationalities adopt different strategies dealing with complex and dynamic problems due to their learning experiences within their culture. They choose to focus on India and Germany because to them they represent extremes in the cultural aspects that contribute to the development of specific problem-solving patterns: predictability of social or economical environment, exposure to problem solving experiences, legitimacy of norms and value system, which increase or reduce necessity for problem solving, power distance and social hierarchy, individualism versus collectivism. For example, German schooling system encourage the students to find solutions themselves, thus they tend to use a more active strategy.

Another researcher who stresses that culture affects learning approach is De Vita (2001). He considers that students from different cultural backgrounds may have different approaches to learning, and that there may be a mismatch between the students' approaches to learning and the, often uniform, instructors' teaching method.

He uses the Felder and Soloman's *Index of Learning Styles* to compare preferences of home and international students in a multicultural class of undergraduate international business management (42 international, 21 home students completed). The conclusion he reaches is that a greater variation in learning approaches existed amongst the international students, with a marked preference for visual rather than verbal inputs. This would, however, be expected from non-native speakers. Given the wide variation from 20 different nationalities in his sample, he concludes that good practice translates into using a variety of teaching methods, addressing each side of the various learning dimensions at least some of the time. He goes on to suggest examples of what might be included within a module design where a large number of international students are present, e.g. in his example *Active – Reflective*, he suggests using the range from brainstorming to reflective statements.

Although there is a strong link between culture and learning approaches, stereotyping or misconceptions of Asian students' learning approaches should be avoided. For example, Chalmers and Volet (1997) discuss some of the misconceptions when Asian students are commonly reported negatively by university teachers and administrators. In a study based on the comments made from 10 international students, they identify what they believe to be five such commonly held misconceptions. Together with their comments on each, they are:

- Asian students adopt surface approaches to learning. However, memorisation and rote learning should not be regarded as simply to reproduce information but as a means of achieving deeper understanding by such students.

- Asian students are passive learners and non-participating. The authors note that

Asian, particularly Chinese students, hold different beliefs about the appropriateness of speaking out in class, e.g. of asking what they perceive as an unnecessary question for the whole group, and prefer to discuss it together after class to formulate a more rounded view and more complete answer.

- Asian students do not want to mix with local students. A misconception they consider to be based on the fact that they often form their own support and study groups. Noteworthy is that they report on one Australian university starting a successful peer-pairing programme, where international students are paired with local students for one year, and with both sides reporting benefits from inter-mixing.

- Asian students lack skills for analysis and critical thinking. From their interviews they find a willingness with open expressions of preparedness to adjust their learning approaches.

- Asian students find it difficult to adjust their learning to a Western context. However, the researchers find they do adapt to meet particular university requirements, and point out that such adaptation is not unique since all first year students, regardless of nationality, have to do this.

Their conclusion is that these misconceptions are often used as an excuse for not addressing the basic issue of student learning, and when the problem is attributed to the students themselves, instructors can avoid questioning their own attitudes and practices. The inference is that the onus should be put on both sides, namely the students and the educators to make adaptations. Nield's (2004) study on questioning the myth of the Chinese learner suggests that a 'purely' western course transplanted into a Chinese setting is likely to be troubled with cultural problems. His research supports the general

view that the Chinese students prefer passive learning. However, he suggests that the notion of Chinese students being merely rote learners and preferring exams with a definite answer is purely stereotypical. Such views are supported by Kingston and Forland's research (2008) on how to integrate international students into UK higher education proves to be interesting and valuable. Based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, assumptions have been made that students with Socratic versus Confucian traditions have very different attitude towards knowledge, academic approach and learning approaches. Socratic traditions emphasise lifelong learning, intellectual enquiry, and extending knowledge rather than reproducing and rote learning (Kingston and Forland, 2008). As a result, the Chinese students may face a lot of problems when studying abroad. Nevertheless, the authors attempt to challenge the preconceptions that East Asian students are different from their Western peers in terms of learning culture and that all such differences are caused by their educational background, which has its root from Confucian philosophies. They review some previous studies, which present opposite findings. For example, some surveys show that East Asian students have serious difficulties in terms of less developed skills for autonomous study, research skills (particularly with regard to utilising the library facilities available), language competence, and Western lifestyles, whereas other researchers find that international students generally are quick to adapt. Rather than being passive, obedient, and lacking in autonomy, they are autonomous and reflective learners.

2.4 Chinese Students' Learning Approaches

Some studies have focused more specifically on Chinese learners' learning approaches. In this area, relevant are the studies are by Biggs and Moore (1993), Watkins and Biggs (1996, 2001), who address the misconceptions of Chinese students' learning approaches.

Watkins and Biggs (2001) discuss six categories of general Chinese culture that are advantageous to Chinese learners' academic learning, by comparing with Western beliefs. First, memorising and understanding. They point out that there is a misconception about Western understanding of rote learning. They state that the Chinese students learn repetitively as an initial step towards understanding. "Whereas Western students saw understanding as usually a process of sudden insight, Chinese students typically thought of understanding as a long process that required considerable mental effort" (Watkins and Biggs, 2001, p.6). Second, effort versus ability attributions. Their statement that 'effort leads to success' is in line with the teachings that Chinese students have been brought up with. Third, intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Their argument is that there is a mix of various motivational drivers, ranging from personal ambition to social factors for Chinese students. Fourth, socialisation pattern. The Chinese students are educated to show respect to adults, particularly teachers at school. Fifth, achievement motivation: ego versus social. They find that Chinese societies tend to attribute individual success to a wider social framework which includes family, peers and even society. Sixth, collective versus individual orientation. In China there is a high level of peer support and collaborative learning, with an aim not to leave the weaker students behind. Nevertheless, regarding teaching practice in classrooms, at the time of their study, they have limited detailed and precise information about the Mainland China. In this research area, as will be discussed shortly, Cortazzi and Jin have made great contributions to understanding the cultures of learning in China.

Tang (1996) investigates the nature of spontaneous collaborative learning (SCOLL) amongst Chinese students in Hong Kong and attributes it to both cultural and contextual

perspectives. From cultural perspective, traditional Chinese culture, which emphasises collectivism and social relationships, influences students to form groups, and conforms with a dependence-emphasising society (Yang, 1981), and a strong sense of collectivism. From the contextual perspective, unfamiliarity with the learning scene and not having a good command of the language make students perceive SCOLL as a necessary strategy to get mutual support. Using a study of 39 students, the majority favour SCOLL to self study for assignments which also lead to more varied deep learning strategies such as analysing and applying against the surface strategy of copying from articles. However, for exam preparation the situation is reversed, with more favouring the self-study and surface strategies, especially memorising and rote learning predominate. Nevertheless, in terms of actual assignment and test scores achieved, no significant difference is found, although there is a difference in the structural complexity within the assignments of those who collaborated, with better formed arguments. It is therefore possible to argue that since students form groups spontaneously, from a teaching perspective, it may be worthwhile giving more thought and training in strategies for collaborative learning, such as participating in discussion, expressing ideas and constructive criticism.

Cortazzi and Jin (1996) put forward two important concepts, that is, 'culture of learning' and 'cultural synergy', to explore and understand language classrooms in China. Cultural synergy means that teachers or students from two or more cultures interact and co-operate with an attitude of being willing to learn, understand and appreciate the other's culture without loss of their own cultural status, role or identity. It involves reflecting upon one's own culture and developing intercultural competence. Further, they state that students' behaviour in language classrooms is set within taken-

for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, etc. A culture of learning is thus part of the hidden curriculum. For example, Chinese students think it is fruitless, time consuming and risky to learn errors from peers, to have group discussion in class and listening and responding to each other; whereas Western teachers consider these student-centred activities as useful interaction. Another example given by the researchers is the expectations of a good teacher and a good student. A good teacher should have deep knowledge, is patient, humorous, is a good moral example, shows friendliness, teaches students about life, arouses students' interest, etc. A good student is hard working, learns from/with others, pays attention to the teacher, respects and obeys the teacher, is active in class, co-operates with the teacher, etc. They also point out apart from the cultures of learning, student behaviour is influenced by other social factors and practical constraints, such as age, ability, gender, language syllabus, exams, materials, etc.

In a later article, Jin and Cortazzi (2002), argue that Chinese schools have seen a shift from 'quantity in education' to 'quality education' since the late 1990s. The changes include reforming and simplifying the curriculum, lessening homework loads and developing more rounded education; recognizing class work in addition to the end-of-term examinations for assessment; and emphasising creativity, imagination, thinking, independent study skills, and learners' active participation.

Regarding overseas Chinese students' overseas learning experiences, researchers find that the learning strategies adopted by Chinese and other Asian students in a Western environment usually conform to the learning approach they have been brought up with,

for example, learning by listening, memorisation, following the ideas of seniors and teachers (Yuen and Lee, 1994; Auyeung and Sands, 1996; Holmes, 2004).

On (1996) examines the Confucian ethic and how it may give cultural keys to the learning approaches and success of Chinese students when studying in Western countries. He notes that the term learning pervades the whole literature of Confucius, and underlies the high values placed on education. Institutions report keen competition in entrance exams and parents show high expectations and pushiness towards their children. The thinking has its roots in two factors, and he believes still influences many modern Chinese learners: First the Warring States (c700 BC onwards) gave rise to frequent restructuring and opportunities in public service to the most competent, which manifests in the civil examination system in traditional China. This leads to the premise of egalitarian access to the rewards of successful learning. Second, effort plays a fundamental role in education and learning according to the Confucian tradition. Despite differences in intelligence, if one tries and keeps trying, one will 'get there' sooner or later. Perseverance is the key to success. Since ability is viewed as an attribute that can be modified by effort, Chinese students are more likely to accept personal responsibility for their success and any failures (Chiu, 1986). It is constantly believed that effort and will power will enable a person to achieve human perfectibility and develop potentiality to the fullest extent (On, 1996). In terms of being stereotyped as rote learners, he further considers the Chinese system of learning is to become familiar with the text, to understand it and then to reflect on it and question it. Memorisation precedes understanding and is for deeper understanding. The Chinese students' using a lot of memorisation makes them appear as surface learners, whereas it may be used as the initial step towards deeper learning. Nevertheless, researchers have

also identified a certain convergence in learning approach and adaptation strategies adopted by the Chinese students. For example, the study of Charlesworth (2007) supports the previous research on cultural differences in international students' learning approach preference, but also provides evidence that learning approaches seem to change over time, "showing a certain convergence amongst all the students in their preferred learning styles" (p.133). For example, when Confucian Heritage Culture students study hospitality and tourism management at a Western university, they adopt an activist approach to learning preference similar to their western peers, which suggests that the Asian students can and do adapt.

A number of authors review Chinese students' overseas learning experiences, and how their national culture influences their learning approach. Yuen and Lee (1994) compare the learning approaches of Singaporean students and those of U.S. students. While the Singaporean students learn by abstract conceptualization and reflective observation, the U.S. students learn by concrete experience and active experimentation. Auyeung and Sands (1996) examine how the learning approaches of accounting majors in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Australia reflect their cultural orientation. Their study uses Hofstede's collectivistic or individualistic cultural dimension and Kolb's learning model. They find that students from HK and Taiwan are less action orientated and tend to use more reflective observation in learning, whereas Australian students are more likely to be action oriented and their learning approach is towards the active mode.

Much of this is due to the Chinese education system, which has its roots enshrined in the Confucian tradition. To study the differences in learning and intercultural communication, Holmes (2004) carried out an 18-month ethnographic study of ethnic

Chinese students in a New Zealand University. Based on their Confucian upbringing, Chinese students are not used to volunteering answers, interrupting, commenting, or criticising the teacher inside class. His research suggests that Chinese students have different levels of difficulties in listening and understanding, reading, writing, and critical analysis. As a result, the students have to adapt their primary culture learning and communication styles. Such adaptation, plus Confucian values of effort, helps the students live up to their parents' expectations.

The differences in both the teaching and learning approaches that newly-arrived Chinese graduate students come across in the USA are studied by Zhang and Xu (2007). Their findings show that in America, the students are better informed with a detailed module guide book than in China; students are responsible to hand in homework on time and will be punished if they miss deadlines; students are expected to participate actively in classes; and students are assessed in various ways and the workload is heavier. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions, i.e. power distance and risk avoidance, they find many examples which are consistent with his views. Typically students and teachers treat each other more equally in the small power distance situation of the USA, more emphasis is given to student initiatives, and the silence amongst the Chinese reflecting their high risk avoidance. Noting that the American courses demanded more from students than they had been accustomed to in China, the students learned some 'hard lessons' but ended up appreciating the differences between the two systems of education.

Accepting there are large differences in teaching and learning, it is logical to ask how students manage in the different systems. This is examined by McClure (2007) who

considers Chinese international graduate (mostly doctoral) students' coping strategies in Singapore. The methodology used is grounded theory, i.e. qualitative and constructivist. A number of suggestions are made in order to deal with the demands of cultural change. These include more information given prior to departure, so that students have more realistic expectations, plus a cross-cultural orientation programme to not only incoming students but to staff at the host university. Others are that students feel a need for a sense of belonging in the university, and that appropriate support should be in place to deal with issues as they arise. Her suggestion that international students would benefit from a buddy system, being paired with a home student prior to arrival, is one noted earlier by Chalmers and Volet (1997). McClure (2007, p.201) states that "a great deal more could be learnt by focusing in depth on the experiences of a relatively small number of carefully selected students than by collecting standardised information from a larger, statistically representative sample group." However, the limitation within the research is that a purposive research sample is used, with students selected who have fluent English and would interact openly in interviews to give diverse experiences. Second, the interviews were conducted in English rather than the participants' native tongue, namely Chinese. Although they may be proficient in English, the interviews may lose some of the inner meanings and sentiments. The sampling method and interviewing in English may therefore increase subjectivity and interpretation bias.

Based on the research of the Chinese students in US accounting and business PhD programs, Cho et al. (2008, p.206) put forward seven categories of Chinese learner characteristics. These include (1) Memorising and understanding (Chinese learners exhibit higher performance in academic settings and actually learn efficiently using

much repetition and memorisation); (2) Effort vs. ability attributions (Many Chinese students, parents and teachers believe that academic performance depends more on efforts than on abilities); (3) Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation (Chinese students' intrinsic motivation are triggered by a mix of motivational streams: personal ambition, family face, peer support, material reward, interest, etc.); (4) General patterns of socialisation (In Chinese culture, provided the teacher behaves with moral integrity, the students would never publicly question or doubt the teachers' instructional strategies and judgements); (5) Achievement motivation: Ego vs. social (In the Western culture competition and winning are sovereign, and thus students' motivation to achieve is perceived as individualistic and ego-enhancing. To the contrary, Asian societies value success in terms of a collectivist framework, involving significant others, family, peers and even society); (6) Collective vs. individual orientation (Chinese culture places more emphasis on the group rather than the individual); (7) Quantitative vs. verbal (Chinese students are generally characterised by higher scores on tests involving non-verbal, spatial or numerical intelligence). They conclude that although Chinese students come to the US with a Chinese learner orientation and face a number of language and learning challenges, Chinese students can adapt, socialise and thrive in a Western learning environment. For example, the students say that they are much more comfortable sharing ideas both in and outside the classroom than they were prior to entering their US PhD programmes.

Reflections on the Chinese students' learning and some of the paradoxes that have resulted are examined by Saravanamuthu (2008). He tries to explain some of the apparent contradictions, e.g. they are generally deemed to be rote learners, yet often display high cognitive abilities, by using a social analysis that looks into their

background and the situations they find themselves in. Starting with the Biggs-Watkins theory of student learning, which considers three approaches namely, surface, deep and achieving, the Chinese learner is often classified in the former with a surface strategy that is reproductive because it aims at the basic essentials and reproduces through rote learning. This in turn would lead to a different quality of learning, with the surface strategy leading to accurate but non-integrated detail recall. Much of this may stem from the Chinese teaching environment, which is often considered as the antithesis of what in the West one would term good teaching-learning characteristics. Typical in China is large class size, authoritarian interaction between teachers and students, teaching methods focusing on explanation by tutors, pressure on students to perform, examinations at low cognitive levels requiring recall and low per capita expenditure. However, many of these so called paradoxes may be explained by the social context. First, despite the expository method of formal teaching, teachers work longer hours and provide more personal attention to students, thus the academic labour input in China is much higher than in a Western classroom, with more pastoral care. Second, studying in the non-native language makes it more difficult to move from rote to deeper levels of learning. Students with low ability and motivation tend to use survival strategies, ending up memorising whole sentences and texts to survive, making them into the rote learner stereotype. Third, the Confucian values attribute success and failure to hard work and personal effort, rather than innate ability or outside factors. Students have been conditioned to believing that long hours and hard work will overcome course difficulties, and thus, so long as they work hard, even low achievers will not feel helpless. Fourth, rote learning and repetitive learning are not necessarily the same, which is likely the cause of some of the stereotyping. From the beginning, the learning of Chinese characters and the assessment methods condition students to favour the

repetitive mode. The Chinese belief is that the initial mechanical learning leads to basic understanding of existing knowledge, upon which internalisation follows, i.e. an understanding over time or a 'penny drops' approach. Based on his critique of learning, the author puts forward some propositions in terms of learning and teaching strategies. When coming to a Western university, Chinese students should be given a transitional phase during which they learn to accept less pastoral care, take on more personal responsibilities, and become more confident with Western pedagogy. He also points out that Chinese learners have to be proficient in English before they may successfully move from a surface-learner to a deep achiever. Furthermore, he has the concern, which has been widely publicised elsewhere, that universities recruit less qualified full fee payers at the expense of academic standards, and that academics are pressurised into adapting course content and evaluations to Chinese learners' abilities and approaches.

Other researchers argue that there is no right or wrong learning approach. Students adopt different learning approach to meet the demands of specific circumstance. For example, Remedios et al. (2008) use an ethnographic study through case analysis of those who tend to be silent in collaborative and problem based learning and reject the view that students who choose to participate without speaking are regarded as failing to learn. Noting that this is common, but not exclusive, amongst Asian students, many reasons are established through the individual cases, with the choice to be silent being personal, contextual and cultural. Apart from the difficulties of communicating in a second language, many other factors such as reading other students body language as being negative towards them, failing to recognise cues to speak, feeling inferior in terms of cultural and subject knowledge, not understanding the humour, not wishing to slow down the others and fear of losing face, all play their part. One result is that when they

do participate, many choose to participate in factual areas which they consider carried minimal risk of error. These socio-cultural factors do not indicate a desire not to participate or a failure to learn, and is in line with Chalmers and Volet (1997) who find that being silent in discussions does not indicate a lack of learning or being mentally passive. It conforms to the learning approach they have been brought up with, that is, learning by listening.

Students use different approaches of learning, which may develop from the demands made on the students and the specific learning circumstances (Valiente, 2008). The students from different cultures show differences in motivation, critical analytical skills, group learning behaviour, thinking and communicating approaches, etc. For example, group members in the West expect a lot of confrontation during group discussion, aim to search for solutions and reach competitive consensus. By contrast, in collectivist or high-context societies, members expect unanimous consensus. Her statement that "under the Confucian tradition, students and teachers are part of the same social structure and are expected to work together in order to increase their common welfare" (Valiente, 2008, p.84) is still largely true, but the inference may be on the decline. Other arguments in the paper, for example, Chinese writing style is spiral and indirect, whereas Western writing is generally deductive, linear and logical; students, who lack a good command of the English language, may turn to copying and memorising passages of textbooks and lecturer's notes; the use of memory may help some students attaining meaningful knowledge, etc., are similar to findings of previous research on learning approach.

2.5 Acculturation and Adaptation

"Each culture is not only an integrated whole but has its own rules for leaning. These are reinforced by different patterns of over-all organisation. An important part of understanding a different culture is learning how things are organised and how one goes about learning them in *that* culture. This is not possible if one persists in using the learning models handed down in one's own culture" (Hall, 1989, p.131). If one wants to learn a different culture, one needs to be adaptable. Chinese students' learning approaches are influenced by their cultural heritage. Then what is the crucial factor that triggers adaptations to happen? To answer this question, it is important to review the concept of acculturation. The concept of acculturation is very important in the literature concerning cultural experiences of various cultural groups (i.e. immigrants, refugees, native peoples, ethnic groups and sojourners). The concept is originally introduced by anthropologists Redfield, Linton and Herskovits in 1936. "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield et al., 1936, p.149). They consider reconciliation of individuals and integrating with new cultural traits would result from intensity of contact, duration of contact and the social, economic and political advantages to be gained on acceptance. The results of acculturation would be of the order (p.152):

- Acceptance, taking over most of the new culture and the loss of most of the older cultural heritage.
- Adaptation, where both the original and new are combined to produce a smoothly functioning cultural whole, or where both cultures are reconciled in everyday life depending upon specific occasions.

- Reaction, which may arise as compensation for an imposed or assumed inferiority.

Ever since the term acculturation has been widely used by researchers, for example, Berry et al. (1987, 1997), Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006), and Sliwa and Grandy (2006). Berry et al. (1987) attempt to explore the cultural and psychological factors, which govern the relationship between acculturation and stress. They propose that acculturation is a process leading to a multiple set of outcomes: Assimilation (attendant culture loss), Integration (the mid-path between Assimilation and Separation), Separation (resistance to further contact), and Marginalisation. They identify five kinds of changes that may occur because of acculturation: physical changes, biological changes, cultural changes, new sets of social relationships, psychological and behavioural changes. For the Malay student sojourners in the study, they find that two variables, i.e. free time spent with and being close friends with local students, are negatively correlated with stress. Indications also suggest that greater participation with the host community diminishes the stress experience. Berry et al. (1997) distinguish the different meanings between the concept of *acculturation* and the concepts of *psychological acculturation* and *adaptation*. Acculturation refers to the cultural changes resulting from cross-cultural encounters, such as migration, colonisation, etc. The latter concepts refer to the psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals' acculturation experiences.

On psychosocial adjustment of students, Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006) state that attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, and acculturation to host country culture, are all significant predictors. They find that English proficiency remains a significant

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predictor for students' socio-cultural adjustment difficulty. The results indicate that the international students who are more confident in their own English abilities and have resided longer in the United States tend to acquire and perform culturally appropriate social skills and fit more competently with the host culture. Language ability and length of residence are critical elements in the acculturation process.

Among the literature reviewed, the study by Sliwa and Grandy (2006) offers some very interesting and novel insights into second culture contact. By using Baudrillard's work, they challenge the theories of acculturation. Based on their findings, they come to the conclusion that of the Chinese students studied, they generally fail to fully capture the complexity of cultural experiences. Sliwa and Grandy (2006, p.20) state, "Chinese students studying at a business school in the North East of England do not appear to be prepared to 'shed their alien ways' and assimilate to the 'second culture', nor do they demonstrate willingness to acculturate by modifying their emotions and cognition." However, the context of their findings is a class consisting almost exclusively of Chinese students, who have little contact with the local students. This provokes the researchers to put forward a thoughtful question for the UK educators, which is "Do Chinese students become 'something' as a result of their sojourn in England, or perhaps just learn to survive in the new environment?" It may well be that cultural assimilation happens under certain preconditions that are not necessarily met in their research. However, the authors suggest that there appears to be no clear line of distinction between illusion and reality. In such a case, it is concluded that educators should therefore take a more reflective view of their understandings of culturally different students.

Some writers incorporate their own experiences, e.g. Wong (2004) who discusses his own changes in learning approach when exposed to other methods, and also studies changes over time of a number of Asian students at an Australian university. The Asian international students are from different disciplines, year levels and country of origin. Whilst they come from a teacher centred learning environment, and initially prefer that way, they soon adapt to a student centred approach with the majority indicating that they learn best when learning by themselves. He concludes that learning approaches tend to be more contextual than culturally based, which itself supports the view of Watkins and Biggs (1996). His study confirms the views of some other researchers, e.g. Volet and Renshaw (1996), who reject the view that Chinese students' approaches to learning are firmly fixed and culturally bound, but hold that they are able to adapt to meet the requirements in a new educational environment. He finds that the more student centred learning approach is a strength of the Australian system, and that there is no need for educators to adapt, but that there should be more effort in understanding the initial learning difficulties of the Asian international students.

A few studies concentrate specifically on the international students' academic and social experiences within the UK. Huang (2008) finds that for certain groups of international students, e.g. Chinese students, they have high expectation of meeting and making friends with other international students, and also understanding British culture and people better during their study in the UK. Interestingly, cultural adaption is one of Chinese students' top concerns prior to their arrival. However, in some schools, he notes that there are too many Chinese students in one class, which goes against the students' original intention of having inter-cultural communications with students from other cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the researcher suggests that UK universities

should provide the students with opportunities to integrate with the local community to have a better understanding of local culture and ways of life.

Using the term intercultural learning, Gill (2007) analyses the experiences of ten Chinese postgraduate students when studying at a UK university. He deals with how they cope with the challenges of strangeness and how they develop methods and strategies for adaptation, and considers the students' transformation as a process of re-evaluating of self and reconstructing of self identity. By way of an ethnographic and narrative study, three areas are discussed: (1) Stressful start, noting that students' prior learning experiences do not accommodate to expectations in the UK, and how they became appreciative of their UK experiences and critical of their earlier Chinese ones. (2) Adaptation is gained by their engagement in networks of relationships, plus support of tutors. (3) Developing intercultural competence, which itself reflects the ways of thinking and perceiving values and attitudes plus changes in self identity through interaction with others.

One important finding is that some of the traditional Chinese views on learning, i.e. spoon feeding, repetition and uncritical acceptance, are not a hindrance to the students' willingness to accept Western teaching methods. In fact he finds that a significant reason for studying in the UK is to be freed from the limitations of the academic culture within China, and is appreciated even though it leads to a stressful start. Viewing their experiences, he finds the gap between Western and Chinese educational values is less than many Westerners tend to assume, which is in line with the findings of Watkins and Biggs (1996). A further interesting outcome is that when applying the second language, they can think in the culture of that language and society, but revert back when using

their mother tongue! One conclusion is that Chinese students have the ability to adapt to learning at a UK university providing there is a facilitative environment. In this respect, the paper focuses on the contextual factors, namely academic staff and networks of relations, which contribute to students' changes in the UK.

Previous research of teaching international students draws attention to cross cultural approaches to learning and the potential for misunderstanding. Generally speaking two apparent contradictory results have evolved. Some studies find that Asian learners are rote learners with non critical reception of information compared to their Western counterparts who prefer and do more analytical learning and critical thinking, whereas other studies challenge these stereotypical descriptions and find that Asian, or particularly Chinese students, have a more academic approach to learning by combining usage of surface, deep and achieving approaches (Biggs and Moore, 1993; Watkins and Biggs, 1996; Watkins and Biggs, 2001; Ramburuth, 2001). John Biggs and David Watkins, two academics in the research of Chinese learners, introduce a 3P model of the teaching-learning relationship between students, the academic environment and student performance. 3P stands for Presage, Process, and Product. The model identifies various factors, (i.e. student's prior knowledge, abilities, preferred ways of learning, values, expectations, competence; teacher's competence, method, classroom climate, assessment, medium of instruction), all contributing to the learning process, during which learners adopt different approaches (i.e. deep approach, achieving approach, surface approach), which in turn lead to different academic performance. Learning outcome is such a complex issue, depending not only on situational but also personal motives and strategies. However, the dynamic relationship of 3Ps has been misunderstood by positivists and thus results in "erroneous theorisations"

(Saravanamuthu, 2008, p.145). Biggs and Watkins (1996, p.281) state that "positivistic view of education is giving way amongst most researchers and some educators to a more general holistic view….That is, events in education form an interactive system, rather than a linear sequence". "The variables involved in the 3P model of learning do not form a simple linear path from presage to process to product. Rather each component of the system interacts with all other components until equilibrium is reached" (Watkins, 1996, p.7). Biggs and Watkins assert that "the paradox reflects the instrumental and narrow way in which positivists have applied the inherently holistic principles of the 3Ps model" (Saravanamuthu, 2008, p.140). The dynamic relationship of 3Ps has been misunderstood by positivists and thus results in "erroneous theorisations" (Saravanamuthu, 2008, p.145).

2.6 Teamwork as a Pedagogical Tool

To prepare the students for the challenges of the business world, many business schools use teamwork as a pedagogical tool to train the students to develop team spirit and skills (Hernandez, 2002; Page and Donelan, 2003; Clark and Gibb, 2006). The foundations of using teamwork as a pedagogical tool lie in social constructionism, which attempts to explain how events and facts are socially constructed. It came to prominence in the 1960's when writers were putting forward the ideas that all knowledge, from the most basic upwards, is both derived and maintained by social interactions. One of the major focuses of social constructionism is therefore to discover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. Whilst the original ideas have undergone a number of transformations, there is not one clear consensus. According to Burr (1995, pp.3-5), there are four elements that most social constructionists share. First, a critical stance should be taken towards taken-for-granted

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knowledge rather than making assumptions about how the world appears to be. Second, the understanding is historically and culturally relative, depending upon where and when in the world one lives. Third, the knowledge is fabricated through interactions between people. Fourth, changing knowledge of the world brings with it changing social action. Over the past two decades these fundamental ideas have had an important bearing on teaching and approaches to learning. The rationale behind using teamwork as an important pedagogical tool in higher education is that students come to understand the real world better through social interactions in which they are constantly engaged with each other. As their knowledge increases and adjusts with the increasing social processes, their behaviour adapts to meet the needs of the world.

Whilst teamwork is on the increase it is by no means universal. Roebuck (1998) attributes this to many instructors believing it takes up valuable class time and sacrifices basics for frills, and as a result will lead to a reduction in material covered. Furthermore, she notes how few instructors have received any formal education in teaching or in using teams. Roebuck summarises the team learning process with instructions on a six step activity sequence, which starts with students being prepared beforehand, individual and team accountability, and the more formal role the instructor should take. She believes instructors should ask themselves how students can best learn, and challenge themselves to design team activities with that perspective in mind. This is a point picked up by Siciliano (2001) who notes that many instructors believe they have cooperative learning when they simply introduce an element of teamwork into their course. She considers many team activities are missing the purpose of the cooperative framework when they just emphasise the task, require little interdependence amongst members and do not assess individual performance. In designing a model for a

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cooperative learning framework, Siciliano provides examples of how team assignments may be structured in terms of team formation and the assigning of roles.

A further intention of teamwork is to develop some of the skills for lifelong learning, e.g. communication skills. Page and Donelan (2003, p.127) describe why university students need good teamwork skills – "today's business professionals must be able to function effectively in teams." Hernandez (2002) writes about how traditional learning develops the wrong skills for the world of today. Traditionally, the exam orientated structure develops graduates who are individualistic and who know more about how to compete with each other than to work together. Furthermore, it develops the skills of memorisation and recall, which is far from what employers want. In today's world of computers and databases, traditional memorisation has become an obsolete skill, with employers needing those who know how to work effectively with others and who can evaluate and find solutions to problems. Clark and Gibb (2006) emphasise the importance of teams in today's business and quote that 50% of staff employed in 80% of *Fortune* 500 companies are working in some form of team. Furthermore, virtual teams, that is one whose members use varying degrees of technology in working across locational and temporal boundaries, is also becoming predominant. With globalisation, the ability to work in a team is taken to a higher level. One of the major goals of the internationalisation of higher education is to prepare students to work in an international and inter-cultural context (Volet and Ang, 1998).

Whilst there is often no clear dividing line, existing literature of teamwork may be considered as falling into four main categories, namely the rationale of using teamwork in universities, the process strategies adopted by students, cultural factors that contribute

to teamwork performance and satisfaction, and the overall evaluation of teamwork as a learning experience.

2.7 Rationale of Using Teamwork

By working in groups, students are exposed to multiple points of view, gain additional insights, learn from each other, and develop interpersonal and group skills (Paswan and Gollakota, 2004). Whilst researchers have been questioning the effectiveness of passive instruction through lectures, the importance of group learning as a pedagogical tool has increased significantly in higher education over the past ten years or so (Houldsworth and Matthews, 2000). When pressurised by budgetary constraints on teaching, Hogan (1999) explores the experiences of both staff and students after incorporating "Semi-autonomous Study Groups" (SAS) into one large organisational behaviour module. The aim of the experiential learning is to enable students to have deep learning, and to relate management and group theory to the real world. The author defines an SAS group as (p.32): "a group of no more than eight students who agree to meet for one hour per week in order to complete given learning objectives together without the presence of a lecturer." During the learning process, staff find that frequently group work breaks down not because of lack of motivation but because of lack of skills and experience. They encourage the students to relate the theories concerning group development, learning approaches, conflict-handling strategies, team roles, and strategies for giving and receiving feedback to their SAS meetings. Students' attitude changes and skills improve as the semester progresses. The evaluation questionnaire reveals a number of advantages of adopting such groups: it enables students to learn about group dynamics, meet a wide cross-section of people, learn to appreciate other people's points of view, develop autonomous learning, and take responsibility for self-motivation. The

disadvantages are summarised as: too time consuming, too disorganised and/or informal, let down at times by individuals because of absenteeism, insufficient input and feedback and/or groupthink and avoidance of confronting group problems. Nevertheless, the overall feedback is that SAS is considered to be a valuable learning strategy.

Machemer and Crawford (2007) state that students value equally the traditional lecture and active learning. Basically they value anything that they perceive will improve their exam performance. However, whilst the students did value cooperative activities (teamwork) they generally perceived and ranked such activities the lowest. They enjoy being active but dislike being responsible for group learning. They prefer a large class, with a teacher-centered learning environment, where they can be invisible, passive observers rather than active participants, and also preserve their anonymity. Such findings indicate that educators should focus on lectures and activities which the students find useful for exam preparation. However, it is noteworthy that the study focuses on student perceived values, not actual learning, and as pointed out by Huxham (2005, p.27), "what students want may not be what is pedagogically best." Both of these studies therefore emphasise the care needed in designing both effective scenarios and the monitoring of teamwork assignments.

Nevertheless, group work as a pedagogical tool is not without its critics. Ashraf (2004) considers the substantial benefits of teamwork to a firm, and teamwork a key characteristic that employers desire, but questions the classroom setting as conducive to learning to be a good team player. Using a game theoretic approach, he concludes that a classroom setting not only intensifies the problem of free riding, but makes the less

motivated students actually more skilful at it. His models suggest that just penalising free-riders is not enough, and that extra rewards are needed to industrious students to save them from being let down in terms of grades. Houldsworth and Matthews (2000) discuss group dynamics and group size with the potential for process loss in reducing the learning outcomes when the size of the group increases. Noteworthy are 'social loafing' when a member puts in less effort than normal, on the expectation that others would produce more, and the 'sucker effect' when a hard working member reduces effort when he believes he is being taken advantage of.

To sum up, empirical studies have supported a number of positive cognitive, motivational and social outcomes of teamwork. Nevertheless, students need to be coached and supported throughout the process and cannot be just left to fend for themselves. Thus it is essential to integrate the preparation, practice, and performance review stages in order to help students to achieve the benefits (Snyder, 2009).

2.8 Process of Teamwork

Many researchers investigate the process of teamwork, which includes group formation, allocation of tasks, participation, assessment, performance, effectiveness, etc. For example, team performance and satisfaction (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004; Napier and Johnson, 2007; Werner and Lester, 2001); group formation (De Vita, 2002; Seethamraju and Borman, 2009); group engagement (Volet et al. 2009); group assessment (Sharp, 2006); peer evaluation dimensions and its impact on satisfaction (Paswan and Gollakota, 2004); teachers' role in students' team experiences (Bacon et al., 1999); factors such as 'free riding' that cause negative team experiences (Brooks

and Ammons, 2003); and the cost of lower grades for industrious students (Ashraf, 2004), etc.

2.8.1 Group Formation and Culturally Mixed Groups

Group formation is the first step in teamwork, and generally includes three kinds, that is, students' self-selection, random allocation by the tutor or intentionally created balanced mixed groups by the tutor. Studies have looked at how best to select students to groups, but no conclusive evidence emerges. Huxham and Land (2000), use learning style questionnaires, such as Honey and Mumford, to design balanced groups, but their study finds no significant difference between these and randomly formed groups. It is therefore likely that factors other than the learning approach are more pertinent to group dynamics, and the general conclusion is that there is no quick and easy 'social engineering' to form an effective group. Other researchers, such as Siciliano (2001) believe that the instructor should play a large role in determining groupings if cooperative learning is to take place. Teams should be constructed in a heterogeneous manner, based on achievement measures or other characteristics, such as gender. There is, however, some evidence that unbalanced groups, e.g. of the same sex or same country of origin report the highest amount of satisfaction (Napier and Johnson, 2007). This supports what Hewett and Hardesty (1999) find, namely groups made up of the same sex are more likely to provide positive evaluations than those of mixed gender. Their findings are consistent with Social Identity Theory, that is, group members would be more likely to associate themselves with like-members, so that group homogeneity results in positive outcomes. When forming groups, students do appear to consider a range of factors that may affect their performance. Seethamraju and Borman (2009) identify four factors that influence students' group formation, i.e. convenience, task

management, social cohesion and technical skills/knowledge. What is interesting, and may be anticipated, is that the group, which take account of the latter three factors when forming the group, are more likely to perform better. Students can be left with more responsibilities, since they may have a better knowledge of potential group members regarding their ability, personality, etc. than teaching staff.

How students perceive culturally mixed groups has received researchers' attention. Volet and Ang (1998) find a lack of interaction between Australian and Asian students. Their findings show that they tend to study in parallel, with a lack of commitment to developing inter-cultural awareness. Thus a major goal of the internationalisation of education, which is to prepare students to communicate and work together, is not being achieved. Their study develops insight into students' views of the issue of cultural mix and put forward many dimensions why Asian students do not mix. These include being at opposite poles to Hofstede's combined measure of power distance x individualism/collectivism; Australian students being less achievement orientated; and the element of homesickness, giving a comfort zone when working together. Their study considers that social cohesion will not happen unless it is structured in as part of formal study. Quoting from interviews, four reasons are found for the preference for working together within the same cultural group: cultural-emotional connectedness (e.g. it is easier to communicate with students with a similar cultural background), language (e.g. potential communication difficulties with non-native English speakers), pragmatism (e.g. local students have other work commitments), and negative stereotyping (e.g. ethnocentric views held by the local students towards international peers). Noting that even after being part of a successful mixed group, students still tend to prefer to work with peers from a similar cultural background, they conclude that

learning institutions have a social responsibility to design learning environments which foster the development of inter-cultural adaptability.

De Vita (2002) explores the relationship between group performance and individual ability. He gives some important literature of group formation, for example, better students prefer to form a group with other better students; Belbin's team roles; Janis's groupthink; multi-cultural groups, with cultural synergy, outperform mono-cultural ones; etc. He addresses the rationale of using cross-cultural groups from previous literature, for example, to enhance students' cultural awareness, understanding and adaptability, so that they are prepared for the inter-cultural working environment. The question addressed by the researcher is that do home and international students mix or do they prefer to study in mono cultural educational settings? The research in the 1990s finds that home students prefer fewer interactions with international students, particularly with those from Asian backgrounds and one fear may be the lowering of their marks. This concern about marks has also been found by Volet and Ang (1998), but it is the Asian students who worry that, Australian students, who are less achievement-oriented, may pull down their grades. Using regression analysis, De Vita tests this empirically and finds any such claim not to be the case. Since his findings suggest that multicultural group work has a positive effect on the individual average mark of all students, he recommends sharing the findings with home students to avoid any preconceived stereotyping.

Summers and Volet (2008) also examine the attitudes of students towards culturally mixed groups. A number of questions towards attitudes are posed, such as to how attitudes may change over the duration of studies. Using a business course,

questionnaire data from 233 students are analysed using pre- and post- task appraisals, both with mixed and non mixed groups. It may be noted, however, that students in the study are not allowed to self-select the composition of their groups. Although many of the results are not clear, there is a general pattern of less positive attitudes towards mixed groups in later years of study. Also, wherever significant differences are found between pre- and post-task attitudes of students, changes are on the negative side by the end of the project. However, caution is needed in the interpretation, since there is a more negative attitude of local students who favour non-mixed groups, which prevent international students from joining. The study does not find that those who experienced mixed group work find it problematical for them. The research, therefore, supports the view that being involved in mixed cultural groups provides students with the chance to improve their ability and skills in intercultural collaboration. To achieve such educational and social aims, it is necessary that universities actively encourage students to complete assignments within culturally mixed groups, and to help them achieve a more positive attitudinal change over the duration of their studies. However, with the development of global education, home students are getting used to international students, and such preconceptions are likely to be diminished.

2.8.2 Group Assessment

The fair assessment of the group is another common issue, with the unfairness potentially generated when a single grade is given to all. However, opinions vary about whether marks should vary according to the respective contributions of the members. Some (e.g. Nicolay, 2002) are opposed in principle, arguing that the group should be assessed as a unit, and attempting anything else conflicts with the notion of introducing teamwork in the first place. He does, however, believe that any group work should only

have a small contribution to final grade, with an absolute maximum of 25%.   Others disagree. Roebuck (1998) firmly believes that for team learning to operate effectively there should be some form of assessment in the three areas of individual performance, team performance and peer evaluation.   The latter does give incentive for participating in discussion, may well reduce the 'social loafer' problem and also satisfy the student curiosity as to what others think of them. In addition, it allows students to have some 'say' in their grade components, and may actively assist in how the team is managed. In a study of 60 teams, each comprising of between 4-7 students, Brooks and Ammons (2003) find that peer evaluation, so long as it is introduced early on in the group work, as well as at the end, not only counters the free-rider problem, but also plays a role in shaping the attitudes students have towards their work. The general conclusion is that peer evaluation is generally fair and can reduce bias easily caused by global measures. Students allocate higher grades to the dependable and competent members who increase a group's accomplishments (Paswan and Gollakota, 2004).   Some researchers devise sophisticated methods to adjust the tutor's mark using student evaluation of themselves and each of the others. Sharp (2006) reviews some of the literature on this, and whilst acknowledging that no system of deriving individual grades from group work can ever be perfect, he finds some attempts are too complicated to be of practical use.   His suggestion is a more straightforward spreadsheet model whereby the tutor's grade may be adjusted to give an individual grade based on peer perceptions of how the others have contributed.   He specifically excludes students' evaluating their own contribution, on the basis that it is difficult, arguably unfair, and prone to bias. However, he admits that the literature is not agreed on this. Sharp's process is first to carry out a test to verify whether or not there are any statistical differences between the students in their peer evaluations.   For this he suggests the rather wide 25% significance level, since he

is more concerned with 'the balance of probabilities' that differences exist rather than the stringent 5% or 1% levels, which firmly establish such an existence. If differences are deemed to exist, the second step is to adjust the tutor's mark for the individual, but within pre-set and agreed limits, say up to plus or minus 10%.

The study by Loughry et al. (2007), based on the literature review of previous peer evaluation instruments, develop what they call the Comprehensive Assessment of Team Member Effectiveness (CATME) to assess a wide range of teamwork behaviours and performance with an aim to improve team effectiveness. CATME evaluates members' performance in accordance with five categories, namely contributing to the team's work; interacting with teammates; keeping the team on track; expecting quality; and having relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities. In spite of the biased factors, such as friendships, jealousy and revenge, that negatively influence the validity of peer ratings, it is found by studies that peer evaluation is positively correlated with the ratings of supervisors, have good predictive validity for performance and can reduce free riding and social loafing tendencies.

2.8.3 High Level Collaborative Learning

Hernandez (2002) cites a number of studies where team learning has been shown to be more effective in promoting higher level thinking skills compared with the traditional lecture. The latter, he considers, tends to assess recall which is a low level learning outcome and fails to develop the higher levels in the cognitive domain of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Team learning, he believes, uses people better as a resource, with knowledge from the individual, his/her teammates, and the instructor, with the students themselves as the key actors. Like other researchers, however, e.g. Roebuck,

Siciliano (2001), he does emphasise the importance of an 'Instructional Activity Sequence', and outlines a six step course design for collaborative learning. The first five effectively ensure the team members are in a position to accomplish the task, and termed the readiness assurance process (RAP). The steps start with individual study of assigned reading material, followed by an individual readiness assurance test (individual quiz) and a group test (team quiz). These are to ensure both individual and team accountability. Step 4 allows teams to appeal against the grading of the group test, but they must provide evidence. This intermediate step is considered to strengthen the team and to help individuals learn how to work together. The fifth step involves input from the instructor, and effectively concludes the readiness assurance process by clarifying any troublesome concepts or remaining misunderstandings. The final step, termed 'application-orientated activities', necessitates activities to be designed not only to promote team cohesiveness, but to stimulate deep learning. They should not only challenge understanding of the course concepts, but should be difficult enough that no one student could readily complete the assignment working alone. Furthermore, assignments should be structured around activities requiring, for example, a specific choice to be made, so that the higher level skills of analysing and evaluating are needed. Team learning, therefore, goes beyond assigning occasional group activities, and requires a more specific course design with clearly defined objectives that reflect higher level thinking. This is in line with more recent research, e.g. Volet et al. (2009) who study 18 second-year veterinary science students' meetings as they work informally on a group assignment in their own time. They analyse the factors that contribute to sustaining group engagement in high-level co-regulation, which means the group coordinate to clarify and share knowledge. They propose the concept of tentativeness, which means that openness and non-defensiveness play a role in motivating students to

participate in the co-construction of knowledge. Also, it is important that students learn through independent study prior to the meeting and undertake research on a different aspect of the project. Task-relevant knowledge increases high-level contributions in group work. Further, they point out that the following areas need more research attention: the impact of personal views, e.g. conceptions of collaborative learning, social learning goals, interest in the task, etc.; group-level variables, e.g. prior relationships between group members, combination of members' interactional styles, etc. and instructional guidance on group engagement in productive collaborative learning. Clearly, there are a lot of variables, but the lack of any instructional guidance is a theme pointed out by a number of researchers, and given further consideration in 2.9 below.

The general conclusion is that higher level learning will only take place if the course is specifically structured with teamwork in mind. As some early writers, e.g. Johnson et al. (1991, p.6) noted: "Many educators when they believe they are using cooperative learning are, in fact, missing its essence. A crucial difference exists between simply putting students in groups to learn and in structuring cooperation amongst students."

2.9 The Impact of Culture on Teamwork

With increased globalisation, the past decade has seen researchers attempt to explore the impact of culture and other factors affecting group dynamics including members' attitudes and willingness to cooperate as a team. People from different nations and organisations hold different understandings of the concept of teamwork (Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001). Students' cultural background and motivation have significant impact on their evaluation of group work (Volet, 2001). Social identity plays a role whereby group members identify with like-groups or like-members and homogeneous

groups tend to be more effective (Hewett and Hardesty, 1999). However, intercultural experience may lead to more favourable views of multicultural group work (Summers and Volet, 2008). Cultural diversity, plus negative stereotyping and distrust, makes team management complex, but worthwhile (Sackmann and Friesl, 2007).

2.9.1 Cultural Impact on Concept of Teamwork and Behaviour

In exploring how national and organizational cultures contribute to different understandings of the concept of teamwork, Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) find that processing frameworks acquired in one culture persist and influence behavior even though contextual circumstances change. Further, they state that while national culture is a source of pervasive underlying values that guide priorities, organisational culture is more context specific, pertaining to preferred practices and orientations. Thus, they propose that metaphors used for teamwork are likely to vary across nations and organisations. They interview team members in four different geographic locations, each with a different power distance / individualism rating. They base it on six multinational corporations. As a result, they derive five different metaphor categories for teamwork (military, sports, community, family, and associates) based on the language team members use during interviews. They find that teamwork metaphors contain essential information about expectations regarding scope, roles, membership, and objectives. For example, American respondents from an individualistic culture commonly describe their work team as a sports team. Sports teams tend to have a narrow scope, with activity limited to the time during which players practice and compete. Sports teams typically have clear roles, little hierarchy, membership is voluntary, and objectives are specific, with clear consequences (win or lose). People

who describe their work team with strong metaphors are likely to hold to certain values and expectations.

Apart from differences in understanding the concept of teamwork, culture also influences group characteristics, group members' knowledge sharing and communication behaviour. Sosik and Jung (2002) examine whether the individualism / collectivism cultural construct influences a group's composition, processes, and performance by using U.S and Korean students. They test two group-composition variables (i.e., functional heterogeneity, preference for teamwork) and two group-process variables (i.e., group potency, outcome expectation). *Functional heterogeneity* is defined as group members' perceptions about the diversity of various functional experiences and skills of other group members. *Preference for teamwork* indicates whether group members feel comfortable and enjoy working collectively, rather than individually. *Group potency* represents the group effectiveness. *Outcome expectation* is defined as the likely consequences of tasks. While the U.S. and Korean groups do not differ on outcome expectation and preference for teamwork in the short term, the U.S. participants, being individualists, pay more attention to group members' abilities and experiences than the Korean students, who focus more on finding commonalities. Further, the U.S. participants are associated with marginally higher levels of group performance than the Korean participants. The latter finding does not support the previous studies which suggest that the collectivistic values, emphasising shared responsibility, common goals, task interdependence, and high levels of cooperation, lead to high group performance. Still another finding is the impact of monochronic and polychronic temporal culture on students' behaviour. It is found that the Korean groups tend to work on multiple tasks at the same time, for example, at the initial stage they

establish high expectations for performance outcomes while establishing member relationships. By comparison, the U.S. groups initially focus on task requirements instead of multitasking on establishment of outcome expectations. Sackmann and Friesl (2007) assess the impact of culture on knowledge sharing behaviour. They consider the temporarily formed project teams, which tackle specific problems. They argue that cultural complexity may impede on knowledge sharing at three different levels: emotionally based influences, cognitive influences and experience based influences. First, cultural differences may lead to negative stereotyping, ambiguity and eventually in low levels of trust, which makes knowledge sharing between the members of a project team to become problematic. Second, project group members bring with them a set of different kinds of knowledge bases that influence their interpretation of the goal of a project, of issues in discussion and of contributions made by other members of the team. Only meaningful communication, mutual understanding and aligned action enable team members to work together. Third, different past experience, industry background and cultural origin shape team members' interpretation of the work situation and determines individual perceptions and actions. Their findings reveal that knowledge sharing is only likely to occur if new project members are welcomed emotionally as valuable contributors to a common task. They also find that degrees of acceptance by another group vary when group members are interchanged, yet still told to abide by their original given behaviour rules. Whilst the study gives insights as to how different cultures may interact, it does have some important limitations. Noteworthy is that the study is conducted as a simulation exercise amongst MBA students, and as such the randomly different groups, each given different rules of behaviour to abide by, may not be necessarily a natural setting for the individual participants. It is difficult therefore to infer, for example, how much culturally mixed

groups would be willing to share information. Paulus et al. (2005) explore the impact of power distance on group dynamics, e.g. communication process / group interactions, decision-making process of consensus, shared leadership, etc. They find that low power distance of the team helps to keep the process on track. For example, the team members can express their opinions freely and equally. By contrast, high power distance causes inter-group conflict. For example, Americans are not patient enough to listen to international students' contributions. An interesting inference that one can make of their research is that a team comprised of individuals from different cultures can temporarily play down their own cultural heritage and develop a team culture that works in certain circumstances.

2.9.2 Asian Students' Teamwork Experiences

A number of studies consider Asian students in general, particularly when they study in different cultures and their perceptions of teamwork. Volet (2001) empirically explores the impact of cultural and motivation variables on Singaporean/Malay students and Australian students' appraisals of group work. The cultural variables include collectivism/individualism, interdependence/independence, family relationships; motivational measures include self-efficacy, extrinsic goal orientation (self/social). The expectation that the Singaporean/Malay students would have more positive appraisals than the Australian students is not supported. The reasons might be that collectivist societies tend to prefer operating in groups is limited to very close in-groups with mutual goals and strong connections. Multicultural groups might bring about unstableness, less trust and commitment, and negative stereotyping. The Singaporean/Malay students with a high level of self-efficacy tend to feel more positive because they are confident of their contribution and value the emotions that emerge

from social approval and fulfilment of duties. They tend to regard studying with friends as distracting and do not want to take the risk of being with uncommitted or irresponsible friends, due to the extreme social pressure to perform well academically.

Selvarajah (2006) explores the educational objectives and attitudes to assessment methods between Chinese and New Zealand European students. The New Zealand educational environment is changing as more fee paying Asian students seek educational opportunities there. In many postgraduate classes, the number of Asian students out-numbers the local student population. Various factors, for example, cultural factors, family influences, individual personality type (e.g. achievement oriented), English language competence, motivation for migration, and other personal circumstances such as financial position and employment status all contribute to students' participation behaviour and educational aspirations. The study finds that the postgraduate students in management studies who are from different cultural background, ethnicity and nationality respond to educational approaches differently. For example, many Asian students prefer group assessment to individual assignment as the preferred method of examination because they lack proficiency in the English language. It is noted that this is different from what Volet and Ang find back in 1998, which states that Asian students dislike teamwork because of their achievement orientation. The local students on the other hand prefer individual assignments because they do not like acting as language teachers. Facing academic and social difficulties, Asian students tend to withdraw rather than voice their concerns.   Regarding educational objectives, developing English language competence and gaining qualifications for employment are the most important drivers for the Chinese students. Another finding is that two years' exposure to a multicultural environment provides the Chinese students the ability to understand other cultures and gives them the confidence

to work effectively in groups. The study holds that teaching methods, academic support, assessment methods, allocation of resources should be in line with the changing student population. This will improve cross-cultural communication and knowledge transfer will take place.

Li and Campbell (2008) state the benefits of collaborative learning and a number of common issues and concerns with group work and group assignments. Their findings amongst Asian students' studying in New Zealand suggests that they value highly classroom group discussions, where they can interact with other cultures and improve their English and cultural understandings, but they tend to hold a very negative view about group assignments. They include potential inequality of contributions and effort by group members; varying linguistic and writing skills; having to liaise with others; the formation of the group, lack of training in group communication; lack of adequate support from lecturers; each student often working individually as a result of which different unrelated content is assembled together; cultural differences among members; and the influences of prior learning experiences including the varying cultural values and beliefs held by members. However, the study does tend to group all Asian students together, with no differentiation of ethnicities of participants, or the time in New Zealand.

However, there is no consensus of view concerning the Asian students dislike of group work. Nield's (2004) findings largely contradict the view that there is a cultural dislike of group work. He finds that the majority (64 per cent) of Chinese students like group work for such practical reasons as sharing the workload, benefiting from each other's

ideas and strengths, including motivation. Those students who dislike teamwork do so because of group dynamics such as difficulties in meeting and unequal contributions.

2.10 Students' Overall Satisfaction and Creating Positive Experiences

The elements that contribute to students' overall feelings and experiences have been researched and problematic areas analysed. Werner and Lester (2001) find that team structure (i.e. the clarity of group goals, tasks, roles of team members), and team spirit lead to both team satisfaction and the grade obtained by the team. However, social support, workload sharing, and communication within the group are positively related to satisfaction but unrelated to team grade. One explanation for why social support scores worse on grade is that such teams may socialise and discuss things, which distract their attention from focusing on the task in hand. The findings by Napier and Johnson (2007) reinforce the importance of team spirit, strong work ethic and equal team member contributions in students' overall satisfaction. The top three factors leading to dissatisfaction are lack of participation in teams, inadequate technical skills, and poor communication among team members. Their contribution lies in knowing what factors impact on team satisfaction, so that educators can adopt various techniques to ensure teams are successful.

Researchers have put forward suggestions to address group work issues. One shared view is that central to the experience is a commitment by all stakeholders, and this includes the educators. Bacon et al. (1999) discuss the lessons to be learned from good and poor student teams, and find that those members with less experience need to acquire essential facts about teamwork. Educators should therefore look for ways to improve team training at the start of a course. A second main recommendation, and

closely correlated with best team experience, is to provide teams with adequate descriptions and processes, i.e. give a clear description of what they are required to submit and an indication of how it will be evaluated. The view that all stakeholders should be involved is also reiterated by Bourner et al. (2001), who address the issues that lead to students' positive and negative experiences by use of a survey of first-year undergraduates. They give the reasons of encouraging students to undertake group work, for example, developing skills, learning how to learn, and promoting student autonomy, and provide answers to some interesting questions, i.e. what do students like best/least about a project; what skills do students improve; how do students evaluate group projects; etc. Noting that different types of group project make different demands on group skills, they put forward a closer on-going staff involvement, since it is often unclear as to the intended learning outcomes, e.g. are they about gaining subject knowledge or developing the skills of working in a team. After addressing teamwork problems, Pfaff and Huddleston (2003) suggest letting students feel that group work is worthwhile as it is related to real-world situations, assigning a reasonable workload, allowing some class time to work on group projects, and to monitor free riding by using peer evaluations. Werner and Lester (2001) recommend that instructors may assign students to teams, and prepare students psychologically and technically for the demands of major team project by introducing some smaller and more manageable initial tasks. Greater intervention by staff in monitoring group progress is very necessary, and when problems arise staff should provide advice or even arbitration (Burdett, 2003). Research by Hassanien (2007) reinforces the view that group work is generally a positive experience for students, but emphasises that collaborative learning will not automatically take place by putting students in groups and expecting them to work together. He argues that to be effective tutors should get involved in the group learning

process and students, for example, should receive training on such matters as to how to set goals, share roles, divide tasks, adopt strategies for conflict resolution and the use of peer and self assessment.

Nearly all studies conclude that generally students report positive and beneficial group work outcomes. Nevertheless, many negative aspects are noted and reported, and most researchers believe that all stakeholders should become involved. Thus educators should pay particular attention to both planning and preparing students for teamwork experiences. This is particularly the case with Asian students where it is reported that they feel frustrated and discouraged with shared marks determined by not only their own ability and effort but also the group members' performance (Li and Campbell, 2008). Whilst cooperative learning is shown to have both its strengths and weaknesses, educators should note that the students' needs, interests, cultural values and thus teaching effectiveness should be considered a priority when planning any cooperative team work.

2.11 Service Quality in Higher Education

The past two decades have seen two most prominent changes in higher education. First, the idea of education has changed from philanthropic to competitive service. It has become a marketable service in the same way as any other service (Russell, 2005). The role of university lecturers has extended from educators to service providers. At the same time, higher education is facing more challenges caused by financial constraints, global competition, the freedom of students to choose the best attainable education they can receive, the speed of information exchange, etc. (Mai, 2005). Various researchers have emphasised that the market for higher education has become more competitive.

As a result, the education institutions need to adopt a more market-oriented focus in order to maintain student numbers and sustain the university economy (Ford et al. 1999). However, the implication of quality education is far-reaching, which goes beyond students' perceptions of satisfaction levels. To achieve quality education should become the ultimate goal of all universities and educators. Second, education has gone global and sees increasing intercultural exchanges, as a consequence of which education policy at both institutional and national levels need adjustment to face challenges. Education service quality studies have been brought to the forefront, with increasing research investigating students' expectations and perceptions of overseas universities.

A large amount of research has been done to explore the determinants of service quality in education. Athiyaman (1997) develops a model to link student satisfaction and service quality perceptions, and in so doing attempts to clarify the conceptual basis of the two constructs of satisfaction and perceived quality. The former is defined as an overall evaluation of the goodness or badness of a product or service. In other words, it is an attitude. Consumer satisfaction tends to be more short-term and results from an evaluation of a specific consumption experience. He finds that perceived quality of eight services items (i.e. emphasis on teaching students well; availability of staff for student consultation; library services; computing facilities; recreational facilities; class sizes; level and difficulty of subject content; student workload) are an important influence on students' post-enrolment communication behaviour. His analysis suggests that perceived quality is a function of satisfaction and furthermore the results point to pre-enrolment attitude having little or no effect on subsequent attitude post-enrolment. The implication here is that in higher education, the management of the service should be more towards enhancing consumer satisfaction, which in itself would then enhance

perceived quality. Different from Athiyaman's research which concentrates on the technical service quality, and relates to the contents and delivery of modules, Oldfield and Baron (2000) try to provide a holistic understanding of students' experiences by incorporating the 'functional service quality', which relates to service processes, interpersonal interactions and physical evidence. They find a number of requisite elements, which are essential to enable students to fulfil their study obligations, for example, the academic staff have the knowledge to answer questions relating to course provision, are able to deal with students in a caring fashion, administrative staff show a sincere interest in solving students' problems, etc. Their finding that administrative staff also play an important role in students' perceived service quality has been supported by later research, for example, Mai (2005). Other researchers have identified additional factors of perceived education quality. For example, Joseph and Joseph (1997) use importance/performance-based approach to evaluate service quality among New Zealand business students. They identify seven determinants, which are academic reputation, career opportunities, programme issues, cost/time, physical aspects, location, and other. In a similar fashion, Sohail and Shaikh (2004) identify six factors, that is, physical evidence, contact personnel, reputation, curriculum, and access to facilities, which influence students' evaluation of service quality. They also point out that management makes substantial contribution to students' perception of good service quality. The influence of explicit (e.g. promotional material) and implicit (e.g. tangibles, price) service promises on expectations are examined by Prugsamatz et al. (2006). Using Chinese business students at two Australian universities, and using an extended Zeithaml model, they find, not surprisingly, that the more service promises the students are exposed to, the higher the desired and predicted expectations. Importantly, however, they find that expectations are considerably great when they get the

information from explicit service promises, such as advertising. Overall, they find the most influential sources of information are past experience, advertising, and word of mouth. The inference is that a university trying to recruit Chinese students should centre promotions around past experiences of earlier students rather than on price or location etc. Gibbons et al. (1994) identify ten shifts which have accompanied the massification of higher education over the past three decades. Amongst these are shifts in funding and from the traditional arts and sciences towards more professional schools, including business and management, with the skills necessary to function in organisations. They acknowledge, however, that while universities show a capacity for change, the needs of markets and users change faster than the ability of universities to respond.

Alongside change is the issue of service quality and researchers point out that it is difficult to generalise perceptions of service quality across cultures and business sectors. Trying to develop a single model of important facts to apply cross-culturally might be a mistake (Ford et al., 1999). For example, the mature student with work experiences are more career focused, and more concerned about the quality of teaching and the university's facilities than the traditional student straight from high school.

2.12 British Higher Education Environment

Two important trends have taken place in British higher education institutions, one which may be termed internal, and the other external. Internally, the UK HEIs have experienced cultural changes in teaching and researching in the past decades. Watson and Banwell (2001) state that from the teaching perspective four major influences, namely, changing student profile, modularisation and funding, the recognition of the

need for lifelong learning, the impact of information and communication technology and the changes in the role of the librarian and information professionals, have all affected the design and delivery of courses. Longden (2006) suggests that securing a quality higher education experience meets both the needs of the individual student and that of society. As a result of the UK expanding higher education with an aim to achieve 50% participation by 2010, it is important that UK universities alter their internal culture to adapt to changing student demands and expectations[2]. The researcher explores the reasons of poor retention and then suggests various strategies available to institutions to tackle the issue. Further, the satisfaction level of students, considered as customers, has received attention of researchers. For example, Douglas and McClelland (2007) develop a conceptual model in HE, which highlights the critical drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They find that responsive, communicative and useful environment in the teaching, learning and assessment areas, and within the ancillary areas responsiveness, access and socialising are the important factors that can maximise students' satisfaction. Collins et al. (2004, p.456) quote from the Higher Education and Employment Division of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) by saying that employers are seeking graduates not only with specific skills and knowledge, but with the ability to be proactive, to see and respond to problems creatively and autonomously and all the predicted trends in the world of employment suggest that these pressures will increase. A high priority, therefore, is the transferability of skills. Thus a mission of the UK HEIs in the twenty-first century is to help develop students' capability to meet the entrepreneurial needs and aspirations.

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[2] As of 2010, this target may well be dropped with recent government cut backs proposed in higher education.

In terms of external changes, as a result of internationalization of education, the UK HEIs has seen an explosion of international students, particularly the East Asian group of students. Between 1994 and 1995 and 2004 and 2005, the number of Chinese students enrolled as undergraduates in UK HE rose from 2,950 to 5,205, highlighting a 57% increase (Kingston and Forland, 2008, p.205). The researchers state that in the process of internationalisation, it is significant for the UK HEIs to understand and implement the idea of "cultural synergy" (Kingston and Forland, 2008, pp. 211-212), which implies that different cultures should be equally valued and grow and adjust together to successfully integrate and gain reciprocal benefits. They raise an interesting question: "Why should it be necessary for a student to 'conform to' or 'replace' their cultural heritage with that of a country in which they are studying for a relatively short amount of time?" Therefore, the emphasis for change should not be restricted to one of the cultures involved, as to do so would imply that this culture is the lesser of the two. In this way, the UK universities can also learn and benefit from its international students. Further, the researchers look at how the international students with an East Asian background adapt to the teaching and learning culture in the UK, which represent Western traditions towards knowledge: one that encourages learning independently, thinking critically, challenging the teacher and participating actively. Their study finds that international students like the active, communicative and open teaching and learning approach in the UK. Generally speaking (after browsing through UK universities' prospectuses), most universities adopt lectures plus seminar as main teaching methods, and essay writing, group work plus timed examinations as assessment approaches. By contrast, lectures and timed examinations are the major methods used in Chinese universities.

Other researchers address the implication of internationalisation for curriculum design in the UK universities. For example, Luxon and Peelo (2009) state that it is important that international students see education in British higher education as a valuable international experience rather than just spending money on a British education. An implementation strategy at the micro, teaching and learning level is equally important as abstract policy at the macro, institutional level. They argue that the integration of international students into the UK educational environment is not an easy task or simply happens naturally. It is difficult for international students to benefit from the UK learning experience when they have little chance mixing with home students, for example, some programmes have upwards of 90% non-UK students. Further, they suggest that in the curriculum design, study skills courses should be embedded within degree schemes or extra courses provided to support non-UK students and the staff involved with them.

In 2007, an article entitled "Holy cash cow" in the Guardian newspaper, written by Victoria Adam, a pseudonym, has caught public's attention and awakened them to the trend. The paper uncovers a dilemma faced by some lower-ranking UK universities, who are desperate to have Chinese students despite their poor attainment, in order to subsidise themselves and keep fees for British students at a lower level. If the story told in the paper is true, then the ethics of UK universities is facing challenges. At the same time, many of the Chinese students studying in the UK are facing an embarrassing situation, that is, they are here only because they are rich financially but poor academically. Therefore, another important issue faced by the UK universities is how to support international students. Bartram (2008) examines the differing support priorities of international students. Previous researchers have classified needs as

social/cultural (pre arrival contact, integration, personal and emotional support); academic (e.g. language and study skills support); and practical (e.g. induction, directions, financial advice etc.). He notes the view of others, for example, students' needs change over time of studying abroad. He basically agrees with Chalmers and Volet (1997), who question the importance of international students' academic needs. His view highlights the needs for socio cultural integration, particularly for those from Confucian heritage countries. He attempts to prioritise needs from interviews and the students completing of statements. One interesting result is that most students put academic needs as their priority. However, he finds it depends on the environment and context of how the questions and statements are derived. His conclusion is still tentatively that there is a hierarchy of needs, namely socio-cultural, academic and practical, and gives a cautionary warning that contradictory impressions may emerge due to the environment and method used in the research.

The Chinese students come to study in the UK due to both external causes (e.g. aggressive recruitment campaigns) and internal motivation. In the light of the increasingly importance of international education, it is essential for the UK universities to pay more attention to the grass root level in that "teaching and learning is at the heart of internationalisation rather than peripheral......micro-level innovation should be the conduit and the focus for policy implementation strategies" (Luxon and Peelo, 2009, p.58). The teaching and learning approaches should therefore take into consideration the social, cultural and academic needs of the students.

Chapter 3 Research Method

3.1 Introduction

This study adopts a social constructionist approach using a qualitative research method, whereby "reality is determined by people rather than by objective and external factors" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, p.30). It aims to increase the understanding of the Chinese students' experiences of studying in the UK by gathering rich data from which ideas and theories are induced. Under the social constructionist research designs, grounded theory is applied for the current study due to the nature of research. The implied underpinning theoretical support for the present research is that it does not test logically deduced hypothesis, rather it is inductive and aims to generate a theory that accounts for Chinese students' adaptation. The research makes comparisons within each individual student, between individual students and the two groups (i.e. UK and China group). It is what Charmaz (2006) defines as the flexibility of qualitative study that gives most impression. She refers to grounded theory as not being a rigid prescription. According to her argument, it is important that researchers have a keen eye, open mind, discerning ear, steady hand and let their imagination flow. It permits the researcher to gather more data that focuses on the categories or concepts that still remain questionable and unknown. She states that "like a camera with many lenses, first you view a broad sweep of the landscape. Subsequently, you change your lens several times to bring scenes closer and closer into view" (Charmaz, 2006, pp.14-15). Another insight found to be useful comes from Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.70), which indicates that microanalysis, that is coding every bit of data, word by word or phrase by phrase in every document, is not always necessary. Still another issue that needs to be clarified is when literature should be reviewed. For the research it is done *before and during* the

research process. The underlying approach of the research derives from Strauss's recommendations that previous research and even the researcher's own experiences can help to develop sensitivity to the meanings in data. "Insights do not just occur haphazardly; rather, they happen to prepared minds during interplay with the data...we cannot completely divorce ourselves from who we are or from what we know" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.47).

It is critical to put forward the rationalisation of why some of the concepts of positivist cultural study, such as that of Hofstede and the research of Chinese learners by Biggs and Watkins, are used in the thesis. To address the potential for bias, acknowledgement of their critics is incorporated. Hofstede is currently the world's most cited author in the social sciences field (French, 2010). The first reason of utilising Hofstede's study is that as a researcher one should adopt an open minded attitude, and thus it is considered as significant to include a broad range of viewpoints, draw insights from various classic works, and learn essences from different and influential studies. Though including Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the view held in this research is that culture embraces diversity, complexity, and changing trends, which is in contrast to the static nature of Hofstede's study. Ethnographic qualitative stance questions the value of Hofstede's dimensions of culture which aim at systematically differentiating cultures from each other (French, 2010). Though not everything changes or is unstable, Hofstede's concepts, theory, method and analysis appear to ignore contemporary post-industrial social dynamics and thus his dimensional model has an in-built conservative and static nature (Linstead et al., 2009). This point of view of dynamic culture has been firmly supported by the findings of the current research (to be discussed in Chapter 4). This research, therefore, incorporates other studies of Chinese values for a more holistic

picture. For example, as to the question of whether Chinese society is collective or individualistic; in most literature, China is collectivist. The concept of collectivism has been used to indicate that Chinese are group oriented and putting group interests ahead of individuals'. However, other researchers argue that Chinese society and people lack social consciousness and collective spirit. Lin (2004), for example, is one of the few authors that point out that Chinese are only family-minded, not social-minded. For Chinese individualism, he gives examples such as Chinese sport and card games, where each man plays for himself. Therefore it is significant to take into account different perspectives from various literature sources.

Biggs' Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) has been used in the past decades to determine learners' approaches and motives. Learners with different approaches vary in their learning motives and strategies (Biggs, 1987b). Generally three approaches and motives are identified: (1) Surface learning motive is to meet requirements minimally and thus limit target to bare essentials and reproduce them by rote learning; (2) Deep learning approach is to develop competence in particular academic subjects with intrinsic interest by reading widely and inter-relating relevant knowledge; (3) Achieving learning approach is to enhance self esteem by obtaining highest grades, following up suggested readings, whether or not material is interesting, and behave as a 'model student'. Nevertheless, some later research argues that learners adopt strategies appropriate to the changing contextual needs and "learners' strategy use is dynamic and varying across contexts and hence is a temporally and contextually situated phenomenon". For example, Chinese students in Britain adopt strategies different from those in China to adjust to a new learning context (Gao, 2006, p.56). The study strategy of the students is induced by their perceived control over learning and assessment

perceptions (Ferla et al., 2009), and interaction with different learning contexts play a critical role in shaping migrating students' motivation (Gao, 2008). International students' adaptation is a complex process influenced by language mastery, social communication, personal development and academic outcomes. Additionally pedagogical, psychological factors, organisational and social cultures all exert influences on the students' intercultural experiences (Gu et al., 2010).

In the current research SPQ is used as a tool to select participants, by no means intending to 'label' the informants. Also, attention is given when considering the cross-cultural perspective, namely the appropriateness of administrating SPQ, which has been developed to account for how students learn in Western cultures, to non-Western students (Watkins, 1996). He asserts that although SPQ demonstrates a satisfactory degree of cross-cultural validity, it is important to identify culturally relevant concepts. For this reason appropriate adaptations of the questionnaire are made when it is translated into Chinese for use in the study and a reliability test is carried out amongst the Chinese participants. A further reason of screening informants by using SPQ results from the pilot study, during which the students, with different learning approaches and motives, appear to resort to different adaptation strategies, which not only appears to be an interesting phenomenon but also worth exploring. The screening approach is also regarded as novel by researchers when presentations are given at symposiums, which obviously is encouraging and strengthens one's belief of utilising the method. To sum up, the justification of using literature and concepts from two different philosophical traditions lie in the belief that inspiration can be drawn from broad debate of social scientists and therefore enrich the author's understanding and knowledge.

To obtain qualitative data, in-depth interviews are used. "Qualitative research is an unstructured, exploratory research methodology based on small samples that provides insights and understanding of the problem setting" (Malhotra, 2004, p.137). The fundamental reason for carrying out a qualitative study depends on the nature of the research itself, and in this case uncovering a specific group of young Chinese students' underlying perceptions of teamwork, and the motivations to change due to the impact of cultural exposure. One of the advantages of qualitative study has been found by Clark et al. (2007), which shows that students tend to be more open in discussion using their own language compared with filling in a questionnaire, when they tend to give more positive answers. Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) also addresses that qualitative methods have strengths in their ability to explore the change processes over time and to understand people's meanings. The weakness involved may be that data collection takes up a great deal of time and resources, and the analysis and interpretation of data may be difficult, depending on the tacit knowledge of the researchers.

To assist in the analysis, NVivo 8 qualitative data analysis software is used. Grounded theory's core processes, such as coding, memos, and the very idea of allowing theoretical ideas to emerge out of one's data, have influenced the development of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis in recent years. These software programs have been written with grounded theory in mind (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For example, coding in NVivo is similar to that of grounded theory, though using different terms. Coding procedures of grounded theory include open coding (analytic process through which concepts are identified), axial coding (process of linking codes to their subcategories), selective coding (process of integrating and refining the theory) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In NVivo, coding starts with free nodes, which represent the 'stand-

alone' nodes that have no clear logical connection with other nodes. Then free nodes are catalogued into tree nodes, moving on to more specific categories. After that relationships of tree nodes are established to show connections amongst nodes.

3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study using in-depth interviews was carried out between 2007 and 2008 in both China and the UK. The pilot study served several important purposes, namely to ascertain the feasibility of the research in terms of the scope and depth of research questions; to ascertain the appropriateness of an in-depth interview as the method for the research; to pre-test the interview questions, and to make modifications where necessary. The detailed procedures are discussed in the following parts.

Purposive sampling was used and the participants for the pilot study were chosen based on the grounds that they were accessible, cooperative, and willing to share their opinions. The participants were not the same ones as used for the present study, since they would have completed most of their own studies before the commencement of the main research. Ten undergraduate students at the Westminster Business School (WBS) were recruited for the pilot study. In addition, three Chinese teachers, doing Masters' degrees at the University of Westminster, were involved. Their experiences of helping students with teamwork in China and working in teams as students themselves in the UK provided me with valuable insights. Similarly, ten students and four staff in China, who were willing to participate and contribute ideas, were also recruited. Interviews, reflective diaries, and discussions in small groups were used to assess the feasibility.

In the UK, interviews were carried out in two phases. The first one took place three months after students' started at WBS and the second one towards the end of the second semester. The length of each interview and discussion varied from one hour to two hours. Each interview was summarised instead of transcribed word for word for the purpose of analysis, mainly due to time restraints. During the interviews, a free-flowing discussion was established to have an overall view of their opinions of studying at WBS, with a focus on the teamwork. These interviews were interactive in nature. From time to time, they diverged from the focus of the conversation and started to talk about their daily life at the Halls of Residence, etc. These seemingly useless small talks turned out to be very useful in the end for me to understand their youth culture. Several conversations, which were very informative, were carried out with five students. They were selected as the key interviewees since they were found to be the most conscientious. A bond of trust was established, which allowed them to provide rich, detailed autobiographical descriptions. The interviews with other students supplemented detailed information about their experiences and thus provided a complete picture of the group.

In China, one-to-one interviews and group interviews were conducted, apart from several less formal conversations with some colleagues and students at various times. The nature of all the interviews was similar to the ones held at WBS. In addition, about 60 students' reflections on teamwork were obtained. The colleagues in China became good informants because some of them had used teamwork in their modules and were more than willing to share the results of their observations. The discussions with them verified the students' stories. The interviews, reflective diaries and 'conversations with a purpose' not only provided some ideas about young Chinese students' teamwork

experiences but also their cultural values. For example, a student suggested me visiting her *MySpace*, where the value and culture of the post 1985 generation could be learnt. The following table shows the number of interviews undertaken in both China and the UK for the pilot study. The interviewees in the UK either returned to China or continued studying for a Master's degree, usually at a different university. The students in China, other than three who later went on to study at different UK universities, finished their studies in China. Tables 2 and 3 show the details of the interviews in the UK and China respectively.

Table 2 Pilot Study Interviews in the UK

	First interview	Second interview	Total
Time	November – December 2007	April – August 2008	
No. of interviews	10 students + 3 teachers	10 students + 3 teachers	26
Length	1 to 2 hours	1 to 2 hours	

Table 3 Pilot Study Interviews in China

	Interview	Total
Time	April 2008	
No. of individual interviews	5 students + 4 teachers	9
No. of group interviews	5 students	1
Length	1 to 2 hours	
Reflective diaries	60	

The pilot study had a twofold contribution to the actual research evolvement, namely the scope and depth of the research questions and the research method.

Regarding the scope and depth of the research questions, the pilot study indicated that the research was dealing with two most complicated things, that is, human nature and

culture. The anecdotes told by the students illustrated the impact of cultural heritage upon their initial behaviour and reactions towards the differences among members during teamwork and also the impact of cultural exposure on their attitude and behaviour. For example, Chinese students were more ready to give up personal opinions if they thought others' might get an approval from the tutors and thus they believed might lead to a better mark. The Chinese students, being particularists, tended to be flexible or ignore rules if they regarded it crucial for personal gains. They tended to place emphasis on the results of the group work and looked at the situation to determine what was the right and ethical resolution. To them, doing a member's job on his or her behalf was an acceptable and ethical behaviour. Another noticeable difference was that the Chinese students tended to use an accommodating approach in solving conflicts. A number of Chinese interviewees suffered anxiety not only from other members' failure to complete work but also from their different ways to tackling the issue. Many Chinese believed that disagreement with each other's ideas is a deviant behaviour and all the team members should pull in the same direction and in pursuit of the same goal. For instance, when differences arose, a simply voting procedure was followed or the team leader's view was taken as authoritative. Furthermore, the Chinese students tended not to force their opinions upon other students. Their sense of holding ground was not strong, especially when they considered other members were better than themselves in terms of English and knowledge. They generally did not bother arguing against the authority if they felt inferior and had lesser power. This lack of equal consciousness explained why Chinese students followed the value of being polite and tended not to be critical, assertive or aggressive in interpersonal interactions. This phenomenon might be an interaction between Chinese culture and Chinese personality structure (McCrae et al., 1996). Another reason might be that they

considered themselves inferior to local and other international students because of their English language competency. Unfortunately, some other students' attitudes towards them reinforced this low opinion of themselves. As an indication, the pilot study had identified certain aspects of changes in expressing opinions, attitude towards self-achievement, cooperation, independent learning, information sharing, dealing with absenteeism, adapting to different cultures in a group, etc. For example, the Chinese students had a different attitude towards independent learning and the teacher's role. The Chinese students at GDUFS expressed a stronger wish for teacher's guidance and participation in their teamwork. They tended to think successful teamwork depended largely on a teacher's participation, and that the teacher should set structured and clear aims of the project, check and make sure that all team members take part in the group work, give guidance and supervision during the whole process and award hard working members and the group leader bonus marks, etc. A typical comment from a Chinese colleague was as follows:

> *Whenever there is a dispute or disagreement amongst any team members, their first thoughts are to contact me as if I can be the adjudicator or judge of their opinions. It's as if I am supposed to be like a referee at a football game. Furthermore, if they do come to a group decision, they will want to speak to me, as if to get reassurance that they may be on the right track. They worry that there might be a 'right answer' that somehow they have missed, and need this reassurance before they are happy to proceed to the next steps.*

On the other hand, the Chinese students, after studying in the UK for several months, began to realise that the early outlook they might have had was not going to work. They had to manage teamwork independently and take more responsibility. They have gradually adapted to less teacher dependency. Also, the study noted how changes among the students varied, but it was not entirely clear as to how much they had changed. For example, a minority of students accepted different cultures wholeheartedly, whereas it appeared that a majority used what might be termed an adaptation process according to the specific circumstances they found themselves in. Still others just kept themselves to their national cultural group showing shyness, hesitation, with wariness of different cultures. Therefore, it was significant for the ongoing study to explore how intensity of contact, duration of contact, and the recognised social, educational and economic advantages upon acceptance, all acted in influencing changes within students.

With regard to the research method, the first important thing that the pilot study indicated was that an in-depth interview was the most appropriate method for this research. One issue arose when group interviews were carried out. It was found that Chinese students showed more hesitation in sharing their true stories when other students were present. They tended to give responses that appeared to be 'correct' in front of their peers. Clark et al. (2007) also find that Chinese students appear to speak freely with a Chinese interviewer. A further point is that the diaries obtained for this study were somewhat general and brief, because they did not have much time or did not want to spend too much time on detailing out their experiences. This led to the decision to use one-to-one intensive interviews for the actual research. Still another achievement of the pilot study was that there were chances to pre test the proposed interview

questions. Three important issues arose that were considered to be important when conducting effective interviews. First, interview questions were extended to become more specific. For example, the original question concerning group leader (i.e. *Do you have a team leader?*) was broken down into several detailed questions (i.e. *Do you have a team leader? How is the team leader chosen? Where does he/she come from? Do Chinese students want to be a team leader? What do you think of your team leader? Do you think he/she is a good leader? Why?*) The reason why it was necessary to use more detailed questions was that Chinese students tended to be shy and brief, particularly when being interviewed, in their answers. Specific questions helped them to ponder and elaborate. Second, questions were worded in a way to avoid standardised and 'right' answers from the students. For example, when they were asked how they understood the meaning of 'cooperation' within a team, they tended to give answers like 'working together to achieve a common goal'. However, when asked *What do you do if your team member fails to finish his part on time? Do you think completing his task on behalf of him is a kind of cooperative behaviour?* they gave an answer, such as 'Yes, I often do that though I am upset', which reflected an important fact that a number of Chinese students accepted covering up and doing each other's task as a kind of cooperation. Also they regarded it as reciprocal, which meant their favour would be returned by the receiver later when they had difficulties handling assignments. Third, flexibility was needed during interviews. The questions required adjusting according to specific situations. It was desirable to go beyond the questions asking solely about how they carried out teamwork. For example, it was found that focus should be put more on students' feelings rather than just the procedures and dynamics of teamwork. This led to the questions being added in the actual interviews, for example, *Can you describe*

your overall emotions/feelings when participating in a team? What are the major problems or conflicts? Anything that disappoints you? How do you handle them?

One further important decision from the pilot study was that to achieve the maximum objectivity and adding explanatory power of the final analysis, a more sophisticated screening method was needed for the research. The pilot study showed that a number of variables influenced participants' views of teamwork and how they got going and how they evaluated themselves. One of the variables was the learning approaches and motives of the students. This was found to be not only interesting and worthy of further exploration, but also within the author's research knowledge and background. Therefore, Biggs' Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) was decided to be used for the actual selection of interviewees. SPQ had been used widely for the purpose of studying students' learning motives and approaches. To the author's knowledge, the screening method used by this research, had no precedent, and proved that previous research results could be used in an original way.

The last but not least decision from the pilot study was to use NVivo 8 for the actual research. NVivo was feasible for a large number of transcripts. The software itself did not do the analysis and interpretations for the researcher. Its major function was to facilitate the coding and analysing processes. For example, when clicking on one node, all the relevant raw data appeared on the screen with their sources. NVivo therefore proved to be a more efficient and effective method for analysis.

3.3 Research Method

The main method for collecting data was the in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the UK group and the comparison group in China for triangulation, which enables the research to achieve credibility, an important criteria for robust qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Participants were interviewed three times over the year, with each interview lasting approximately between one to two hours. Although interviews were the major source to yield data, a number of informal conversations were carried out with the students, with the aim to understand their general life outlook and values. Since the author was based most of the time in the UK during the research, there were more frequent face to face contacts with the UK group than the comparison group in China, with whom the general contacts were kept by e-mails. This, however, was consistent with the key objective of the study, namely young Chinese students' adaptation as a result of cultural exposure. It did take a lot of time and effort to arrange meetings with the comparison group in China, although the author had managed to fly back to China three times for fieldwork and tried to fit in with the participants' schedules. Tables 4 and 5 show the number of interviews carried out in both the UK and China respectively.

Table 4 Data Collection in the UK

	Pre-interview	Interim interview	Post interview	Total
Time	July – August 2008	December 2008	April – May 2009	
Place	China	UK	UK	
No. of interviews	8	8	8	24
Length of interviews	1 – 2 hours	1 – 2 hours	1 – 2 hours	

Table 5 Data Collection in China

	Pre-interview	Interim interview	Post interview	Total
Time	September 2008	December 2008 – January 2009	June 2009	
Place	China	China	China	
No. of interviews	8	8	8	24
Length of interviews	1 – 2 hours	1 – 2 hours	1 – 2 hours	

In order to avoid any bias, all interviews were carried out in the Chinese students' native language, namely Chinese. The interviewees signed a letter of consent to indicate that they understood the purpose of the interview and that they voluntarily took part in the research studies. Interview questions were designed, with a focus for the different developmental stages of the students' perceptions of teamwork. There was a point when there were no fresh returns from interviewees on certain questions during the interim interviews. For example, *what type of teamwork do you prefer?* The answers obtained at the interim interviews were more or less the same as the pre interviews, and added nothing new to what was already known. Therefore, the same question was not asked again for the post interview, for which, more questions had been designed on students' overall feelings, evaluations of progress, influences from team members and other adjustments accordingly. For example, *Can you describe your overall emotions/feelings when participating in a team? How do you adjust to the learning style, e.g. teamwork (in the UK)? Have you gained any benefits from teamwork? If yes, what are they? Are there any differences between the team members in their teamwork behaviour? Do they influence you in any way? Have you changed because of their influence?* (See Appendix B for the complete interview guide). These extra questions enabled more information to be ascertained on the students' behavioural and cognitive changes.

For the interviews, the questions were e-mailed to the participants beforehand so that they could have a general idea about the interview and their expected role in the research. This was particularly necessary for the pre interview, because the questions were used as a warming up exercise for the interviewees to understand the nature of the study. Since it was the first time for the students to take part in a study as such, all of them took it seriously and wrote down notes for the questions, so as to be more informative during the interview process. It was not uncommon that participants tended to be brief and not good at elaborating or giving detailed descriptions of their experiences. To solve the problem, it was found necessary to ask further questions on the interesting and important points. Also, it was helpful for the interviewer to have opportunities to get to know the participants, so that the interviews could be carried out in a relaxing and friendly atmosphere, which surely was favourable for getting rich data. It was found that the situation had improved a lot during the interim and post interviews, because the interviewer and interviewees had known each other for nearly a year, and they had always been encouraged to reveal their true emotions and opinions rather than expecting them to give correct answers. Additionally, it was found that taking notes of keywords during the interviews was very helpful to get a general idea of the possible categories and to convert them into themes at a later stage.

The research conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews for data collection. For the selection of interviewees, however, a quantitative approach was used. As shown in Figure 3 (p.123), the first step was a pilot study. Second, all together 16 interviewees were selected by using Biggs' Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) (1987a, 1987b) (See Appendix A). Eight interviewees were chosen from the 30 students, who intended to come to the UK to study. Another eight were chosen from the 318 students who studied

in China. They were of similar age and background. They were chosen so that they represented a good mix of gender and learning approaches. Third, a three-phase fieldwork was carried out for both groups. The three phases included pre-interviews which took place before the students came to the UK, interim interviews which took place about three months after the students started their studies in the UK, and post interviews which were conducted upon the students' completion of studying in the UK. The three phases of the fieldwork had a different focus. The pre-interview was to look at the students' previous outlook and experience of teamwork, the interim interview found out the students' initial experience of teamwork in the UK and the post interview was to ascertain the students' adjustments after two semester's studying and cultural communication during teamwork. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. They were transcribed for data analysis. Finally, data derived from the same interviewee over time, between the interviewees in the same group, and between the two groups were compared and analysed from cultural perspectives in order to answer the research questions.

Figure 3 Research Design

| Pilot study |

| Screen interviewees by SPQ using **SPSS** | | Analyse with **NVivo 8** |

Target Group in the UK
N = 8
30 student were screened

Three-phase fieldwork

| Pre-interview: Before coming to the UK | → | Outlook of teamwork & teamwork experiences |

| Interim interview: About three months after the semester starts in the UK | → | Cultural inheritance: teamwork behaviour |

| Post interview: Upon completion of studying in the UK | → | Cultural exposure: changes & adaptation: what & why? |

Analysis from cultural perspectives

Comparison Group in China
N = 8
381 students were screened

Impact of cultural exposure
Comparative method

- Similar age & background
- Similar three interviews conducted

| Changes or no changes without cultural exposure: |

3.4 Screening Interviewees

The interviewees selected for the research were the young Chinese students who were born post 1985 (i.e. in their early to mid 20s). They were the students of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS), who transferred for a final year to complete their degree in the UK (UK group). A comparison group (China group) was also investigated. This group included students of similar age and background, studying purely at the same university in China. These segments have been growing up in an era when Chinese consumerism and economic reforms have taken place. They also represent the changing Chinese culture, and the generation that has to commit itself to increasing levels of cultural, economic, political and social involvement in the global community.

As discussed in 1.5 Theoretical Framework, the pilot study indicated that informants were different in their learning approaches and how they were willing to and did in fact adapt. Furthermore, to ensure the comparability of the comparison group in China and the group coming to study in the UK, the interviewees were pre-screened according to learning approaches (namely surface, deep and achieving approaches) by using the Biggs' SPQ (1987a, 1987b), definitions of which are given in 3.1 Introduction. Therefore the two groups were similar in terms of their learning motives and strategies. A further reason was that learners of different motives and approaches might adapt or change in different ways, and thus might add more value to the findings.

When using Biggs' SPQ (1987a, 1987b), slight amendments were made in translation into Chinese, so as to fully reflected the tone of the questions and also to meet the current learning situation in China, for example, in question 38 'my religion' became

'my beliefs'.   Further, it is important to take into consideration the cross-cultural perspective when using SPQ, namely the appropriateness of administrating SPQ, which is developed to account for how students learn in Western cultures, to non-Western students (Watkins, 1996). He asserts that although SPQ demonstrates a satisfactory degree of cross-cultural validity, it is important to identify culturally relevant concepts. The example given is about the lower reliability and validity of Western questionnaires for Nepalese students.

SPQ was administered to both the UK and China groups, with 30 and 31 respondents respectively. Since there were 381 potential students for the latter, a two stage sampling process was adopted. The first stage was to randomly choose one class from the twelve possibilities, using *EXCEL* function =RANDBETWEEN(1,12), and the second stage was to select students for the study. Class 3 was chosen and the Biggs' SPQ was administered to all. Eight students were chosen who met the criteria and who expressed a willingness to participate.

Studies on the reliability of SPQ have been carried out by the original researchers. The alpha coefficients ranged from 0.74 to 0.85 (Biggs, 1987a, pp.28-30), which were considered highly satisfactory, indicating that the students in question displayed a good degree of consistency of the data. Other independent investigations also supported the structure of the SPQ scales. Nevertheless, it was considered necessary to do a reliability test of SPQ for the research mainly because the original questionnaire had been translated into Chinese and it was used specifically among the Chinese learners. Consequently, SPSS had been run to test the reliability of SPQ. The results indicated a

relatively high level of reliability (all α's are greater than 0.7) thus giving confidence in segregating the different learning approaches.

The detailed results were as follows:- The Cronbach's Alpha of Surface Approach (SA) scale for all the 14 items was 0.744. After deleting the 3 items (i.e. questions 7, 16, 25) that contributed negatively to internal consistency reliability, alpha became 0.760. The Cronbach's Alpha of Deep Approach (DA) scale for all the 14 items was 0.805. After deleting question 38, which contributed negatively to internal consistency reliability, alpha became 0.809. The Cronbach's Alpha of Achieving Approach (AA) scale for all the 14 items was 0.770. After deleting the 4 items (i.e. questions 21, 27, 33, 39) that contributed negatively to internal consistency reliability, alpha became 0.820. These are summarised in Table 6 below[3].

Table 6 Cronbach's Alpha of Learning Approaches

	Reliability	Statistics
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Surface Approach	0.760	11
Deep Approach	0.809	13
Achieving Approach	0.820	10

Second, Z scores were calculated to categorise students into the three types, that is, surface learner, deep learner, and achieving learner.

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[3] The Cronbach's Alpha details of each item are provided in Appendix C.

Finally, a two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the highest Z score and the others. The students, whose first highest Z score was found to be significantly higher than the others were selected as potential interviewees. If two scores were very close, there was no dominant specific learning approach, and those students were not selected. The potential interviewees were approached and told the purpose and nature of the research. A number were singled out, and sixteen students, who showed more enthusiasm to participate in the project, were selected, with eight in each group. However, others were kept as additional informants, just in case there was an attrition rate during the course of the longitudinal study. The results for the participants chosen in the UK and China are shown in tables 7 and 8 respectively.

Table 7 Participants in the UK

Participants UK	Order of Z scores	Mann-Whitney P value		Type of learning
UKF1	Surface, Achieving, Deep	0.041	0.000	Surface
UKF2	Surface, Deep, Achieving	0.034	0.002	Surface
UKF3	Deep, Achieving, Surface	0.021	0.000	Deep
UKF4	Achieving, Surface, Deep	0.096	0.122	Achieving/Deep
UKF5	Achieving, Deep, Surface	0.112	0.061	Achieving/Deep
UKM1	Surface, Achieving Deep	0.015	0.013	Surface
UKM2	Deep, Achieving, Surface	0.075	0.002	Deep
UKM3	Achieving, Deep, Surface	0.001	0.006	Achieving

Table 8 Participants in China

Participants China	Order of Z scores	Mann-Whitney P value		Type of learning
CF1	Surface, Deep, Achieving	0.083	0.009	Surface
CF2	Surface, Achieving, Deep	0.005	0.010	Surface
CF3	Deep, Achieving, Surface	0.020	0.002	Deep
CF4	Achieving, Deep, Surface	0.722	0.007	Achieving/Deep
CF5	Achieving, Surface, Deep	0.077	0.086	Achieving
CM1	Surface, Achieving, Deep	0.025	0.006	Surface
CM2	Deep, Surface, Achieving	0.011	0.003	Deep
CM3	Achieving, Deep, Surface	0.797	0.043	Achieving/Deep

Note:

The Z scores were ordered from highest to lowest. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney test was then conducted to establish whether a significant difference existed between the highest score and the other two. The P (probability) values between the highest and second, and highest and third were given respectively. To establish whether or not just one specific learning approach predominated, a 10% significance level was used, since a balance of probabilities was more useful here than a rigid statistical difference. Where no significant difference was noted, both learning approaches were shown.

The research conduct complies with the Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research 2009/10, University of Westminster[4]. Letters of consent were signed with the interviewees (See Appendix D). The number of interviewees was determined by the following reasons:

- It was a micro study;

- It had the intention of getting rich and deep data from in-depth interviews;

- It intended to have a good mixture of both male and female students, and different types of learners.

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[4] The Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research 2009/2010 of the University of Westminster is available at: http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/rs/key-documents.

It is important to address the relationship between the author and the participants. With the comparison group, the author had a distant but friendly relationship throughout the study. When the participants for the UK group were recruited and first interviewed, they only knew the author as a researcher. During the research process, however, when they studied at the WBS, a few selected one of the modules on which the author was teaching as a seminar tutor. As the study progressed, some showed a growing interest in doing a project themselves concerning cultural differences and adaptation as it is related closely to their learning in the UK. As a result, the author was chosen by the course leader to become the participants' project supervisor. This actually proved to be particularly valuable as it enabled one to gain a deeper understanding of the students and their culture. The author did not show favouritism in marking their projects, which were independently assessed by both internal and external examiners. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002, p.43), there has been different views about whether or not the researcher should remain independent from the phenomena being observed. The traditional assumption in science is that the researcher must maintain complete independence to ensure the results' validity. They state that "this ideal is not always possible…there are those who have tried to turn this apparent 'problem' into a virtue." A number of researchers (e.g. McClure, Ouyang) used their students as informants and found student-teacher relationship actually helped communication. Their respect to the teachers enabled them to participate enthusiastically. This is related to the advantage of taking double roles stated by Holliday (2007, p.24) as 'capitalising on existing roles', where people do research as part of their job, for example, teachers are normally expected to observe and assess the behaviour of their students. However, he does stress that the researcher should make the familiar strange, which means keeping at arm's length from the research setting. In the case of this research, the participants treated the

author not only as their tutor but also as their trustworthy friend, to whom they talked about their adjustment as well as other things in their lives. Holliday (2007) states that the qualitative researcher who claims to be 'exploring' could be a very strange concept for the interviewees and therefore it was important to set up the right relations in the research setting, for example, one researcher finds it more helpful to establishes herself as 'wife and mother' and the other as 'friend of a friend'. The judgement of what role to take and what relations to be built should be made in the specific setting.

3.5 Data Analysis

NVivo 8 was used for analysing the data. The specific steps were summarised as follows:

- To code each transcript with free nodes;
- To make tree nodes: 'stand-alone' free nodes are catalogued into a hierarchical structure;
- To set up categories amongst tree nodes;
- To build a theme chart-illustrating emerging connections and theory;
- To organise participants into cases, that have similar attributes.

Coding was started with free nodes. The advantages of the initial careful word by word, line by line, incident by incident coding included (1) studying the data in such a way that the analysis reflected truly the participants' experiences; (2) avoiding 'taken-for-granted' preconceptions, which might have come from the author's own educational background; (3) uncovering the hidden assumptions to gain new insights.

Then free nodes, with similar properties, were grouped into tree nodes, with a hierarchical structure which made sense of what the interviewees had said. During the

process it was important to decide how tree nodes could categorise the free nodes incisively and completely. Tree nodes condensed the data and captured the main points of the statements of the interviewees, through which individual's experiences, actions, and perceptions could be compared.

Afterwards, categories that describe the connection between tree nodes were set up. A set of terms were constructed to group the tree nodes into an organised scheme, which conceptualised interviewees' adaptations and changes. The connections were identified in order to ascertain the essences and to establish themes. Themes then crystallised the relationships between categories that were developed. A casebook was established with specific attributes of each interviewee, that is, gender and their learning approaches. Finally a theme chart was constructed, which demonstrated the relationships between cases and emerging themes. In terms of constructing theory, the study followed a constructivist approach as against the objectivist approach. According to Charmaz (2006, pp.130-131), "a constructivist approach places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants." A constructivist approach holds that theory arises not only from participants, who construct meanings and actions in specific situations, but also from the researcher's own interpretations. Both researchers and participants play a role in interpreting meanings and actions. This implies that different researchers may come up with similar ideas but may theorise them differently. By contrast, an objectivist approach assumes that data already exist in the world, and the researcher's task is to find them and to discover theory from them. Charmaz states that the social context from which data emerge as well as the interactions between the researcher and the participants are significant.

While doing the coding, it was important to have other interviews in mind and to make constant comparisons within the same individual interviewees, between different interviewees and also between the two groups. One advantage of NVivo was that all the quotes under the same free and tree nodes from different interviewees were grouped together, so that it was convenient to trace the sources and references of nodes. It was found that keeping memos or notes on the differences and similarities helped to establish core categories and themes. For example, coding the first interview, the following questions were kept in mind: *How do they form a group? Which type of formation do they prefer? What are the major problems? How do they differ in solving them? What are the strengths or weaknesses that they find about local or other international students? How much do they benefit from cultural interactions? How do they evaluate the other team members' behaviour and attitude? Do they accept or reject them? What are the changes they have found in themselves? What adaptations are suggested by the anecdotes?* Coding the other interviews, the data was compared and put into either existing nodes or new nodes. If there was more than one mention of a certain change, the procedure adopted was to write a memo immediately for it, so that it might be transformed into themes. Good memory was necessary here, because occasionally there were more free nodes than necessary. Fortunately, an advantage of using NVivo was that it allowed the merging of similar nodes. Figure 4 (overleaf) is an illustrative example of the coding and theorising steps.

Figure 4 Data Analysis
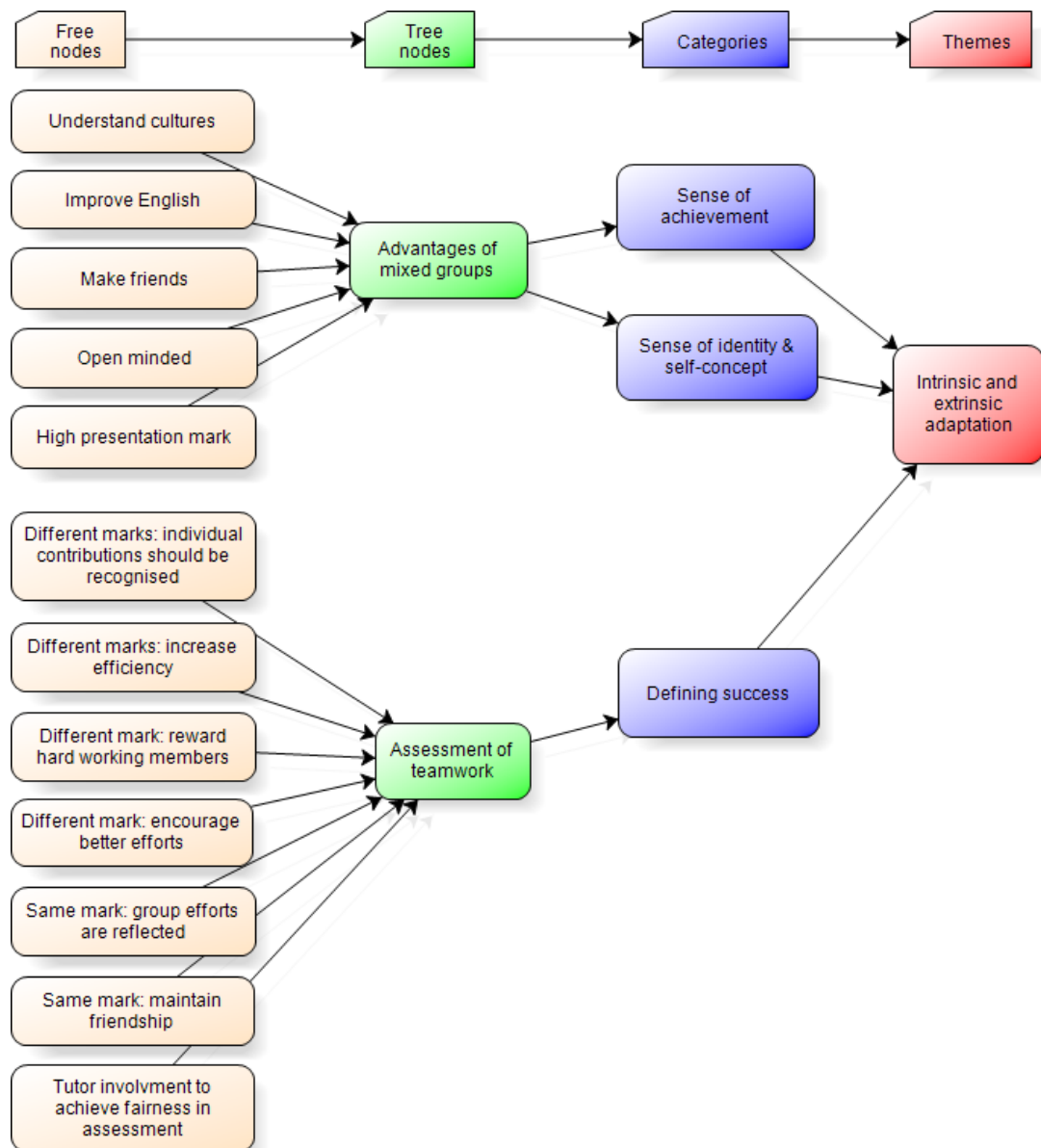
Two excerpts, one from the UK group and the other from the China group, are used to illustrate the three-phase coding and categorising process, which unifies a set of ideas analytically and therefore helps to get the essence and themes. (See Figures 5 - 8)

Figure 5 Example of Free Nodes

Excerpt 1 UKF3

Free nodes

At the beginning when my turn came, I always felt nervous and a bit uneasy because I was thinking whether my opinion sounded sensible or not, whether my group members would reject it or not, whether I appeared stupid or not, etc. Too many worries made me stammer and I could not explain my points clearly. By contrast, my group members always appreciated their own opinions and never hesitated to communicate them. From time to time, when I did pick up courage to talk, I found that they listened to me and liked discussing with me. After knowing them better, I started to talk more and more during group meetings. My earlier worries gradually disappeared. I started to feel proud of expressing my own opinions, though sometimes the group rejected them. Nevertheless, that no longer made me anxious, and I did become braver than before.

Feel nervous & uneasy

Too many worries that stop expressing opinions freely

Aware of the difference between foreign students & herself regarding idea expressing

Encouraging members

Talk more; earlier worries disappeared

Feel proud

Become braver

Figure 6 Example of Nodes and Categories

Free nodes	Tree nodes	Categories
- Feel nervous & uneasy - Too many worries that stop expressing opinions freely - Aware of the difference between other students and herself regarding idea expressing - Encouraging members - Talk more; earlier worries disappeared - Feel proud - Become braver	Progressive psychological-ly and in behaviour regarding expressing opinions	Echoic & Emulation (imitate process)

Figure 7 Further Example of Free Nodes

Excerpt 2 CF5   **Free nodes**

Sometimes I do not want to do teamwork either. I want to take it easy too, shopping and chatting with friends, going to the cinema, etc. What makes me different from other laid back students is that I learn to restrain myself. Thinking of the future career, parents' expectations, good marriage, I motivate myself to study hard. I do feel stressful, although I do not have any financial stress like some of my classmates, who do part time or odd jobs such as personal tutor for primary school kids or as receptionist at exhibitions. Some members tend to leave the task until the last minute. They would rather be watching a film or surfing on the internet than working on the tasks. I need to spend a lot of time hurrying them up. Several times, I force them to stay after class to discuss the assignment, which just gives me extra hassle and makes me appear 'dull or domineering'. To make matters worse, they think I am competent so that they can rely on me, which means I end up doing most of the work. Other members only make a few adjustments after I complete the task. I feel imbalanced psychologically because we all get the same mark. As time goes by, I begin to question my enthusiasm. I ask myself 'why should I spare time and efforts looking after others?' Gradually I find myself turning passive towards teamwork.

Do not want to do teamwork

Learn to restrain herself

Main reasons of studying hard

Feel stressful

Chinese university students do part time jobs

Laid back team members tend to spare more time enjoying life rather than studying hard

Role as a leader: hassle & extra work

Dull & domineering image as a leader

Depend on the most competent members

Psychological imbalance; Disagree that all members get the same mark

Begin to doubt her enthusiasm & turn passive

Figure 8 Further Example of Nodes and Categories

Free nodes	Tree nodes	Categories
- Do not want to do teamwork - Learn to restrain herself - Main reasons of studying hard - Feel stressful - Chinese university students do part time jobs - Laid back team members tend to spare more time enjoying life rather than studying hard - Role as a leader: hassle and extra work - Dull & domineering image as a leader - Depend on the most competent members - Psychological imbalance - Disagree that all members get the same mark - Begin to doubt her enthusiasm and turn passive	- Negative self image as a leader - Internal & external causes of passive attitude	- Passive attitude and behaviour - Self concept

As a summary, there are a number of points that need to be emphasised in this chapter. First, the pilot study has demonstrated that the research questions had a sufficient scope and depth to offer useful and interesting interpretations and insights that educators and researchers could use in the future. In fact, the cross disciplinary nature of the research added a degree of complication and challenge for the researcher. Apart from the cultural implications from the pilot study, there were important implications for the research method. Considering the fact that the Chinese students tended to be shy and more reserved in speaking in group discussions, it was more feasible and effective to interview them one by one intensively. In order to carry out such intensive interviews, it was first of all necessary to build up trust and friendship between the interviewees and interviewer. Then during the interviews, the interviewees were encouraged to give detailed descriptions on certain events instead of brief answers, and to release their true feelings and views instead of giving 'right' answers or the answers that they expected a tutor wanted to hear. Other methods, such as observation, group discussions with both students and teachers could be used in a complementary way to get additional information.

One of the originalities of the research was the way that participants were screened. Biggs' SPQ had been widely used to investigate the learning approaches and motives of learners. It was believed that the author has been the first researcher who used it for selection purposes, and this proved later that it added a lot of explanatory power to the conclusions. The research was logically designed with three phase interviews carried out among both the UK and the China groups. Further, the number of interviews was sufficient for gathering data to make comparisons and to uncover the in depth attitudes and adaptation arising from the learning behaviour of the students. The interviews were

also participant centred, bearing in mind the interviewer could only act as a guide. The times of interviews were arranged for the convenience of the interviewees. Regarding data analysis, NVivo 8 proved to be effective in organising data and facilitating analysis.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gives a description of how participants are selected and how data is collected and analysed. The research studies a specific group in a specific setting. The value of the research is that the group represents part of the changing Chinese society, and studying in the UK may well have an impact on the traditional beliefs that they arrived with.

In this chapter, the Chinese students' learning experiences are interpreted from their 'cultures of learning' (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). During the initial stage when the Chinese students study in the UK, they are more likely to use a Chinese interpretive system to interpret the behaviour of the local and other international students, and the role of the UK University lecturers. Similarly Chinese students' classroom and teamwork participation are interpreted and judged by local, other international students and the University lecturers, who themselves have their own particular cultures of learning and cultures of teaching. This interaction between cultures of learning and teaching in international education may involve changing ways of studying and the communication may be more productive if teachers and other students have the awareness of different cultures of learning (Jin and Cortazzi, 2006). As a focus of the research, the discussion and analysis is centred around how young Chinese students' perceptions of teamwork change as a result of studying in the UK. The understanding of the students' adaptation is guided by 'culture and discourse systems' (Scollon and Scollon, 2001), namely how and why they adapt in their ideology/attitudes towards diverse values and beliefs via mixing with local and other international students, in their

discourse/communication styles, in their outlook of socialisation and learning, in their concept of time and face system.

The analysis is based upon the deep and rich data collected from the in-depth interviews with a group of students studying in a UK university and a comparison group in China. The contextual mediation of UK participants' changes, and the contrasts between the two groups are explored, by using social-cultural concepts (Gao, 2006), including learning discourses, influential agents (team members, teacher, friends and parents), and assessment methods. The findings from post interviews are naturally integrated with the findings from the pre and interim interviews, rather than rigidly dividing the discussions chronologically. The major reason lies in the focus of the whole research, which attempts to ascertain the impact of cultural exposure on the students' perception and behaviour. Adjustments in three areas, namely psychological, cognitive, and behavioural, are identified. It is also found that the extent of adaptation is moderated by the students' individual learning approaches, namely surface, deep and achieving, and whether there are any variations in their coping strategies and evaluation of cultural adaptation values. To triangulate the results, the findings from a comparison group of similar students in China, with respect to age, gender and learning approaches, are discussed. When exploring Chinese students' subculture and attitude, broader cultural and social dimensions are incorporated, namely close cultural and social environment including family members, educational environment including schools and peer groups, and the broader environment including mass media and global aspects.

4.2 Cultural Exposure Leads to Adaptations

The adaptation process undergone by the Chinese students is not the "processes of becoming an English student" as stated by Sliwa and Grandy (2006, p.20), which the author agrees to be an illusion. The reality shown by the findings is that provided there is sufficient cultural exposure, the students benefit from the process during which they learn to be sensitive to cultural differences and various outlooks, and adjust their learning, communication and problem solving skills to fit in with the new educational context. The Chinese students are facing three facet challenges during the process of teamwork: linguistic competence (pragmatic competence), cognitive & affective competence (competence of interacting with various cultures), and teamwork competence (competence of working with others). To face and tackle the challenges, the Chinese students adopt what may be referred to as functional approaches and contingency approaches. Functional approaches are practical methods adopted in order to get a good result, such as trying to be in a mixed group with both Chinese, local and other international students, who are better at English; allocating tasks according to Chinese students' strength; helping the weak members to complete their parts; choosing native speakers to do the presentation; caring more about task needs rather than individual needs, e.g. accepting being ignored as long as the grades are reasonable; etc. Another approach often adopted is to volunteer to tackle aspects which are more factual, i.e. to look up specific data which is non-controversial and what may be called a back-room function. In this way they can still feel they are contributing equally, but without being in the front line. Functional approaches provide a sense of security, assistance and a source of information. They help to reduce fear of inadequacy and frustration. Contingency approaches are the actual changes that Chinese students try to make according to the situation in order to become a useful contributor in teamwork. These

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approaches include being active in group discussion and straightforward in expressing opinions; adjusting learning methods and being independent; learning other members' skills, etc. As an illustration, some interviewees find the stage of team development is a significant factor affecting how a team works together. They comment on the process of developing an effective team. For example, at the beginning, they have their own ideas and one person takes the leadership role to make most of the decisions. As time goes on, everyone becomes comfortable in expressing their opinions and they are able to constructively incorporate everyone's ideas together to get the best end result. When everyone feels like an equal in the group and understands the role that they represent best, then that facilitates the opportunity for maximum creativity and output. Contingency approaches provide stimulus to adjust, together with meeting social needs. They help to reduce the anxiety of being rejected. As a result, students show either intrinsic/motivational or extrinsic/instrumental motives to adapt to the new environment. Generally such characteristics as flexibility, empathy, responsiveness to challenge, and braveness to accept uncertainties and differences are crucial in intrinsic adaptation, which is more permanent as against extrinsic, which may be short-term only.

4.2.1 Culturally Mixed Group

The first important finding of the research is that the Chinese students in the UK generally recognise the positive aspects of teamwork. This is consistent with Nield's (2004) argument where he questions the culturally stereotype Asian student and their preference for rote learning and dislike of group work. The students also prefer to have chances to work with other international students in a mixed team rather than in a team consisting of solely Chinese students. The reasons reported by the participants confirm

the four goals underpinning the use of cross-cultural groups in the curriculum stated by De Vita (2002), namely countering the ethnocentric approach in universities, preparing students to work in an international environment, enhancing students' cultural awareness, and challenging cultural stereotypes. The research provides support for the view held by Summers and Volet (2008) that it is valuable to promote mixed group assignments. However, it does contradict the findings that both local and international students become less positive about mixed groups as time goes on. This research shows that only in the initial stage of studying in the UK do the participants tend to cling to groups made up of solely Chinese. The major reasons disclosed by the participants include lacking confidence in communicating with local and international students, due to both language proficiency and wariness of those from different cultural backgrounds. They admit that they feel nervous when talking with local and other international students, which is not necessarily caused by negative stereotyping, though some of the Chinese students rather suspect that other students look down upon them. Additionally, some of the Chinese students have known each other for about three years, and they feel obliged to stay together because of friendship and loyalty. However, this kind of group loyalty appears to break down after months of mixing with the students from other cultural backgrounds. In this case, this research does not support the earlier study of Volet and Ang (1998), who find that Asian students dislike mixed groups because of cultural-emotional connectedness, language, pragmatism (e.g. local students have other work commitments), and negative stereotyping.

All the participants come to show preference for culturally mixed teams. Having heard so much about the Western world from the mass media, the young Chinese students have the drive to experience for themselves the different values and customs. This is

vividly expressed by the Chinese idiom that 'it is better to see once than hear a hundred times'. This supports Huang (2008)'s findings that the Chinese students are motivated to be familiar with diverse cultures (e.g. British culture and society) and are keen on travelling in the UK. The students find it beneficial to liberate themselves from a uniform way of thinking and doing things. This finding is in line with that of Gill (2007), who finds that some Chinese graduates go abroad in order to get away from the rigidity of the Chinese educational structure. The students in this research state that the variety of ideas adds flavour to life. Obviously other students' innovative ideas, which may be absent in a pure Chinese group, are another strength that attracts the Chinese students. Chinese students are impressed by local and other international students' creativity and broad experiences as commented by one interviewee:

> *Other students are good at applying their life experiences to understanding the theories in the books, and thus able to support their arguments with specific evidence during the discussions. This makes the discussions livelier too. This of course has a lot to do with what they have seen and heard in daily life. By contrast, Chinese students appear dull and inexperienced. They tend to be restricted to the ideas in books, and give limited examples, with no personal experiences involved.* (UKF4)

The Chinese students are also impressed by the lively atmosphere of the group work with local and international students when they meet. They comment that many other students, especially the European members, put some joviality into teamwork, so that they enjoy the discussion process. By contrast the Chinese take it so seriously that it

appears to be a grind rather than an enjoyable learning process. This confirms what Ouyang (2004, p.61) finds about the 'fun' style of learning and teaching in China, and who states that "having fun whilst learning is an alien idea to most Chinese teachers and students who believe that learning should be hard and achievement is proportionate to the hardship endured……This belief is so deep-seated that many simply regard fun or cheerful learning as anything but meaningful and achievement bound." Whilst they are initially taken aback by the easy-going mood of the team and impressed by the fact that the learning is still going on, their inherent serious learning approach sometimes inhibits them from joining free discussions of the group with jollity attached.

Another achievement of the Chinese students is that through communicating with local and international students they realise that their understanding of their own culture is shallow and superficial. They can discuss such aspects as food and greetings, but have little knowledge about the underlying reasons behind Chinese people's behaviour. As commented by one interviewee:

> *Other students can give a lot of detailed information about their own culture. In contrast when asked questions about my own culture I realise how sheltered has been my upbringing that I understand my own culture very little compared with European students.* (UKF2)

> *Many members are quite talkative about their own culture, while we Chinese students appear to have very little to say. It might be the student's personality or language. Or they have never really given it much thought.* (UKF4)

The change is an urge not only to learn about diverse cultures, but more about their own so that they can converse more openly. Conversations with local and international students invoke questions about one's own culture, which go more profound than the simple topics on daily life. This supports the argument of Brislin (1981) that one benefit of intercultural interactions is the ability to gather insights into one's own culture and upbringing by observing contrasts.

Other reasons are related to face and friendship. The interviewees actually find cultural closeness stressful. The simplest reason is that under the pressure of friendship and group loyalty, some hard working and more competent Chinese students have to 'forgive' and 'cover up' for free riders or social loafers. In an all-Chinese group if one member fails to complete his/her part, other Chinese members are more likely to 'forgive' him/her. This is not the case if they work with local and international students, who would kick the lazy or incompetent ones out of the group without mercy, or report the issue to the module leader.

All the students interviewed dislike sole Chinese groups because they worry that once in such a group their concerns about maintaining relationships may take precedence over the need to allocate tasks fairly[5]. For example the familiarity between each other gives some members a chance to take on a lighter workload. Interviewees mention their worries of being 'well acquainted' with each other and maintaining group harmony:

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[5] This is not to say that it represents all the Chinese students studying at WBS, for the interviewees report that some of weaker students in terms of English proficiency prefer sticking with sole Chinese groups.

Being friends, I feel embarrassed to say 'no' or to criticise if they fail to meet deadlines. But with other students, whom we know less well, we try to behave in a proper way, for fear that they may otherwise look down upon the Chinese. (UKF2)

We know each other so well that we tend to depend on the most competent members, and do not get real involvement in the process. In fact if the tutor can get involved in allocating group members, we can have more mixed groups, with students from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the groups can be more diverse, with different views. Sometimes I found it difficult to reject other Chinese students when they asked to be in the same group. (UKF3)

The same interviewee is concerned about her mark:

Some Chinese members' English proficiency is no better than mine and I am afraid their work might pull down my mark. To be with English speaking and European students, I can at least get a high mark in presentations. I want to have more opportunities to practise my English with them. (UKF3)

Not all the young Chinese students follow the traditional group orientation and solidarity value to which all schoolchildren in China are expected to aspire. Since some of them have their own learning objectives and plans, they do not want to sacrifice their own interest because of group loyalty. Despite the fact that they have been educated to

conform to collectivism, the younger generation worship independent space and individual interests. Further, after some positive communications with local and other international students, the Chinese find them friendly and understanding. This obviously enforces their acculturative desire to join a mixed group. The negative stereotyping and wariness of non-Chinese nationalities diminishes. However, some interviewees disclose that the initial friendliness of local and other international students is rather just the latter's form of being polite, and does not necessarily lead to future interactions, which very much builds on common interest and hobbies.

Apart from the intrinsic motives discussed, being in a mixed group also brings about a number of complimentary benefits. The interviewees in the UK generally strongly value the functional experiences, competencies, knowledge and skills of other group members. This is what Sosik and Jung (2002) referred to as functional heterogeneity. For example, the local, European and American students are better at presentation and thus they can learn from their presentation skills, and achieve higher grades for the presentation part. They are also better in researching relevant references. The Chinese students' high expectations of other members' abilities may lead to their belief that the culturally mixed group may be more effective and have a better performance. This encourages them to join a mixed group and to learn from the more capable members. In contrast, the functional heterogeneity of the comparison group is low, where the students are similar in their backgrounds and experiences. There is little urgency to motivate them to be involved in a heterogeneous team. As a result, when setting up a group, they may give more attention to social relations and camaraderie at the expense of the functional heterogeneity, which allows members with diverse skills to be in a group to facilitate the exchanging of skills and knowledge. Among the interviewees

studying in the UK, belonging, bonding, and familiarity of co-national peer group enhanced by a common language have become a less important factor in choosing groups. Co-national peer group does not guarantee unfailing support. What is more important is that they long for a multi-cultural group, which can give them a chance to broaden horizons and learn more.

Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the theme chart of how Chinese students initially start and feel more comfortable with a sole Chinese student group. With the injection of cultural exposure and working with others, they come to prefer mixed teams, which bring such benefits as learning different ideas, values and customs, avoiding stressful cultural connectedness and loyalty, more carefree communication with local and international students, and the learning of new skills.

Figure 9 Culturally Mixed Teams
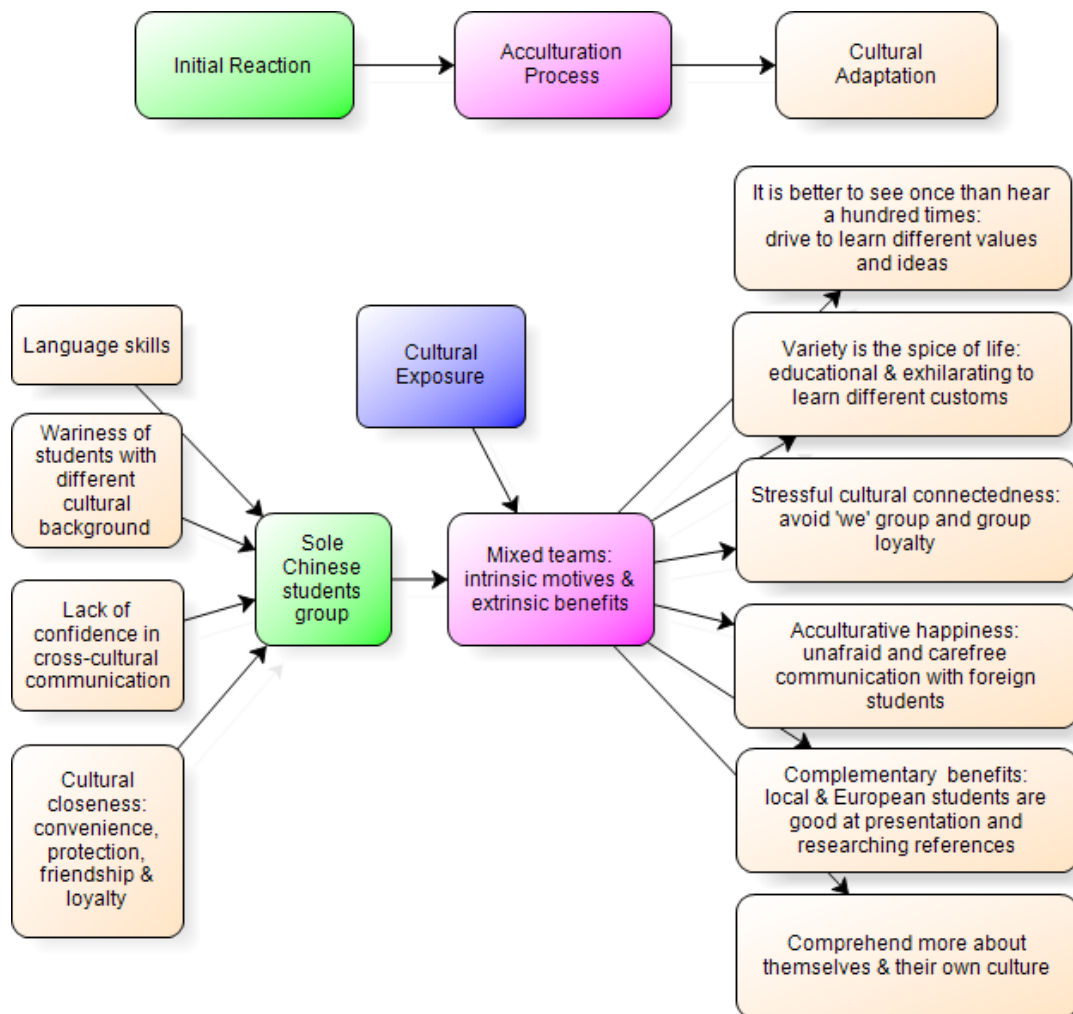
4.2.2 Progressive Attitude and Behaviour

Discussions with fellow tutors and students suggest that they tend to regard the Chinese students as non participative because of their silence in class and hesitancy in being communicative. This research shows that this is a common misunderstanding, and the author prefers to label them as the 'silent participants' rather than non participants. Much has to do with their upbringing both at school and at universities in China. As a result the reasons can be categorised into both individual beliefs and their cultural / educational background. In the West, verbal participation is commonly viewed as active learning, and 'silent' students as not being involved and thus not learning (Remedios et al., 2008). However, students may be fully involved with the problem to hand, and it can be argued that silence may therefore not denote failure to learn, but simply another way of learning.

It is found that Chinese students value and like active participation, just as other Western students; however, several factors hinder them to participate actively. The following attempts to analyse the silent behaviour of the students from their cultural inheritance in terms of both individual beliefs and their cultural and educational background. The themes that emerge from the interviews may be categorised as follows:-

Individual beliefs – which can be expressed via the following Chinese idioms:
- 'A tall tree catches the wind' – a person in the limelight or who appears to show off is liable to be disliked or attacked. ("*UK is not our home. I tend to take a low profile and do not want to be attacked.*" – UKM2)

- 'You cannot know how huge the sky is unless you climb up a mountain' – you can get inspiration and enlightenment from others' wisdom. ("*We think more and talk less. It may be that we are shy or other team members' ideas are better than ours.*" – UKF3)

- 'Think thrice before acting' – too much worring about what to say and how to say it; concerns about being laughed at when making a wrong or valueless statement; wasting other students' time because of their less fluency in expressing opinions, etc. ("*I am afraid that others do not get my meaning because of my oral English.*" – UKM3)

- 'Harmony produces wealth and happiness' – if others challenge the reasoning, it is taken as personal, and not impersonal as implied, with a potential loss of face. Furthermore, they may feel socially isolated, and not able to notice the social cues and pauses in conversation when it is appropriate to speak. ("*I am not sure if my evidence is correct or not. If it is wrong, I feel ashamed of myself and lose my face.*" – UKM3)

Cultural and educational background:

- Self expression

  A spoken 'voice' is equated with authority, experience, knowledge, and expertise (Gao et al. 1996) – Chinese students tend to regard other group members as superior in terms of English language and knowledge. They tend to respect and follow authority when they consider themselves to be in a weak power situation. Their sense of equality in expressing one's opinion is not strong. ("*This has a lot to do with the social and educational background in which we have grown up. We have been trained to be silent. At home we obey*

the parents and at school we listen to the teacher. We are required to raise our hands before speaking and not to interrupt while the teacher is talking." – UKF1)

- Information sharing

  The highly competitive learning environment in China leads to students' hesitation in information sharing – students feel reluctant to share information with their peers because they intend to confine and keep their individual and original ideas to themselves. Students want to possess some knowledge that others do not, in order to be different and outstanding. (*"We Chinese students regard individualistic achievement as very important. We often 'hide' the best ideas during group discussion, and then put them in our individual coursework."* – UKM2) (*"They do not ask any questions until other students have left the classroom, so that they have some extra information from the tutor."* – UKF5)

- Learning autonomy

  Passive teaching style – spoon feeding and teacher centred, as a result of which students' sense of learning autonomy is weak, under the misconception that teachers, whose role can be compared to a caring mother, should take care of learning. Growing up in a teacher centred environment, Chinese student upbringing points to a preference to listening to superiors. The teacher is not only expected to be knowledgeable, but helpful and patient, almost like a friend. Given the more distant style of teaching in the West, this later empathy may not be there. This gives a specific role to the personal tutor, who should be aware of their problems, caring and sincere, and to help to induct them into the more Socratic style of questioning and discovering for oneself. (*"In China, the class*

is teacher-centred, with the students listening and accepting what they are told. Here in the UK, you can argue with the teacher and give your own ideas." – UKF3)

- Conformity or creativity

  Conformity followed by Chinese education, particularly in bringing up of children – students tend to think there is always one correct answer to every question, and one correct solution to every problem. ("*The teaching in the UK is not like that in China. There is no single correct answer here. I feel much freer and open during discussions.*" – UKF4)

After eight months' cultural exposure, the students show changes at behavioural and cognitive levels, namely they have become progressive of expressing ideas, persevering of holding ground in discussions, and more creative and autonomous in thinking.

4.2.2.1 Progressive of Expressing Opinions

One common phenomenon during discussion is that Chinese students appear rather hesitant or holding back in putting forward their ideas. In contrast, local and other international members appear eloquent, forceful and less hesitant in expressing opinions. One obvious progress made by the Chinese students is that they have changed from being recessive to progressive in expressing opinions; and from resigning to persevering about one's opinions. A major reason for their change is that the Chinese students have become more imaginative and internally autonomous in thinking and making judgement rather than following strictly the rules and facts given in the books or by the teachers. They have more chances of independent thinking and show more confidence in themselves. The Chinese students' need for exhibition increases, with

more courage and braveness to attract attention to themselves. The importance of peer approval decreases while the importance of individual orientation and self-assertion increases. For example, the following episode is typical among the interviewees:

At the beginning when my turn came, I always felt nervous and a bit uneasy because I was thinking whether my opinion sounded sensible or not, whether my group members would reject it or not, whether I appeared stupid or not, etc. Too many worries made me stammer and I could not explain my points clearly. By contrast, my group members always appreciated their own opinions and never hesitated to communicate them. From time to time, when I did pick up courage to talk, I found that they listened to me and liked discussing with me. After knowing them better, I started to talk more and more during group meetings. My earlier worries gradually disappeared. I started to feel proud of expressing my own opinions, though sometimes the group rejected them. Nevertheless, that no longer made me anxious, and I did become braver than before. (UKF3)

The students refer to one of their biggest achievements is that they learn to appreciate their own opinions. At the beginning, they withdraw and lose self-confidence before they have a go at convincing others to accept their ideas. All the distracting thoughts in their mind prevent them from feeling free to present their hard work, which may be as good as other group members. How other people think of them becomes too dominant to let them communicate effectively with other members. This kind of 'how other people think of me' or 'public image' culture is quite common among Chinese people.

Consequently, Chinese students tend to think twice before they speak out, whilst Western students have little hesitation in so doing.

Another important factor that stimulates the Chinese students to freely and bravely express their ideas is the interactive teaching approach and environment during the seminar discussion. This supports the view of Charlesworth (2007), which suggests that students' learning approaches are under the influence of educational environment and may change accordingly. The following episode illustrates a discovery by many Chinese students, that there is no hiding place inside class. A typical comment goes like this:

In China I used to sit next to the good students, so that we could discuss when the teacher raised a question. Also I used to find a seat in the corner and keep myself out of the sight of the tutor when I did not want to speak or participate. The teachers were not so pushy. Here unfortunately, I found that strategy did not work. At the seminar, I tried to hide myself at the back of the classroom and thought no one was going to pay attention to me. To my great surprise, I was picked up by the tutor to answer the first question. Although I thought there was nothing new in my speech, the tutor seemed satisfied with it. I was frightened that people would laugh at my ideas but nobody did. The tutor has always been encouraging. That was very reassuring. I discovered that in the UK there was no place to hide. Gradually I moved to the front of the classroom to become part of the group. My group members hold the view that they pay a lot of tuition fees to study at the university, so if they have

any questions they would surely ask the tutor to get the value for money.

(UKF4)

Generally the seminars at the university are interactive, encouraging the students to develop their analytical skills by using case studies and presentations. The Chinese students are also pushed forward by the firmness of the tutor. The following is the experience of one of the interviewees, who told his story to his friend:

The tutor did not allow us to speak Chinese during seminars. The penalty

was established at fifty pence for one sentence. He was fined one pound

one day. This effectively stopped us chatting in Chinese. (UKM2)

The above episodes indicate that cultural exposure provides a pushing context, which enables 'echoic behaviour' and then an 'emulation' process to take place. The Chinese student tries to imitate the verbalisation of other members and copy the pattern of expressing opinions. Afterwards many students feel grateful to this 'cruel' rule, because their oral English has improved a lot, and they can communicate with English speakers more confidently now. The above two concepts grasp the major behaviour change of the Chinese students. Regarding attitude change, the previous xenophobia/wariness of local and other international students and University tutors has been turned into accepting and understanding, which facilitates smooth communication and free interactions.

4.2.2.2 Persevering in Holding Ground

The 'echoic behaviour' and 'emulation' process are also evident in the participants'

increased ability and sense to support their ideas and hold ground during teamwork discussions. Generally there are two reasons which contribute to this change. First, the Chinese students find that local and some international members are very loud in argument in order to persuade others. They appear defensive, giving the impression that they are good at protecting their self interests. In contrast the Chinese students tend to give up their ground quickly when meeting disagreement. Also, they accept quietly the fact that other members fully discard their work and ignore them. Interviewees disclose why they do not hold ground and how they have changed:

One girl in my group is very loud in supporting her views. She talks and talks until other members seem to be convinced. I feel there is no room or necessity for me to talk. (UKF5)

At the beginning, I did not argue with them when I had different opinions. One obvious reason is that my English is not good enough to argue, and another is that I do not want to appear rude or aggressive. (UKM3)

I used to hesitate to argue against group members' opinions, because I did not want to appear unfriendly and competitive. When I see they have a point that is better than mine, I readily give up my ideas. I tried to be humble and modest, so that I tended to accept their ideas once they put them forward. However, I discovered that my silence made me appear inactive. The members thought I had made few contributions to the group meetings. As time went by I started to talk more. The atmosphere within the group gradually improved. If they disagreed, they would discuss with

me in a friendly way and explain their points. When I had what I considered to be a good point, I no longer gave it up easily, as happened before. (UKF3)

Apart from being inadequate in language to carry out argument, they are not brought up in a society which allows them much space to develop skills in argument, particularly in academic situations. What they have learnt is that they need to talk, talk and talk in order to let other members take their ideas seriously. Another important discovery is that local and many international students are good at finding evidence from various sources to support themselves and convince others. As a consequence, the Chinese students learn to do more researching work before going to a discussion. They find that with supporting materials from books, journals and websites, they have a greater chance of effectively addressing the problem. As a result the team members accept their ideas and show appreciation of their contribution. Further, they learn that fully accepting others' opinions does not necessarily demonstrate the virtue of being modest. On the contrary, it might indicate being weak, indifferent and lack of creativity and enthusiasm. Other members take their polite attitude as indifferent, non-participative, and lazy. The more silent they are the more they are looked down upon.

4.2.2.3 Self Autonomy and Responsibility

There is a change in the attitude of the students towards independence in learning as time progresses. While being empowered in terms of formation of groups, allocation of tasks, arrangement of meetings, and other decision making power during the whole team work process, the students at the same time find themselves shouldering more tough responsibilities to ensure the successful completion of the team project. The

Chinese students used to believe that tutor's support, guidance and suggestions are the most crucial factors conducive to their optimal learning and academic success. This belief is shaken by the UK teaching approaches that are different from the Chinese approaches in various aspects. For example, they are required to do reading and researching in order to write an essay, with proper referencing. The cut and paste method is regarded as plagiarism. The overall evaluation of a student's performance generally consists of various components, e.g. presentation, individual coursework, group work and exams. A shared changing view among the interviewees is that through teamwork, they have learnt to take charge of their study and be more self reliant. This is accompanied by their adaptive strategy that is the ability to manage their own learning by seeking help not only from tutors but also group members and classmates. The participants emphasise the importance of individual capabilities to coordinate with other members actively, to respond to problems or conflicts autonomously, and to contribute to group work as a responsible member. Several interviewees mention that to work within a mixed group, they behave in a more responsible way and do not want to let other members look down upon the Chinese. They agree that independence in learning in fact makes them more mature and helpful in everyday life. A student comments on his progress in being independent in learning:

> *With little help from tutors and friends, I have to depend on myself. I have become more autonomous in learning, because I have to do a lot of reading and researching independently. I have no choice but force myself to study hard. I learn to be responsible for myself, my study and other members. Every member needs to look after his/her responsibilities.* (UKM2)

In class I have to respond to the tutors' questions. Classes tend to be more student centred. The criteria of assignments are stricter than in China, and I need to manage my study and time well to complete them on time and with good quality. In this way, I have made a lot of progress in learning independently. My self-autonomy improves. (UKF4)

One important issue is that students' self autonomy and responsibility in learning should not exclude the involvement of tutors in certain stages during the team building. For example, the Chinese students, particularly in the initial stage feel there is a need for the tutor's interference in allocating groups, due to the fact that some local and international students show resistance to be in a group with Chinese students fearing that their weak English proficiency would impact upon group communication and the mark. As stressed by Johnson et al. (1991), team building is a more complicated process than simply putting students together. In such circumstances, it is desirable for the tutor to be ready to get involved and help the students to establish the culturally balanced groups. For the overseas Chinese students it is extremely meaningful for them to establish relationships with people not culturally connected, so as to avoid the problem of isolation. Therefore, an essential for creating opportunities for the international students to integrate and benefit from each others' strengths consists of the tutor's support and expertise, as well as the individual initiative and efforts of the students themselves.

Figure 10 (overleaf) develops a theme chart to explain the 'silent participation' behaviour and the factors attributed to the upbringing of the Chinese students. Cultural exposure leads to an echoic behaviour and emulation pattern which itself leads to

response patterns such as being more forthright in expressing opinions, holding one's ground better, and more self autonomy.

Figure 10 Silent Participation
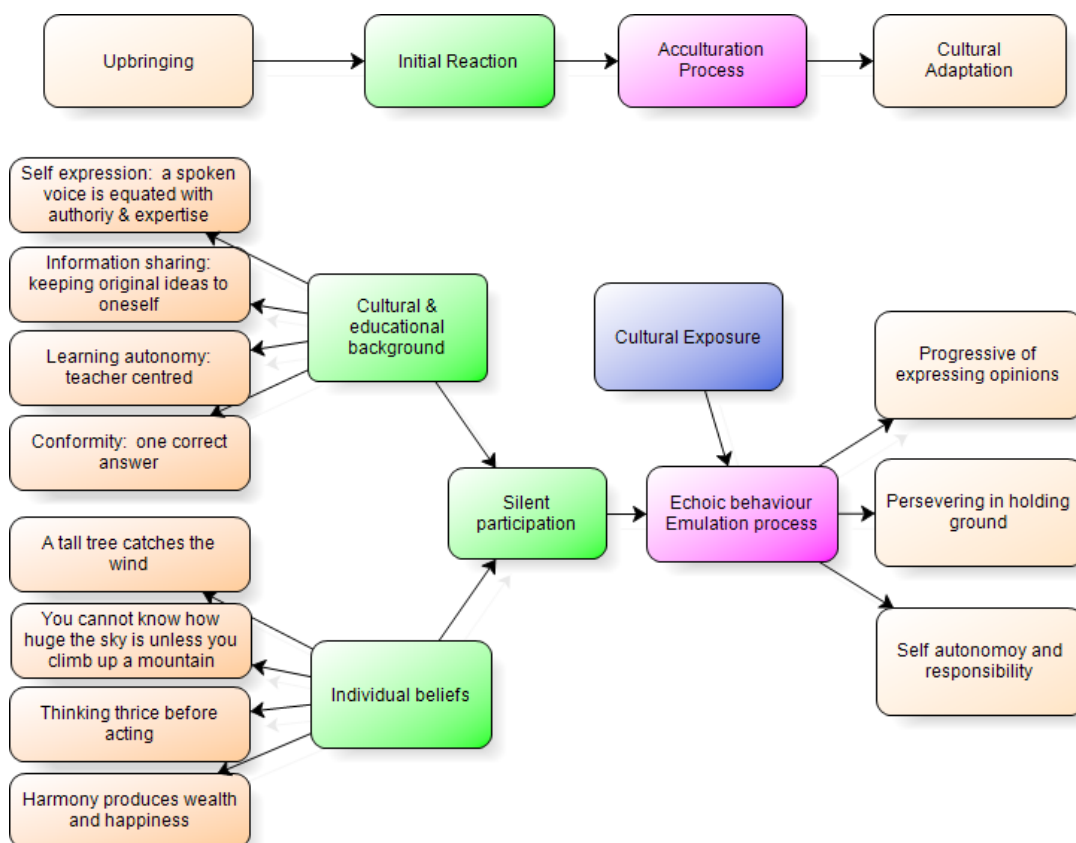
4.2.3 Explicit versus Implicit Communicating Style

The changes in the values behind the communication process (Gao et al., 1996), namely implicitness (*hanxu*), centred on listening (*tinghua*), focusing on insiders (*zijiren*), politeness (*keqi*), and face saving strategies (*mianzi*), are not necessarily firm or permanent but there are indications of how the students act and think differently. Having grown up in the modern China, the young people experience the openness and diversity of cultures, however, they accept and absorb it in a rational way. Coming from a high context culture, the young Chinese students tend to communicate in a

roundabout way, which European and English speaking members, who are more used to the direct style, find difficult to comprehend. There are two interpretations of the Chinese implicitness. The positive one is that the Chinese value being modest in giving their opinions. The 'mind what you say' attitude has several advantages, for example, leaving room for flexibility, adjustments, and harmony; giving face (*mianzi*) to the listener, particularly friends and insiders (*zijiren*) whose ideas may be different from those of the speaker; and avoid making mistakes by speaking much. The negative understanding of Chinese implicitness is that the Chinese say 'yes' and appear to agree to things, while they may well disagree but will not say 'no' because of the desire not to offend others and maintain harmony. This is also noted as an aspect of Chinese business culture. The Chinese tend to use ambiguity as a strategy to free themselves from making commitment and taking responsibilities. The Chinese students in the UK state that they are impressed by the explicitness of local and other international members:

Other students have a straightforward way of communicating their ideas. They speak their mind openly and freely, which is a sharp contrast to our Chinese hanxu style. Their directness makes their speech very powerful and convincing. I could easily catch their points and understand them. The Chinese students have to be forced to tell the truth bit by bit. (UKF5)

The Chinese students tend to communicate in an implicit way. Their ideas are more or less the same and they are expecting a correct answer. This may have a lot to do with the habits of pursuing conformity. I find most Western members are straightforward and to the point, which actually

makes their arguments convincing. They are braver. Now I have learnt to use my own life experiences to support my ideas and convince other members. However, when Chinese group members are together, we still follow the 'hanxu' style, and try to keep the harmonious relations, by not arguing against each other. Nevertheless I like the frank and explicit approach of other members to get their opinions across. (UKF4)

The interviewees state that the young people in China nowadays have become more direct and explicit in expressing their emotions and ideas in public than the older generations; however, there is still a gap between their directness and that of the English speaking and European members. They tend to appear humble and hesitant in front of the Western counterparts. One interesting cause pointed out by the students is that they do not have a sense of belonging and security in the UK. Their initial belief is that politeness is the key to good relationships. Therefore, it is wiser to be centred on listening (*tinghua*) than speaking. Their changing attitude is that once they begin to communicate, they become more open and explicit. A phenomenon worthwhile emphasising is that when Chinese students socialise and communicate with the Chinese insiders (*zijiren*), they tend to switch back to their less direct style compared with when they interact with local and other international members. Dealing with the latter, they gradually imitate and follow the more direct and explicit approaches. One explanation is that they expect their Chinese counterparts to fully understand the non-verbal messages, which are not only significant but of paramount importance in understanding the Chinese language.

When the Chinese students come to be more explicit in their communication, they tend to reveal their efforts, to which they attribute their success to. They also show pride in their achievement rather than behaving in a modest way, whereas before they did not have this sense of pride in something they were able to do. For example, one interviewee comments on her pride in her active participation and efforts:

I have tried my best to do my part well and made good contributions to the teamwork. My activeness motivates other members to work as hard. I am proud of my efforts and achievement. Sometimes the group is not very efficient because one or two members are too laid back and leave everything till the last minute. Apart from urging them, I have tried to influence them by my active behaviour and attitude. (UKF4)

This excerpt suggests two interesting implications. First, the traditional highly valued virtue 'humility' held by the Chinese people has seen a declining importance amongst the young people regarding individual abilities and experiences. This finding does not support the previous studies, for example, Leung (1996) who found that the collectivist orientated Chinese tend to be more externally orientated. However the findings confirm the study of Tong and Wang (2006). A shared view is that enriched experiences and increasing independence contribute to internal locus of control. The significant step made by young Chinese students is to recognise self progress, contributions and efforts. They learn to strengthen internal capabilities and control of their success, and tend to attribute success to internal factors, such as their activeness, adjustments and conscientiousness. Although the development of this kind of internal orientation of the young Chinese students should not be isolated from the competitive social environment

in which they grow up, being exposed to different cultures and the UK educational system reinforces their belief in individualistic force and internal control, which they deem may be helpful to improve self confidence and self concept, and therefore to become more competitive in today's job market. Second, they learn to analyse the external factors in an objective way, and showing abilities to apply both secondary and primary control, defined by Rothbaum et al. (1982). Whilst changing themselves to fit in with the broad cultural and educational context in the UK, they attempt to implement primary control, that is, to influence and change the behaviour of the laid back members, within a smaller social context. This is obviously different from what Weitz et al. (1984) found about the Eastern cultures, which pay high value to secondary control in life, namely changing oneself to fit in the environment. This suggests the progressiveness over the past two decades in China and the effect of acculturation, when they work in a mixed team.

4.2.4 Rationality about Uncertain Events

Every Chinese student is familiar with the famous saying, namely 'nothing is impossible for a willing mind', which has been used by parents and schools to encourage the students to work hard to overcome hardships in their study. Therefore, the Chinese students believe that efforts can help them through difficulties. If they concentrate on what they are doing, they can succeed. However, in front of risks and uncertainties, most Chinese students immediately show anxiety and frustration. In contrast, when most local and international students face uncertainties, they use more sense of rationality and tend to make full use of their capabilities to deal with problems with order and calmness. Rather than resorting to intuition, the students notice that Westerners tend to rely more on facts and figures, which they consider more a rational

way of decision making. For example, coming across difficult issues, most non-Chinese students make judgements about the likelihood of managing them. If the probability of solving the problems is low, they would quickly turn to a different resolution rather than stubbornly sticking to the method they are used to using. This is reflected in how English speaking and European students are good at making use of their speciality in the uncertain situation:

We usually use PowerPoint to present the results. When one of the local members in our group told us that he did not have PowerPoint on the computer at home, I felt so worried about our presentation which was due the next day. To my amazement, he used the Excel to design a flow chart to explain the development of the chain shop, which was very impressive. I found his way of solving the problem creative. (UKM2)

Another achievement is that through teamwork I learn how to deal with emergencies. During the group work process, I have met all sorts of uncertain situations, for example, some members fail to complete their parts, some do not turn up for the meeting, some leave their work till the last minute, etc. I have become more capable of facing and handling the uncertainties with calmness. (UKF3)

An important change in the attitude of the interviewees is that in front of uncertain circumstances, they learn to depend more on rational rather than intuitive thinking and belief in fate. This implies that overcoming fear of risks, taking advantage of the strengths and searching resources to analyse the situation, and to make judgements in

order to solve the problem. This kind of sense of order and calculation may be more helpful than just being worried about the uncertainty.

4.2.5 Direct Revelation – Emotional Calmness

One of the progresses made by the Chinese students, particularly the female students, is that their initial anxiety of interaction with local and international team members declines as time goes by. During the teamwork, at the beginning of the term, they tend to converse in Chinese first before they join the group discussion, fearing that their expression is not correct or clear enough for other students to understand them. Later, they are told by some friendly members that the behaviour can be interpreted as rude and offensive. The local, American and European students, who are more used to confrontational but friendly ways of discussing, find the quietness or the roundabout way of the Chinese students difficult to comprehend or even frustrating. In their eyes, the Chinese students cling to each other and lack initiative to be part of a group. They appear exclusive and reluctant to talk with other members. To some extent, they misunderstand the Chinese students' behaviour. Speaking in one's mother tongue actually indicates that the Chinese students feel insecure and not confident. They tend to seek approval and agreeableness among the in-group before they are brave enough to speak in public. This has led to somewhat negative impressions being formed about the Chinese students by local and other international counterparts. However, the actual friendly interactions with other students help the Chinese students to drive away the frustration and worries. A common story disclosed by the interviewees is as follows:

> *I used to feel afraid of talking with local and other international students,*
>
> *because I am not fluent in English. However, I come to find that most of*

the members are not really threatening. They can be very understanding when I communicate with them directly, telling them my strengths and weaknesses. They often show willingness to help. Once the barrier disappears, we become friends and our conversations start to cover a larger variety of topics. Now I no longer feel frightened talking with local and other international students.

The interviewees agree that direct self-disclosure is an effective tool to build friendly intergroup relationship and may be one of the most important skills they consider essential in conducting successful and satisfactory teamwork in the UK. Language proficiency obviously has effects on the Chinese students' self perception. Nevertheless the teamwork offers the students a chance to examine more closely the process of cross cultural communication in an equal environment, and helps them to learn how to manage anxiety and improve communication skills.

4.2.6 Decreased Ethnocentrism

Students' ethnocentrism decreases and they start to see issues from the point of view of students with different cultural backgrounds as a result of intercultural interactions. Instead of thinking that other students are doing things in a 'wrong' or 'improper' way, they come to accept that there are various ways of doing things. According to Brislin (2008, p.163) ethnocentric thinking refers to the belief that people from one culture think that individuals from other cultures should follow the standards for daily life and proper behaviour that they have learned as part of socialisation. This concept is similar to 'world-mindedness' (Brislin, 1981, pp.293-294), which means becoming more accepting and tolerant of people from other cultures, and more aware that solutions to

problems demand contributions which transcend national borders. Through teamwork the Chinese students learn to adapt to different cultures and try to understand team members from their cultural perspectives rather than simply complaining about different attitudes and behaviour in teamwork. Becoming tolerant might be one of the most significant results of being exposed to different cultures in the UK. As one interviewee relates:

> *At the beginning, I found it so difficult and frustrating to work in the team with some members. They had a lot of parties and felt so tired that they could not come to our meeting the next morning. It was difficult to make appointments with them. It struck me that in their life, leisure activities were as, or even more, important than studying. As time went by, I try to understand them from their cultural background. It is their culture, which is different from mine. I think we need to accommodate to each other's values and behaviour, which benefits communication within a group. I find myself becoming more flexible in thinking.* (UKF3)

For many Chinese students, studying and academic achievement are much more important than leisure activities. However, this may not be the case with other local and international students. Both sides may find each others' learning methods frustrating. In this case, only through making compromises and adaptation can one get along with team members. Wang et al. (2008) state that hard work and diligence have always been a prevailing value in China, although absolute equalitarianism in the 1960s and 70s badly discouraged Chinese people's enthusiasm for hard working. However, since the implementation of the economic reform policy, prosperity has taken an overriding

importance in every aspect of Chinese people's life, with high expectations of others' work ethic. Chinese students' changing perceptions on hard work and leisure enjoyment is accelerated under the impact of different cultures, though still moderated to some extent by the traditional values of parents and ancestors. Acceleration means their dormant tendency for self-indulgence and sensuous enjoyment, due to their comfortable living standards in China, is triggered by those more tolerant and permissive cultures, which put a lot of emphasis on private life and space. This is in line with the views held by Scelzo and Lerman (2009), who state that the impact of China's unprecedented economic market growth and prosperity is fundamental on today's Chinese youth, who have been under the influences of Western popular culture via music, movies, television shows, and magazines. They show eagerness to try new things. Compared with the older generations, they embrace materialistic values and personal entertainment. Whilst the young Chinese students have new found freedom, they have nevertheless been socialised to conform to parents' hopes and need to maintain the long-held traditions. Working alongside others clearly has an influence, for example one interviewee states that she is impressed by a Portuguese girl's attitude towards work. She discloses:

> *I appreciate European students' attitude towards life and study. The*
> *Chinese competitive educational system expects and urges every student*
> *to excel, as a result of which, they attach a lot importance to marks and*
> *results. I feel relaxed and pleasant to work together with a member who*
> *once says in a group discussion: "I do not live for work, but work lives*
> *for me". They can balance their study and leisure activities well.*
> (UKF4)

The Hispanic idiom contrasts sharply with the Chinese working philosophy, namely 'live to work and work to live' and that one must concentrate all our efforts into study. Decreased ethnocentrism is also manifested in the students' better understanding of European balance of casualness and hard work.

4.2.7 Emancipated Mind

The Chinese students' motivation to emancipate the mind may be strongly related to their cultural heritage, which has always been so liberal-minded as to embrace all incoming beliefs. The Chinese have been outward-looking and adventurous historically, for example the famous silk roads on land or Zheng He's sails bear witness to this. On the one hand, they long to see the rest of the world; on the other hand, they still keep their cultural root mentality and take pride in their highly developed civilisation. The invasions from foreign countries to some extent drove China to close its door and implement a kind of self imposed enclosure policy towards the outside world. However, since 1979 after China re-opens its door to the outside world, there have been waves of studying abroad, with the aims varying from improving living conditions to seeking advanced knowledge. The Chinese students are impressed by local and international students' life experiences. Through working with other members, they develop a broader perspective on life, future career and other current events. One interviewee relates:

> *The American girl in my group has set a good example for me and has a*
>
> *lot of influence upon me. The girl is hard working, responsible, and*
>
> *adventurous. She comes to study in the UK for a year. She has chosen*

different subjects according to her interests. By contrast I tend to accept

the fact that my life is arranged by either parents or schools. I have got

the feeling of being restrained or controlled. Now I feel that I have

become more brave and courageous than before, and have learnt to take

up the responsibility of looking after my life and study. I am eager to

travel during the summer holidays in Europe and see as much as possible

to broaden my view. (UKF5)

What she achieves more through teamwork are the ways of looking at the world and taking care of one's future life. This finding is consistent with that of Tong and Wang (2006), who find that people with higher education tend to have more internal locus of control, and older people are more external than the younger generation due to the fact that the young Chinese students encounter educational reforms, which aim to prepare citizens for the challenges of globalisation. Being educated abroad and being able to successfully handle the changes in both study and life in the UK help to increase the interviewees' self esteem. As a result of this the interviewees' level of internal locus of control is raised, which means they learn to be more accountable for their own behaviour and actions. Leung (1996) has similar findings regarding the influence of self confidence on the level of external/internal locus of control. This is reflected in the interviewees' willingness and confidence to make more decisions about their own lifestyles. Another consequence of this is the increase of individualistic values amongst the young Chinese students. Teamwork helps her to build up a stronger character. Other students also mention that during teamwork they are often involved in discussions where members express different opinion, and as a result now they tend to regard unfamiliar arguments as inevitable and natural in such situations. Gradually they come to consider worldly perspectives fascinating, as different views help them to think in a

more global way. What is more significant is that in the past they tend to show disrespect and little patience to those who they consider inferior and powerless.   When they start off by feeling inferior in the team, with less skills and competence in language, they are still treated with respect by the native and other Western members. Over time they come to appreciate this more equal treatment and attempt to adopt this approach when meeting with others.

4.2.8 Principle Abiding

During the teamwork, the Chinese students begin to realise that UK University tutors and students attach a lot more importance to principle abiding, which means following regulations and ethical aspects.   In the UK they learn to follow a more disciplined approach. The concept is reflected in the following cases. The first example given by the interviewees is the allocation of tasks in the early stage of teamwork:

> *Other members usually require that initially each student looks at the whole project, and contributes ideas or references. Then, distribute work according to each member's strengths and preferences. By contrast we Chinese students prefer to turn the team work into a sort of individual work by dividing the project into parts, and each member looks after one part. As a result, I often complete a project with little clue and understanding of other parts. The reason for doing this is to avoid the hassle of arranging meetings and time wasting discussions. The whole idea of teamwork is ignored or breached.* (UKM1)

Whilst the above cannot be considered exclusive to the Chinese, it nevertheless depicts their initial behaviour. The second case is about finishing tasks for the free riders. A noticeable difference is that the Chinese students tend to look at the situation to determine what is right or ethical and acceptable. There are no hard-and-fast rules as such in China. Every rule is subject to interpretation and change. For example, in the case that a member fails to complete his part on time and the deadline is approaching, most Chinese students will, though unhappily, finish the coursework on his behalf. They regard it as ethical, cooperative and helpful. This is what Trompennars (2000, p.8) defines as 'particularism', namely "in particular cultures far greater attention is given to the obligations of relationships and unique circumstances. For example, instead of assuming that the one good way must always be followed, the particularist reasoning is that friendship has special obligations and hence may come first. Less attention is given to abstract societal codes." In contrast, most local and other international students tend to report it to the module leader, because the free rider has broken the team contract signed by all the members.

An important cultural explanation is that the Chinese students appear to think regulations or principles can be flexibly interpreted. This seems contradictory to the fact that they have grown up in a controlling social environment, which restrains much personal liberty. Since their schooling at the kindergarten, they have been imbued with filial piety, loyalty and obedience. The ideology is forced upon them rather than inherent in their mind. The Chinese, only when they are in the weak power position, show respect for authority and rules. Failing to observe rules and laws prevail through all the various ranks of Chinese top officials and newly emergent tycoons. The root lies in the fact that inherently they do not have a law mind, which can be witnessed in many

daily circumstances. A further illustration of this is in business where, historically, there has been a lack of company law and most business has been conducted via *guanxi* and personal relationships, rather than by contract. Even in today's world, the contract is only deemed as an initial part of the relationship, which may be subject to interpretation and change, rather than being a formal and legal agreement. Whilst these views may be gradually changing with globalisation, it still plays an important role as part of the cultural heritage, and in the ways of thinking.

Another explanation is that the Chinese students are ready to give up principles and personal interests to get a decent mark and degree. 'Individual academic excellence' has long been embedded in the Chinese educational system. As a result of severe competition, Chinese students are quite active and cooperative if no formal assessment is involved, but once it has to do with grades, they appear to be concerned with who are in a group, what each member is supposed to do, how tasks are allocated, how to get higher marks than other groups, etc. Their tolerance of late work, laziness or free riding is lower than that of members from European countries. They generally do not argue with team members but their silence does not mean their level of anxiety is low. On the contrary, many of them suffer great anxiety because of some members' late work or laziness.

4.2.9 Dynamic Assessment Method

Despite all the setbacks met during teamwork, those Chinese students who prefer teamwork admit that this dynamic assessment method frees them from the Chinese exam oriented system, which has been a heavy burden in their learning experiences. They find teamwork helps them more effectively to absorb knowledge. One

interviewee shows his dislike of Chinese exam oriented system in both the interview and the final project on his teamwork experience:

Under the examination–oriented education system, teachers have been turned into machines of pursuing high scores and achieving a high rate of students passing university entrance examinations. This is a mark of the teachers' own success. Academic grades seem to be the most important criteria on which to make a judgement about a student. This badly damages student's self-respect and esteem. However, in the UK, the educational system pays attention to cultivate students' teamwork spirit and independent learning abilities. I no longer feel that the mark is the most important thing in my life. The tutors use various assessment methods to evaluate our study. (UKM1)

Why are exams so important in China? Lin (2007, pp.369-370) attempts to answer the question "how did it come about that the mark and the diploma have, in the student's mind, come to take the place of the true aim of education?" He states: "We have this system because we are educating people in masses, as if in a factory, and anything which happens inside a factory must go by a dead and mechanical system. In order to protect its name and standardise its products, a school must certify them with diplomas. With diplomas, then, comes the necessity of grading, and with the necessity of grading come school marks, and in order to have school marks, there must be recitations, examinations, and tests…But the consequences of having mechanical examinations and tests are more fatal than we imagine. For it immediately throws the emphasis on memorisation of facts rather than on the development of taste or judgement." This in

effect forms part of the adventure of studying abroad. The UK University may at first appear loose or lenient, for example, with no attendance checking, etc., whereas in China the instructor as well as the class monitor record all attendances independently for double checking! However, in the UK, the students learn to be responsible for their own learning and looking after themselves.

4.2.10 Increasing Individualistic Values

The concepts of Individualism/Collectivism used in this research are based on those of Hofstede, rather than going into various and heterogeneous features and component ideas proposed by a number of influential researchers in this area, namely Hsu, Triandis, Schwartz, etc. The subculture of the young students born post 1985 may explain their individualistic trends. The young students' understanding of the concept of group may be different from that of the older generation. For decades since the establishment of New China in 1949, the Chinese associated 'community' and 'group' with 'motherland, communist party, work unit and family'. In recent years, the range of the concepts covered and the importance of the extensive scope of this has decreased, with a shift towards the opportunity to develop personal dignity and autonomy, and more attention on private and close nuclear family. However, teamwork acts as a sort of catalytic promoter, which reinforces their individualistic values. The first obvious change is from long and intense face to face social interactions with classmates in China to more frequent, causal and brief interactions in the UK. Apart from the reason that they have to cut back social activities due to the pressure of assignments and having a single private room, the interviewees admit that their feeling of belonging to a Chinese group is weak. They are more likely to chat with another close friend on the QQ internet to disclose and share worries and happiness. Rather than meeting face to face, they choose

to communicate on the internet. One interviewee discloses that nowadays the Chinese students attach more importance to the individual interests than the group's:

> *Some of the Chinese students attach great importance to their individual interests. They tend to spend a lot of time and efforts on individual coursework but not on group work, hoping for other members to contribute more. The communication among the Chinese students is not so frequent except amongst good friends. Most of us spend a lot of time doing assignments in the dorm. It is uncommon for them to do things in groups.* (UKF4)

The Chinese students say they have become sociable in a Western way, for example, exchange quick conversations when meeting on campus and before/after classes. One interviewee says she is surprised that such brief interactions make her appear more sociable and easy going in the eyes of her team members. However, the Chinese students still long for more and deeper communication with local and other international students as interviewees expresses their regrets:

> *It is not common for home and other international students to become close friends with us. They have their own small circles, usually with the same or similar cultural background.* (UKM1)

> *My flatmates in the Halls of Residence often have parties together. They usually chat and drink in the kitchen, sometimes till early morning. They did invite me from time to time. I declined on several occasions because*

deadlines were approaching and I had no time to rest. That seems to stop them inviting me again. I might appear unsociable but I still hold the view that my studies should come first. (UKF5)

Recognition of self achievement is another good example. The young Chinese students, though still think they should be self effacing and group oriented, do not show any hesitation in expressing their pride in individual contributions and success. They talk about their achievements in handling all sorts of difficulties, which have arisen during group work. They are more aware of their individualistic ability. They attribute their progress to their ability and hard work. This forms a sharp contrast with the reflective diaries of the pilot study in China. The Chinese students at GDUFS do a lot of self-criticism in their reflection, whilst the Chinese students in the UK talk more about their contributions to the group work. More than 95% of the former reveal the mistakes they make and say they are determined to do a better job in the future. The typical Chinese modesty is shown between the lines.

Further, the interviewees claim one big change in their attitude towards understanding of competition and cooperation. There used to a well known slogan in China 'Friendship first and competition second'. The understanding of the concept of competition is limited and associated with some negative connotations, implying conflict, inequality, social un-restlessness, etc. The interviewees claim that while growing more competitive they have also learnt to be cooperatively oriented through teamwork. They attach a new meaning to 'being competitive', which is being competent and able to realise self and group goals. This is in line with the current culture in China, which considers that it is not a shame to be wealthy, competitive, and

successful. One of the most significant findings of the research is that it honestly and bravely admits that China has moved towards a more individualistic society, whose group conformity and commitment have seen lesser influence.

4.2.11 Monochronic versus Polychronic Temporal Attitude

The Chinese students used to be comfortable with the polychronic temporal behaviour and attitude. According to the literature review on monochromic and polychronic cultures, the former puts emphasis on promptness. It is linked with orderly behaviour, conscious sequence, strict planning and time allocation, which are believed to contribute positively towards reaching goals in a more efficient approach. Chinese culture is that of a polychronic nature, but with its own unique feature, which attempts to increase efficiency and promptness by undertaking multiple tasks within a given time block. A typical example that can be seen in many business settings is that office staff attempt to increase job efficiency and meet their obligations by carrying out several activities within a given time sequence. It is not uncommon for staff to come across interruptions and have to switch among different activities. In the UK, the Chinese students observe the contrast in time management, which appears to be more orderly, having strict sequencing and doing one activity at a time. The interviewees notice that the behavioural tendencies are present to varying degrees among group members. For example, the local members prefer to tackle problems separately, usually one at a time, whereas some Chinese members tend to hold small meetings alongside the big meeting, discussing a different topic in their own native language. The Chinese students seem to be fairly comfortable with this kind of tangled situation, without realising that this might be the source of misunderstanding and conflict. Comparatively speaking, the Chinese students' sense of sequencing of tasks is weak. For example, on several

occasions, when the tutor is going through the project, the Chinese student will shortly start to ask questions about another module coursework, which in the eyes of the tutor is disruptive to his/her concentration on the major task for the meeting to hand. The local and European students' way of prioritising tasks by keeping a diary to plan their time leaves a deep impression on the Chinese students:

I find the Dutch and French members in my group follow their own schedules of completing assignments. They prioritise the activities according to the importance of the task and the approaching deadline. When I expressed my concern and worries, they told me that they have roughly calculated the amounts of time needed for the group work and want to organise the meetings accordingly. I find that sometimes they are deliberately rescheduling activities and put things off which can be done later. (UKF1)

The Chinese students realise that following monochronic approach actually proves to be more effective and efficient:

Other members tend to have a main theme for the meeting and hold discussions around it. They do one thing at a time. Though it appears slow, it turns out to be effective, by focusing on one task. By contrast, we Chinese group members tend to digress and start to talk about something irrelevant at the meeting. This reminds me of the experience at the undergraduate office. In the UK, the receptionist deals with one student at a time, and everyone stands in a queue. In China, all the students would crowd around

the counter, asking questions. The office worker also tends to handle various issues at the same time. It lacks order. (UKF3)

Chinese students tend to do more than one thing at a time. For example, when they go to the lecture, they sometimes read the book of another module. The result is low efficiency and that they are wasting time. (UKF4)

Regarding the attitude towards time, the change among the interviewees is that they find their ability to organise their time, determine priorities and to bear time pressure has improved during their time studying in the UK. They have adapted to a more monochronic approach to manage the time and to prioritise the activities. For example, due to the pressure of lots of assignments, the Chinese students learn to complete each assignment on time and then move on to the next. They come to realise that it is more efficient and effective to fix one task to a specific time block and complete it with concentration and focus.

In order to place all these points together, Figure 11 (overleaf) gives a theme chart which summarises the adaptation of the Chinese students in the UK.

Figure 11 Dynamic and Open Behaviour
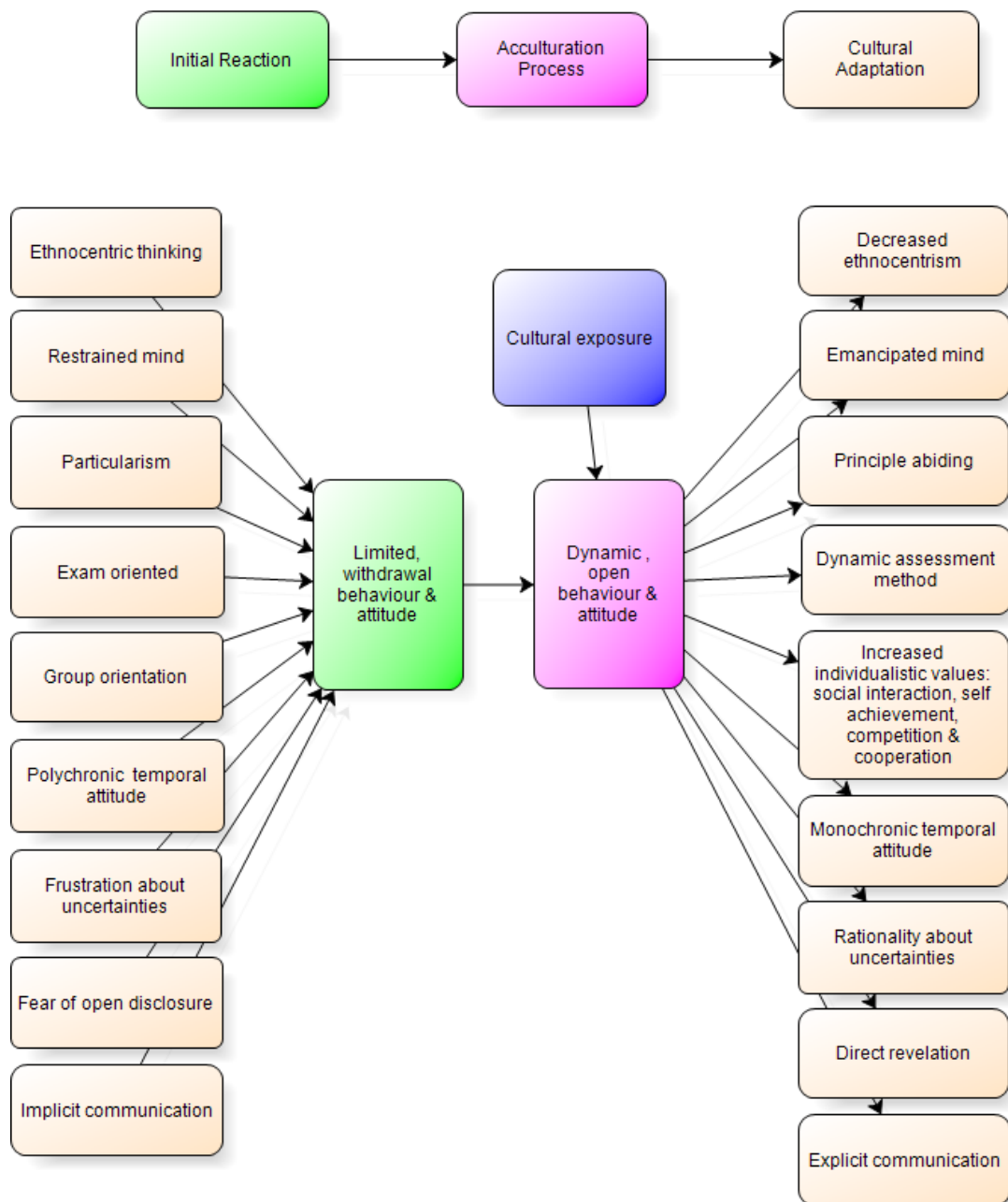
The actual theme chart developed from the research is shown below in Figure 12. It categorises the adaptation into three areas, namely psychological, behavioural and cognitive. The psychological area reflects the changes in self identity and concept in terms of openness, sense of achievement and self confidence. The behavioural and cognitive areas reflect the process that the students imitate the behaviour and ways of thinking and learning.

Figure 12 Natural and Situational Adaptations
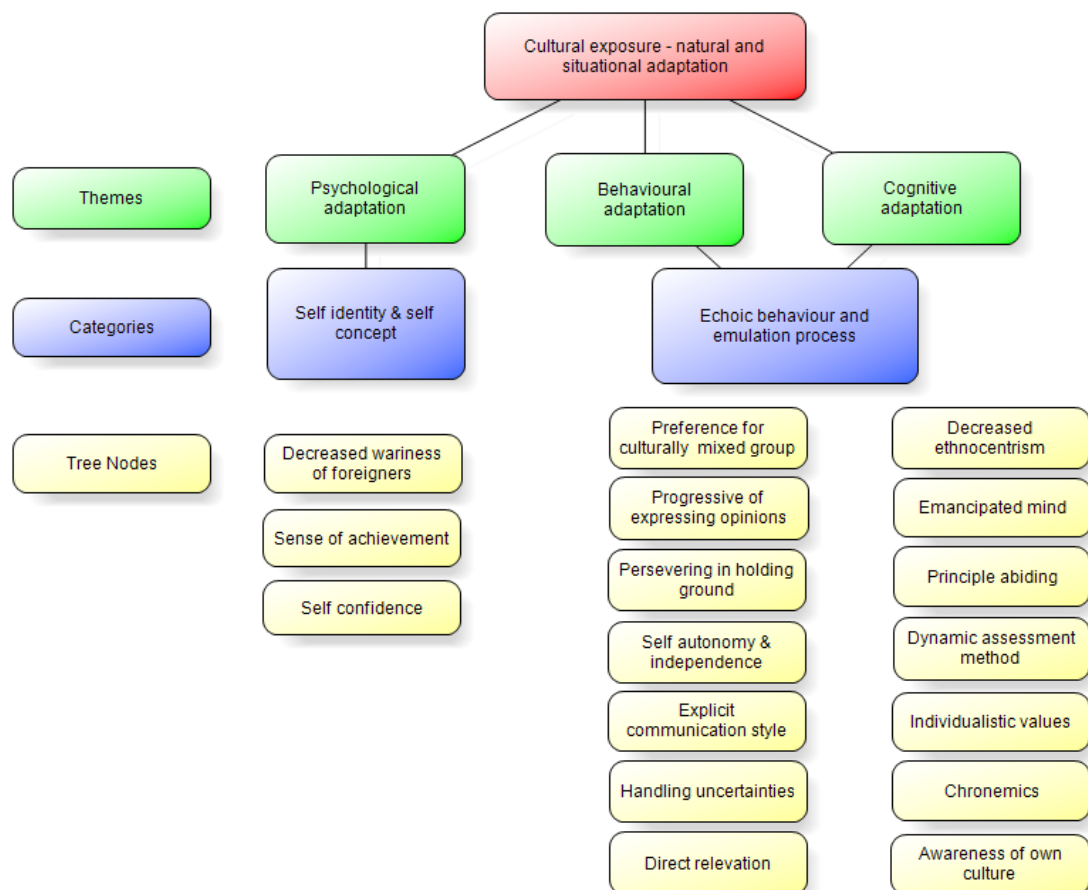
4.2.12 Adaptation Variation

Whilst the interviewees have changed as a result of cultural exposure during the teamwork process, they vary in terms of their sense of achievement and confidence, sense of identity and self-concept, i.e. how they view themselves, how they define the meaning of success in their learning, how they accommodate to uncertain situations, etc. Two changing processes have been identified, namely intrinsic adaptation and extrinsic adaptation. Intrinsic adaptation is a more natural process which takes place when the interviewees show strong interest in diverse cultures and have the urge to become one of 'them'. Extrinsic adaptation happens because the students gain some benefits from integration, i.e. extrinsic benefits, not because of their intrinsic or internal motives. In other words, they have not really integrated different cultures, styles, and procedures, but they go along with the situation they find themselves in. The intrinsic and extrinsic adaptations are reflected in three areas, namely psychological, behavioural and cognitive adaptations. Psychological adaptations are about how the Chinese students *feel* about themselves and their image after studying in the UK, for instance, do they feel more confident in communicating with local and international students? Do they feel the sense of achievement? Behavioural adaptations are about what the students *do* during teamwork, for example, how do they express opinions, convince other members, and relate when there is disagreement? Do they try to benefit from a culturally mixed environment to improve their skills and learn from each other? Cognitive adaptations are about how the students *think* about and *evaluate* the cultural exposure, for example, do they think that cultural exposure broadens their outlook and benefits their future life and career? Do they make rational judgements about the cultural differences? Do they value the progress made in viewing things and people from various perspectives? The

previous sections focus on answering the question: *How does cultural exposure within a Western society influence the Chinese students?* The following section essentially concentrates on the question: *To what extent do the young Chinese students change*? An emphasis is given on searching for any themes that emerge amongst the students with different learning approaches and also amongst the female and male students. However, by no means does the study underestimate other aspects that contribute to students' intercultural experiences, for example, the 'contact theory' (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009) argues that there are four important elements that impact the nature and extent of intercultural contact and therefore international students' personal growth and development: equality (whether different groups of students feel equal to each other), common goals (whether groups of students have a meaningful common purpose to work towards), intergroup cooperation (whether the university encourages cooperation between different groups of students) and authority support (whether teaching staff and administrators encourage positive intercultural contact). If some or all the above factors are lacking, group work, which is normally a collaborative strategy can sometimes lead to non-cooperation and conflict, which impacts students' intercultural confidence and negative experience.

4.2.12.1 Adaptation Strategies amongst Learners

Variation in Coping Strategies

The first distinction is found in the coping strategies adopted by students with different learning approaches. The changes among sojourners after their intergroup contact in a host country have been noted by the researchers in cross-cultural and psychological studies. Some of the changes have been supported empirically, whereas others have been more speculative in results. For example, Brislin (1981) suggests attitude change,

increased tolerance, decreased anxiety, non development of prejudice, assertive and reactive attitudes, and clearer perceptions of other people's opinions. He also identifies (p.304) five coping strategies that sojourners use depending on specific circumstances. These strategies are (1) *non-acceptance*, which means that people behave as they would in their own culture; (2) *substitution*, which means that people learn appropriate responses practiced by hosts and behave likewise; (3) *add*, which means that people behave as they would at home in some situations and like hosts in others; (4) *synthesis*, which means people combine elements of behaviour from both home and host cultures; (5) *resynthesis*, which means an original integration of ideas which are not found in either culture. In areas where there is close synergy between the two cultures, e.g. dress and tastes in music is similar amongst young Chinese and Western students, the strategies found tend towards the higher categories. In education, however, where the differences are more profound at the start, the strategies are at the lower levels.

Responses from the interviews suggest that students with a surface approach to learning tend towards the first two strategies above, that is, non-acceptance and substitution. The first is exemplified by their feeling of homesickness and their sense of loss in an alien culture. The latter, would be explained by a 'go with the flow' or 'when in Rome' type situation, which would exemplify the surface approach of an 'easy life' or survival principle, which is acceptable if it may lead to a reasonable grade, and to keep face by obtaining the degree. On the other hand, the interviewees, who show achieving and deep motives, adopt more *add* and *synthesis* strategies.

The following episode illustrates how one participant with deep learning approaches 'adds' and 'synthesises' with different cultures. He states that a big cultural difference

he has noticed is that here in the UK there is a clearer demarcation between work and leisure and working and private life. He comments:

> *I suggested that we had meetings in the library on weekends since all of us seemed to be busy going to lectures and seminars on weekdays. To my surprise my proposition met disagreement. The European members said unless it was very urgent, they chose not to, and to take weekends off to meet friends and do something different to relax. They thought they deserved a rest on weekends after five days of studying. By the way, one European girl was working part time, so she could not make it anyway.*
> (UKM2)

Learning from what he considered to be the more efficient European members, he claims that his own time management has improved. He adapts to their working culture, for example, not to arrange any meetings on weekends. He concentrates on his study during weekdays, and on weekends he does shopping or visits some scenic spots in London.   This helps him to rid of the uneasy situations, that is, thinking of study when playing, and the feelings of guilt for wasting time, and the thinking of playing while studying. Now he can study well and play well too. In other words he adjusts his attitude towards time.

Another example is about the interviewees' adding and combining different ways of maintaining relationships among members. Participants with deep and achieving approaches tend to make friends with students from different cultures rather than confining themselves to the small Chinese circle on campus. During the social

communication process, they come to have more casual and brief meeting ups, instead of hanging about together. They comment that in China, team members tend to meet more and spend a lot of time together socially. They do shopping together, have meals together, go to the library together, chat after class, etc. The relationship tends to be long term rather than short term orientated. In the UK, the frequency for social maintenance is much less. Many members usually meet only for group work. One of the objective reasons for this is that a lot of local and other international students need to work part time to ease their financial burdens, whereas most of the Chinese students need not work to pay their tuition fees. In addition, in China, many group members have stayed in the same dormitory for two or three years or come from the same small class, and thus have known each other for a long time. Most of the Chinese students in the China group who have been interviewed prefer to form a team by themselves, so that they are able to work with friends. Apart from this explanation, there is another important factor leading to this phenomenon, that is, the Chinese and the English have different ways of building and maintaining relationships, which can also be seen in other work settings in the UK. Many colleagues meet at the workplace only, but in China many colleagues live together on campus and are also very close in their leisure time. They know each other very well, including each other's private life. This might appear intruding in the British people's point of view. Although very few people would deny the importance of relationships in business in the UK, their ways of establishing friendship and networks are rather different. Table 9 (pp.193-196) *Adaptation Variation amongst Learners* shows the matters that the participants (1) find difficult to accept and would generally stick to their own way in their own culture; (2) learn to behave likewise; (3) act differently depending on the situations; (4) combine or integrate different cultures. The table seeks to summarise the issues mentioned by the

interviewees in the UK in terms of coping strategies and their overall feeling and evaluation of team work. These points further illustrate the variation amongst students with different learning approaches. The table is divided into nine columns. The first column includes the four topics, under which the interviewees' coping strategies are grouped, plus their overall feeling and evaluation. The topics are Non-acceptance: behaviours that the participants find difficult to accept; Substitution: the behaviours that the participants adopt in a similar fashion to the other members; Add: the participants behave appropriately depending on the situations; and Synthesis: the participants combine the various behaviours and cultures. The next eight columns include the information about each individual interviewee's responses according to the four topics based on the line by line analysis of each transcript. The interviewees' responses have been categorised under various themes based on the tree nodes developed. However, it is fair to say that there is a continuum between strategies and not always a strict and absolute dividing line between, for instance, *Add* and *Synthesis*.

Table 9 Adaptation Variation amongst Learners

UK Participants /Learning approaches	UKF1 (Surface)	UKF2 (Surface)	UKF3 (Deep)
Overall feeling & evaluation	➤ get a pass grade more easily if in a good team ➤ do not adapt quickly & easily ➤ limited participation ➤ inferior	➤ reducing workload ➤ limited communication ➤ humble: not good at defending rights	➤ well adapted ➤ proud/sense of achievement
Non-acceptance (*behave as in original culture*)	➤ prefer pre-planning & scheduling ➤ worry about uncertainties ➤ friends are Chinese	➤ time consuming to communicate with unresponsive team members ➤ different mentality ➤ little knowledge of China	➤ social activities, i.e. parties impact team meetings
Substitution (*behave likewise*)	➤ making appointments by e-mail to see tutors	➤ depend on capable members	➤ frequent, causal & brief interactions
Add (*behave appropriately depending on situations)/* Synthesis (*combining elements of both*)	➤ responsibility ➤ researching method	➤ researching on websites ➤ gather insights into one's own culture by observing contrasts ➤ role of life experiences in study ➤ mature/ independent	➤ accept local and international students' social activities from a different perspective ➤ communicate in English during teamwork ➤ independent study ➤ less concerned about face-brave in expressing opinions ➤ less concerned about humility & *Hanxu* - holding ground ➤ culturally mixed group ➤ prefer monochronic temporal behaviour ➤ rationality about uncertain events ➤ direct revelation & emotional calmness

Table 9 Continued

UK Participants /Learning approaches	UKF4 (Achieving / Deep)	UKF5 (Achieving / Deep)
Overall feeling & evaluation	➢ enjoyable/confident/ ➢ cultural awareness ➢ self motivated to learn from other members' strengths	➢ mixed feeling: both happy & unhappy experiences ➢ cultural sensitivity/tolerance
Non-acceptance (*behave as in original culture*)	➢ domineering team members	➢ domineering & aggressive team members
Substitution (*behave likewise*)	➢ have to do a lot of reading & researching to complete assignments	➢ need to do a lot of researching & reading to write projects ➢ private & working life
Add (*behave appropriately depending on situations*)/ Synthesis (*combining elements of both*)	➢ tutor's guidance in learning: assuring feeling ➢ efficiency ➢ self autonomy ➢ time management ➢ learning ability ➢ enjoy learning process ➢ prefer student-centred teaching approach ➢ encouraging tutors: no correct answers ➢ less concerned about face-brave in expressing opinions ➢ less concerned about humility & *Hanxu* -persevering in holding ground ➢ cultural interactions with overseas friends ➢ move from curiosity about different cultures to motives to integrate ➢ culturally mixed group broaden horizon ➢ direct revelation & emotional calmness ➢ decreased ethnocentrism	➢ researching efficiency ➢ less concerned about humility & *Hanxu* -persevering in holding ground ➢ emancipated mind ➢ ability to handle hardships ➢ self autonomy ➢ communication skills ➢ less concerned about face-brave in doing presentations ➢ explicit communicating style ➢ attitude towards fate & managing one's life ➢ direct revelation & emotional calmness

Table 9 Continued

UK Participants/ Learning approaches	UKM1 (Surface)	UKM2 (Deep)	UKM3 (Achieving)
Overall feeling & evaluation	➢ meetings & discussions are time consuming	➢ meet/exceed expectations ➢ sense of achievement ➢ interested in cultural differences & interactions ➢ initial inferiority disappears	➢ mixed feeling: both happy & unhappy experiences ➢ stress from studying ➢ learning to adapt ➢ meet expectations ➢ sense of achievement though stressful ➢ more knowledge about UK
Non-acceptance (*behave as in original culture*)	➢ other students' little knowledge of China ➢ more comfortable with Chinese friends	➢ free riders ➢ stress as a team leader	➢ heavy workload due to free riding/laid back members ➢ superficial interactions
Substitution (*behave likewise*)	➢ depend on competent members ➢ tutor's role & guidance in learning ➢ low mark requirement: pass	➢ information sharing ➢ working & private life/space ➢ lecture/seminar attendance ➢ communication with tutors	➢ genuine but time consuming group discussion ➢ take on more responsibilities to get a decent mark ➢ information sharing

Table 9 Continued

UK Participants/ Learning approaches	UKM1 (Surface)	UKM2 (Deep)	UKM3 (Achieving)
Add (*behave appropriately depending on situations*)/ Synthesis (*combining elements of both*)	➢ principle abiding ➢ dynamic assessment method ➢ less concerned about face-brave in doing presentations	➢ conflict solution: compromising ➢ assessment: same mark for all members ➢ chronemics ➢ self autonomy ➢ responsibility & organisation skills as a leader ➢ self requirement becomes higher ➢ changing from feeling inferior to equal ➢ adjustment to different mentality & learning approaches ➢ ability to handle difficulties ➢ decreased ethnocentrism	➢ task allocation ➢ need to work hard to get a good mark ➢ attend as many lectures as possible ➢ peer evaluation ➢ independent ➢ handling uncertain events & difficulties ➢ learning approach: analysing problems from various perspectives ➢ researching skills ➢ participation approach: thinking + speaking ➢ taking care of one's responsibility ➢ completing tasks on behalf

Variation in Cultural Adaptation Values

What is the value of cultural adaptation? Before going into details about how Chinese students evaluate cultural adaptation, it is worthwhile to discuss briefly the inspiration that has been drawn from the four ways of an object obtaining value by Jean Baudrillard, the French philosopher, and his works (Baudrillard, 1981). The four values are functional value, exchange value, symbolic value, and sign value. Take, for example, a luxury car, the BMW. Its functional value is driving from one place to another. Exchange value is the economic value, for instance, a BMW car may be worth a lecturer's twelve months of work. Symbolic value is the value or ideas that are assigned to represent an object. For example, a BMW may be a symbol of high quality and durability. Sign value is the value within a system of objects. For example, a Ferrari, like other most expensive cars in the world, apart from the functional and exchange values they possess, may suggest more social status and wealth. During the consumption process, the consumer will be motivated to purchase a positively valued product or a product with positive symbolic meanings in order to maintain a positive self image or to pursue an ideal self concept.

Baudrillard's ideas of the value of objects are used to describe a rather abstract 'object', namely cultural adaptation. For the Chinese students, the value or implication of the cultural adaptation is both rich and far-reaching in reward. The functional value is that they learn the lesson from teamwork, adjust their learning approaches, communication ways and therefore get the degree and complete the university education successfully. The exchange value is that today's investment in education may bring a good job and salary in the future. The world recognised British higher education degree is a symbol of quality and thus gives symbolic value. The highest level of value is the sign value of

successful cultural adaptation, namely it brings social recognition, confidence, and prestige. Each of the four of Baudrillard's areas of obtaining value is important, but the inference from the interviews is that learners with different approaches attach different degrees of importance to them. Clearly they all want to obtain their degree, and little distinction can be made between functional and exchange values. However, the students with surface learning approaches appear to attach a lot of importance to the functional and exchange values, whereas the students with deep and achieving approaches not only have these in mind, but also think highly of the symbolic and sign values. Whilst it would be too subjective to state that the former students only consider the functional and exchange values, the inference is that it is linked to their priority, namely graduating with a British degree. The differences are summarised in Table 10. The number of the ticks in the table indicates the degree of each item, that is, the more ticks the more value they attach to the item.

Table 10 Variation in Cultural Adaptation Values

Cultural Adaptation Values	Surface approaches	Deep approaches	Achieving Approaches
Functional value: Successful completion of a UK degree	√	√	√
Exchange value: ➢ Potential career choices in developed countries ➢ Good salary	√	√	√
Symbolic value: ➢ Quality education (world recognised degree from a UK university) ➢ Broadened outlook ➢ Overseas experiences	√ (with lesser degree of importance)	√√	√√
Sign value: ➢ Social recognition ➢ Self image ➢ Prestige		√√	√√

Variation in Overall Evaluation

A basic distinction is found in the overall feeling and evaluation of the teamwork in the UK between students with different learning approaches. Comparatively speaking, students with surface motive and approaches tend to evaluate their experiences in a less constructive way, for example, they feel inferior in the team because of language proficiency and different culture; have limited participation and communication with local and other international students; find discussions and meetings time consuming. What they like about teamwork is that it reduces workload and helps to get a pass grade more easily if they happen to be in a team with capable members. The feeling of inferiority because of language is also expressed by the students with deep, achieving or achieving/deep motives, particularly during the initial stages of studying in the UK. However, the big difference between them is that the students with deep, achieving or achieving/deep approaches demonstrate more willingness and spare more efforts to change themselves and fit in with the environment. In other words, they appear to enjoy their teamwork experiences in a more positive and constructive way. For example, their overall feeling is described as 'enjoyable and rewarding' with a sense of achievement because they have become more confident, tolerant, and culturally sensitive, though they may find some occasions and free riders stressful. The inference made here is that the students with deep and achieving learning approaches express and show much more interest in cultural differences, enthusiasm to overcome difficulties in communication, pro activeness in assimilating, and eagerness to let non-Chinese students become knowing about Chinese culture. This kind of positive motive and attitude is reflected in the ways they participate in teamwork, cooperate with other members and spare efforts to build effective teams. This finding goes into more depth than the study of Clark et al. (2007), who simply find that the students from China regard gaining high marks and

learning to work with others as the most important results of group work. Table 11 gives a summary of the students' acculturation experiences as indicated by Berry et al. (1987). However, among the interviewees there is no report of total marginalisation or reaction against it. This implies that the students all adapt to a certain degree.

Table 11 Variation in Acculturation Experience

Acculturation Experience	Surface approaches	Deep approaches	Achieving Approaches
Acceptance with attendant culture loss			
Adaptation / Integration	√ (with lesser degree)	√√	√√
Separation with wariness of further cultural contact	✕	✕	✕
Full marginalisation / Reaction	✕	✕	✕

Variation in Defining Success

How do the participants define the successful outcome of teamwork? There are several similar points shared amongst all the participants with different learning approaches, namely improved researching skills, proficiency in speaking and writing, etc. Apart from that, the interviewees with deep and achieving motives and strategies tend to appreciate teamwork more as a chance to accomplish learner controlled, interactive, intellectual, and process focused learning than a chance to get through a large amount of assignments with less efforts. According to the comments given by the deep and achieving participants, teamwork enables them to play a role in the planning of the learning, making adjustments to suit the different learning needs, ways, interests and

capabilities of individual members. They learn through interaction between members and acquire knowledge through doing things. The learning process is creative and challenging. It demands the learners to apply not only their knowledge obtained from the textbook but also more importantly to apply their cognitive, psychological, social capabilities. Therefore, they mention that the assessment of the success of the teamwork goes beyond the final mark given by the tutor at the end of the semester. The success is such a complex and meaningful package that it contains the development in dealing with people, confidence enhancement, cultural awareness, handling confrontations, group recognition, individual maturity, emotional stability, intellectual progress, and overcoming acculturative stress. The acculturative stress defined by Berry et al. (1987) refers to the stressors that cause physical, psychological and social reductions in the health of individuals, for instance, confusion, anxiety, feelings of alienation, identity confusion, etc. The findings of the research indicate that all the participants in the UK experience different kinds of stress to a different degree during studying in the UK. The level of the stress of all the participants starts at more or less the same place, with a declining trend at the end of the studying period. The stress that the participants have before they come to the UK is mainly caused by anxiety of uncertainties, nonetheless largely discounted by the self eagerness to see the outside world, envy shown by the peer group who have not the chance to go abroad to study, encouragement from families and friends, and their misconceptions of Western liberal ways of learning and teaching. Having experienced knowledge oriented and to a lesser extent learning oriented approaches of learning in China, the young students appear to appreciate the latter, though they feel accustomed and more comfortable with the former. During the pre-interviews, the students express their expectations of a strong practical oriented teaching approach in the UK, and that the UK teachers are not so controlling

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(i.e. paying a lot of attention to the grades) as are the teachers in China. The Chinese students' perceptions of Western teaching approaches mainly come from their experiences with the international experts at GDUFS. These tutors appear to be more lenient about the students' mistakes, whilst the Chinese tutors spend many hours correcting the grammatical errors in their assignments. Also the international tutors tend to adopt a more 'fun' style of teaching, which leads to some students' feeling that they are being treated as kindergarten kids (Ouyang, 2004). Nevertheless whilst seemingly a less structured approach is used for seminar discussions, the pure 'fun' style of teaching is largely untrue. The UK lecturers do teach seriously and pass on knowledge and require the students to read a lot of books and theoretical articles to develop independent learning. Although the students report that they appreciate the learner oriented approach and want it that way, ironically it proves to be the biggest barrier that they have to overcome when they study in the UK. The highest point is during the interim period of time, when they are undergoing the process of adjustments psychologically and behaviourally. Pressure of completing a huge amount of assignments obviously does not help the situation. During the interim interview the girl with a surface learning approach claims: "*My anxiety is that we cannot complete the assignment on time…We are required to read a lot of books for writing essays and the tutors do not tell me which ideas are the most important for the assignment.*" – UKF1.

The students with achieving approaches though adjust in more flexible ways in their studies also suffer stress because of their aim to get as a high mark as possible and spare good efforts to integrate with local and other international students. The female student with an achieving/deep approach tells her constant worry in the study: "*The requirements for the assignments are stricter.　One needs to show a good*

comprehension to complete the tasks." – UKF5. The stress level of the students with deep approaches appears to be relatively lower due to their more rational judgement of the situation. For example, the male student with a deep learning approach reveals his happiness after getting his first mark in a Marketing module: "*I feel so happy that I called my parents to tell them the good news. I feel that my hard work and efforts are rewarded. One of the biggest differences between studying in China and here is that I come to understand the concepts better after completing the assignments. And the marks reflect whether or not one really understands the task and the relevant knowledge.*" – UKM2.

The general pattern is that those with the surface approaches surface the highest interim level of stress, followed by those with achieving and deep approaches respectively.

The stress level sees a decline at the post interview. The reason that the stress level decreases for the students with surface learning approaches is due to the passive strategy, for instance, they try to seek resort to Chinese circles, and go back to China for a week during the holiday. In contrast the students with deep and achieving approaches adopt more pro active ways and appear to be more self-determined to overcome the stressors during the adaptation process and begin to enjoy the results of achievement.

To sum up, the surface participants appear to resort to extrinsic adaptation. It tends to be more temporary, situational and instrumental. They do show adjustments, however, they also admit that they adjust in order to cope with the new education system, and once the environment changes, they tend to go back to their old ways. The deep and achieving participants by contrast adapt more intrinsically, naturally and willingly. It is

apparent that this kind of adaptation is more long term and permanent. For example, all three types prefer to work within culturally mixed groups, with some reasons which are similar, but others which are different. The most important reason for the students with surface strategy is to be with competent local and other international students so that they do not need to worry too much about the quality of the assignment. For the deep and achieving participants, grade is one reason but more important reasons are to learn from local and other international students, to interact with different cultures, and build up the confidence of dealing with different people and values.

Figure 13 indicates that the students' different learning approaches act as an important internal cause that moderates and impacts their cultural adaptation strategy and process, when they are under the same cultural exposure environment.

Figure 13 Impact of Learning Approaches on Adaptation
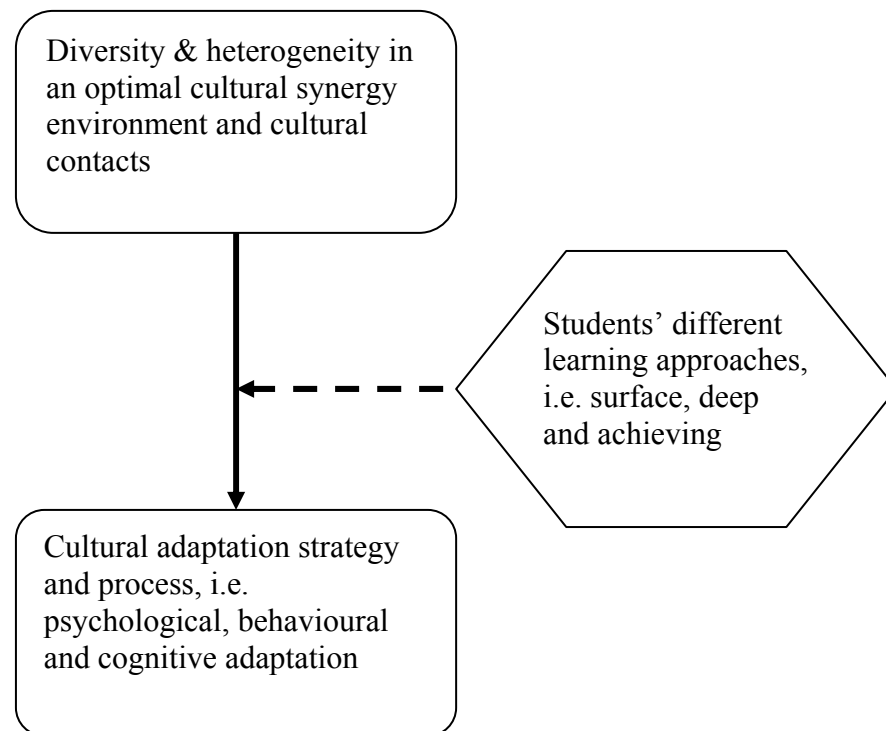
There is little distinction found in the overall strength of adaptation between deep and achieving participants, though the latter's responses emphasise changes in the behavioural aspects more than the psychological and cognitive aspects. For example, how they organise their time to achieve better grades, how the team members should take care of their responsibilities, how they develop the research skills, etc.

It is the learners, with deep and achieving/deep approaches, who show a consistent level of adaptation over the three levels. Psychologically they have become braver and more confident in communicating with other international students and have shown a stronger sense of achievement. Cognitively, they report that they have become more open minded, culturally sensitive, and more accepting of different attitudes towards principle abiding, time, and assessment. In their behaviour, they have learnt to be more straightforward in expressing opinions and independent in their studying. The pure achieving learners adapt more in the behavioural aspects, whilst surface learners, who show less overall adaptation, are very much in the behavioural area. In this respect, the two are similar, although there is a difference in the magnitude of change.

Variation amongst Genders

Another interesting issue is that there are some variations amongst genders. The findings indicate the changing pattern among the interviewees is that both female and male students who adopt deep learning approaches and achieving / deep learning approaches adapt both intrinsically and extrinsically. Students who use surface learning approaches show lesser change, and where it exists, it is extrinsic. However, between female and male students who use deep and achieving learning approaches, the former show lesser acculturative stress and adapt better than the latter in the three adaptation areas indicated in Figure 15. This finding does not support what Berry et al. (1987) have found regarding sex differences in acculturative stress, though they do state that whether this pattern really indicates greater female stress, or some other situation, such as a greater tendency for females to subscribe to or agree with personal statements (as used in their study), and therefore appear to be more stressed, is not evident in the literature. However, Berry does report that the magnitude of the difference amongst Chinese sojourners tends to be lower than for other Asian groups. The same result appears to be found amongst the students with surface learning approaches, that is, female students show more changes than the male ones. As a consequence, it may be confidently assumed that the female interviewees are better at adapting, and do adapt more than males. It is found that the girls, particularly with achieving/deep learning approaches, present strong intrinsic motives to get integrated into the Western society:

> *I like living in the UK and Europe, which has a free and relaxing attitude*
>
> *towards life. I like to know more about different cultures. I think I adapt*
>
> *quite well to the life here, and really hope to integrate into their culture*
>
> *and society. I want to have more deep communications with the local*

people and broaden my horizon. (UKF4)

The fact that male interviewees appear less adaptable, may be explained as follows: First, the two boys express a stronger feeling of inferiority during the interviews and their desire to hold on to their original identity and status. This is verified by the opinions of the female students. In Chinese universities, their academic performance is more or less the same as other Chinese students. Therefore, the power distance among students is small. In the UK, they feel that they have lost their equal status, by appearing academically weaker, mainly due to less English proficiency, than other English speaking and European students. They have a feeling of losing their role or identity, and have become an insignificant minor in the team, with little contributions. Volet et al. (2009, p.129) also find that during teamwork, one student tends to become more confident in his/her understanding of the task than the rest of the group, and takes on a more instructive role to guide the others' understanding. Some interviewees share the following experience:

> *One of the members takes on a very protective role and makes me feel*
>
> *small and superfluous. He asked me to e-mail my part to him and then I*
>
> *had no idea what he did to it. I even had no idea if my part went into the*
>
> *whole project or not.*

A female student's words reveal the gender differences in attitudes towards team roles and the male students' sense of inferiority in front of capable members:

In China I used to be a team leader but not here. This does not bother me. I do not feel bad or disappointed. In my view, it does a team good if they choose another student, who is more capable and has better communication skills than me. I heard that some male students have a sense of inferiority in the UK, because they feel small in front of more competent overseas members. (UKF3)

Psychologically, the male Chinese students want to stick to the original self image, which is more powerful and has more dignity. Therefore, they show more dislike of domineering team members than females, which makes them lose confidence of being a competent male figure. The male participants may find their self image and status more challenged in a different environment. The females, by contrast, appear to be more accepting and flexible. Furthermore, the male students with deep and achieving motives tend to participate more than the students with surface motives, who tend to put less effort into teamwork.

The research finds that all participants recognise the functional/practical advantages of teamwork, which is, helping them to improve English proficiency, though they do report some problems of teamwork, such as free riders, time consuming in coordinating, and most important of all, the anxiety that some members might fail to complete, and thus pull down their marks. These dissatisfactory aspects of teamwork have been documented by other researchers (e.g. Roebuck, 1998; Houldsworth and Matthews, 2000; Siciliano, 2001; Ashraf, 2004). However, the research ascertains that through direct communication with students from various cultural backgrounds during teamwork, the Chinese students adapt psychologically, cognitively and behaviourally to

varying degrees. Psychological changes are reflected in their decreased wariness of local and other international students, and University staff, self confidence and sense of achievement. Cognitive changes are revealed in their open mindedness, decreased ethnocentrism, increased cultural awareness, and attitudes towards principle abiding, time, and assessment. Behavioural changes are shown in their ways of expressing opinions, holding ground, handling uncertainties, mixing with local and international students, and studying autonomously. The research finds that the extent of adaptation is moderated by their individual learning approaches, namely surface, deep and achieving. Further, the organisation and individuals both have certain control over the extent of cross-cultural contact, how much teamwork to be used in the course, with whom to form a team, whether to turn up for the teamwork, etc. This is in line with the range of moderating factors identified by Berry et al. (1997). The factors prior to acculturation include demographic, cultural, economic, personal, motivation, expectations, and the factors arising during acculturation include acculturation strategies, contact/participation, cultural maintenance, social support, coping strategies and resources, prejudice and discrimination. Berry et al. argue that these variables inevitably affect the process of psychological adaptation (i.e. self-esteem, identity consolidation and satisfaction), and socio-cultural adaptation (i.e. cultural knowledge, social skills, interpersonal relations). Therefore these factors have been incorporated within the analysis. The essence of the process of adjustment in cross-cultural settings is to analyse why people behave as they do and how certain behaviours do or do not contribute to adjustment, rather than just ascertain what has happened. Brislin contends that "adjustment is marked by people's satisfaction, perceived acceptance by hosts, ability to function during everyday activities without stress, and ability to complete assigned tasks" (Brislin, 1981, p.303). During the teamwork process, the scene is constructivist, rather than there being a set social

order. The social actors (students) are evolving change, not only the Chinese within the team, but the home and other international students as well. The team norms are being set, examined, adjusted as well as being forgotten or ignored as a result of the team members' cultures interacting with each other.

4.3 Teamwork Experiences of the China Group

Most of the research of teamwork has been carried out in Western universities, and little has been done on how collaborative learning operates within Chinese tertiary education. Therefore, the China group not only acts as a comparison but also helps to fill such a gap in the literature. It is worthwhile to elaborate on the general social and educational environment in which the participants are involved before going on to discuss the findings. Recently there has been in China heated arguments on websites among the contemporary university students concerning a traditional story about a girl and whether or not she should marry the rich land owner. This is an old classic story about a young girl from a poor peasant family who refused marriage with a rich land owner, and was forced to leave her home to live in the wild. The story was used to let the people value the happy new life after the establishment of New China, and to defend against the exploiters who caused social inequality and poverty and who also tried to derive the poor of their dignity. However, a majority of university students nowadays begin to argue against the simplicity of this moral story. Those who are for the marriage argue that it is not a sin to marry a rich man, and it makes life a lot easier during the economic recession when they have to face the difficulties of finding jobs. The marriage will be even more desirable if the rich man is talented and young. What is pointed out here is that this argument would not take place when the author was a child or even at university. This happens due to three factors: first China has become more open in terms of letting students voice their opinions; second, the contemporary university

students have diverse values, which may be regarded as anti orthodox ideas; last but not least is that the money value system of the younger generation has seen tremendous changes. After China shifted its target to economic construction since the late 1970s, it has seen dramatic changes in the living standards and life of its people. However, it is doubtless that people's spiritual life lags behind and the social conduct and ethics has seen decline. The Chinese government has spared great efforts to stress the importance of building a prosperous and strong society with advanced culture and ideology. The objectives are to educate Chinese people to develop high ideals, moral integrity and a strong sense of discipline. The ideology is that the public good comes before personal affairs and the nation comes before the family, so that China becomes an equal and harmonious community. The Chinese communist party holds an atheist outlook. Rather than turning to a religion to relieve the spiritual crisis or identity crisis, whilst promoting the Party's beliefs, it permits a renewed rigour and promotion of classical Chinese studies, since many doctrines are in line with its policy of constructing a harmonious and ethical society. Yu Dan's "Reflections on 'the Analects'" (2007), which reinterprets the classical text with simple but inspiring anecdotes, therefore was broadcasted on Chinese Central TV (CCTV), with a bestselling accompanying book. Yu Dan's lectures and books enjoy great popularity despite the debates and criticism of her interpretations in the orthodox academic field. What contributes to Yu Dan's recognition by the common people and makes her a household name in China? One reason is that she has established a bridge between the classics and ordinary people. She has made incomprehensible texts easy to understand and relevant to the modern world. Another reason is that the Chinese government and people have become more acceptable than decades ago of Confucian ideology in a modern setting. They are

making great but still cautious progress. In summary, the participants are under the influence of traditional values, government ideology, and Western beliefs.

The interviewees of the comparison group in China share a number of features in terms of their changes after a year's teamwork. Generally speaking they have become more flexible in thinking, tolerant in accepting different ideas and behaviour, patient with the passive group members, active in participating under the influence of dynamic members, confident in expressing opinions because members get along well and become friends, and constructive in reflecting on their own strengths and weaknesses.

4.3.1 Exchanging Ideas

The Chinese students have learnt Confucius' famous saying: "If three of us are walking together, at least one of the other two is good enough to be my teacher" (Analects 7.22). Therefore they admit that the biggest achievement is learning from each other and benefiting from each other's visions through teamwork. One of the prominent characteristics of the young people born after 1985 is that they desire independence in life and novelty in thinking. They are willing to accept various ideas. They comment that teamwork gives them a chance to communicate their own ideas as well as being exposed to various points of view:

> *When we did the translation of the novel, sometimes we had very different*
> *interpretations. I realise that actually various people look at things from*
> *a different perspective. I learn to listen to different opinions, which might*
> *be the points that I have never thought about before. Gradually I find*
> *that I have profited from members' useful views, which help me to widen*
> *my own thoughts and improve my study. Also, I find that my group*

members, especially those who come from big cities, are fairly open in respecting and accepting fresh ideas that are different from their own. What I have learnt from them is that I have no reason to dislike a person simply because we are different. (CF4)

Having said that they are ready to exchange thoughts, there are two interesting points that are worth discussing. A few active members complain that they have little achievement in sharing ideas with group members. On the one hand, it is difficult for the group to reach a consensus. Every member regards him/herself as having equal power and insists upon his/her own views. They tend to be critical of others' opinions, without making actual constructive contributions themselves. Having high opinions of oneself rather than being humble may reflect the culture of today's young people. On the other hand, the group discussion results in virtually little fresh ideas apart from the ones put forward by the few active members. Some members always come to the meeting without any preparation, and thus give irrelevant points that are of little value for the project. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the students to turn teamwork into individual work, and thus there are limited opportunities for group discussion and the exchange of ideas.

4.3.2 Challenging Self Assertiveness

There are two sides of pursuing independence and novelty. The positive consequence is that the students do not blindly follow the opinions of the authorities and peers. The negative side is that this may lead to the problem of stubbornness and inflexibility in accepting ideas of other people. Whereas some young people appear forceful and self assertive, showing little respect to others' views, others just choose to turn a deaf ear to

different opinions. Teamwork, therefore, provides them with a valuable chance to challenge this kind of over-assertive self. During teamwork they realise that only by adopting an accepting attitude towards different opinions can they create a harmonious group. They come to understand that narrow mindedness leads to conflict and communication barriers. It is also significant to require much from oneself and little from others, as Confucius says: "If one sets strict standards for oneself and makes allowances for others when making demands on them, one will stay clear of ill will" (Analects, 15.15). Two interviewees comment on their progress in accepting the views of other members:

Through teamwork I have a better understanding of different ways of dealing with the world and handling problems. I have become more tolerant of various thoughts. Facing those really stubborn members who are self centred, I reflect upon my own behaviour and realise that selfishness should be despised. I learn to restrain myself and control my temper. I start to think from the point of view of others and the team as a whole. I realise that to work as a team I need to care more about others' feelings, not just my own. (CM1)

I have become more tolerant and patient with different people and different views. I begin to put myself in other people's shoes and become more empathetic. The team does not work if every member only stands on their own points, without showing respect of others. I learn to think more from a team's angle.   (CM3)

While the post 85 young people pursue uniqueness in thinking and show strong individualistic values, they generally want to avoid confrontation and too much disagreement with their peers. The practice of suppressing self assertiveness may be in line with the overall ideology advocated in Chinese universities, and related with harmony ideal of Chinese culture. Regarding relationship with people, Chinese culture believes that human nature is basically good and values harmonious social relationships and obligation built upon trustworthiness, courtesy, morality, compassion, reciprocation of favours and gifts, face, etc. The Chinese are taught to exercise self-control and tolerance. Chinese culture stresses accommodation and practices the doctrine of the golden mean. It is believed that harmony is able to foster a cohesive force within the society. Concerning the relation between men and the society, the Chinese have been taught to imitate both ancient and modern time role models who would gladly be the first to bear hardships before everybody else and the last to enjoy comforts. The ideology of patriotism is: *Concern for the world comes first; joy for the self comes last*, which has been inculcated among the Chinese as a personal virtue as well as a spiritual prop in times of crisis.

4.3.3 Proactive or Inactive?

A number of students inevitably adopt a passive attitude towards teamwork due to several reasons, the major one being that teamwork only accounts for a very small percentage of the total mark. For them, they tend to give much more attention to individual coursework and exams, which makes up 80% of their final assessment. However, there are still a small number of students who tend to work conscientiously, show enthusiasm in various studying activities and take things seriously. These hard working students set good examples for other members and have certain impact on

inactive ones, who are urged to participate actively. One interviewee comments on how group members' diligence and activeness contribute to her change in attitude:

> *Imbued with what I have seen and heard during teamwork, my mentality has changed from being passive to proactive. Some of the members are really enthusiastic and active in their studies. They seldom complain about taking on more tasks. They are always willing to help the weaker ones. They have a strong desire to advance. I am moved and feel the urge to change my laid back or inactive attitude and behaviour. Realising that soon I am going to enter into society, I feel that I should work more efficiently and take on more responsibilities for myself and others in the group.* (CF1)

However, it is found that the active students under the influence of the laid back members turn to be inactive during the group work. Having gone through all the frustrations of working alone on the team project and getting little recognition, they tend to reduce his/her efforts and adopt a resisting attitude towards teamwork, which they believe has been unfair for the hard working students. This is the sucker effect (Houldsworth and Matthews, 2000), which has been discussed in the literature review.

4.3.4 Friendship Attributes to Free Expression

The interviewees mention that they achieve friendship after a year's teamwork. Unlike the UK group, the interviewees in China have a lot more social activities among the group members. One obvious reason is that most of the time the teachers let the students themselves form teams and those who are initially friends tend to choose to be

in the same team. Several interviewees find this kind of group closeness and friendship helps them to build confidence in expressing opinions, gives them recognition and relieves their stress. A friendly relationship gives students psychological comfort and ease. This is in sharp contrast to the experience of the UK group, who find closeness stressful and can be disturbing to some extent due to the fact that competent ones have to look after the weaker ones. The interviewees disclose their appreciation of the development of friendship and equal status among members:

I have gained friendship, which helps me to relieve stress during my studies. We encourage each other. They give me recognition for my work, and this helps me to build up my self confidence. On the other hand, my wide reading influences my friends too. In universities nowadays, a large number of students just keep to themselves with limited communication with others. Locking ourselves in a small circle can be quite dangerous in the sense that we tend to be narrow minded. (CF3)

I have become braver than before in expressing my ideas. The first reason that contributes to this change is that after a year's cooperation, we get to know each other really well and we have become friends. We often meet for social activities too. The good relationship enables smooth communication. Another reason is that there is no domineering figure in the team, a member who always gets high marks in exams and appears self assertive. I used to feel inferior in front of them. I was afraid of making 'stupid' mistakes and to be laughed at. With group members of equal academic level, I feel more comfortable expressing freely my

opinions. I used to be the quiet one but in the recent teamwork I become

the leader. I feel so happy that my ideas are often adopted. I feel that I

am useful for the team. (CF2)

To a certain extent, friendship and knowing each other better during the teamwork process prohibits non-participative actions of some students, who may otherwise believe that their contributions are worthless or they are not as academically strong as other members. This withdrawing phenomenon in group performance has been discussed by Houldsworth and Matthews (2000), though caused by a different reason, namely group members' rejection of attempted contributions. In general, the interviewees prefer to form groups by students themselves and work with friends, because it is easier and more convenient to communicate and express opinions. However, one or two students do mention that if teachers assign students to teams they can have more chances to work with various students to develop interpersonal skills. All the interviewees believe that team members should meet for social activities to develop friendship. They hold that a harmonious environment is essential for their cooperation, although sometimes this means going with the flow and sacrificing one's own ideas. The close in-group members meet quite frequently, with other members communicating mainly through the internet.

4.3.5 Reflective in Behaviour

Teamwork provides a context for students to understand themselves better through the eyes of colleagues. Evaluations from team members promote them to do self reflection and self criticism. In the beginning some members feel shocked, disappointed and frustrated because of unfavourable feedback from group members about their attitude

and behaviour, for example, if the group leader tends to adopt a dominant and authoritarian style, which he/she believes could improve efficiency and put the group under good control. The teams often have a tacitly approved leader, who often is competent in communication, organisation and studying. The students, who have had the experience of being a team leader, confess that it is a tedious and demanding job. The following is the disclosure of one interviewee:

> *I thought I had done a very good job as a group leader. I was strict with myself and always took things seriously. I was so surprised to learn that my members found me domineering and demanding. At first I felt upset because I thought they did not appreciate my hard work and had too high expectations from me as a leader. Gradually I tried to reflect on my own behaviour and came to realise my weaknesses. For me the biggest achievement of teamwork is that it enables me to understand myself better. Also I come to appreciate the efforts made by other members. In a recent Marketing project, I involved everyone and let each member give full play to their abilities. To our delight we got the third prize in the competition.* (CF4)

As a consequence, it is very rare that a student would volunteer to be a leader, because he/she does not want to appear showing off or perhaps does not want the bother to do extra work. Chinese students tend to show high expectations of their leaders. In the eyes of the members, the leader represents a figure of authority. They also tend to follow good leaders and pay respect to them. From a leader's point of view, criticism is a heavy blow that discourages them from making further contributions. As a result they

psychologically tend to escape and resign rather than put on a brave face and overcome hardships. However as time goes by, they draw an important inspiration from teamwork experiences, that is "it is not the failures of others to appreciate your abilities that should trouble you, but rather your failure to appreciate theirs" (Analects, 1.16).

4.3.6 Teamwork versus Individual Work?

The history of collaborative learning in China goes back three decades, when individual success must be attributed to the help of the country, group and party. Emphasising individual ability and efforts is scorned and looked down upon. During those years, schools and teachers encouraged students to set up 'mutual help study groups', which enable strong students to help the weak ones, so that no one lags behind. This was similar to the idea of establishing mutual aid teams in the countryside. The idea reflected the egalitarian ideology of the Communist Party. The practice of 'mutual help study group' became less important in the 1980s to 1990s. The idea of using teamwork in educational settings has become popular, partially due to the social worries that the single child generation would lack coordination skills.

The Chinese university at which the interviewees studied, launched its English Language Teaching reform, namely the project CECL (Communicative English for Chinese Learners) in 1979, with a revolutionary shift in teaching ideology and approaches.   The significance of the project is that it introduces the idea of student-centredness into teaching. Group work within and outside classroom is used to help students to develop communicative competence, which focus not only on linguistic skills but also on students' development as a whole person. There is no smooth course for any breakthroughs. Inevitably the project has caused a lot of controversies, since

traditional methods of teaching and learning have been prevalent for decades in the Chinese educational system. Consequently there is a mixture of different teaching approaches across various disciplines. Jin and Cortazzi (2002) also mentioned that quality education policy had been put forward by the Chinese educational ministry since 1990s. However, the two crucial questions arise: To what degree has quality education policy been implemented by teachers and schools and how far has this shift influenced Chinese students' learning approaches? Still a large number of Chinese educators show hesitation and a certain degree of doubt about the validity of the method. As a compromise, they tend to use the traditional teaching ways, adding some elements of the so called quality education.

During the interviews, it is found that theoretically all the interviewees agree that teamwork helps to improve their communicating, cooperating, and organisational skills. The members are able to learn from each other's strengths. They believe that two heads are better than one. By working together with responsible members, they can reduce workload. Another advantage of teamwork is that some students hope to get a decent mark by team efforts. For most of the interviewees, getting a good mark is a major criterion to judge whether a team is successful or not. However, in practice they claim that the desirable aims can be discounted by a number of factors. As a result, Chinese students tend to have a low level of satisfaction of collaborative learning. They mention a number of disappointments, which hold them back in achieving their aims. These causes may be analysed as the internal and external contributors to the students' passive attitude.

With the exception of two, all of the interviewees in China prefer individual coursework to teamwork. The internal causes reflect two features of the young people born post 1985, namely weak self-control, fearing hardships and pleasure-seeking. This generation looks down upon those students who are good at studying and academically strong but poor at socialising and having few friends. A popular figure is someone who is smart and who need not spend too much effort to achieve great success and is also good at communicating with the peer group. The situations at secondary schools and universities are somewhat different. At schools, the competition is more intense, where tests are seriously implemented and the scores are ranked and open to students and parents. Students are strongly encouraged or pushed to get the best grade score. Progress is credited while poor performance is reprimanded. At the end of the term, good grades are the very essential criterion for evaluation of a well-rounded student, who is supposed to develop better than peers in all areas, morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically. Because of the competitive atmosphere in schools, students make every effort to become top in class and to achieve better than others do. By contrast, once getting into a university many students' major aim is to pass and get a diploma, in which case a mark of 60 makes no difference to 99 since degrees are not classified as in the UK. In their eyes, after years of hard working, university is the educational terminal and grade has become less important. One of the interviewees has always been a top and hard working student in the grade and she discloses her frustration dealing with the laid back members and peer pressure:

> *Sometimes I do not want to do teamwork either. I want to take it easy*
>
> *too, shopping and chatting with friends, going to the cinema, etc. What*
>
> *makes me different from other laid back students is that I learn to restrain*

myself. Thinking of the future career, parents' expectations, good marriage, I motivate myself to study hard. I do feel stressful, although I do not have any financial stress like some of my classmates, who do part time or odd jobs such as personal tutor for primary school kids or as receptionist at exhibitions. Some members tend to leave the task until the last minute. They would rather be watching a film or surfing on the internet than working on the tasks. I need to spend a lot of time hurrying them up. Several times, I force them to stay after class to discuss the assignment, which just gives me extra hassle and makes me appear 'dull or domineering'. To make matters worse, they think I am competent so that they can rely on me, which means I end up doing most of the work. Other members only make a few adjustments after I complete the task. I feel imbalanced psychologically because we all get the same mark. As time goes by, I begin to question my enthusiasm. I ask myself 'why should I spare time and efforts looking after others?' Gradually I find myself turning passive towards teamwork. (CF5)

The student's active attitude turns into passive because there is no reward for hard working students. The group leader or the laborious students have to do most of the work. Gradually they lose the enthusiasm to be a leader or organiser because there is little reward for it, and likewise some teachers attach little importance to it. The result is as long as they can pass, nobody is really willing to do extra work.

Another internal cause of passive attitude is opinion conflict. Whereas some of the members tend to cling obstinately to their own opinions, others think teachers' opinions

are more important and much more worth listening to than those of peers. They feel more secure to follow the teachers' instructions, although the interviewees admit that they do not always fully follow the views of the teachers. They make judgements and comparisons. If they have any disagreement, they discuss it with the teachers after class in order to show respect to the teacher and not to let him/her lose face. Having mentioned the problem of opinion conflict, it is important to point out that in general the decision making process still tends to be democratic. The team decisions are made by consensus or according to the views of the majority. If there are any disagreements, they solve them by negotiation and discussion. They try to avoid face to face confrontations, because they are classmates and meet virtually every day, and thus it is important to have a harmonious relationship. They listen to each other carefully during discussions and try to reach agreement by negotiation. When their opinions are not accepted, they try to convince other members, and most members will give up if the majority disagrees. The majority of members are modest during the teamwork process. This is in consistent with what Hu (2006) has found about the contemporary university students in China. About 41% of the one thousand and four respondents are in favour of negotiation when facing different opinions and go for the idea accepted by the majority. This may appear a little bit contradictory to their individualistic character they show in their daily life. My participants admit that at home with parents, they tend to be more stubborn and self assured. In schools and universities, they have been educated for years what popular and unpopular behaviour are, and therefore try to suppress the selfish elements and be a good student.

While discussing the external causes it is important to point out that in Mainland China, the teaching methods vary from teacher-centred and content oriented to those moving

towards student-centred and learning oriented, depending on different provinces, schools and universities. Therefore, the following causes are basically related to the specific context where the participants are from. External causes mainly consist of such shortfalls as little guidance from teachers, boring topics, demanding tasks, very little constructive feedback, no specifications and criteria of the assessment, and little recognition for hard work. First, the teachers often give very general guidance in how to carry out a project, for example, there is not detailed information on how to design a questionnaire, how to administer it and analyse it. It cannot be denied that in China nowadays university students show less dependence upon teachers' guidance, though many still regard teachers' guidance as necessary and still a number of students consider teachers' suggestions as a word of law. In this aspect, it can be seen that the Chinese students tend to show high respect to their teachers and authority. The teachers appear more controlling, whereas the students more obedient. However, they do not necessarily expect much help from teachers. The reasons are teachers tend not to get involved in students' teamwork, apart from giving a general guideline and when students go to ask them for help. Another important reason is that the students think university studying should be different from that in middle school, when teachers virtually look after everything. They have the desire to be independent and mature. Second the topics are too broad and open that the students find it difficult to grasp the focus of the task. They also see little relevance of the task with the real world and future career. Basically the students contribute their demotivation to the fact that the tasks are too much about theories and lack practical elements. Third, the feedback is generally too brief to be constructive and helpful. They expect the teachers to give more detailed instructions so that they feel that their efforts are worthwhile. One important reason leading to the unsatisfactory phenomenon is that the workload of the

Chinese university teachers increases dramatically in the past few years due to the enlargement of recruitment, and the requirement of research and publications. The policy is to publish or to perish, with generous bonuses for publishing. From the teacher's perspective, they are suffering from work stress and constantly complain about the decreasing quality of students. One interviewee comments on her disappointment and feeling of setbacks:

Usually the teacher chooses to give detailed comments for one or two groups in class. There are six groups altogether. This means the students in other groups only get very general and short feedback, with one or two sentences or simply a mark. Although the teacher asks us to contact him/her if we have any queries, we seldom do. I do not see the point of arranging a special meeting to discuss the coursework. My view is that my hard work is not recognised by the teacher. I find this discouraging. (CF5)

Other external causes are related to the process of carrying out teamwork and its final assessment. First, it is time consuming. The students find it too troublesome to find a time for group discussion. Many group members find all sorts of excuses for not coming to group discussion, for example, other coursework. Many classmates put their self-interests first. Some members are poor in time management. Therefore they think the optimal number of group members is three to four, because if there are too many, it takes a long time to discuss and reach an agreement. Second, the teamwork does not necessarily encourage creativity. The interviewees inform that they try to find the easiest way to pass a group assignment or finish it as quickly as possible for the task's

sake, although it might mean sacrificing quality and creativity. Also they turn teamwork into individual work. Some teams do not have cooperation in a team as such. They complete the individual parts and then put them together, often in piecemeal fashion, before the presentation. When they do individual work, they need to think about the whole project independently. However, in much of teamwork they just take care of one part and ignore the rest. They do not need to think about the project as a coherent whole. As a consequence, the students have little sense of achievement. Third, cooperation implies helping those students who find it difficult to complete their tasks on time and effectively. In order to have a good mark, the team has to have this kind of cooperation, that is, completing tasks on behalf of some laid back or incompetent students. This reflects Chinese people's weak sense of principle, which can be abandoned for the present gains. Consequently this kind of cooperation puts a lot of burden on the competent members, who gradually turn to be less active as discussed. Finally, the interviewees think that the industrious team members who make more contributions should get a higher mark, and it is unfair to give the same mark to all the group members. The final mark should be determined by the students' individual performance. Both teachers and students should have a say in the final evaluation of each member, because the students know the whole process of teamwork, and also know who has worked hard and who has not. Big contributors should be rewarded and given recognition. The prevalent Chinese culture of 'eating from the same rice bowl' during the Cultural Revolution, is now deplored among the younger generation. Having revealed the reasons why the students of the comparison group in China prefer individual work to group work, it is beneficial to look again at what Johnson et al. (1991) define as five essential components of truly cooperative teams, that is, (1) the team members must (1) have clear positive interdependence, which implies that each

member's distinctive contribution and their joint efforts are indispensible for group's success; (2) promote each other's learning by encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to complete tasks; (3) hold accountability to do his/her fair share of the work; (4) use appropriately the interpersonal skills needed for effective cooperation to achieve the group's productivity; (5) reflect upon group process, that is what actions are helpful or unhelpful and decide what actions to continue or change to improve effectiveness. They state that cooperation is more than physical closeness and that the situation when one member does all the work or each member does the shared part individually and then pieces the parts together do not mean cooperation. The findings suggest that theoretically the students understand and agree with the crucial components of true cooperation. However, in practice the learning group lacks this kind of cooperation, and therefore the participants feel that teamwork is only an ideal idea, whose potential advantages have not been fully explored, otherwise they could have achieved more through working in teams.

It also relates to the issue of culturally appropriate pedagogy addressed by Phuong-Mai et al. (2006). They state that it is counter effective to introduce and practice Western-based approaches without taking into account the cultural complexities and the needs of learners and teachers. They argue that high power distance between teacher and student, students' preference for well-structured tasks and precise details, large class size, teacher-dominated classes with non-participative learners, the traditionally passive role of women in participation, harmony oriented relationship and thus hesitation in challenging each other's ideas and reasoning, and finally the teacher's leadership role in learning, all act as barriers to the application of group learning in Confucian Heritage Cultural countries. It is found that most of the above mentioned factors also apply to

the China group, with one notable exception. The female students no longer play a passive role and are often the most pro-active within teamwork. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the most significant hindrance to satisfactory teamwork at GDUFS is related to the poor structured teamwork assignment by teachers and a small percentage of the team mark in the total assessment as compared with individual work. The individualistic characteristics of the young students may be considered next in importance in influencing their attitude towards teamwork.

One point that is worth mentioning and discussing is that many students find extracurricular activities are more interesting and help more in terms of building collective spirit and training cooperative skills. The students take part in the activities that they are interested in and are highly motivated. They develop their organisation and communication skills subconsciously through these activities. Teamwork is more a sort of moral education than academic education in China. The Chinese government and educational institutions have always attached great importance to team spirit and collective wisdom. However, in terms of the means adopted to help students to build team spirit is very different from those used in the UK. Living and working harmoniously in a group has always been valued and emphasised in Chinese society. Due to scarcity of resources, Chinese people learn to stay together without friction in closely-knit groups from the earliest days in kindergarten to university days. For example, in university dormitories six students stay in one room and share bathroom and toilets with perhaps 12 to 15 others for four years. This view concurs with Clark et al. (2007) in that the Chinese learn interpersonal and teamwork skills through socialisation early in life rather than through cooperative learning in educational institutes, where the focus is on competition and high grades. However, the role played

by the Chinese educational institutions in training young people's team spirit cannot be discounted. The commonest ways to help young people to develop and build team spirit are through collective extracurricular activities and recreational and sports activities, for instance, the annual sports meeting in schools and universities, chorus competition, drama night, representation at oral English competitions, etc. Educators constantly tell the students that success depends on collective wisdom. In the case that there is a conflict between individual and group interests, the latter should come first. The view is that young people, by joining in these activities, learn how to cherish the good name of the collective, and win honour for one's group. By contrast academic teamwork appears boring. In addition there is the stress of passing the courses. Students tend to complete the task for the task's sake, and some members care too much about the mark. Consequently, members tend to use all sorts of strategies to finish the assignment, and thus play down the advantages of teamwork, for example, the competent members do most of the task and finish the task on behalf of the laid back ones. Another important reason is that the state educational guideline acts as a conductor's baton, directing and deciding the behaviour and performance of both teachers and students. Since the guideline attaches more importance to objective assessment of individual student's performance, the percentage of teamwork only makes up a small part of students' final evaluation. Furthermore, much teamwork involves presentations, for which sometimes each student is assessed on an individual basis, as well as an overall mark for the team report. In such cases, the pure element of teamwork becomes somewhat devalued.

4.3.7 Learning Approaches and Varying Changes

In the China group, one of the two girls with an achieving learning approach shows stronger disapproval of teamwork than the rest of the participants. The main reasons lie

in unfair assessment and too many responsibilities for those students who intend to achieve high grades. She feels that other students do not study hard and pull her marks down.

> *The other team members tend to rely upon me because they know that I*
>
> *care about the results and will try my best to do a good job. There is little*
>
> *recognition from the teachers and they seldom get involved.* (CF5)

The other girl mentions that teamwork helps her to reflect upon her own behaviour as a team leader, but has mixed feelings about the actual benefits of team working. She does, however, want to avoid the responsibilities of being a team leader because of the high expectations involved. The girls with a surface learning approach report that the attraction of teamwork is to make friends and know more people. The girl with a deep learning approach tends to be more positive about teamwork and discloses many achievements she has got from teamwork, particularly benefiting from meeting different people and exchanging ideas.

> *We undertake a business planning project, which requires the knowledge*
>
> *in marketing and finance. I realise that my knowledge in these areas is*
>
> *limited and find the task challenging.   To be in a team with students*
>
> *major in different subjects can compensate this.   Some members are*
>
> *encouraging and give recognition to each other's good work. This helps*
>
> *me to build up self confidence.   During teamwork, I also learn other*
>
> *members' communication skills and strengths.   I find out my own*
>
> *shortcomings and areas that need improvement.* (CF3)

By contrast, the boys seem to enjoy teamwork better than the girls. They appear more flexible and broad-minded towards the conflicts and disagreement that arise during group work. They generally tend not to make an issue over task allocation. This they attribute to different gender personality. Furthermore when compared with the girls, they attach a lesser importance to grades in their university lives. However, the boy with a deep learning approach does not think teamwork meets his expectations. He reports that there is little integration during teamwork process and therefore the benefits of teamwork are largely discounted.

The inference is that teamwork is just taken as a small, but mandatory part of the course. Those with achieving motives do, however, feel they would be better on their own, whilst surface learners, and to an extent the male members, tend to regard it more as a social aspect than a learning criteria. It therefore appears that teamwork is treated by the university as something that should be introduced, following a Western pattern, but without much thought as to how it should be adopted and incorporated. Figure 14 below summarises the proactive changes of the comparison group in China who do not undergo any cultural exposure.

Figure 14 Proactive Changes
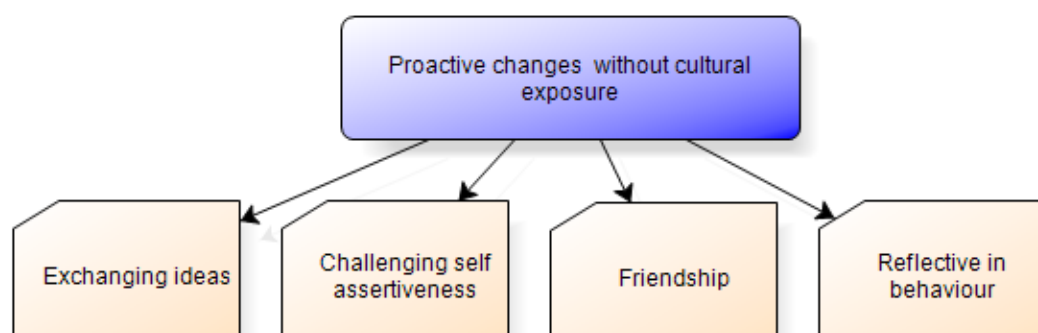
The passive changes are shown in Figure 15 (below). An aspect that needs to be pointed out is that the internal causes leading to passive changes in the students' attitude are the characteristics of many of the young people born post 1985. The characteristics are not typical just amongst the comparison group, they are also evident in the students in the UK group. The differences are the external environment, that is, the pressure to graduate with a UK degree; the stricter assessment criteria in the UK, etc. have a moderating and lessening effect on the internal factors. For example, the tight timetable to meet deadlines force the UK group to concentrate on the tasks in hand rather than considering them as peripheral.

Figure 15 Passive Changes
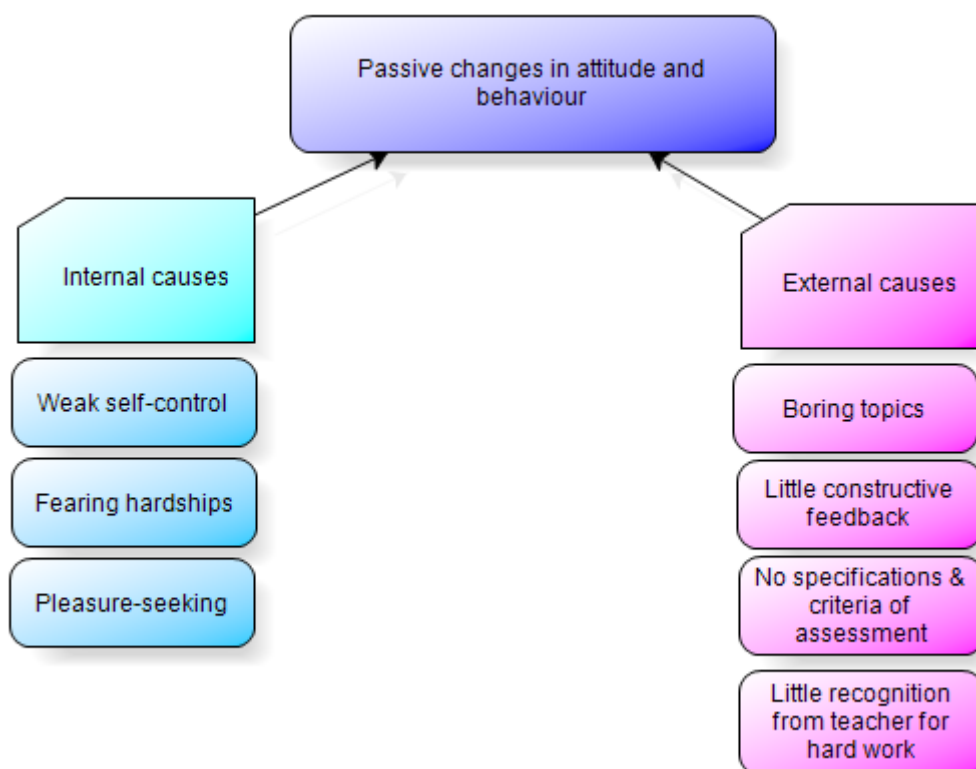
4.4 Cultural Exposure Leads to Differences between UK and China Groups

Before making a comparison between the UK and China group, it is essential to give a 'thick description' of the context within which they have undertaken teamwork, including their initial experience in China, and for the groups continuing in China and studying in the UK. As discussed in the Introduction, the theoretical concept of teamwork in this study includes both formal and informal groups. Based on the author's teaching experiences of over two decades in China and the UK, and her in-depth discussions with the Chinese lecturers who are using teamwork, she is in a strong position of giving the following description of context of teamwork in both countries, with an aim to provide a broad picture of the previous and current teamwork experiences of the UK group and China group participants. Various aspects, such as amount of teamwork in the whole curriculum, individual variations due to different selected modules, weight of teamwork in the overall evaluation, types of assignment given, team formation, timeframe, expected outcome, tutor assistance and feedback, etc. are taken into consideration. The UK group share more or less similar teamwork experiences with the China group before they come to study at Westminster Business School (WBS) since they come from the same university. Taking the China group first, it is fair to say that the amount and types of teamwork vary among modules. Lectures are the main teaching methods, broken up with inside class group discussions, with no separate seminars. Each year group is divided into 'classes' of around 30 students for core subjects, but numbers varied with electives chosen. Whilst some modules incorporate many un-assessed inside class group discussions in order to encourage students' participation and activate class atmosphere; others use more assessed teamwork as part of the overall evaluation of students' understanding of the subject.

During group discussions students discuss questions centred around the key concepts or theories covered in the lectures. For example, after the tutor delivers a lecture on the British domestic economy, students are required to work in groups to solve different tasks, for example, looking at the table of 'Household Expenditure' and then answer the questions such as what changes have there been in the pattern of household expenditure; which categories of goods and services have grown faster than others and why. After group discussion, the students report their opinions to the whole class, with some feedback from the tutor. Generally the students form groups with the ones sitting close to each other. Assessed teamwork usually takes the form of a project with two components, namely a presentation and a written report, whose timeframe varies from two to three weeks. For example, in the HRM module, the students are asked to design a plan of recruiting, training and then a method of appraising new employees for a company. The percentage of teamwork grade in the total assessment varies from 10% to 20%, depending on the complexity of the tasks, etc., with the norm being around10%. The tutor's involvement also sees a lot of variations, depending on different individual tutor's understanding of how teamwork should be processed, with most of them getting involved to give an overall explanation of the task and then offer advice whenever the students seek help. The most frequent way of forming groups is by students themselves, with occasional tutor allocation. There is little adoption of peer evaluation and team contract to prevent or stop the commonest problems such as free riding or social loafing. It is fair to say that teamwork depends more on the motivation and self autonomy of the students rather than on detailed guidelines of teamwork procedures. In addition, the students have peripheral teamwork experiences, such as a simulated trade fair, with an element of competition between the teams. The students are required to do it but it is not formally assessed as part of their degree. Some students show great interest in and

voluntarily take part in the extracurricular team activities, which are more practically orientated and engage students from different schools, which results in a wider social network and friend circle.

The UK group's teamwork experiences at WBS basically consist of both formal and informal teamwork mentioned at the beginning of the section. What is important to point out is that there exist variations in the amount of teamwork each participant experienced depending on their pathway and selected modules. The main teaching method is lectures followed by seminars with a student centred approach. Assessed team coursework was widely used under the rationale of autonomous, cooperative and interdependent learning. During seminars, the students are given questions or problems to solve related to lectures and cases. A seminar group discussion from Cultural Differences and People Management module is given as an illustration. Students with different nationalities are allocated by the tutor to discuss desirable and undesirable behaviours in different cultures. They first discuss examples and societal influences on these behaviours. They then analyse some of their reactions to another culture (it should be a culture with which the students are very familiar), for example, in relation to beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, differences in education, differences in work organisations, etc. The self analysis exercise aims to give local and international students a chance to break the ice in communication, get to know each other's culture better, and challenge stereotyping perceptions. The presentation following the discussion is un-assessed, but with feedback or comments from the tutor. Formal teamwork is usually assessed and accounts for around 30% of the overall evaluation. On an organisational behaviour module, for instance, the students are given a case study and then required to evaluate the company's performance from various perspectives and

put forward future strategies. The teams are formed either by tutor allocation or self chosen approach. Team contract and an assessed reflection on how the team functions are practised on some modules in order to reduce the potential free riding problem.

In addition the two groups have undergone changing learning contexts, which can be interpreted by social-cultural framework (Gao, 2006). The UK and China groups are under three different contextual mediations, including learning discourses, influential agents (team members, teacher, friends and parents), and assessment methods.   The learning discourse of the UK group widens, shifting towards acquiring knowledge and skills of disciplines in business, passing coursework in these disciplines, doing a masters degree after graduation in the UK and meeting the expectations of the parents who invest in their child's education abroad. The influential agents that the UK group comes into contact with also become more diverse and heterogeneous in terms of different cultures of learning and teaching. Not only the team members but also the University lecturers are diverse in their cultural backgrounds. Assessment methods are varied, including team or individual coursework, presentation, exams, etc. By contrast, the learning discourse of the China group still continues to be the same as before, focusing more on English skills. Team members and lecturers come from the same cultural background and show more homogeneity than diversity. Assessment methods, though incorporating teamwork and presentation, are still dominated by individual closed book exams, often based on answers to short questions which are of a recall nature. The contrast social-cultural contextual mediation leads to the answer of the question *what are differences between the two groups with similar backgrounds but are now studying in a different educational context*? Making a comparison between the UK group and the China group is to ascertain how cultural exposure within a Western

society influences the Chinese students and the adjustments and changes that they make accordingly. The findings of the research indicate that as a consequence of cultural interaction, the UK group presents a number of differences to that found in the China group. This section gives an analysis of a number of prominent differences, namely, the range of achievement, the function of a team, the team composition, responsibilities of team leader and individual members, stages of team building and development, and team meetings. Following from that, some similarities between the two groups are also discussed.

4.4.1 Mediating discourses of learning achievements

The first contrast between the UK group and the China group is the students' reported achievements from teamwork. The most commonly reported theme by the UK group is that they learn from mixing with local and other international students, whereas the China group is reporting on social aspects of teamwork, namely developing friendship whilst working together. Furthermore, the range of achievements reported is considerably higher for the UK group. By comparison, the number and diversity mentioned by the China group are somewhat limited in scope. The achievements reported by the UK group cover mainly three aspects: psychological, behavioural and cognitive. The psychological adaptations include that the students no longer feel uneasy and nervous communicating with local and international students and UK tutors, and their confidence in cross cultural interaction has been strengthened during the learning process. The behavioural adaptations are reflected in their acceptance, willingness and readiness to work within culturally mixed groups; their braveness to convey opinions in a straightforward approach and to convince group members by using evidence; their increasing independence and responsibility in researching, learning and applying for

Masters studying after graduation; and their ability to face and deal with uncertain events, which may be considered too stressful and disruptive to handle when they arrived in the UK several months earlier. The cognitive adaptations show that the students have become more broad minded in accepting different values and realise that there are various ways of thinking and doing things, for example, the ways in which rules may be followed, students' learning outcomes, and to balance studying and living. They learn to look at things from different perspectives, and realise the shortcoming of confining one's thoughts within a limited sphere. In contrast, the China group reports little sense of achievement, with the main reason being that there is little heterogeneity among members, for they tend to be close in both experiences and abilities. Nevertheless, the university academic staff tend to believe that the prime outcome of teamwork is in the development of team skills, but in reality the students have a different perception and see it just as a job to be done and are more concerned with their grades. Therefore, the important achievements reported by most interviewees are behavioural and cognitive. The former gains are reflected in gaining friendship and relationships, which helps to give additional confidence in expressing opinions; learning to challenge self assertiveness and respect other members' ideas; taking up the leader role to develop organisational skills; and learning to cooperate with others. The latter change is mainly that the students realise the necessity of adjusting one's own behaviour according to the peer culture and to become sociable. In summary, fewer themes are identified in the interviews with the China group, which indicates that the UK group feels a stronger sense of achievement. However the extent to which these themes are noted is not universal among the students. For example, some students mention certain themes more than others. Table 12 (overleaf) shows the topics that have a high percentage of coverage, namely topics that are frequently referred to by the participants

during the interviews with regard to their teamwork achievements. The topics are listed according to the descending order of the references reported by the interviewees. Here the reference refers to the number of times that participants have mentioned the nodes or concepts. From Table12 it is apparent that the frequency of reporting of various achievements is rather different for the two groups.

Table 12 Most Referred to Achievements by the Two Groups

Groups	Most Referred to Achievements (in order of frequency)
UK group	1. Learn from the strengths of the local and international students / team members 2. Prefer culturally mixed & various groups 3. Self autonomy & independence 4. Progressive of expressing opinions & holding ground 5. Self confidence 6. Analysing & researching skills 7. Participation 8. Communication skills 9. Sense of achievement 10. Intrinsic motive to adapt 11. Presentation skills 12. Dynamic assessment 13. Decreased ethnocentrism 14. Responsibilities 15. Active in attitude 16. Wariness of local and other international students & direct revelation 17. Principle abiding 18. Emancipated mind 19. Chronemics 20. Dealing with uncertain events
China group	1. Enlarge friendship circle & develop social relations 2. Challenge self forcefulness and tolerant in accepting other people & their ideas 3. Exchange of ideas 4. Appreciation of the chance of becoming a leader 5. Brave in the expressing of ideas among friends 6. Learn about oneself 7. Cooperation skills 8. Friendship within a group gives additional confidence

4.4.2 Task versus Face and Relationship

It is found that the teams in the UK focus more on task itself rather than on developing social relationships. The interviewees in the UK, when they mix with members from various cultural backgrounds, tend to give more attention to the process of completing the tasks. The students hope to achieve three important aims through working in a team: to get a decent mark, to improve their all round communication skills and English proficiency, and to learn more about various cultures. Since most students realise that it is a big expense for their parents to send them abroad to receive higher education, they are under certain pressure to pass and get the degree, and most of them hope to get a good grade so that they may continue to do a Master's degree in the UK after graduation. Therefore, it is not surprising that the students make every effort to coordinate with group members in order to successfully complete the common goal. Therefore, all team members are expected to take equal responsibilities for the group work, though some members may contribute more than others. Also, the competition between teams occurs, with each team trying to outperform the others. A good illustration of this 'masculine' phenomenon is when each team needs to give its presentation in class to be evaluated by other teams and the tutor. Normally students listen carefully, raise various questions and even challenge the views put forward by other teams. Initially this question time proves to be a big challenge for the Chinese students, who have had little practice of this kind back in the Chinese university. They admit that they used to read aloud from the pre-prepared notes for the presentation. It is a big step forward for them to try to present by memorising the notes, and a real significant progress to talk naturally and then answer questions from the audience and the tutor. The interviewees take pride in their improvement of presentation skills.

In comparison, it is found that the participants of the comparison group in China have to take a lot of consideration of face issue. Every Chinese has a duty of gaining face for the group but has not a right of losing face, because what he/she loses is not his/her personal face but the face of the group. Face culture explains why Chinese people generally prefer passive to aggressive, and prefer whispering or gossiping behind one's back to expressing ideas and feelings openly. They are trying not to let other people lose face, which is a humiliating experience for all. There are three examples to illustrate the importance of giving face to each other during the teamwork in China. First, giving face to friends implies the commitment of the most competent member to take the responsibility to finish most of the task on behalf of the whole team. In the Chinese cultural context, the students find it important to keep good *guanxi*/interpersonal relationships with the peer group. They do not want to offend each other, simply because they meet regularly for classes. *Guanxi* implies a personal relationship based on such constructs as reciprocity, favouritism, and face. Reciprocity refers to mutual benefits and exchange of advantages. Favouritism implies 'doing favours' for friends, for example, offering help and spending extra time on carrying out the team project. The capable student gives face to his/her friends by not letting the tutor know who the free riders are. In order to maintain good *guanxi*, the students tend to have more social activities among members apart from team meetings. Another reason that the students in China appear to have more communication outside class is that compared with the students in the UK, they generally have less pressure in their study, due to the fact that the failure rate at GDUFS is extremely low, plus there is no degree classification. The second example is that very few students raise questions after each team gives a presentation. One reason may be that they show little interest in the topic but a more important reason is they do not want to let the presenter lose face and feel embarrassed

in public in case he/she is not able to give an answer. The other team members will return the reciprocity or favour by doing the same. As a consequence, the question time turns out to be a silent routine, with a few comments from the tutor. The Chinese students regard it as a friendly 'cooperation', which helps to maintain a high degree of relationship quality. The final example is that face in fact acts as one of the most important motives for the students to do a good job in the teamwork. They do not want to lose face in front of the tutor and classmates, and do not want to appear incapable and lazy. To sum up, the close relationship and dependency upon friends is highly valued and much importance is attached to it during teamwork by group members.

Another reason that the Chinese group focuses more on social aspects than the UK group does is that, contrary to what might generally be believed, comparatively speaking most of the students have little or no pressure from their parents to achieve high marks in the university. Their parents care more about their health and well being now. The long and traumatic journey through the schooling system, where high marks have been paramount, has come to an end once the children get into a prestigious university, like GDUFS. The major aim for them now is to get the skills to get a good job after graduation. However, the Chinese students studying in the UK still have great concern about their marks. For those who plan to continue to study in the UK for a Master's degree, they wish to get a 2:1 instead of just a pass in order to enter a university of higher ranking in the league table. Fortunately they are free of financial pressure, unlike other team members, many of whom need to work part time or borrow money for their higher education. It is because Chinese parents do invest a lot of money in their children's education, though gaps exist between urban and rural areas.

4.4.3 Discussion & Negotiation

A certain degree of similarity is found between the two groups in terms of decision making and problem solving processes. The interviewees in the UK and China normally adopt a 'generate – discussion – vote' technique when making decisions. The general procedure is that each individual member reports his/her ideas. After all the ideas have been presented, the members may have a discussion, during which members can try their best to convince the others before the team reaches a decision. If not, the minority have to give up theirs and follow the group consensus.

However the major adjustments reported by the UK group are that they learn to support their opinions by giving evidence and references from various sources. Their views of showing disagreements of each others' opinions and putting forward arguments during discussions change. In other words they interpret the meanings of confrontation in a different way, namely open expression of conflicting opinions or disagreeing with others' ideas does not necessarily mean being rude or unfriendly. They come to consider them to be constructive for teamwork rather than personal and confrontational. Therefore, making contributions to the discussions prioritise over being polite (*keqi*), implicit (*hanxu*), and giving face (*mianzi*) to other members. These findings support the literature which addresses the face and harmony issues in Chinese culture, for example, Gao et al., 1996; Fan, 2000; and Valiente, 2008. The findings also deepen the interpretations of the term confrontation in the sense that it has different implications in different cultures. Whilst in one culture, open expression of different opinions is regarded as a result of critical thinking and a normal process of discussion, in another culture, it might be regarded as impolite. When problems arise, the UK participants tend to resort to a compromising approach. This is in contrast to the China group,

which reports a more avoidance approach in solving problems, with a lot of mentions of face issue, that is, they try to avoid face to face confrontations. Compared with the UK group, they tend to be more lenient towards free riding because of friendship. However, when discussing how they make decisions during group meetings, it appears that many interviewees complain that there are some exceptionally stubborn ones, who insist on individual 'creativity', ignore team decisions and just do what they like. This finding appears to contradict the common belief that Chinese students brought up in a collectivist society always put other people's interest before their own. However, it is supported not only by previous research of the Chinese university students, for example, Lai and Xie, 2004, but also by the participants' view that the individualistic and self-centred characteristics of the young people born after 1985 are always in the way of reaching a consensus. It cannot be denied that the Chinese social shift from collectivist to individualist orientation does impact on the outlook and behaviour of the younger generation.

4.4.4 Temporary versus Permanent Teams

The interviewees in the UK report that teamwork tends to be more oriented towards the task as discussed above. Regarding team formation, there exist variations between the UK group and the China group due to the factors that students take into account when forming a team by themselves. The students studying in the UK are likely to be in a team which is formed more on the basis of individual member's skills and knowledge, ability to contribute and complete the task independently whereas the China group, particularly the boys, tend to form a group on the basis of convenience (e.g. being friends or living close by). The formation to some extent influences what the students can gain from teamwork as well as team's academic performance as found by

Seethamraju and Borman (2009). The UK teams present several prominent characteristics which are as follows:-

First, the teams are relatively temporary and the control of the team tends to be flexible. Each student may be involved with different teams for different module tasks. During one year, they may come across new members from various cultural backgrounds to complete new tasks. Therefore regarding team composition, there are more differences than similarities among members. The changeable feature of the teams might result in more complicated and longer periods of time of mutual acceptance, information sharing, establishment of the norms of the team, getting on with differences, ascertaining the appropriate ways of expressing ideas and solving conflicts, etc. Second, the teams tend to assign tasks based on members' abilities. Since initially members do not necessarily have the knowledge of each other's capabilities, at the team formation stage, each member often needs to give information about him/her and get to know each other. They have to demonstrate their strengths through various means. For example, through e-mails, they can to some extent, learn whether a member's written English is good or poor. Also it is not difficult for them to make a judgement of a member's oral English by his/her presentation at team meetings and discussions. As a consequence, the interviewees, having gone through all these stages, develop the communication skills of working among unrelated and unconnected individuals. For example, they have become more progressive of expressing opinions not only within a small circle with friends but also in a large class or in the public where there are strangers.

In contrast, the teams in China are relatively permanent, with the members coming from the same class and usually formed on the basis of convenience. The reason is that the

grade is divided into 12 classes, with about 30 students in one class. Each class is fixed in the sense that they have the core modules together for two academic years. As a result, members meet virtually every day and get to know each other fairly well. In this respect, compared with the UK group, the process of accepting each other and setting up team norms is comparatively simpler and quicker, due to the homogeneous composition of teams. Further, the teams appear to be more friendship oriented, emphasising relationship development through social interactions.

4.4.5 Facilitator versus Authority

The leader role of the UK teams, though not formally selected, is often taken up by local or European students. This is closely related to the features of the Chinese young students. First, they are already under the heavy pressure of completing lots of assignments and thus feel reluctant or incapable of undertaking extra responsibilities. Second, they tend to associate a team leader with a good communicator and organiser, in which case they consider that the native and other European students have more of an advantage. More importantly, they feel inferior or insecure in an overseas country, which prevent them from exhibiting the abilities that they may have. Initially they appear to withdraw, be humble, nervous, and passive in giving opinions that they do not seem to be the right person to be a team leader. Still another reason is the 'looking after oneself' culture among the Chinese students that stop them from taking on the leader role to make more contributions. However, some Chinese students become a team leader at the later stage. They find that in the UK a leader is more of a facilitator and manager than an authority and expert. As a facilitator, their major job is to help the team coordinate activities or other team skills. This indicates a low power distance between members and the leader.

Teams in China also do not have an elected leader as such. Usually the students who are academically competent or good at organising, by general consent, take up the leader role. Similarly the students in China hesitate to be a team leader. Apart from the 'looking after oneself' culture, there are several other reasons. For example, it is not uncommon that the leader is under the pressure of high expectations of being capable of dealing with lots of responsibilities and performs effectively. The members tend to treat them as a powerful figure, who should possess expertise, competence and devotion. Further, the leader is the one to be blamed if anything goes wrong. Different from the facilitator in the UK, the team leader in China is more of an authority role, who has multiple tasks, for example, organising meetings, resolving conflicts, doing presentations and even completing tasks on behalf of free riders. The students who act as the team leader have the tendency to adopt more controlling and authoritarian approaches to fit in with the Chinese image of being a leader.

4.4.6 Independence versus Interdependence

As a pedagogical tool, teamwork is adopted with the intention to encourage and guide students to develop autonomy in studying and be accountable for the common goal of a team. Furthermore, it is believed that students build up essential skills and abilities through actions and social interactions, rather than simply being taught at during lectures. Independence and responsibility are two of the most referred to achievements by the Chinese students in the UK. This is reflected in the process strategy followed by the team. Generally tasks are allocated fairly among members, with each member having to share equal responsibility and being required to complete his/her parts independently according to the criteria set out in the module guide. There are both internal and external reasons that enable this kind of accountability. The external cause

is that individual and team accountabilities are clearly defined in most occasions, with a contract signed (or implicitly agreed) by all team members. The internal cause comes from the students' cognitive adjustments after studying in the UK. As mentioned in the pilot study, Chinese students tend to regard covering up and completing each other's task as a kind of friendly reciprocal cooperation. This is what many interviewees call 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. However, after studying in the UK for several months, they begin to interpret and understand the meaning of 'cooperation' in a different way. Though helping each other is necessary, being independent in one's work and not letting other team members down during teamwork are even more valued.

By contrast, the China group reports a lot more interdependence amongst members, with the weak ones tending to rely on those regarded as more competent. Although the competent members tend to have a high level of self-efficacy and are confident of their contribution, they do not necessarily experience the rewarding emotions of fulfilment of tasks, as found by Volet (2001) about the Singaporean/Malay students studying in Australia. In fact, most of them find it stressful to complete the tasks on behalf of the whole team. The reasons that lie behind the China group's interdependence are as follows: first, inactive attitude towards teamwork, which accounts for only a small percentage of a student's final grade. Clearly group assessment impacts students' motivation; second, competent students usually care about their marks and study, and thus always try their best to do a better job and get a decent mark for the team. This indicates that in general Chinese students tend to be more achievement oriented. Nevertheless, what should be made clear here is that competent students are not necessarily dominant members, who restrain group dynamics; third, the face issue, having known each other for nearly four years means classmates should cover up for

each other; finally, due to little enthusiasm among the students, group potency/effectiveness suffers, which in turn leads to a 'do not bother' and 'who cares-about the mark should do the work' attitude. It is apparent that this finding is consistent with what Sosik and Jung (2002) have found about the impact of the cultural dimension, namely individualism / collectivism on group potency. The collectivistic values, which have commonly been believed to be held by the Chinese society, do not always lead to fair shares of responsibility and cooperation, and high group performance. The implication from the situation in China is that it is necessary for the tutors to help to structure cooperation amongst the students in order to achieve the optimal team performance and outcome.

4.4.7 Is Storming Stage Avoidable?

The stages of team development in the UK takes longer and appears more complicated due to the heterogeneous feature of the team members, plus the fact that members live on as well as off campus. The Chinese students seem to be informed of and expect the difficulties and therefore regard the 'storming' stage, when all sorts of problems arise, as a normal and expected discomfort. Their knowledge and sources of information about cultural differences come from the previous students who have studied in the UK. Exchanging conversations on the QQ with alumni certainly help them to be prepared for the forthcoming troubles during teamwork.

By contrast the interviewees in China seem to form their teams based on friendship and personal relationship so that they may well avoid the 'storming' stage and enter into the performing stage as soon as possible. In their eyes the 'storming' stage represents the failure of a team. The physical dispersion among interviewees in China is small, with

all of them living in the dormitories on campus. Furthermore, having been studying in the same class gives them the illusion that physical closeness eliminates the occurrence and functions of the stages when group members get to know each other better through conflict solving and development of group goals and rules. However, although they tend to disregard the storming stage, it does give the students a chance to learn to be tolerant, flexible and accepting.

Some group members do not turn up as they promised. Although they themselves do not try hard, they tend to find fault with other members' work. They hardly show any interest or enthusiasm towards group work. I learn to be patient with the laid back members and avoid face to face conflicts. Gradually I have become more tolerant. (CF4)

Conflicts arise due to different understanding of tasks and different approaches to tackle the problem. I learn to be less assertive and try to solve the differences by following the opinions of the majority. (CM3)

4.4.8 One Thing at a Time?

The two groups are similar in their attitude towards punctuality, following schedules and plans, which are regarded as important in carrying out teamwork. However, it is found that they show contrast in managing their time. Whilst the students in the UK group demonstrate a strong tendency to move towards a monochronic use of time, namely step-by-step, one-thing-at-a-time, the students in China tend to remain and are characterised by polychronic time use, with overlapping tasks. This is in consistent with the previous research, for example, Bond (1990), Morden (1999), Kiger (2003),

which regard the Chinese ways of handling things as polychronic. In the UK, when the group members meet, they assume that time should be used for the purpose of discussing or solving problems. Generally they concentrate on the main issues of the meeting, though sometimes the discussion lingers around one issue and turns out to be long and time consuming. Due to the fact that there is a lot more of both teamwork and coursework in the UK universities, they have to finish assignments separately, one by one, in order to meet different deadlines, disperse workload and ease heavy pressure. Gradually they adapt to managing their time in a more efficient and detailed way.

In China, if the meeting is held on the internet, members often do several things at the same time, for example, working on another assignment or reading a magazine while chatting on QQ with other members. If they meet face to face, the situation can be muddled, with members discussing different issues at the same time. The reason for a long and time consuming meeting is caused by too much digressing or interruptions. The leader has to draw the attention of the members and keep the meeting on the prearranged agenda. Another example is that the interviewees, with the exception of one girl, tend to leave all the assignments till the end of the term when deadlines approach, which means they have to deal with several assignments within a given block of time.

4.4.9 Group Assessment

Regarding the two groups' opinions towards group assessment, the similarity lies in the disagreement and disappointment with the fact that free riders obtain the same mark. Both groups hold that one of the biggest contributors to their de-motivation and stress is that all members have the same mark despite their contributions and performance. The

findings of the study support the previous research (e.g. Roebuck, 1998; Brooks and Ammons, 2003; Paswan and Gollakota, 2004; Sharp, 2006; Loughry et al., 2007) which holds the view that peer evaluation in terms of individual member's contribution, capability of completing tasks with good quality, good communication skills, etc. is highly desirable for team effectiveness, fairness and motivation. Although the students are supposed to manage their groups by themselves, tutors' involvement to ensure teams are ready to function and evaluation is fair is much appreciated by the students. This result confirms that the high level collaborative learning need necessary preconditions to take place, for example, the structured cooperation recommended by Johnson et al. (1991), Readiness Assurance Process suggested by Michaelsen and Black (1994), and openness and instructional guidance stressed by Volet et al. (2009). In terms of the difference in this respect, the students in the UK are generally satisfied with the mark obtained for the team projects. Compared with their individual grades, they are more or less the same or even better if they are in the group with some competent European students. They are particularly happy with the presentation grade and the improved skills in making a speech in public. In comparison, the interviewees in China state that the reason why they seldom make complaints about unfairness in group assessment is mainly that the mark of teamwork usually accounts for a small percentage of the final grade. They are quiet about the situation not because they are satisfied but they do not bother and also doubt that the teachers would take any actions to correct the marking criteria. Table 13 (overleaf) gives a summary of the main findings of the differences between the two groups in terms of psychological, behavioural and cognitive adaptation, task strategy (namely team function, advantages of working in a team and leader's role) and process strategy (namely team members' responsibilities, cooperation, communication, team formation, problem solving, decision making, and assessment).

Table 13 UK versus China Group

		UK Group	China Group
Adaptation or change due to cultural exposure and the influence of team members	Psychological adaptation	• Decreased wariness of local and international students • Sense of achievement • Self confidence	• Little sense of achievement • Low motivation because of little functional heterogeneity among members
	Behavioural adaptation	• Culturally mixed group • Progressive of expressing opinions • Persevering in holding ground • Self autonomy & independence • Explicit communication style • Handling uncertainties • Direct revelation	• Challenge self assertiveness • Develop friendship & social relations • Develop organisational skills as a leader • Awareness of different ideas and behaviour • Turn teamwork into individual tasks
	Cognitive adaptation	• Decreased ethnocentrism • Emancipated mind • Principle abiding • Dynamic assessment method • Individualistic values • Chronemics (become more monochronic) • Awareness of own culture	• Reflective in one's own behaviour • Proactive or inactive attitude • Lenient towards free riding
Task strategy	Major function of a team	• Task focused • Non fixed team members	• Face, friendship & relations • Fixed team members
	Advantages of working in a team	• Improve confidence of working with local and international students • Curiosity of different	• Reduce workload • Absorb different ideas • Enlarge friendship circle

		• cultures & values • Cultural interactions • Broaden views • Improve English proficiency • Get a decent mark	
	Leader's role & responsibilities	• Facilitator & organiser	• Authority figure • High expectations of team leader
Process strategy	Responsibilities	• Equal responsibilities • Self autonomy & independence	• Rely upon competent members • Interdependence
	Cooperation	• Fair allocation of tasks	• Complete tasks on behalf
	Communication	• Task oriented • Causal and brief interactions	• Relationship maintaining • Frequent social activities
	Team formation	• Heterogeneity of skills, cultural backgrounds, knowledge, etc.	• Harmonious relationships & convenience • Separate male & female groups
	Problem solving	• Compromising approach	• Avoid face to face confrontations
	Decision making	• Discussion & negotiation • Support ideas by giving evidence or references	• Discussion & negotiation • Stubbornness in individual 'creativity' & difficult to reach a consensus
	Assessment	• Expect tutor's involvement to ensure fair evaluation • Generally satisfied because teamwork mark is better or equally good as the mark received for individual work	• Expect tutor's involvement to ensure fair evaluation • Generally do not complain because of the small percentage of teamwork mark in the final grade

In the summary of the differences and similarities between the UK and China groups, it is important to emphasise the pragmatic stance on this research, which does not undervalue other influencing factors. A number of significant changes have been ascertained in the UK group in terms of thinking and learning as a result of studying in the UK, although the two groups share similar prior ways of learning, knowledge of teamwork, and educational background. The similarities of the two groups form the well-founded basis of making a comparison. In order to strengthen the argument of the impact of cultural exposure, a further step is taken in careful selection of the participants so that students with different learning approaches are included and with a balanced number in the respective group. Having designed the research as such, the possible biases caused by students' diverse individual personality, motives, aptitude, major pathway, macro environment, micro surroundings of universities, etc. should not be underestimated. For example, among the China group, the students state that they tend to form male or female groups, on the grounds of convenience of meeting each other and communication. The Chinese university regulations on students' dating has seen tremendous changes in the past years, (e.g. they are even allowed to get married theoretically), and have become much more tolerant regarding the relationships between boys and girls. However, the most accepted view among the teachers and parents are still somewhat conventional, holding that dating distracts attention from studying, which should be the priority of a student's life. In contrast, the students in the UK are engaged in much more heterogeneous groups, with varied backgrounds and gender. Whilst the whole experiences in an overseas country have a definite influence, it is only when doing teamwork that they have direct involvement with local and other international students. Left to themselves they would be studying independently and seeking solace from fellow Chinese colleagues. All these variables account for the final

differences between the two groups. Nevertheless, the significant point is that the UK group experience more sense of achievement after months' of teamwork experiences. This may be the core of internationalisation of education, which is providing young people chances of accessing another culture and to understand other ways of thinking and looking at different aspects of the world.

Chapter 5 Implications and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This research demystifies the somewhat dominant stereotypes of Chinese learners. Chinese learners in higher education, internationally and in China, have been undergoing a process of change as recorded here. The study thus has very important implications for educators and administrators in British universities and universities elsewhere in supporting Chinese students' educational efforts. In particular, the findings are of great value to those universities which run joint programmes. It is important for those in British universities to know what their Chinese students have experienced in China and what they will likely experience in the UK, and thus to provide support for international students both academically and personally (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). There are a number of issues and problems these students face when coming to the UK and if the positive experience is to be achieved, these problems need addressing. Whilst there is some concern as to how universities in the UK support international students, the issues presented here are from the findings from interviewing the UK group, and relate to the university where they study. The main issues and recommendations involved are:

- To fill the gaps in academic expectations so that the students are adequately prepared for hardships of studying in the UK, including working within teams;
- To lessen the gaps in cultural expectations so that the students have an optimal extent of interaction with local and other international students, promoted by tutors;
- To add more meaningfulness to teamwork by incorporating practical projects.

5.2 Academic and Teamwork Preparation

Since the thesis is mainly concerned with teamwork, and the UK group's adaptation process it brings about, this is given the most importance and emphasis. What is clear is that teamwork does bring about longer term and more lasting benefits. The adaptation process, however, can be slow and at times a painful experience amongst those interviewed. Whilst participants in China group continue in their same traditional way, the UK group is found to be under considerable pressure, largely due to being inadequately prepared for the changes. The findings show that the students are not adequately prepared for the new educational system or cultures of learning that is expected of them, as illustrated by two informants: *"The information we get about studying in the UK didn't prepare us for the learning hardships. We only heard about the positive aspects such as the number of Chinese students studying abroad and getting their degree."* (UKF5). *"Under the stress of the workload I did not want to go to lectures or seminars, but I thought of my parents who were paying for my education. I did not expect to have so much coursework here to get my degree. How I dreamed that one day I could have a sound sleep without such stress"* (UKM2). Apart from the overall learning hardships as mentioned above, informants also express the difficulties of teamwork they come across during the interim interviews: *"My overall feeling is that teamwork is much more difficult here. We have a lot more teamwork here at the business school than in China. To communicate in a second language is also not easy. During the teamwork process, I find it hard to manage the disagreements and differences. In the beginning a lot of time is taken up to solve these problems"* (UKF5). *"I feel stressful because I am afraid that I contribute little to the group by putting forward some valueless points"* (UKF3). These findings suggest that UK collegial support should be offered to the students as early as possible, and may be termed the

preparatory responsibilities. The students should be informed of the knowledge of the course requirements, teamwork assignments and assessment methods as specifically as possible long before they arrive. This may help them to be fully aware of the differences and potential difficulties in learning. Then the collaboration between the UK and Chinese sides is needed to prepare the students for the essential practice, for instance teamwork, to study in the UK, so that the students are well trained and prepared to fit in quickly to the UK educational environment. To put it into effect, the UK University could have a staff or representative, who has a good knowledge of both educational systems, to coordinate and to carry out the preparatory tasks in China.   It is suggested that a UK teacher could teach one or two modules as they would be taught and assessed in the UK.

5.3 Cultural Synergy through Mixed Teams

The findings show that the students have a preference for culturally mixed groups. One of their educational and cultural aims of studying in the UK is to enrich cultural experiences. Their overall feeling is that they have not only become more confident to work effectively in groups but also develop the ability to understand other cultures. Generally the students in the UK tend to be far more positive than negative about working within a mixed team. This is in line with what the small amount of research has also found, for instance, Gill (2007), which addresses the benefits to be gained by going abroad to study.   Nevertheless, there are some negative aspects. The students do complain about the same problems which are widely identified, for example, social loafers, poor timing, marginalisation, etc.   However, once they have completed their studies and reflected upon the whole teamwork process, it is the positive outcomes that they emphasise and are therefore more likely to remember in the longer term.   One

common aspect reported by the students is that efficient teamwork does require a favourable environment in which to take place. This is particularly true at an early stage of their studies, when they lack relevant skills and experiences. An issue thus arising from the findings is a lack of spontaneous cross cultural interactions between Chinese students and local students. This seems to fail to meet the expectations of the Chinese students before they come to study in the UK. During the pre interviews, they express the hope to have as much communication as possible with students from other cultural backgrounds. This is supported by what Zhang and Brunton (2007) find about the Chinese students, who have always expressed the desire for quality interaction with host nationals when studying abroad. Being open minded and showing willingness to build up their competitiveness by studying abroad are the prominent features of the young students born post 1985. *"I want to be in a team with students from different countries so that I can practise my oral English. I want to be in a different circle and be exposed to different cultures. Though there might be a lot of difficulties, I am ready to face them and hope I can make progress,"* states one participant (UKM2). *"I expect new things and working together with students from other countries to complete projects,"* states another student (UKF4). In the conversations, it is found that they have a zeal for new things, for example, British culture, society and people. They state that their studying of English over the past ten years has been dominated by grammar and vocabulary exercises, and they look forward to learning more about British customs and contemporary issues from various perspectives. They are not reconciled about staying in China and hope to discover the rest of the world, including the different values and cultures. There is no doubt that the data shows the participants wish to have more and deeper contacts with local and other international students during their one year study in the UK, so that they would make even greater progress. However, there are a number

of reasons for deep cultural contacts not to take place. These can be categorised as psychological barriers, communication skills and language proficiency. For example, lack of courage to approach non-Chinese students and to break the ice, nervousness of speaking English in front of local and other international students, fear of making mistakes, e.g. grammatical errors, difficulties in using English to argue or discuss complex topics, failing to understand the local students if they speak too fast or use a lot of slang, stereotyped view of local and other international students, thinking that they do not want to mix with Chinese students, etc. As time goes by, they report that they have become more confident in using English, communicating with other students and expressing ideas, as has been discussed in the previous chapter.

Based on the above, it is suggested that managers should make an effort to create a cultural synergy environment, and staff to facilitate optimal cultural exposure and contacts amongst students, such as encouraging the formation of mixed groups. This fully concurs with the opinion of Luxon and Peelo (2009), who address the problem of the discrepancy between policy and implementation, by arguing that it is important to transmit effectively the strategic internalisation policy to the classrooms and lecture theatres, where students and teachers actually experience internationalisation. Reciprocal adaptation (Zhou et al., 2008) and efforts should be made from both sides, i.e. UK educators and international students and this is significant and crucial for successful global education. As having been reviewed in the literature, the concept of 'cultural synergy' in the international educational environment has been put forward by Cortazzi & Jin (1996) and Kingston and Forland (2008). The idea of cultural synergy is to enable the students to draw the best essence from all cultures, form their own sensible judgement and try to build a 'stronger overriding culture' (Chaney and Martin, 2007),

which will facilitate their career and personal development within a global environment. Since internationalisation is one of the top priorities of their host university's future development, it is essential for the managers and teachers to realise that cultural differences need to be managed, and if managed well, it will bring benefits for both the university and the students. The significance of studying in a multicultural education system is supported by Selvarajah (2006), who states that it is especially valuable for the Chinese students who are from a mono-cultural society. It is of paramount importance for both the staff and students to develop cultural awareness and give sensible responses to the cross-cultural issues that arise. It may be argued that the point of international students coming to the UK is to learn so that it is their obligation to adjust themselves to fit in with the British education system and teaching approaches. If they only want to keep to their own cultural heritage, then there is no need to study abroad. This could be used as an excuse for failing to give appropriate and prompt responses to cross-cultural support needed by international students. This research argues that such a view would appear somewhat ethnocentric in nature, and teachers should also be proactive and creative in making adaptations to work effectively with many students from different cultural backgrounds. Developing cultural awareness has become an essential requirement of nowadays' educators dealing with international students. Further, education is not a one-way business, namely the teachers give and students receive, but a two-way interaction, during which both teachers and students are being educated, influence each other and develop together. This argument, however, does not underestimate the role or status of teachers. In fact, it makes the teacher's role more challenging and creative. This issue has also been highlighted by Sliwa and Grandy (2006) who describe some of the contacts with English students as 'hi bye friends', where relations are polite but superficial and brief. For the Chinese students to

acculturalise more fully, it is of prime importance to properly organise culturally mixed teamwork and cooperation amongst international and host students. Though generally the students can manage themselves, the findings suggest that tutors' involvement in the team formation stage helps the students to have a more mixed and balanced team rather than just working with the students of similar cultural background due to cultural attachment and convenience. This is particularly true with the Chinese students, who often at the initial stage are not brave enough to approach the local and international students and voluntary choose to be in the same team, and who also have concern about other Chinese students' accusations of not being loyal and friendly to their own fellow countrymen. All in all, during teamwork process the tutor's role can be compared to a conductor of an orchestra. Every piece of musical instrument originates from different parts of the world and produces a different sound (different cultures). Every performer (team member) plays the musical instrument uniquely. There is no single and best conducting and performing style. However, a conductor can communicate his artistic directions to the performers and to shape the melody of the group to produce a piece of beautiful music. In addition to that, according to what the participants have experienced, sufficient cultural exposure is crucial to adaptation, without which change can hardly occur. Therefore it is strongly recommended that managers of the university provide opportunities that allow cultural exposure and contacts to be set at levels which allow a more optimal outcome.

5.4 Meaningful Teamwork

The data shows that the students are more motivated and enthusiastic about teamwork which has practical application and is related to the real business world. During the pilot study as well as the actual research, all of the participants have high expectations

of obtaining practical experiences during their sojourn in the UK. "*In China, learning is more about summarising knowledge. I hope this will be different in the UK. I hope to have more practical teamwork*" (UKF5). They state that the internship style teamwork enables them to improve practical capabilities, though they may be more challenging. Another major reason relates to the future job seeking, and having internship on their CV certainly adds weight. Further, they tend to show more interest in doing something practical instead of studying pure theories and concepts from books. This in fact supports the researchers (e.g. Charlesworth, 2007 and Kingston and Forland, 2008) who argue that the current generation of learners tend to show more similarities than sharp differences in learning methods, for example, they appear to prefer more pragmatic and concrete learning contents than abstract theories and concepts. Last but not the least is that doing an internship makes studying in the UK more worthwhile and gives them something to show for when going back to China. However, in this aspect, their expectations are generally not met. Most teamwork projects require the students to analyse a case study, give an oral presentation and then write a group report. At the university there appears to be only one module that provides such a chance of meeting these expectations; the one requiring the students to design a business plan for a small business company. Unfortunately the participants are not on that module. They really envy those students to take part in the meetings with local business people. The recommendation is that managers and tutors can be more proactive in establishing links between the university and companies, particularly small firms or shops, which are happy to obtain suggestions on business development without actually paying and making other commitments. Most of the Chinese students studying in the UK actually are potential human resources who can contribute to the building up of contacts between UK businesses and ones in China. Whereas theoretical studying is

necessary for the university students, practical application of ideas are also motivating and add value to the students' overseas learning experiences. Meaningful teaching and learning can be fulfilled through interactive teamwork, aiming to promote cultural awareness, with the best possible intercultural interactions between tutor and students, and amongst students. Practical application may well help the students to become more inventive and creative in the teamwork process. This can be termed as a 2I's + 2C's learning and teaching approach (i.e. Inventive, Interactive, Creative, and Cultural awareness).

In general all the UK informants appear to be happy with a single group mark, since they feel it is at least as good as or better than they could have done individually. However, all of them recognise that free riding affects fair teamwork assessment, and de-motivates hard working students. Although all the participants in both UK and China say they have benefitted to varying degrees from a team approach, and working with others, the findings indicate that all too often teamwork is seen as being added to a module, rather than being integrated with, and little thought given to how the best learning experiences may be achieved. The commonest complaints are about being in a team with irresponsible or lazy members, and other students' stereotyped view of the low ability of all the Chinese students, and thus feel reluctant to work together with the Chinese students, or blame them for low marks. *"When we have Business Strategy teamwork, some local students do not want be in the same group with us Chinese"* (UKF1).   *"Not every member pulls his/her weight at teamwork. There are always some free riders. It is very unfair for the hard working members when we only get one team mark,"* complains one interviewee (UKM1). As a result of the above findings, the

following recommendations are made for the teamwork preparatory, process and product stages.

First, the author agrees with a number of other practitioners in cooperative learning that teams should be put together in a heterogeneous manner and not left to students themselves who will choose like minded friends, or indeed simply selected randomly. When cooperative learning is structured by the instructor, including group formation, team members focus on the task more effectively and help each other in understanding the material better than in the situations when teamwork is unstructured (Siciliano, 2001). Teams are then given some background of the roles each member may adopt, e.g. a small team of three may have a leader, who directs the team's activities, a recorder who keeps the information on the project development and a checker of the understanding and ensuring each member comprehends the reasoning behind any decision, etc. This is the preparatory stage, the final part of which is to ensure all students have a good understanding of the task and assignment material.

The next is the process stage, where it is suggested that the progress of the teamwork should be monitored and guided by undertaking methods such as signing a team contract and grade adjustments by the tutor to reduce the probability of free riding. The counter argument may be that 'a single mark for a team' is the primary reason to judge how a group works together as a team, and not to distinguish amongst the component members. It is suggested that at least one module should have a mid-point evaluation as a learning objective. A mid-point evaluation is to give a general picture of how each member performs in the eyes of the other group members. It would include an (ungraded) peer assessment so that each member could reflect on how they were viewed

by others. This should be informative as to how they stand in the team and being non-graded, the members are likely to be honest. This can also be confidential to the individual, and give each member the opportunity to improve their performance. If necessary, the tutors can arrange to meet each team to learn about their performance and adopt timely action if any problems and conflicts arise. For example, the tutor can arbitrate with the rotating of team roles, so that every individual learns to be accountable. Thus assessment as to how well the team gels and works together becomes part of the objective for team work.

The final is the product stage, which should provide a chance for each member to receive valuable feedback from the tutor and team in order to improve in the future. This should be a reflective process rather than just getting a final grade, which would be tutor assessed, but with adjustments for peer evaluation. The latter, whilst not universally agreed, does reflect the balance of opinion in the literature (Roebuck, 1998; Brooks and Ammons, 2003; Sharp, 2006). It must be remembered, however, that the purpose of the thesis is not to give a detailed outline of how a teamwork assignment should be conducted. Rather it is to assess the learning experiences and development of young Chinese students during their involvement with teamwork. Nevertheless, unless the whole structure is suitably coordinated, much of the potential learning which may be gained from teamwork will be missing. To ensure high level collaborative learning and to stimulate individual and team accountability, more structurally designed courses are required. The students can accomplish more if teamwork is suitably managed towards these higher levels.

5.5 Conclusion

The intention in this section is to identify how the research contributes to the existing knowledge, its limitations, and the implications for future study.

"A very small qualitative study can be just one piece of a very large jigsaw puzzle, illuminating one instance of social behaviour, which, when put alongside other instances from other studies, begins to build the larger picture" (Holliday, 2007, p.84). This precisely summarises the achievement of the current research, which investigates in great detail a specific group of young Chinese students' teamwork experiences in a UK business school. As an insider of being both a researcher and teacher, the author is able to observe, understand and analyse the participants' emotions and behaviour from both perspectives and thus enables this small scale study to offer illuminative instances, which proves that "it is not the size of the study nor the quantity of data that necessarily makes the difference" (Holliday, 2007, p.85). As an insider, the author, rather than being detached with a positivist intention to get objective and an uncontaminated record, integrates herself with the research site and participants to end up with rich data. The objectivity is achieved through the interaction between the researcher and the students, giving true voice and seeing through the eyes of the students being studied. This understanding of objectivity of research is in line with the view of Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Following the analysis of rich data, a clear answer is given to the research questions that are raised at the beginning of this study: Do Chinese students' perceptions of teamwork change as a result of study in the UK? If so, how and why? How does the cultural inheritance influence the ways in which young Chinese students tackle and handle

problems especially in team or group situations? To what extent does exposure within a Western society influence them and to what extent do they change? The answers are: the students' upbringing, namely cultural backgrounds, impact their perceptions and behaviour when they come to the UK. The influences derive not only from the traditional Chinese beliefs such as Confucianism, but also the contemporary Chinese values brought about by the enormous social and economic development of the society. However, this research also suggests that through direct interaction with local and international students during teamwork, the Chinese students alter with various extents psychologically, cognitively and behaviourally. They adapt in their ideology (e.g. decreased ethnocentrism, emancipated mind, perceptions of principle, and acceptance of different cultures of teaching and learning); socialisation (e.g. preference for culturally mixed groups); forms of discourse (e.g. explicit communicating style, progressive of expressing ideas and holding ground, and monochronic attitude towards time); and face system (e.g. more task oriented during teamwork). It is a journey, during which they need to challenge stereotyping, ethnocentrism, misunderstanding and a large number of other cultural barriers. It is a passage through which they learn about cultural differences, try to make sense of the meaning and subtleties of various messages and experiences, and successfully fit in with the new environment. It is a passage where they progress greatly in language skills, communicative competence, cultural awareness, empathy, flexibility, and braveness. Furthermore, this research finds that the extent of adaptation of the students is moderated by their learning approaches. The students with deep and achieving approaches make better adjustments driven mainly by their intrinsic motives. They vary from the students with a surface approach in their coping strategies, overall feeling and evaluation of teamwork, and their cultural adaptation values. In addition, the students with an achieving approach change more in

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the behavioural aspects than the psychological and cognitive aspects compared with the students with a deep approach. The findings imply and stress that creating optimal cultural synergy with diverse cultural contacts/exposure certainly maximises and facilitates cultural adaptation. This research does not underestimate the impact of such factors as individual participants' personality, aptitude, etc. upon students' adaptation, though these variables go beyond the scope of the current study. The findings, based on the rich and deep data collected through in-depth interviews, contribute to the researchers' understanding of cultural adaptation and enrich both UK and Chinese educators' understanding of internationalisation of education, and therefore the study contains far reaching implications for future research.

A number of important cultural views can be inferred based on the findings. Chinese students' adaptation in the new social and educational environment proves that culture of learning is not fixed, instead it is dynamic and changing under contextual multiple influences. The significance for the students is that they move from mono-culture to multi-culture; and from single experience to diverse experiences. Their adjustment is a process of enriching their learning approaches, rather than abandoning totally their own cultures of learning. They learn the things that are not in their own culture, which implies that new cultural traits cannot be forced upon the students, who basically make their own choices and manage their adaptation within a certain environment; there is no superiority of one culture over another, or there are no better cultural beliefs and values; and the Chinese students are not expected to become 'English' or European students; rather to become useful, culturally competent personnel for the changing world. This view is supported by Kingston and Forland (2008, p.211), who claim that studying abroad is more about being involved in, and gaining experience and knowledge of,

another culture, rather than fully adopting that culture and diminishing one's own. Therefore, this study does not support the nature of Hofstede's dimensions, which hold that groups differ in a consistent way from those in other cultures. One issue to be addressed is the potential negative aspects of the Chinese students' adjustments, for instance the implications for the students on returning to China. Following the above discussion, intercultural contacts enrich their cultural experiences and enable them to become more flexible and tolerant of diverse ways of thinking and behaviour. By no means have they abandoned their own culture. In this sense, it can be argued that returning to China does not necessarily mean a reverse cultural adjustment. Clearly this is beyond the scope of the present research, which gives no data to show whether the positive outcomes outweigh any negative ones or vice versa. How the students readjust when returning to China will be the scope of future research to be undertaken.

No research is without its limitations, and a number related to this study are acknowledged.

First, the research studies a specific group in a specific setting. It involves nearly one year's spending on intensive data collection in both the UK and China, and provides the ground work for more studies. Researchers can, with caution, apply the results to similar situations. The interviewees' opinions might not represent that of other Chinese students studying in the UK as a whole. The findings are based on certain historical and cultural settings, and thus caution should be taken to apply interpretations to other situations. Factors at individual, group, task and organisational levels all have limited the generalisation of the findings. It is acknowledged that acculturation is all part of being in the UK for the year and visibly seeing how others react and behave.

Nevertheless, it is only in teamwork whereby they directly mix with a range of different cultures, and have to interact and integrate with others, and this is therefore a major influencing pattern.

Second, there are a number of variables that account for the differences between the comparison group and the UK group, for there are potential differences in the wider course experiences of the two. The participants in the comparison group in China are not pure business majors, while those in the UK group major in business; therefore, their studying experiences may be different. For example, the type of teamwork, time spent in teamwork, categories of activities may all differ. Also, inherent differences exist between the students who have chosen to travel to the UK and those who have not. For the former, they may adjust in a subconscious way to prepare for the adventurous learning journey abroad. These feelings are uncovered during the pre interviews among some participants.

Third, the author's role as a teacher as well as a researcher might influence or shape interviewees' answers. They might become more aware of their role in teamwork. Nevertheless, after comparing the ways discussions took place during the pre interviews and post interviews, it is found that the role as their teacher virtually helps to drive away the initial rigidness caused by strangeness, power distance and unfamiliarity. The interviewer and interviewees gradually chat more as friends than as student and teacher. The trust enables communications to take place in such an open way that it brings out the students' emotional changes.

Fourth, the interpretation of interviewees' responses may be influenced by the author's own perceptions. Having been studying in the UK herself, the author's own teamwork experiences may inevitably influence data interpretation. However, every effort is made to guard against putting one's own experience into the analysis.

Fifth, there is not always a clear dividing line between different learning approaches, and thus a degree of caution is needed when interpreting the relationship between learning approaches and the adaptation process.

Finally, it is impossible to deny the factors, such as personality, traits and skills, which may determine individual participant's amount and type of cultural interactions with local and other international students. The extent of mixture with other members, the amount of time spent for teamwork and the different nationalities that the Chinese students come into contact with all influence their overall experiences, and therefore their adaptation process. To sum up, the research attempts to achieve objectivity, which "does not mean controlling the variables. Rather, it means openness, a willingness to listen and to give voice to respondents, be they individuals or organisations" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.43).

Nevertheless, despite the above mentioned limitations this research contributes to the knowledge in the following areas. First, it is significant for the study to uncover the consequences of the young Chinese students' overseas learning journey. During this journey what they have achieved in cognition, psychology, and character has gone far beyond which people generally see and believe. It is not only a British degree and improvement in English language and business subjects; it is the first step in the

students' life towards becoming independent, creative, open minded, culturally competent, emotionally mature and confident personnel. It is a journey full of hardships, uncertainties, tears but also happiness, which gives the students a valuable chance to mature. Based on a wealth of data and analysis of the factors attributing to the students' acculturative process, the author is in a position, together with other researchers, to suggest that internationalisation of education should work towards an educational reform that allows 'cultural synergy' to take place so as to progress beyond the basic commercial marketing aspect. It is all about human development, namely helping the students to become progressive, confident, entrepreneurial and influential as grown-ups. Internationalisation of education contributes to how the life of young people can be changed. The university's system and pedagogy should integrate this humanistic, social, economical ideology into its future development strategy.

This research also links the theories of the Chinese students' learning approaches with the studies of acculturation and adaptation. Also, it uses learning approaches to select participants. As mentioned in the limitations, it is not uncommon that the students show one predominant learning motive but applying different approaches in various circumstances. In other words, no specific learning approach predominates. Therefore there may be certain bias in interpretation and predication. In these circumstances, it may be asked: "*What is the purpose of establishing the linkage between learning approaches and adaptation*?" The argument is that this linkage provides an answer to the question 'why do the students change to a different extent?' Previous researchers have also attempted to answer the question by studying a number of psycho/social factors such as acculturative stress, attachment avoidance, anxiety, English proficiency, etc. that influence students' adjustment. Therefore this research has deepened and

broadened the understanding of students' acculturative process and coping strategies from a new perspective. In light of the different extent of cultural exposure, an important task for the future research is to follow up the participants if they continue to study in the UK, to complete a longitudinal study so as to explore the impact of longer cultural exposure upon students' adaptations. Research in the future can focus on the effects of more frequent and intense cultural interactions upon students' behavioural and cognitive adaptations.

Another contribution relates to the comparison between the UK group and the China group, with an attempt to triangulate the results and discount the bias. Only on the basis of the comparative data can the argument that cultural exposure in the UK impact Chinese students' perceptions and behaviour in teamwork stand firm. This also provides scope for further study, for example, "*Is the UK group who have team learning experience better prepared when they commence work compared with the group remaining in China*?"

Last but not least whilst teamwork itself has been studied extensively by many researchers, the research is the first to investigate the young Chinese students' teamwork perceptions. This, in its own right, makes the research original and worthwhile, and is perhaps the reason why the papers published at the conference and symposiums have attracted a lot of attention of other researchers and teachers. The Chinese colleagues at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies have also shown great interest in the research topic after reading the author's articles, and hope to develop collaborative research projects in the area. These will surely lead to more future studies in both teamwork and cross-cultural studies. Even the participants have

written their major BA projects about their own teamwork and studying experiences in the UK. One of the biggest contributions that any researcher can make is to increase people's interest of a specific situation. Of major significance is that teamwork, as a process of intercultural learning, brings about change in Chinese students in terms of increasing skills and understanding, and in ways of thinking and perceiving. The extent of such changes is influenced by their learning approaches, as well as their cultural background. Nevertheless, by examining the cultural context, it is hoped that it may help educators and tutors to avoid some of the common stereotyping that Chinese students are rote and passive learners. In line with other researchers, e.g. Gill (2007), Peelo and Luxon (2007), these students have the ability to adapt and learn provided they are in a facilitative environment, and have support from tutors and interactive contact with different cultures.

My contribution is only a drop of water in the sea, but the sea is powerful only because it contains numerous of such small drops.

5.6 Reflection of Research Experience

The following is a reflection of the achievements I have made during the research process and what I would have done differently. Every research has its limitations and every researcher has his/her regrets. The thing that I could have done differently or better would be the first interviews carried out in China. The conversations between the informants and me lacked the natural spontaneity that I had expected. The students' responses appeared somewhat dry compared with the interim and post ones, when my interviewing skills improved greatly and we got to know each other really well. During the latter interviews I appeared to know better about which aspects to prompt the

informants so that I obtained more information and ideas about their perceptions, without following strictly the order of my prepared questions. However, from the very beginning, I did try to arrange informal meetings before the actual interviews. During these meetings, I tried to show them that I was an open minded and mature student myself by sharing with them my own studying experiences in different universities in China, the UK and Spain. My understanding of the students' pre-departure expectations, anxieties and difficulties studying in a different educational environment enabled me to offer suggestions and help if there were any. I did build a friendly relationship with the informants. The friendliness and trust made my participants feel at ease and feel free to reveal their true feelings. Nevertheless I do feel a strong sense of achievement during the past three years' research journey.

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Appendix A   Study Process Questionnaire

Study Process Questionnaire
学习动机及策略调查表

Name: Age: Gender:

姓名：   年龄: 性别:

It is important that you answer each question as honestly as you can. There is no right or wrong answer. Your answers will be kept confidential.
请您务必认真、坦率、真实地回答每一个问题，回答无所谓正确与错误之分。你

所填写的任何资料，我们将为您保密。

Please circle one of the five options for each statement that best fits your study approaches on the Answer Sheet. The numbers stand for the following response:
请您根据您的学习动机及策略在答卷上进行选择。5，4，3，2，1 分别代表：

5 = this statement is **always or almost always** true of me

　　我总是这样做

4 = this statement is **often** true of me

　　我经常这样做

3 = this statement is true of me **about half of the time**

　　我有时这样做

2 = this statement is **sometimes** true of me

　　我不常这样做但我这样做过

1 = this statement is **very rarely/never** true of me

　　我几乎不/从不这样做

1.   I choose my present courses largely with a view to career prospects when I graduate rather than out of their intrinsic interest to me.
　　我主要是根据今后可能从事的职业来选课，但是这些课程本身不一定是我最

　　感兴趣的。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

2.   I find that at times studying gives me a feeling of deep personal satisfaction.
　　我常常能从学习中获得成就感。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

3.   I want top grades in most or all of my courses so that I will be able to select from among the best positions available when I graduate.
　　我想在所有或大部分课程中得高分,这样毕业时我能找到好工作。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

4. I think browsing around is a waste of time, so I only study seriously what's given out in class or in the course outlines.

我认为浏览书籍浪费时间, 我只认真阅读课上发的或大纲要求必读的资料。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

5. While I am studying, I often think of real life situations to which the material that I am learning would be useful.

学习时，我会经常把正在学习的知识与实际相联系。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

6. I summarise suggested readings and include these as part of my notes on a topic.

对所要求读的书，我会总结，做笔记, 并将不同的话题进行分门别类。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

7. I am discouraged by a poor mark on a test and worry about how I will do on the next test.

考试得低分会使我气馁并担心下一次的考试。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

8. While I realise that the truth is forever changing as knowledge is increasing, I feel compelled to discover what appears to me to be the truth at this time.

知识在不断更新发展，我强烈渴望了解新知识。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

9. I have a strong desire to excel in all my studies.

我强烈渴望在学习上出类拔萃。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

10. I learn some things by rote, going over and over them until I know them by heart.

我会用死记硬背的方法学习一些知识。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

11. In reading new material I often find that I'm continually reminded of material I already know and see the latter in a new light.

阅读新材料的时候我常常会记起以前学过的知识，并从新的角度去理解它们。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

12. I try to work consistently throughout the semester and review regularly when the exams are close.

一个学期中我都会努力做到按时学习，快考试时，进行系统的复习。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

13. Whether I like it or not, I can see that further education is for me a good way to get a well-paid or secure job.

无论我是否喜欢上大学，我明白它能为我找到高薪或保障性好的工作。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

14. I feel that virtually any topic can be highly interesting once I get into it.
只要认真学进去，任何科目都会使我产生浓厚的兴趣。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

15. I would see myself basically as an ambitious person and want to get to the top, whatever I do.
我认为我是一个有抱负的人, 无论做什么都期望成为最优秀的。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

16. I tend to choose subjects with a lot of factual content rather than theoretical kinds of subjects.
我倾向选择那些只需要学习和记忆事实而不需要抽象理论分析的课程。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

17. I find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own point of view before I am satisfied.
我发现我需要下功夫研究某个科目才能形成自己的观点。这样我才会感到满意。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

18. I try to do all my assignments as soon as possible after they are given out.
作业布置下来后，我会尽快地开始做。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

19. Even when I have studied hard for a test, I worry that I may not be able to do well in it.
即使我已经认真复习了，我还是会担心考试考不好。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

20. I find that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or movie.
我发现学习理论知识有时会是一件令人兴奋的事情，如同一部好小说或电影。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

21. If it came to the point, I would be prepared to sacrifice immediate popularity with my fellow students for success in my studies and subsequent career.
为了学习和今后的事业，我宁可不合群 (少参加或不参加同学们的集体活动)。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |

22. I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do anything extra.
总的来说，我只学习每门课程要求的项目，没有必要做更多的。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

23. I try to relate what I have learned in one subject to that in another.
学习一门课程时，我会尽量把它和其它课程相联系，力求融会贯通。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

24. After a class, I reread my notes to make sure that they are legible and that I understand them.
课后我会反复看笔记，确保我能看得懂和理解它们。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

25. Lecturers should not expect students to spend significant amounts of time studying material everyone knows won't be examined.
老师不能指望学生花很多时间学习那些大家都知道不会考查的内容。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

26. I usually become increasingly absorbed in my work the more I do.
学得越多，我就会越投入。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

27. One of the most important considerations in choosing a course is whether or not I will be able to get top marks in it.
选课时的一个重要考虑是我是否能得高分。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

28. I learn best from lecturers who work from carefully prepared notes and outline major points neatly on the blackboard/power point.
如果老师认真备课，堂上清楚明确地给出重点，我会学得很好。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

29. I find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to obtain more information about them.
我对许多新的科目都感兴趣，常常花额外的时间去寻找更多的信息,了解它
们。
Always　　　　Often　　　　Half the time　　　Sometimes　　　Very rarely/Never
总是　　　　经常　　　　有时　　　　　不常　　　　　几乎不/从不

30. I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely.

我会自我测试重要的题目，直到我完全理解它们。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

31. I almost resent having to spend a further three or four years studying after leaving school but feel that the end results will make it worthwhile.

可以说我并不喜欢中学毕业后再读三，四年大学,但为了未来还是值得的。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

32. I believe strongly that my aim in life is to discover my own philosophy and belief system and to act strictly in accordance with it.

我坚信我的生活目标是发现自己的人生观和做事原则，并努力按照自己的原则办事。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

33. I see getting high grades as a kind of competitive game, and I play to win.

我认为如何获得高分是一种竞争游戏，我的最终目的就是拿好成绩。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

34. I find it best to accept the statements and ideas of my lecturers and question them only under special circumstances.

我认为最好接受老师的看法和观点，只在特殊情况下才提出异议。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

35. I spend a lot of my free time finding out more about interesting topics which have been discussed in different classes.

我会花许多业余时间去了解课上讨论过的有趣的话题。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

36. I make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures.

我会努力阅读与讲座有关的必读书。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

37. I am at university mainly because I feel that I would be able to obtain a better job if I have a tertiary qualification.

我上大学主要是因为如果我有大学文凭我就可能找到好工作。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

38. My studies have changed my views about such things as politics, my beliefs, and my philosophy of life.

学习使我改变了对许多事物的看法, 例如政治，信仰和人生观。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

39. I believe that society is based on competition and schools and universities should reflect this.

我认为社会是建立在竞争机制上的，学校应该反映这种竞争。

| Always | Often | Half the time | Sometimes | Very rarely/Never |
| 总是 | 经常 | 有时 | 不常 | 几乎不/从不 |

40. I am very aware that lecturers know a lot more than I do and so I concentrate on what they say is important rather than rely on my own judgement.

我认为老师知道的比我多得多，所以我看重老师的观点，而不是依靠我自己的判断。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

41. I try to relate new material, as I am reading it, to what I already know on that topic.

阅读新材料时，我会把它们与我现有的知识相联系。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

42. I keep neat, well-organised notes for most subjects.

大部分的课程我都有清楚的笔记。

Always	Often	Half the time	Sometimes	Very rarely/Never
总是	经常	有时	不常	几乎不/从不

Study Process Questionnaire 学习动机及策略调查表
Answer Sheet 答卷

Name: Age: Gender:

姓名：   年龄: 性别:

Please circle one of the five options for each statement that best fits your study approaches on the Answer Sheet. The numbers stand for the following response:

请您根据您的学习动机及策略在答卷上进行选择。5，4，3，2，1 分别代表：

5 = this statement is **always or almost always** true of me

    我总是这样做

4 = this statement is **often** true of me

    我经常这样做

3 = this statement is true of me **about half of the time**

    我有时这样做

2 = this statement is **sometimes** true of me

    我不常这样做但我这样做过

1 = this statement is **very rarely/never** true of me

    我几乎不/从不这样做

Question 问题		Question 问题		Question 问题	
1	5 4 3 2 1	15	5 4 3 2 1	29	5 4 3 2 1
2	5 4 3 2 1	16	5 4 3 2 1	30	5 4 3 2 1
3	5 4 3 2 1	17	5 4 3 2 1	31	5 4 3 2 1
4	5 4 3 2 1	18	5 4 3 2 1	32	5 4 3 2 1
5	5 4 3 2 1	19	5 4 3 2 1	33	5 4 3 2 1
6	5 4 3 2 1	20	5 4 3 2 1	34	5 4 3 2 1
7	5 4 3 2 1	21	5 4 3 2 1	35	5 4 3 2 1
8	5 4 3 2 1	22	5 4 3 2 1	36	5 4 3 2 1
9	5 4 3 2 1	23	5 4 3 2 1	37	5 4 3 2 1
10	5 4 3 2 1	24	5 4 3 2 1	38	5 4 3 2 1
11	5 4 3 2 1	25	5 4 3 2 1	39	5 4 3 2 1
12	5 4 3 2 1	26	5 4 3 2 1	40	5 4 3 2 1
13	5 4 3 2 1	27	5 4 3 2 1	41	5 4 3 2 1
14	5 4 3 2 1	28	5 4 3 2 1	42	5 4 3 2 1

Appendix B   Interviewing Questions

1.   Have you ever participated in any teamwork?
     你参加过小组项目吗？

     [How much teamwork have you participated in? 多少次？]

     [*The interim interview and post interview will incorporate question 2.1.*]

2.   How many group members are there in your group?

     你们小组有几个组员？

     2.1 Which countries do they come from?

        他们来自哪些国家？

3.   What is the optimal number in a group?
     你认为多少个组员比较好？
     [Does the number of group members influence the efficiency of the team?
     小组的人数是否影响效率？]

4.   Can you mention some benefits of teamwork off the top of your head?
     你认为小组项目有哪些好处？

5.   What kinds of teamwork have you participated in within your studies?
     你参加过哪种小组项目？

6.   What type of teamwork do you prefer?
     你喜欢哪一种？

7.   What is the main aim of teamwork?
     你认为小组项目的主要目的是什么？

8.   Does your team work effectively? If yes, why? If not, why not?
     你参加的小组工作效率如何？为什么工作效率好？为什么工作效率不好？

9.   What skills are involved in teamwork?
     你认为参加小组项目需要哪些技能？

10. Which skills do you think are the most important for effective group work? Why?
     那么你认为哪种最重要？

11. Does your team have group rules for meetings and deadlines? For example, do you
     have a timetable to work to?

你所在的小组有没有有关碰头和什么时候交作业的具体约定或时间表?

12. Do you know what you are meeting for before you go to one?
    每次小组碰头前你知道要做什么吗?

13. What do you often do at meetings?
    每次小组碰头你们都做些什么?

14. Do you go to meetings adequately prepared? Do you contribute during discussions?
    在每次小组碰头前你都准备了吗? 你是否积极参与?

    [Any reasons for little or non participation? 是否有什么原因让你不想参与讨

    论? Any reasons that make you silent or inactive? 什么原因会使你不发言或不

    积极参与? Do you have opportunities to talk? 你有没有很多发言的机会?]

15. Is there a team leader? If yes, how is the team leader chosen?
    你们有组长吗? 你们是怎么产生组长的?

16. What do you think of your team leader? Do you think he/she is a good leader? Why?
    你认为你们的组长怎样? 你认为他/她是否是个好组长? 为什么?

17. Is there any dominant figure in your group apart from the group leader?
    除了组长外,你们小组成员中是否有人比较喜欢 "他说了算",表现出强势?

18. Does your team define clearly what needs to be done and by whom? Does your team have a clear objective?
    你们小组有没有具体规定谁做什么?

19. Do you think a clear allocation of tasks is important?
    你认为具体分工是否重要?

20. Do team members follow the schedule?
    你们小组的成员是否都严格按照计划和时间表工作?

21. If not, why not? How do you handle the situations when they occur?
    如果有小组成员没有按照计划和时间表工作, 你们是如何处理的?

22. Does your team revise your timetable or plan if you get into difficulties?
    如果进程中遇到问题你们是否调整时间表或修改计划?

23. Do team members listen to each other during discussions?

在讨论时，小组成员认真听取别人的意见吗？

24. If not, why not? How do you handle the situation when others do not listen to you?
在讨论时，如果小组成员不听取你的意见，你如何反应？

25. How do you form the group? By students themselves or the teachers? Which would you prefer, and why?
你们的小组是如何组合的？你喜欢哪一种？

26. How does your team solve problems if any occur? Give some specific examples.
如果有矛盾，你们小组是如何解决？问题出在哪里？

[*The interim interview and post interview will incorporate question 27.*]

27. How does each member tackle problems or conflicts if any occur? What do you think of their ways of tackling problems compared with your way?
如果有矛盾，你们每一个小组成员是如何面对和解决的？你认为他们的方法如何？你赞同哪一种解决方法？为什么？

28. What are your strengths and weaknesses in teamwork?
你在参与小组项目时表现出哪些优点和弱点？

29. What are your group members' strengths and weaknesses?
你的小组成员在参与小组项目时表现出哪些优点和弱点？[不同国家的学生可能表现出不同的文化]

30. What does "cooperation" mean to you?
你认为 "合作" 的含义是什么？

31. Do you think finishing tasks on behalf of others is a sort of cooperation?
帮助他人完成工作是否算是合作呢？

32. Do team members meet apart from group work? Is it important?
除了小组活动外，你们还有其它交流吗？交流对你重要吗？

33. Do you think all team members should get the same mark for their assignment? Explain your reasoning?
你认为所有成员的分数应该一样吗？为什么？

34. Do you think the industrious team members who make more contributions should get a higher mark?
你认为贡献大的组员应该得到高一些的分数吗？

35. What do you think of the free riders?
    你怎样看待不干活的成员？

36. How does your team deal with them?
    你们是怎样处理他们的？

37. Do your teachers give you any help? If yes, what help and in which aspects? If no, why not?
    你们的老师提供帮助吗？在哪些方面？如何提供？

38. Do you think teachers' help important?
    你认为老师的帮助重要吗？

39. Are you satisfied with your teamwork? Give reasons.
    你对小组项目满意吗？为什么？

40. Are there any areas which lead to disappointments in teamwork? Give examples.
有没有让你失望的地方？请举例。

41. What do you expect to learn from group work? Do you think teamwork meets your expectations? Do you achieve the aims?
你期望从小组项目中学到或得到什么？你得到了吗？你的期望实现了吗？

42. If yes, why? If not, why not? What are the major problems?
为什么？问题出在哪里？

43. Can you summarise the role you take in teamwork?
你在参加小组项目过程中担任什么角色？

44. If you were with a different group, do you think you could have made a different contribution? What would you do differently?
如果参与别的小组，你会有不同表现吗？

45. How do you think teamwork will help you in your future career?
你认为小组项目对你今后的工作有帮助吗？有哪些帮助？

46. What are your expectations of teamwork in the UK?
你对英国大学的小组项目有什么期待吗？

47. What are your expectations of the teachers in the UK?
你对英国老师的期望呢？

[*Questions 46 and 47 are only for pre interview. For interviewing the comparison group, questions 46 and 47 will be omitted.*]

[*Questions 48 to 52 are focused on for post interview.*]

48. Can you describe your overall emotions/feelings when participating in a team?
你参加小组项目的感受是什么？

49. What are the major problems or conflicts? How do you handle them?
主要有哪些困难？你是如何解决这些困难的？

50. How do you adjust to the learning style, e.g. teamwork?
你是如何适应小组项目这种学习方法的？

51. Have you gained any benefits from teamwork? If yes, what are they?
参加小组项目，你的收益多吗？如果有，有哪些收获？

52. Are there any differences between the members in their teamwork behaviour? Do they influence you in any way? Have you changed because of their influence?

你觉得小组成员有哪些不同？他们对你是否有影响？你有没有因此而改变？

Notes:
For the interviews, students are encouraged to give specific examples and elaborate on their points of views.

Appendix C   The Cronbach's Alpha of Learning Approaches

1. Cronbach's Alpha of Surface Approach

<div style="text-align: right;">N = 11</div>

Reliability Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Surface motive1	29.21	35.604	.415	.742
Surface strategy4	30.00	35.433	.326	.753
surface strategy10	29.13	34.416	.496	.733
surface motive13	28.30	34.745	.370	.748
surface motive19	29.11	34.370	.396	.744
surface strategy22	29.34	35.363	.431	.741
surface strategy28	28.38	35.872	.343	.750
surface motive31	29.90	32.857	.435	.740
surface strategy34	29.31	35.518	.433	.740
surface motive37	29.05	32.014	.590	.717
surface strategy40	29.41	37.046	.285	.756
Overall Cronbach's Alpha				.760

2. Cronbach's Alpha of Deep Approach

<div style="text-align: right;">N = 13</div>

Reliability Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
deep motive2	38.08	41.543	.460	.796
deep strategy5	37.97	41.299	.409	.799
deep motive8	37.23	40.413	.454	.795
deep strategy11	38.05	40.748	.496	.792
deep motive14	38.28	40.838	.345	.807
deep strategy17	37.98	41.650	.315	.808
deep motive20	38.26	41.763	.372	.802
deep strategy23	38.26	39.497	.620	.783
deep motive26	37.54	39.686	.484	.793
deep strategy29	38.00	38.267	.601	.782
deep motive32	37.21	40.904	.398	.800
deep strategy35	38.51	43.221	.297	.807
deep strategy41	37.80	40.461	.589	.787
Overall Cronbach's Alpha				.809

3. Cronbach's Alpha of Achieving Approach

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
		Reliability Statistics		
achieving motive3	26.02	35.883	.418	.813
achieving strategy6	27.44	35.817	.471	.807
achieving motive9	25.82	34.650	.543	.799
achieving strategy12	26.46	35.519	.491	.805
achieving motive15	26.11	36.270	.393	.815
achieving strategy18	26.51	32.187	.655	.786
achieving strategy24	27.03	34.666	.584	.796
achieving strategy30	27.02	36.750	.407	.813
achieving strategy36	27.46	36.186	.539	.801
achieving strategy42	26.59	34.113	.536	.800
Overall Cronbach's Alpha				.820

Appendix D   Consent Letter

To All the Participants

My name is WANG, Yi, a PhD candidate at Westminster Business School, University of Westminster.

My research aims to explore Chinese cultural impact on young Chinese students' (born post 1985) teamwork experiences in a UK business school and to ascertain if in-depth exposure to a different culture helps accelerate any changes of perceptions.

To ensure that the research is entirely ethical, I would like to confirm that your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not appear in any work attached to this research (anonymous) and your answers will not be used for any other purposes than the completion of this research.

Please sign this letter to indicate that you understand the purpose of the interview and that you voluntarily take part in the interviews.

Thank you very much for participating!

Student's Signature & Date

Interviewer's Signature & Date