

# Why Do Chinese Study for a Master of Education Degree in Canada? What Are Their Experiences?

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to understand why Chinese came to Canada to study for a Master of Education degree in an international student program at an Ontario university and what their experiences were in the program. We collected data from nine Chinese students in the program through one-on-one interviews. Research participants thought Canada had a safer environment than the United States, Canada had a better academic reputation than Australia and Britain, and Canada was less expensive than other developed countries. Most participants believed they fulfilled their purpose of leaving China for more education. Based on the findings, we made recommendations on how to improve the program and on further research in the future.

## **Résumé**

Le but de cette étude était de comprendre pourquoi des étudiants chinois sont venus au Canada pour étudier dans un programme international de master en éducation dans une université de l'Ontario et quelles ont été leurs expériences dans ce programme. Nous avons recueilli des données provenant de neuf étudiants chinois dans le programme par le biais d'entrevues particulières. Les participants à la recherche pensaient que le Canada avait un environnement plus sûr que les États-Unis, qu'il avait une meilleure réputation académique que l'Australie et la Grande-Bretagne et qu'il était moins cher d'y étudier que dans les autres pays développés. La plupart des participants estiment qu'ils ont rempli leur objectif en quittant la Chine pour plus d'éducation. Sur la base des résultats, nous avons formulé des recommandations sur la façon d'améliorer le programme et la recherche à l'avenir.

## **Why Do Chinese Study for a Master of Education Degree in Canada? What Are Their Experiences?**

### **Introduction**

Annually, international students contribute \$6.5 billion to Canadian economy and provide jobs for more than 83,000 Canadians. There are 90,000 international students studying full-time at Canadian universities (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2010). “International students enrich our country in many ways, and we continue to learn about their positive experiences in Canada, and their reasons for choosing to study here” (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2009, p. vii). Of all the international students that came to Canada in 2010, 17,934 were from China, the most important source country (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011).

Most Chinese students study together with Canadian students, but some study in programs that are established particularly for international students. At one Ontario university’s faculty of education, in addition to international students studying together with Canadian M.Ed. students, an international student M.Ed. program was established in 2004. Students in the international program took courses arranged specifically for them, but they had the option of auditing courses with Canadian students. Some of them did utilize the opportunity to audit other courses, in addition to taking the courses arranged for them. In June 2005, 25 of the first international cohort students, all from the mainland of China, graduated with a Master of Education degree. Since 2004, there have been eight international M.Ed. cohorts. The seventh cohort graduated in October 2011, and the eighth cohort started in early July 2011. Of all the students in the eight cohorts in the international M.Ed. Program, the vast majority are from the mainland of China, with one Japanese in the third cohort; one Saudi in the fourth cohort; one Saudi in the sixth cohort; two Saudis and a Thai in the seventh cohort; and two Saudis, one Thai, and one from the United Arab Emirates in the eighth cohort. The reason the vast majority of the international program students have been Chinese is that the proposer and then the coordinator of the program is a Chinese-Canadian who has connections in China and who has been making continuous efforts to strengthen these relationships in China so that faculty can recruit candidates there with relative ease. It should also be noted that the vast majority of the students in the international program have been females, which may have something to do with the discipline of education.

It is important to understand why Chinese decided to study for a Master of Education degree in Canada. It is also important to understand their experiences in the program. Instructors and all those working in the program may gain insights into how to improve the program. Understanding students’ goals and experiences may also assist the program in its recruitment efforts in China, which has the largest higher education system in the world with over 30 million students (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2011), and where the demand for higher education in developed countries is still growing (Guo, Chen, & Wu, 2011). In 2011, almost 334,000 Chinese students went abroad for education (Gao, 2012), and the Chinese government intends to send more students overseas (Zong, 2011).

In June 2011, 9.33 million Chinese took the higher education entry examination, but only 6.75 million, about 72.3% of the exam-takers, were admitted into a higher education program in the fall (Zhang & Li, May 26, 2012). It seems that the current Chinese supply in higher education does not meet the demand. There may be three reasons why Chinese leave China for further education. The first is the current Chinese supply of higher education may not be able to meet the

demand and universities in developed countries have been partly meeting the Chinese demand. The second is that many Chinese are interested in receiving education from developed countries, believing that education in these countries is of higher quality (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2002; Zhao, 2011). The third is that—knowing the quality of life is better in developed countries—some Chinese are interested in immigrating to a developed country.

International students are an important component of the student body at the university where this study was conducted, and Chinese students are the biggest international student group on campus. Of the 1,424 international students in 2011-2012 at this university, 832 (about 58%) are Chinese. Understanding Chinese students' goals and experiences in the international M.Ed. program may contribute towards the internationalization of the faculty of education, as well as the internalization of the university. Several Ontario universities have international programs that cater mainly to Chinese students, and other Ontario universities are contemplating the establishment of international programs to attract more international students with Chinese students being one important focus. In addition, most Canadian universities with an M.Ed. program have international students and many of these international students are from China; however, little literature exists that describes how these Chinese students think about their experiences of coming to Canada and studying here.

The purpose of this study was to understand why Chinese came to Canada to study for a Master of Education degree at this university, and what their experiences were as they studied in the program. The knowledge gained through this study may be utilized to improve the program and make it viable, sustainable, and grow. The knowledge gained in this study may also be useful for the program's recruitment efforts in China. In addition, the knowledge gained through this study might be useful for M.Ed. programs in other Canadian universities that have Chinese students and that are interested in recruiting more of them.

### **Context of the Study**

In 2003, a graduate from the Master of Education program at this university's faculty of education, with the assistance of a professor, proposed starting an M.Ed. program specifically catering to international students. The program was called International Student Program (ISP) with a purpose of recruiting students outside Canada and providing them with knowledge of Canadian and Western education. The graduate who proposed the program became the coordinator of the program once it received approval and started operation.

The first international cohort of 25 students arrived on campus in March 2004 and they graduated in June 2005. Since the first cohort there have been eight cohorts. Changes to the program have been made since the first cohort. Currently the program's duration is 16 months. The ISP students start courses in early July and graduate in October the next year. They take two courses in summer and nine more courses in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Some of them, often those interested in pursuing a doctoral degree, prefer to write a major research paper under the advisement of a faculty member instead of taking courses only. In the seventh cohort, four out of 39 students decided to write a major research paper. These four students worked on their research projects after taking seven courses.

### **Methodology**

This is a qualitative study. In a qualitative study, the researcher "relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words... from

participants; describes and analyzes these words” (Creswell, 2008, p. 46). The data collection method used in this study was one-on-one interview.

All the students in the fifth international cohort who started in early July 2008 and graduated in October 2009 were invited to participate in the study. A participation information and consent form was distributed to the students. Out of the 16 students in the cohort, nine (all females) volunteered to take part in the study. Each of these who agreed to participate was interviewed for about half an hour. The interviews were conducted in Chinese (Mandarin) in February 2009. During the interviews, the participants were asked the following questions:

- 1) Why did you choose Canada, not another country, such as the United States, Britain, or Australia for your further education?
- 2) Why did you decide to study for an M.Ed. degree at this university, not another discipline or university?
- 3) What have you gained in the program?
- 4) Will you go back to China once you graduate from the program?

The participants were also invited to comment on the strengths and limitations of the program and were asked to provide suggestions for improving the program.

Participation in this study gave these students an opportunity to reflect on and discuss their goals and experiences of studying in the program. Once in Canada and having started their program, they might find the reality different from what they had expected back in China. In responding to the interview questions, they thought about why they came to Canada, what they had gained in the program, what they had expected but did not receive, and what they hoped to change so that future students would benefit more from the program. They also discussed what they wanted to do once they graduated.

The interviews were audio-taped for transcription and data analysis. One of the authors of this article is a Chinese-Canadian who translated the transcribed data into English. We went through all the recorded, transcribed, and translated data, and organized the students’ responses following the structure of the interview questions. In reporting the findings from the study, we use pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the information collected.

### **Findings**

In responding to the first question: Why did you choose Canada, not another country, such as the United States, Britain, or Australia to further your education? Ai said Canada is a multicultural country with a nice environment and it is also safe. Bin stated that there were two reasons why she decided to come to Canada. The first was that she had liked Canada since she was a little girl. The second was that she had participated in a cultural exchange program organized by the Chinese Ministry of Education and had visited Canada twice, each time for a month living with a local family; both times, Canada had given her a very good impression. When the time came to decide which country she would go to for further education, Canada was a natural choice. Cui said she originally planned to go to Western Europe but was told it was very expensive and it was difficult to obtain a visa. Her parents’ friends recommended Canada, saying Canada was a good country with a nice environment and high quality education. They told her Canadian education was similar to American education but that the Canadian environment was much better. She never considered Australia because there were too many Chinese students and studying in Australia would not be very meaningful. Dong came to Canada

because her agent told her that if she went to study in Canada it would be easier to immigrate after graduation. The agent also told her Canada was less expensive than Western Europe and it was safer than America. The vast majority of international cohort students were recruited in China through agencies. These agencies are businesses that provide relevant information to those who want to study abroad and help them apply for a student visa. They charge a fee for their services.

E believed education in North America was as good as that in Britain. She believed it was easier to be accepted by a Canadian university than by an American university and easier to obtain a Canadian visa than an American visa. She also believed Canada was safer and more stable. Ge claimed that as long as you have money, you can obtain a degree from Britain or Australia. It would not be very meaningful to study in either country. She did not like America. That was why she selected Canada. Hua listed three reasons for choosing Canada: 1) when she accompanied her classmates to make inquiries at an agency about studying in Canada, she herself became interested, so she also applied; 2) she had relatives in Canada who told her studying in Canada was not as expensive as in other developed countries, but that the quality of education was as good; and 3) the Canadian government encouraged international students to become permanent residents once they graduated. Ing said she did not go to Australia because there were too many Chinese students. She thought if she came to Canada she would spend more time with Canadians, which would be helpful for her future. She did not go to America because that year it was very difficult to obtain a US visa.

In responding to the second question regarding why they decided to study for an M.Ed. degree at this university, Bin said she studied in an undergraduate program at a medical university. When she had her practicum, she found that focusing on medical science alone did not allow her to be broad-minded enough; she felt she needed to study something else to become more open-minded. Cui stated that people working in the agency through which she sought information about studying abroad told her that all she had to decide was what discipline she wanted to study and they would arrange the rest. The agency recommended two universities: one was this university's Faculty of Education and the other was another Canadian university's Faculty of Business. She had relatives working in the education sector and one of them told her this university's Faculty of Education ranked well in Canada, so she decided to come here. Dong felt teaching might be a good job for a girl. Her agency recommended two universities upon hearing that she was interested in obtaining a Master of Education degree, which were this university and another Canadian university. This university admitted her first. E said right after she registered with her agency for their service, this university's professors arrived to interview candidates, so she applied. The agency suggested two discipline choices: education and business. Her parents thought there were too many Chinese studying business and they did not see a future for her in business. They thought probably studying education would be better for her, so she decided to study for a Master of Education degree.

Feng studied humanities in her Chinese undergraduate years, was quite interested in education, and both her parents were university professors, so she decided to study for a Master of Education degree. The reason why she selected this university was that before graduating from her undergraduate program, this university's professors were interviewing applicants in her city, so she applied. Ge obtained her Bachelor's degree at Beijing Normal University, a teacher education institute, and she was very interested in education, so she decided to study for a Master of Education degree. Her agent recommended this university. In addition, her cousin studied here and felt it was a good university. Hua said her agent recommended two graduate programs: an M.B.A. program and an M.Ed. program. In her undergraduate years, she studied educational

administration and she decided it would be easier for her to study for a Master of Education degree. Another reason was that she believed that if one studied the same field in both undergraduate and graduate studies, it would be easier to find a job after graduating. One more reason was that she actually was quite interested in education. There were also several reasons why she picked this university over others. The agency recommended it and it was in Ontario, not far away from Toronto, which might make looking for a job easier in the future. Ing stated that her agent told her that even though she did not study education in her undergraduate years, she could study for a Master of Education degree by studying in the preparation program first. This university's Faculty of Education and Faculty of Business have a joint preparation program for master's studies where international students who did not meet the admission requirements for a master's program can study for eight months to improve their abilities—mainly English abilities—so that they can meet the admission requirements. The joint preparation program also prepares students for the Canadian education system. She studied in the preparation program before enrolling in the international Master of Education program. Graduates from the preparation program have to go through similar application procedures to enroll in the M.Ed. program.

In responding to the third question (“Since you have studied in this program for about eight months, what is the most gain you have received and what comments do you have on the program?”), Ai stated that the most important gain she received was that she had some understanding of Western pedagogy, how Canadian students study in a university, and how she should study in a Canadian university. Generally speaking, she fulfilled her purpose of receiving education overseas to have an understanding of the Canadian education system, Canadian professors, and Canadian students. Bin said although she was busy studying, she was happy because she gained more knowledge than in her undergraduate program when she studied medicine. She studied something she liked, was more open-minded, and became more knowledgeable. Cui had been in Canada for over 20 months because she first enrolled in the preparation program before entering the M.Ed. program. She did not feel any significant change because the preparation program did prepare her for the M.Ed. study. After she began her graduate study, she started thinking about the differences between Chinese education and Canadian education. At first, probably because of freshness, she felt Canadian education was better, however, after a while, she felt Chinese education was not as bad as some people described it, and Chinese education was appropriate for the Chinese context. She liked the small class but was not satisfied with the composition of the class: all Chinese, and all females. She felt her conversation colleague was good; this person encouraged her to take part in many university activities to understand different things, which she herself would not have taken part in. The Faculty of Education provides a conversation colleague for every student in the international program interested in participating. This conversation colleague interacts regularly with the partner in the international program, helping the international student improve English and increase her understanding of Canada. Conversation colleagues are recruited from domestic Master of Education students. Dong felt she made significant progress since her undergraduate major was not education. She also felt Canadian professors were quite different from Chinese professors. She liked one Canadian professor very much but she disliked some other professors. The one she liked very much taught students knowledge through games, respecting students' own development, but at the same time having the classroom under control. Those whom she disliked taught pedagogical concepts that were very different from her own understanding. Her conversation colleague helped her improve English, especially at the beginning, helping her to speak English more fluently, which was an obvious sign of progress. E believed she made

progress in improving her English. Other than that, she did not feel she made significant progress. Basically, she studied all her courses by herself. She took part in group presentations and, when all presentations were complete, a semester ended.

Feng believed her English was much better than it was when she started the program, particularly her oral English and writing. She received assistance from professors and classmates—especially from classmates who had studied in the preparation program. She felt she had an excellent conversation colleague. She lived in her home for 10 days during the reading week and spent a good time with her family. Ge believed that, of all the courses, the internship course in which they visited local schools and observed classes was the most helpful. During the observations, she felt she understood the differences between Chinese education and Canadian education. Her conversation colleague was a Mexican immigrant who had similar experiences of learning English. They talked not only about Canadian culture but also Mexican culture. Because of this, she felt she gained more than other Chinese students. She believed one thing about Canadian education was that Canadian professors would not demand students do something but they would instead encourage students to do things on their own.

Hua felt she gained a lot in many areas in this program. The most important gain was how she thought in the classroom. There was more discussion in Canada, and during discussion she often felt that people with different ideas were all right. She gradually felt that in education sometimes there was no right or wrong, but people continuously worked on improvements to find the most appropriate approach. She also felt that she improved her English a lot, since there weren't many Chinese around and she had to use English most of the time, whether it was in study or her daily life. Finally she had a very good conversation colleague. She increased her confidence in speaking English and realized that the more English she spoke, the more confident she became. She learned more about the life of local people. Ing indicated that there were advantages and disadvantages to the international program. One disadvantage was that all the students were Chinese and they often spoke Chinese to each other, which was not good for them in terms of improving their English. But she said she might have difficulty attending classes in the domestic program. She would not understand as well as those who had taken undergraduate courses here before enrolling in the master's program, and she might also have difficulty adapting to the situation. However, she claimed that those Chinese studying together with Canadian students might not be stronger in English. A Chinese student from the domestic program visited their class and her English was not better. She believed she gained something in the program. Her conversation colleague was very good, taking her to participate in various activities. It was easy for students in the program to make an appointment with professors, usually by email, and students did receive assistance from professors. The Office of International Services was also very helpful, providing assistance when international students applied for an off-campus work permit and when they filed a tax return. The Office often emailed international students, notifying them of events on-campus and in the community.

When asked whether they would stay in Canada upon graduation, Ai stated that she had not made up her mind. She would consider applying to a Canadian doctoral program if that was possible. Bin indicated she would return to China because there were many opportunities. Cui said that in the long run she would return to China because she was more familiar with Chinese education and was more interested in working in the Chinese education system. Although she had been in Canada for over a year and had visited a variety of schools, she did not consider herself to really understand the Canadian education system. Everything she knew about Canadian education was superficial, not thorough. However, when she graduated from the M.Ed. program she planned to find a job and work in Canada for a while to gain some work experience.

She had never worked. She only had study experience but no work experience. She expected it would be difficult for her to find a job working in the Canadian education system. Her English was not very good and she was not knowledgeable in other areas either. She just wanted to find a job that might be suitable for her and allow her to try the experience. When she returned to China, she would find a job related to education. Dong stated she would return to China once she graduated. She said it would be very difficult to find a teaching job in Canada. If she returned to China, it would probably be easier to find a teaching job. In addition, it would be easier to teach in a Chinese school. On the weekends, she volunteered in a school in the city that taught Chinese. After observing the classroom here, she felt she would feel a stronger sense of achievement if she worked in a classroom in China. In a Chinese classroom, children were more obedient. Here, a classroom seemed chaotic, and every child was doing his or her own things, probably because education here was more child-centered. E declared that right after she graduated, she would return to China to start her own business, probably in international trade.

Ge said she would return to China immediately to find a job in the education sector. Hua indicated she wanted to stay in Canada, but she knew that although she really wanted to work in the education sector, it would be difficult for her to find a job in Canada related to education. She would look for a job in other areas, take more courses, obtain other certificates, and then look for a job in education. Ing stated she would find a job in Canada, but eventually she would return to China. It was almost impossible for her to find a job in the Canadian education system. The internship course was only comprised of visits to local schools. It would be more useful to have a co-op program, like the one in the Faculty of Business, which was a kind of work experience. Most students in the international M.Ed. program did not have any work experience and came to this program immediately after they graduated from their Chinese undergraduate study. They believed that without work experience, they would not be able to find a job even if they returned to China. Hua wanted to work here for a while, obtain some work experience, and then return to China to look for a job. If she returned to China right after graduation, studying in Canada would be meaningless. If they could have some co-op experiences, they would have a better understanding of Canadian schools, and their English was still weak. Ing observed an undergraduate class where students spoke out freely; however, students in the international program were different in that whatever they said they went through a process of translation. In international student classes, there was often silence. Often, the students did not want to say anything. When they wanted to say something, it was not easy to find the right words. Sometimes when they made statements something was lost in translation, and they could not express themselves as freely as Canadian students.

In responding to the question of what suggestions they had to improve the program, Ai stated that all the students in the program were Chinese and there was little interaction between Chinese students and Canadian students. She hoped at least she could take courses together with Canadian students. Bin said more opportunities should be created to let international students interact with Canadian students. Before coming to Canada, the agency did not tell her all the students in the program would be Chinese. She had been here for about eight months but she still did not feel she immersed herself in the local life and had enough interaction with Canadian students. She mainly used Chinese in her study and life. Cui felt that, generally speaking, the program was good. Personally, she felt the program was too short. In China, one had to study for three years full-time to obtain a master's degree. She had been here long enough and she felt alright. For those who arrived directly from China to start their M.Ed. Program, it was quite difficult. By the time they adapted themselves, the program ended. She felt the program would be better if it had been longer. Dong thought what needed to be improved the most in the



international student program was to make it really international. Students from other countries should be recruited into this program. Although students would still come from non-English-speaking countries, at least they had to use English to communicate with each other, and they could learn each other's cultures. At the moment, one felt one was studying in a program for Chinese students. E felt some professors should improve their teaching. Some professors felt very good about themselves and seemed too self-confident. She wanted to study together with Canadian students, but since most Chinese students' English was not that strong, they needed more understanding and assistance from professors. Some professors did not understand Chinese education or they only knew a little about it. In class, they wanted to hear students say how bad Chinese education was. Personally, she felt Chinese education was not that bad, particularly its basic education (from Grade 1 to Grade 9).

Feng thought students in the international program could probably stay together in the first semester, but that they could then study with Canadian students in the second semester so that they could have more interaction with Canadian students. She felt time was a little tight for the program and there was quite a lot of pressure. Ge believed the program was good and she did not see any need for significant improvement. Hua suggested that the program should create some work opportunities for students so that they could have some work experience. With an M.Ed. degree one could work in a variety of areas. If graduates had work experiences, it would be easier for them to find a job, whether they wanted to return to China or stay in Canada. In the internship course, they were like tourists, paying superficial school visits. Like Hua, Ing also suggested that the program should let them have some work experience. She asked, "Can we find a job when we return to China if we only take courses here?"

### **Conclusion, Discussion, Recommendations, and Future Research**

Based on the data, we conclude that the nine participants came to Canada to study for a Master of Education degree because they believed that Canada offered quality education, because Canada was safer and less expensive than other countries, and because most of them were interested in working in education. One thing four participants mentioned is that they thought Canada has a better or safer environment than the United States. This is an important reason why they decided to come to Canada. It is well-known in China that the United States is the target of extremists. One participant said she did not like the United States. This may reflect the opinion of some Chinese who perceive the United States as an arrogant country that interferes into the internal affairs of other countries, including those of China. Many Chinese believe it is wrong for the United States to have invaded Iraq. Another thing that can be gathered from the responses is that three participants believed studying in Canada was less expensive than in some other developed countries.

It seems that for three participants, Canada had a better academic reputation than Australia and Britain. Ge claimed that as long as you have money, you can obtain a degree from Britain or Australia. Actually, there is financial pressure on British universities to make money from international students, primarily from Asian students (Robertson, 2010). British universities established at least two branch campuses in China: Birmingham-Ningbo University and Liverpool-Xi'an Jiaotong University. However, Australia is the country with the highest proportion of international students (Robertson). In 2011, 557,425 international students were enrolled in education programs in Australia (Marginson, 2012). International education brought \$18.6 billion to Australia (Jiang, 2010), and "Australia has become a by-word for making money out of international student flows" (Marginson, p. 11). Most Australian and British universities

are public sector at home but operate as commercial ventures abroad (Bashir, 2007, cited by Adnett, 2010). Some Chinese have noticed that Australia and Britain are more aggressive in recruiting Chinese students. Cui, Ge, and Ing mentioned that it was easy to be admitted by an Australian or British university. In addition, both Cui and Ing mentioned that they would not go to Australia because there were too many Chinese students.

Seven participants believed they gained something from the program and fulfilled their purpose of leaving China for more education. Two indicated advantages and disadvantages of the program. Participants had obtained some understanding of Canadian education and Western education, and they established some appreciation of the differences between Chinese education and Canadian education. Six participants wanted to work in the education sector. They realized that it was more difficult for them to find a job working in Canadian education than in Chinese education due to their weak English and a lack of real understanding of Canadian education. They hoped this program might let them have some understanding of Canadian education and Western education, thus helping them find a job working in the Chinese education system.

Another important thing was that four participants indicated that they improved their English significantly in this program. Although they felt they improved their English through the program, most of them still felt their English was weak. Ing observed that because of their weak English, students in the international program were not able to express themselves as freely as Canadian students. Insufficient English proficiency is one of the top factors negatively affecting Chinese students' study in North America (Huang & Klinger, 2006; Windle, Hamilton, Zeng, & Yang, 2008; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). In addition, Chinese students are from a very different cultural background, and cultural factors negatively affect their academic studies (Huang & Cowden, 2009). Six participants believed that they benefited significantly from their conversation colleagues, who helped them improve their oral English and increased their understanding of Canada. Four participants wished that they had interacted more with Canadian students.

For two participants, it seems that their parents had an influence on their decision to obtain further education overseas. Cui said her parents' friends recommended Canada. E stated that her parents thought it would be more useful for her to study education, not business, so she eventually decided to study for a Master of Education degree. Another obvious finding was that the agents who provided information to the participants when they inquired about studying abroad had a strong influence on their decisions. Cui came to this university because her agent recommended it. Dong decided to come to Canada and this university because of her agent's suggestions. Ge, Hua, and Ing all said they selected this university because of their agents' recommendation.

Based on the findings of this study, we recommend that the program enhance the effectiveness of the conversation colleagues and encourage international students to have more interaction with Canadian students by auditing domestic courses and participating in university and community events. Professors teaching in this program may also need to be more student-centered and adopt methods that are more engaging and more convincing. In recruitment, more information about how the program is organized is useful for applicants to have a better understanding of the program. Two participants stated that one of the reasons why they came to this university was that when they considered going abroad, professors working in the program were in China interviewing candidates. Currently, professors in the program go to China to recruit students twice a year. It is advisable to consider increasing the frequency of faculty's going to China for recruitment.

In its 2011 budget, the Ontario government indicated that it would increase international student enrolment by 50% while guaranteeing spaces for qualified Ontario students (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2011). The federal government is also interested in having more Chinese students in Canada, as the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and its consulates in Shanghai, Chongqing, and Guangzhou participated in the largest international education exhibition in China in October 2011 (Fairlink Exhibition Services Ltd., 2011). In its 2011 budget, the federal government allocated \$10 million to promote Canada as an international study destination (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2011). Because China is the most populous country in the world with the largest higher education system which still seems not to meet its citizens' demand, because Chinese are interested in learning from developed countries, and because some Chinese are interested in immigrating to a developed country, Chinese come here for further education and China is the most important source of international students (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). As internationalization increases in Canadian universities, there is potential for Canada to have more Chinese students.

According to a recent report, 50% of international students plan to stay in Canada after they have completed their studies (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2009). Anecdotal information from previous graduates of the international M.Ed. program indicates that although some Chinese students in the program planned to stay in Canada after graduation—and some did stay using the opportunities such as those through the post-graduation work permit program—many of those who stayed found it difficult to find a good job and eventually returned to China. Of the nine participants in the study, two did not respond to the question whether they would stay in Canada, four said they would return to China immediately, two stated that they would stay for the moment to gain some work experience but would eventually return to China, and one indicated she wanted to stay in Canada permanently and eventually find a job in the education sector. It was interesting to note that two of them said that being able to immigrate to Canada was one of the reasons why they selected this country for their graduate education.

Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia have loosened residency requirements for overseas graduates from their master's programs, no longer requiring them to have an employment offer before applying for an immigration visa. In addition, Manitoba made legislative changes so that all international students who have obtained a study permit of at least six consecutive months are eligible for Manitoba health coverage effective April 1, 2012 (Manitoba International Students Health Insurance Plan, n. d.). The predominant reason why they did this is to encourage skilled overseas graduates to stay in province. Canada appears to be working to integrate its migration policy towards two aims. The first is to help provinces capitalize on a valuable source of talent. The second is to give prospective international students overseas employment opportunities. This change could affect Canada's attractiveness as an overseas student destination (The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2010).

While China is "rapidly becoming a world power in research" (Pendlebury, 2010, p. 7), it will not become a research superpower by 2020 as Hu Jintao, the President of the People's Republic of China, hoped (Altbach, 2010). As the Chinese population and economy continue to grow, the demand for foreign higher education also continues to grow (Guo, Chen, & Wu, 2011; Zhao, 2011). In 2010, the Chinese higher education participation rate was 26.5%, still lower than the average of OECD countries. According to a Chinese ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities, China has only three universities among the top 200 universities in the world (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, 2011), when China has about one-fifth of the world population and the second largest economy. It will be a while before the vast majority of Chinese universities provide education with quality similar to that in North America, Western Europe,

and Japan. The number of Chinese who came out for further education worldwide increased significantly from about 130,000 in 2007 to almost 334,000 in 2011 (Chen & Sun, 2010; Gao, 2012). Because of the apparently inadequate Chinese higher education supply, the Chinese interest of learning from developed countries, and some Chinese's interest in moving to a developed country, Chinese will continue to leave China for education. If Canadian universities do a good job in providing quality education and if the Chinese economy continues to develop as it has had in the past three decades, the number of Chinese studying in Canadian universities may increase.

It will be interesting to find out why some Chinese students apply to the international student program, usually through an agency, instead of applying directly to the university and studying together with Canadian students. We suggest three reasons why Chinese come out for further education. Future research can ask Chinese students why they leave China for more education to confirm or refute these three reasons. Another interesting topic that can be investigated is how many Chinese come to Canadian universities with a goal of improving their economic life. "International study is associated with a significantly increased probability of permanent migration to the host country" (Adnett, 2010, p. 629). However, it is still rare for international education to be discussed on the basis of economic migrants (Scott, 2010).

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