

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Homecoming: Foreign-Educated Returnees' Experience of Reentry

into Chinese Universities in Yunnan Province, China

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Massey University, Wellington

New Zealand

Min Wang

2016

Abstract

With the growing number of foreign-educated graduates returning to China, few studies have been done on what happens when they return, especially those who work in Chinese universities. The purpose of the study is to explore the re-entry experiences of returnees who have been employed in higher education institutions in Yunnan Province, China, from three different perspectives: the perspectives of returnees, non-returnees and administrators via one-to-one interviews. The study assesses what difficulties and challenges these returnees face when they returned to China to work at Chinese academic communities and also make recommendations on how Chinese universities can make use of returnees' social and cultural capital based on the findings of the study.

In this study qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used to collect information from different sources. Qualitative method was adopted as the primary method and quantitative as supporting role. Twenty-four foreign-educated returnees and 11 non-foreign-educated graduates were interviewed. Nine management leaders were also interviewed to explore the organisational perspectives in dealing with the returnees. Simultaneously three different group questionnaires were distributed to these participants to collect quantitative data.

Analysis of the data suggested that these returnees encountered challenges in re-adapting into Chinese universities, both academically and culturally, even though they were regarded as having social and cultural capital advantages. The data indicated that returnees had difficulties in utilising their knowledge in Chinese universities. They had limited influence on the universities' research, teaching, and management or on changing the academic environment. The Chinese academic culture, the administration systems and returnees' changing of cultural perceptions helped to influence returnees' re-entry experiences. Among these factors, academic re-adaptation and the bureaucratic system were the two factors that influenced returnees' experiences most. The returnees reported negative attitudes towards Chinese universities in two areas: the Chinese academic culture; the bureaucratic nature of the Chinese universities.

It is argued in this study that if the Chinese government and the management levels of universities want to make use of returnees' social and cultural capital, universities should

build a healthy organisational culture and improve their services to returnees. It is critically important for Chinese universities to establish a more reasonable assessment system to guide research and teaching. Also, in a healthy academic environment, research should not be connected with bureaucratic power. That is, universities' management systems would focus on professionalism instead of managerialism. Further, establishing a supportive management system will help returnees to re-adapt to their Chinese academic life smoothly.

For returnees, it is suggested that they should hold realistic expectations towards Chinese academic and social culture in order to manage issues in re-adaptation. To deal with workplace cultural and sociocultural issues, it is important for them to communicate with colleagues and friends as often as possible, thus to help them become familiar with the cues and norms of the home culture again. Further, returnees would need to actively establish research teams that include both returnees and non-returnee colleagues. It will help them to employ their knowledge learned overseas, and at the same time, to build effective interpersonal relationships with non-returnees and other returnees.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to those who helped, guided and supported me to arrive at this destination, and who provided insight and inspiration.

My deep gratitude is sent to my main supervisor Professor Frank Sligo, for his wisdom, guidance, encouragement, considerateness and endless patience through these years and beyond. Sincere thanks also to my co-supervisor Dr. Mingsheng Li, for his academic help, knowledge, tolerance and valuable advice on my research. Words cannot express my gratitude for the many inspiring conversations with both of them that sparked so many ideas; and thanks also given to Ming's family, Helen, every single moment spent with this loving family is cherished.

I am also very thankful to all my participants for sharing their personal experiences, and for their time and support, especially to those who helped me find the potential participants in the study. This thesis would be impossible without their generous contributions.

Appreciation also goes to Lois Burns, for her help in the early stage of my candidature, on my research confirmation, and on the designing of the interview and survey questions. Thanks are also extended to Paya Hsu, for her help and valuable advice on my thesis; and to George Huang, for sharing his ideas with me.

My grateful thanks go to all of family members for their understanding and for encouraging me to study overseas, and to my lovely daughter, An Yijing, who came to New Zealand with me to share with me every moment of this journey. Special thanks go to my husband, for his financial support and backing, and to my brother, for his emotional support. Without their support, I would not have arrived at this point.

Last but not least, my thanks and acknowledgements go to my colleague Professor Li Changyin, for his comments on my methodology chapter, Peng Xuefeng, for his help on the translation on the interview and survey questions and Cheryll McMorran for reading and editing my work and for sharing her thoughts and comments.

Table of contents

Abstract	I
Acknowledgements	III
Table of contents	IV
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Figures	VIII
CHAPTER 1 MAPPING THE STUDY	1
1.1 Overview of the chapter	2
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 The Chinese overseas students	6
1.4 Chinese higher education development	8
1.5 The need for research — problem identification.....	9
1.6 The research questions of the study	12
1.7 Rationale for the study.....	13
1.8 Overview of the study.....	13
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
2.1 Overview of the chapter	17
2.2 Theoretical frameworks of the study	18
2.2.1 Structuration theory.....	18
2.2.1.1 Structure.....	19
2.2.1.2 Agent and agency in structuration	20
2.2.1.3 Duality of structure	21
2.2.1.3.1 <i>Signification</i>	21
2.2.1.3.2 <i>Domination</i>	22
2.2.1.3.3 <i>Legitimation</i>	23
2.2.2 Culture and cultural identity change theory	24
2.2.2.1 Culture and characteristics of culture	24
2.2.2.2 Chinese and Western cultural characters.....	26
2.2.2.3 Sussman's cultural identity change model.....	27
2.2.2.3.1 <i>Cultural identity salience</i>	27
2.2.2.3.2 <i>Sociocultural adaptation</i>	27
2.2.2.3.3 <i>Repatriation</i>	28
2.3 Reentry adaptation and reverse culture shock	29
2.4 Returnee scholars in Chinese universities	33
2.4.1 Elites with privileges.....	33
2.4.2 Chinese universities' and returnees' expectations.....	37
2.4.2.1 Chinese universities' expectations	37
2.4.2.2 Foreign-educated returnees' expectations	38
2.4.3 Disparities between universities' and returnees' expectations	39
2.4.4 Organisational culture of Chinese universities.....	42
2.4.5 Returnees' reverse cultural shock	46
2.4.6 Research gaps.....	47
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	51
3.1 Overview of the chapter	52
3.2 A theoretical consideration—Mixed research methods	52
3.2.1 A pragmatic view of mixed methods.....	52
3.2.2 Qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods	53
3.2.2.1 The qualitative research method	53
3.2.2.2 The quantitative research method.....	54
3.2.2.3 Differences between the methods.....	55

3.2.2.4 The mixed research method.....	55
3.2.2.4.1 <i>Matching the research questions with the mixed method</i>	56
3.2.2.4.2 <i>Providing stronger inferences and the opportunity for greater divergent views</i>	57
3.2.2.5 The embedded mixed design	58
3.2.2.5.1 <i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	59
3.2.2.5.2 <i>Questionnaire survey</i>	59
3.2.2.6 Validity of the study	60
3.2.2.7 The pilot study.....	61
3.3 Data collection procedure.....	63
3.3.1 Location and time.....	63
3.3.2 Research sampling.....	65
3.3.2.1 Returnee participants.....	67
3.3.2.2 Non-returnee participants	70
3.3.2.3 Administrators.....	71
3.4 Data collection method.....	72
3.4.1 The questionnaires.....	72
3.4.2 Interviews.....	74
3.4.2.1 Interviews with foreign-educated returnees.....	74
3.4.2.2 Interviews with non-returnees and administrators	75
3.4.2.3 Interviewing language	76
3.5 Data analysis.....	77
3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis	78
3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis.....	81
3.6 Ethical considerations	82
3.7 Summary of the chapter	83
Chapter 4 RECRUITMENT POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATORS' AND NON-RETURNEES' VIEWS OF RETURNEES.....	84
4.1 Preview of this chapter	85
4.2 Recruitment policies	85
4.3 Administrators' and non-returnees' views regarding returnees	87
4.3.1 Agents of new knowledge, new concepts	87
4.3.2 Agents for internationalisation in higher education	91
4.3.3 More open-minded and more creative in thinking	94
4.3.4 Introducing new teaching methods	94
4.3.5 Different research methods	96
4.3.6 Negative feelings towards returnees.....	101
4.4 Summary of this chapter	106
CHAPTER 5 REENTRY ISSUES FOR RETURNEES	108
5.1 Overview of the chapter	109
5.2 Reasons for returning	109
5.2.1 Family connections/association	109
5.2.2 Career considerations	111
5.2.3 Sense of belonging	112
5.2.4 Summary of reasons.....	114
5.3. Academic re-adaptation challenges faced by returnees.....	117
5.3.1 Interpersonal networks (guanxi) and difficulties accessing resources.....	117
5.3.2 Difficulties in knowledge transfer and knowledge localisation.....	123
5.3.2.1 Applying new knowledge in teaching.....	123
5.3.2.2 Applying new knowledge in research.....	126
5.3.2.3 Mismatched expectations	127
5.3.3 Different academic environment for conducting research	131
5.3.3.1 Facing the Chinese auditing system	131
5.3.3.2 Facing different philosophies in doing research.....	135

5.4 Facing the bureaucratic system and having little influence in the Chinese academic community	141
5.4.1 Facing the different institutional system.....	141
5.4.2 Low salaries	145
5.4.3 Lack of support from the universities	147
5.4.4 Minimal influence in the Chinese academic community	149
5.4.5 Summary of academic re-adaptation challenges.....	150
5.5 Cultural re-adaptation experiences and changes of returnees.....	150
5.5.1 Dealing with interpersonal relationships	151
5.5.2 Readjusting and communicating --- ways of managing the process	154
5.5.3 Changes in returnees	158
5.5.3.1 Changed cultural values	158
5.5.3.2 Changes in cultural attitudes.....	162
5.5.3.3 Changed attitudes towards students	163
5.5.3.4 Changed attitudes towards life	166
5.5.3.5 Summary of cultural re-adaptation experiences.....	167
CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION	169
6.1 Overview of the chapter	170
6.2 Reasons for returning and positive aspects of returnees' experiences	171
6.3 Elites with privileges?.....	173
6.4 Cultural identity change in returnees.....	177
6.5 Implications of this study	180
6.5.1 Implications for Chinese universities.....	180
6.5.1.1 Improve service for returnees	180
6.5.1.2 Build a healthy organisational environment	181
6.5.1.3 Create a collaborative research environment	181
6.5.2 Implications for returnees.....	182
6.5.2.1 Appropriate cognitive expectations	182
6.5.2.2 Communication	183
6.5.2.3 Collaborative work	183
6.6 Summary of this chapter	184
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION	185
7.1 Overview of the chapter	186
7.2 Major findings of this research	189
7.3 Contributions of this study.....	194
7.3.1 Theoretical contributions	194
7.3.2 Practical contributions	195
7.4 Limitations of this study	196
7.5 Recommendations for future research	198
References.....	200
Appendix 1	216
Appendix 2 (1)	217
Appendix 2 (2)	219
Appendix 3 (1)	221
Appendix 3 (2)	223
Appendix 4 (1)	224
Appendix 4 (2)	227
Appendix 5 (1)	230
Appendix 5 (2)	232
Appendix 6 (1)	234
Appendix 6 (2)	236
Appendix 7 (1)	238
Appendix 7 (2)	242
Appendix 8	246

List of Tables

Table 3. 1 Universities and participants' numbers in six universities	65
Table 3. 2 Demographic information for returnees.....	68
Table 3. 3 General information for returnees.....	70
Table 3. 4 Demographic information for non-returnees	71
Table 3. 5 Demographic information for the administrators.....	72
Table 3. 6 Demographic information for the three groups.....	74
Table 3. 7 Analysis process of the study.....	78
Table 3. 8 Codes with data extract.....	80
Table 5. 1 Returnees' reasons for coming back to China	115
Table 5. 2 Returnees' attitudes regarding their teaching and research	129

List of Figures

Figure 4-1 Non-returnees' views on returnees' overseas experiences	90
Figure 4-2 Administrators' views on returnees' roles in bringing new ideas and globalisation to universities	93
Figure 4-3 Non-returnee colleagues' views on returnees' roles in bringing new ideas and globalisation to universities	93
Figure 4-4 Non-returnee colleagues' attitudes regarding returnees	99
Figure 4-5 Administrators' attitudes regarding returnees.....	99
Figure 4-6 Level of administrators' satisfaction with returnees' role in teaching and research	100
Figure 4-7 Administrators' views regarding recruiting top-level returnees	101
Figure 4-8 Non-returnee colleagues' views regarding recruiting top-level returnees... ...	101
Figure 4-9 Non-returnees' and administrators' views regarding foreign-awarded credentials	103
Figure 4-10 Non-returnees' views regarding returnees' teaching and research performance	105
Figure 4-11 Administrators' views regarding returnees' teaching and research performance	105
Figure 5-1 Returnees' satisfaction with academic role in teaching	134
Figure 5-2 Returnees' satisfaction with academic role in research	134
Figure 5-3 Returnees' views on the universities' academic environment.....	137
Figure 5-4 Returnees' views on themselves in their research	138
Figure 5-5 Returnees' views of their role in updating research standards at their university	139
Figure 5-6 Non-returnees' views regarding returnees' understanding of Chinese higher education	140
Figure 5-7 Administrators' views regarding returnees' understanding of Chinese higher education	140
Figure 5-8 Returnees' attitudes regarding their salaries.....	146
Figure 5-9 Returnees' attitudes regarding their salaries and non-returnees' salaries	147
Figure 5-10 Returnees' views regarding support from their universities.....	148
Figure 5-11 Non-returnee colleagues' satisfaction of relationship with returnees.....	157

Figure 5-12 Returnees' changes in outlook.....	159
Figure 5-13 Returnees' change in perception regarding the Chinese culture	159
Figure 5-14 Returnees' change in perception regarding Western cultures.....	159
Figure 5-15 Returnees' views on the way students should be taught	166

CHAPTER 1 MAPPING THE STUDY

1.1 Overview of the chapter

This study occurs at a time when it is increasingly important to understand Chinese foreign-educated returnees (*haigui*). The number of returnees returning to work at Chinese universities has been increasing dramatically since 1980s because of the economic development of China and the government initiatives to promote Chinese overseas student to come back to serve the country. With these changes happening, Chinese universities and returnees may need to understand the characteristics of returnees and the organisational culture of Chinese universities in order to make full use of returnees' advantages of overseas education. This chapter identifies the research problems surrounding Chinese foreign-educated returnees by presenting a general account of Chinese social and economic contexts in Section 1.2. The chapter then presents the development of Chinese overseas students in Section 1.3. It goes on to offer a discussion of the development of Chinese higher education in Section 1.4. The need for research is identified in Section 1.5, followed by the research problems presented in Section 1.6. It proposes some key terms and concepts in relation to the recent research: reentry adaptation, reverse cultural shock, cultural identity, cultural conflicts and organisational culture. Following the discussion of the rationale for the study in Section 1.7, this chapter concludes by showing the structure of the thesis in Section 1.8.

1.2 Background of the study

A World Bank report says, “As knowledge becomes more important, so does higher education” (Rosovsky & Bloom, 2000, p. 9). The report finds that in today’s world, “wealth is concentrated less and less in factories, land, tools, and machinery” (p. 15). Human capital—the resource of knowledge and skills generated in universities and research institutions—is now crucial to national competitiveness. According to Jia Chen (2010), there is a huge demand for talent in Chinese drive for modernisation. He argued that “In the coming 10 years, more than 7 million professionals will be needed in the fields of education, political science and law, medicine and health, publicity and cultural information, as well as disaster prevention” (Para. 4). Chen said that by 2020, more than 5 million talented individuals will be needed in equipment manufacturing, information technology, biotechnology, new materials, aeronautics and astronautics,

oceanography, finance and accounting, international business, environmental protection, energy resources, agriculture technology, and modern traffic and transportation.

In 1978, Chinese leaders launched the economic reform and opening-up policies in China in order to develop its economy and to get connected with the Western world after China was isolated from the West for many years. Ever since then, China has undergone enormous economic changes in the past thirty years (H. Wang, 2011a). In the past two decades, China's economy has boomed rapidly, and since 2010 China has overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world (H. Wang, 2011a). This economic boom has grown steadily. Alongside this economic development, China's higher education has also achieved great success. The number of universities as well as university students has increased dramatically. The quality of higher education has also greatly improved since it was seriously destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. However, the education system has not kept pace with economic development (Z. Wang, 2007). Chinese higher education is blamed for lack of creativity, lack of ability to do critical thinking, divorce from society, and out-dated teaching styles (Mooney, 2006). It is therefore an imperative for Chinese universities to recruit and maximize the use of foreign-educated higher degree holders to change such an educational environment. The Chinese government has recognised the important role of higher education in enhancing China's national competitiveness, as well as the importance of Chinese foreign-educated talents' social and cultural capital in globalising China, since 1980s, the Chinese government has been encouraging its students overseas to return to China and contribute their knowledge to the development of the country (Z. Wang, 2007).

Over the past decades, the top Chinese leaders have made a concerted effort to improve the quality of human capital in the country. In 1998 President Jiang Zemin argued that "China should establish a few world-class universities" (Zhou & Jiang, 2003, p. 34). In 2001, Premier Zhu Rongji told the World Forum on the Chinese Economy that China's future emphasis on economic reform would no longer stress attracting financial capital but instead concentrate on attracting human resources and technology from abroad (R. Zhu, 2001). President Hu Jintao (2011) regarded *rencai* [talent] as the most important strategic resource for the nation's development and he called on the whole Chinese society to "adhere to the major principle of respect for work, knowledge, talent, and creation" (p. 2). Li Yuanchao, Director of the Department of Organisation, remarked that "the introduction of talented, senior people from overseas is an urgent task to

establish an innovative, national personnel system, and more and more positions in China need skilled people with international training and background” (‘State plan’ 2011, p. 4). Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao recently stated that the country would carry out more open policies to attract overseas talent: “We will increase spending on talent projects and launch a series of initiatives to offer talent-favourable policies in households, medical care and the education of children” (H. Wang, 2011a, p. 7). Specifically, the national plan also seeks to attract overseas Chinese and foreign academics and professionals working at the world’s best institutions or as entrepreneurs who are able to make breakthroughs in key technologies, develop high-tech industries and lead new research areas.

It is apparent that the “war for talent” in China reaches the highest levels (Yee, 2006). The Chinese government has begun to realise the seriousness of the brain drain and the need for talented scientists and professionals, especially at the high level. The majority of Chinese students and scholars who have studied at overseas institutions opt to settle down in their host countries and only a small proportion has returned (Yee, 2006). Thus, since the mid-1990s, China has adopted various measures to reverse the “brain drain” trend. Major programmes put in place aimed aggressively at attracting the permanent return of foreign educated students include the “One Hundred Talent Programme” at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS, 1994), the “National Science Funds for Outstanding Young Scholars Programme” at the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC, 1994), and the “Thousand Talents Plan” at the Ministry of Personnel (MOP, 1995), the “Chunhui Programme” (1996) and the “Cheung Kong Scholar Programme” at the Ministry of Education (MOE, 1998). These programmes were launched to recruit senior academics from around the world. Top targets have been those born in China who have reached professor or associated professor level (Catcheside, 2011). There have been notable successes including Yigong Shi who left Princeton to join Tsinghua in Beijing as Dean of the School of Life Science, Ding Hong who left Boston where he was a professor of physics, and Yi Rao, Adjunct Professor in Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, is now Dean of the School of Life Science, Beijing University. The Chinese government admitted that in spite of an increasingly larger number of foreign-educated returnees, “many of the early returnees are not among the best and brightest”, and “some of the returnees who have been labelled as overseas talent are in fact not top in their fields, and that many brilliant

people still never consider returning as an alternative” (‘State plan’ 2011, p. 6). The brain drain has become a brutal reality.

In the mid-1990s when China’s economy started to take off and international companies started to move to China, most of those who returned were treated as a special class of the privileged and were often regarded as “sea turtles” (*haigui*¹, or “coming from overseas”), which was distinguisingly different from “land tortoise” (*tubie*), referring to those locally educated professionals. Some students, scholars and professionals have taken advantage of rapid economic growth and potential job opportunities associated with the growth and have responded positively to the preferential policies of the Chinese government toward them. Many returnees land high profile and high income jobs and become key players in their professions. The lucky few can command sky-high salaries. Pay packages for top-level managers in China are comparable to those of their counterparts in Western countries, easily running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. For examples, some top Chinese universities “are engaged in a multimillion pound shopping spree to tempt senior academics from the UK and the USA to take posts” by “offering a salary of between \$US100,000 and \$200,000 a year” for business management research professors. This doubles the salary they could expect for a similar position in the UK and the USA (Catcheside, 2011, p. 3). In 2011, the Royal Society published a report predicting that the number of scientific research papers published by academics at Chinese universities would outstrip those from the US within two years (Catcheside, 2011) although the quality is still lower than the USA and the UK.

The explosion in student number in China is also creating a huge demand for academics who can teach, especially in the popular subjects of science and business. There is evidence that Chinese institutions are extending their recruitment drive far beyond the academic elite which was the object of the Thousand Talents Programme. The programme hopes to lure 400 overseas academics every year, under the age of 40, in the fields of natural science and physics to research and teach. They will be given a living subsidy of around £50,000 and research grants of up to £300,000 over three years (Catcheside, 2011). With such favourable policies, as of August 2011 a total of 6,200 overseas scholars and experts applied to join the “Thousand Talents Plan”; 1,510 were

¹*Haigui* (海归), a homonym for “sea turtle” (海龟), meaning “returnees from overseas” in Mandarin. It provides a powerful metaphor: sea turtles are born on land, spend most of their lives at sea, but come back home to lay eggs and start a new generation.

selected and now enjoy the benefits of the “Thousand Talents Plan” (State plan seeks to attract talent and halt brain drain, 2011). In 2013 alone, 861 overseas talents were selected by “Thousand Talents Plan” and a total of 4180 talents had been chosen by the plan. The Chinese government offers a one-off tax-free bonus of 1 million yuan (\$US154, 600) to all successful applicants to make up for the low salaries they receive upon return to China (Sheng & Zhao, 2014).

The government’s ideological, political and economic imperatives have attracted many foreign-educated Chinese to come back to China. Chinese returnees have played a very important role in China’s modernisation and development and they have made great contribution to globalise China (Rosen & Zweig, 2005; H. Wang, 2012). According to Wang (2011b), Chinese returnees dominated China’s academic and R & D sectors and 78% of university presidents in China were returnees; 72% of directors in China who in charge of state and provincial key research centres and labs were returned Chinese; 81% of academicians of Chinese Science Academy were returnees; and 54% of the staff at the Chinese Engineering Academy were Chinese returnees.

1.3 The Chinese overseas students

The history of Chinese students studying in foreign countries can be traced back to more than one hundred years. The first Chinese foreign-educated returned student, Rong Wong (Yung Wing), initiated the study-abroad movement in China during the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) and in 1872, the Qing Dynasty “made the milestone decision” (C. Li, 2005b, p. 71) to send 30 school-aged students to study in the US. Since then, hundreds of thousands of Chinese students went abroad to study and came back to China. Different generations of returnees² (five generations according to Zhang, Wang and Alon, 2011) have made huge contribution to the modernisation of Chinese technology, education and science (J. Song, 2003; H. Wang, 2005). The trend of study abroad has reached the highest since 1978 because of China’s reform and opening-up policy (H.

² Zhang, Wang and Alon (2011) divided *haigui* into five generations, each with its own mission, commitments and responsibilities:

1872–1900: Learning from the West
1900–1927: Ending the feudal past
1927–1949: Founding the People’s Republic of China
1949–1978: Building the new China
1978–present: Opening up and globalising China

Wang, 2005). Between 1978 and the end of 2010, more than 1.9 million Chinese went abroad for study and research and more than 632,000 Chinese, or 33% of them returned home (G. Wang, 2011; Zhang, 2011). Today Chinese students study in more than 100 countries and regions in the world with the United States being the most favourite destination (H. Wang, 2011a). By the end of 2009, over 1.62 million Chinese students and scholars had studied overseas, which is an average annual growth rate of 25.8 % since 1978 (H. Wang, 2011b). In 2010 alone, 284,700 Chinese were enrolled in foreign educational institutions, and 134,800 returned to China after graduation (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). In 2013, 413,900 Chinese students applied to study in foreign countries, and the total number reached over 3.05 million since 1978 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). China has become the largest student source country in the world (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). With the increasing number of students going overseas to study, the number of foreign-educated Chinese returnees also has increased dramatically. From 1978 to 2010, more than 632,000 Chinese students returned to China. In 2000, 9,121 overseas Chinese students returned, but the number doubled to 20,152 in 2003, and then doubled again in 2006 to 42,000. From 2004 to 2006, the return rate increased at 20 % every year (Gu, 2009). In 2009 the number of returnees reached 108,000, a sharp increase of 56.2% over the previous year (MOE, 2009). In 2010, the number reached as high as 134,800 (G. Wang, 2011). In 2013, the number of returnees reached over 300,000 (H. Wang & Miao, 2013). The number of Chinese students intending to study in the West has been on the increase for many years and the trend will continue, and so will the number of returned students. The current wave of returnees is undoubtedly the largest foreign-study movement in Chinese history, and it will continue to gain momentum, partly because a rapidly emerging Chinese middle class can afford to send their children abroad and partly because the state is steadily increasing funding for postgraduate education abroad (C. Li, 2010). All these Chinese returnees have played a crucial role in China's economic, scientific and technological development (H. Wang, 2011b) and they have become "part of China's soft power" (Bail & Shen, 2008, p. 28) by bringing positive effects to the image of China (Bail & Shen, 2008). With the number of returnees increasing sharply, the u-turn in the flow of Chinese brains has created an era of "returning times" in China (H. Wang, 2005; M. Yang & Tan, 2007).

1.4 Chinese higher education development

The structure of China's higher education has evolved through three stages of development: (1) following the European model in the first half of the twentieth century, (2) adopting the Soviet model of a centrally planned scheme until the 1980s, and (3) following a largely market-oriented model since then (Levin & Xu, 2006, cited in Yi, 2011). Since the early 1980s, China's higher education has undergone great changes and has been greatly influenced by Chinese economic development. The market-orientated economic reform has had important impact on China's higher education development (Ngok, 2007, 2008). Further, to make education better serve economic development and China's modernisation, education reforms have been carried out since the mid-1990s, which has been characterised by two major changes, decentralisation and marketization (Ngok, 2007, 2008). By adopting the policy of decentralisation and marketing, more schooling types became available to cater to the differential demands of a large population (Ding, 2004; Yi, 2011) and more and more diverse agencies have been encouraged to provide educational service (Ngok, 2008). It also means that many number of national universities are no longer under the direct administration of the central government of national ministries (Yi, 2011). The other change of the reform was to restructure the administration of higher education to remedy low education and research efficiency in Chinese higher education (Levin & Xu, 2006). One of the education reform consequences is the expansion of the Chinese higher education on the one hand, and the developing of world-class universities on the other. In December 1998, the Ministry of Education issued a document entitled Action Plan to Vitalise Education in the 21st Century. Since then, China's higher education began to step into the period of mass higher education. The number of students in China's higher education has been increasing dramatically (Ngok, 2008). This change has also become one of the reason that Chinese government recruits foreign-educated returnees to work in the Chinese higher education.

With the persistent rapid economic growth and the expansion of high education scale, the Chinese leadership is eager to earn international reputation in the area of higher education by developing some key Chinese universities into world-class universities (Ngok, 2007, 2008; Yi, 2011). New projects, new assessment methods and other initiatives were introduced into building world-class universities. In 1996, China implemented a

national programme named 211 Project. This project is aimed to achieve remarkable improvements in teaching, research, administration and efficiency in 100 institutions of higher education and in certain key disciplinary areas in the twenty-first century. This project aims to improve the overall quality of Chinese education. In 1998, China embarked upon 985 Project. This project targets at a few top universities in China with huge extra money from the central government to help these universities to become world-class universities and to make them globally competitive (Levin & Xu, 2006; W. Song & Liao, 2004). The Chinese government's strong commitment to transforming a few top Chinese universities into the world-class league reflects China's ambition to develop a higher education system compatible with its growing economic power and its grand strategy of peaceful rise in the globalisation era (Ngok, 2008).

1.5 The need for research — problem identification

In today's increasingly globalised world, cross-border communication has become a very common phenomena in everyday life (Szkudlarek, 2010). Much literature has focused on issues of individuals' cross-cultural adaptation and many handbooks and cross-cultural management manuals have been published concerning the issues of cross-cultural adaptation strategies (Szkudlarek, 2010). Even though there are a growing number of articles and books on re-entry difficulties, the understanding of re-entry phenomenon has still remained unclear (Szkudlarek, 2010) and there is limited data to support the theoretical hypothesis that no one is exempt from reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2000). Furthermore, most research on the re-entry experience of international students has come out of a Western-based perspective (Butcher, 2002).

With the number of Chinese returnees increasing rapidly, problems concerning returnees (*haigui*) have become more and more salient. Many *haigui* find it difficult to make connections and to adjust to a China that has changed dramatically since they left (Wheeler, 2012). There is a misperception that those who were born in China and later received foreign higher education would not anticipate any problems in cultural adaptation and re-integration when they return to work in the Chinese socio-cultural contexts because of the perceived cultural closeness (Selmer, 2002; Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Such a misperception fails to recognise that culture plays a primary role in shaping people's knowledge, behaviour, psychology and social relationships (Neuliep, 2015).

These returnees bring with them technological knowledge and expertise. What they have acquired from foreign countries is heavily embedded in values, beliefs and expectations which are formed, shaped and consolidated during their sojourn in the host countries. Cultural clashes are inevitable in the process of knowledge sharing and transfer from one cultural context to another. Much emerging evidence shows that overseas Chinese expatriates may experience special difficulties in China (Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Challenges which arise upon returning home are largely unexpected and re-adaptation to home culture often takes much longer time than adjustment to a foreign culture (Adler, 1981; J. N. Martin, 1984; M. M. Wang, 1997). Chinese returnees do experience difficulty integrating into workplace back home because of such factors as *guanxi*, interpersonal conflicts (Cao, 2008; Gu, 2009) and a lack of understanding of the complexity of the workplace culture (Gross & Connor, 2007). Returnees have to face many challenges such as abiding by the local rules of academic games, involving in non-academic affairs such as administrative duties and media relations and trying to strike a balance between internationalisation versus localisation within limited resources (Xu, 2009). They also have to deal with feelings of isolation and resentment from local colleagues thus being shut out of local network (Wheeler, 2012). Further, more and more returnees (*haigui*) start to feel that the preferential treatments that the government gave them has created tension between returnees and local colleagues, which promotes envy and competition instead of cooperation between returnees and locals (Rosen & Zweig, 2005; Zhang, 2011). In fact, domestic scholars reject communicating with returnees because of their worry and competition for resources. Domestic scholars fear that sharing their work with others would risk their new ideas being taken away or inviting criticism of their research, which would lead to challenges to their face (Rosen & Zweig, 2005). Tension arises especially between young returnees and the established or senior domestic scholars (Yi, 2011).

When foreign-educated Chinese return to work in Chinese universities, many experience various levels of reverse culture shock and face enormous visible and invisible challenges (Feng & Feng, 2009). Li and Xu's (2004) survey found that returnees had to face problems such as the unbalanced distribution of workplace, an unequal academic balance between natural science and social science (natural science usually gets more research resource) and university's teaching staff employment (inbreed employment rules), namely giving priority to graduates who graduated from the universities in

recruiting. Cheng, Lou, and Gao (2000) also mentioned similar problems that returnees had to face. According to their study, many returnees were not satisfied with their living situations. They had to face many problems in their work as well as in their life. These problems are mainly focused on the following aspects:

- It is difficult to start the research because of lack of research funds.
- Basic living needs cannot be met because of low salary and unaffordable housing.
- It is hard to handle the complex interpersonal relationships “*guanxi*”. Many returnees had not anticipated the complexity of redeveloping personal relationships before returning.
- It is hard to improve one’s academic ability because one cannot get access to the latest information and research in Western countries.
- There is a lot of non-academic distraction to academic research.

The university authorities and locally trained teachers also lodged their complaints about returnees (Gu, 2009). Now local people perceive returnees differently comparing to decades ago (Gu, 2009). The halo surrounding returnees was beginning to disappear and the enthusiasm towards them has cooled off (Gu, 2009; He, 2003). They no longer were seen as elites as before and the public began to rationally assess the value of these returnees (Gu, 2009). Their foreign education, ideology and behaviour were said to be largely divorced from China’s cultural and socio-cultural realities and management practice (He, 2003). There is a huge discrepancy between how returnees view themselves and how others view returnees (Shao & Truex, 2012). Dissonance between returnees and local communities often occurs with mismatched expectations and perceptions. It seems that there existed a vast gap between the perceptions of the returnees and those of the local management and the public, including locally trained teachers and senior returnees (He, 2003; Shao & Truex, 2012). It is important to consider why and where these problems exist and how they can be solved. In addition, it is also important to consider what might authorities and returnees do to reduce the dissonance to decrease the damaging effects on the good intentions of the Chinese authorities and returnees. It was these problems that motivated me (the researcher) to investigate the fundamental issues from a more scholarly perspective and look for some possible solutions to these problems as the central theme of this thesis.

There is much literature on returnees’ significant contribution to the development and

transformation of China and their introduction of Western ideology, science and technology to this country (Rosen & Zweig, 2005; H. Wang, 2005, 2011a, 2011b; David Zweig, 2006; D. Zweig, Chen, & Rosen, 2004). There is still some other literature on returnees' level of satisfaction, job employment issues, and returnees' impact and influences on Chinese economy, education, politics and military (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; Gill, 2010; Guo, 1998; C. Li, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b). However, some other important issues are under-researched, such as foreign-educated scholars' cultural identity, Chinese returnees' reverse cultural shock, role conceptualisation and perceptions, cultural compatibility and organisational fit, the effects of organisational culture on returnees, communication conduits in organisations that affect communication effectiveness, and how socio-cultural challenges are resolved and how the communication process in returnees' cultural adaptation and reintegration is managed. Research into these issues faced by Chinese returnees will assist in more fully understanding of returnees and will help them adapt to the Chinese culture properly by helping them re-adjust to Chinese cultures, giving them proper guidelines and re-adaptation suggestions, thus to enable them apply what they have learned in Western countries in the workplace. This study will investigate these issues from cross-cultural perspectives. The output of this research will benefit both Chinese universities and foreign educated Chinese returnees, as well as Chinese overseas students who might return to China in the future. Of course, it will also benefit individuals who are interested in cross-cultural communication and management.

1.6 The research questions of the study

Based on the issues discussed above, the study is to investigate the reentry experience of returnees at the Chinese universities in Yunnan Province, China. It aims to investigate the nature of their reentry experiences and how they manage the process of re-adaptation into the home culture by examining the academic, social, cultural, psychological and political challenges they faced in their cultural re-adaptation interviews. The study also aims to identify and examine how foreign-educated returnees view their roles in Chinese universities and how university senior officials and non-foreign-educated colleagues view these roles, including their attitudes and perceptions towards returnees. The ultimate purpose of this study is to find out what difficulties and challenges these returnees face when they return to work in Chinese academic communities and how Chinese universities

can make use of returnees' social and cultural capitals. Thus, the overarching research questions for this proposed research project are:

1. What are the overall experiences of foreign-educated returnees as they re-adapt to their home country's universities in Yunnan Province, China?
2. How do returnees manage the process of re-adaptation into their universities?
3. How do non-returnees and administrators view foreign-educated returnees' roles in and contributions to the universities?

1.7 Rationale for the study

The researcher's opportunity to study in New Zealand provided a unique experience to conduct this research. From February 2008 to February 2009, the researcher had an opportunity to study for one year as a Visiting Scholar at University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Upon returning to China, the researcher also met some reentry problems and reverse cultural shock, such as the feeling of distance from the family, the crowdedness of the cities, and the unhygienic habits of Chinese people. The researcher felt critical about the things around her. These personal cultural experiences at universities in both countries motivated the researcher to look deep into the cultural challenges encountered by foreign-educated returnees. The same experiences will help the researcher to understand returnees more deeply, because the stories and responses are in many cases deeply personal and also largely similar to each other (Butcher, 2002). The perspective of an "insider" not an "outsider" will definitely make the research more persuasive.

1.8 Overview of the study

By providing the situational contexts and needs for the study, Chapter 1 identifies the research problems for the current study and outlines the rationale for it.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework and a review of previous work relevant to the current study. It first discusses the theoretical background from two aspects: the structuration theory and cultural identity change theory. Then the chapter reviews the experiences of Chinese returnee scholars at Chinese higher education. This includes the roles and contributions of returnees at Chinese universities, the expectations of universities and returnees and the expectation disparities between these two parties. The

organisational culture of Chinese universities and the reverse cultural shock of returnees are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also identifies the research gap in the literature, thus establishing research domain for the current study.

Chapter 3 presents the research design of this study. By providing the pragmatic world view of the study, this chapter first explains and justifies why a mixed research method is adopted in the study. Then it further argues why and how an embedded design of qualitative method and quantitative method is most suitable for the study, and why the three groups of participants were selected for the research. The chapter also discusses the actual data collection procedure, method and data analysis process. The validity of the study and ethical issues are also presented in the chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study from the perspective of non-returnees and administrators. It also summarises the recruitment policies of the universities. It first outlines the recruitment policies, followed by the views and attitudes of non-returnees and administrators towards returnees in terms of returnee's roles in and contributions to the universities.

Chapter 5 is also a finding chapter. It provides the reentry issues for returnees. The chapter first summarises the reasons of returnees for returning from three aspects: family connection, career development consideration, and the cultural reasons. This chapter then reports the challenges and difficulties returnees encountered when they returned to their home country's academic communities. The chapter focuses on reporting the reentry issues of returnees from three aspects: the academic challenges faced by returnees, the bureaucratic issues of reentry and the cultural re-adaptation experiences of returnees.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature. It explores and explains the reasons why returnees had limited influence on Chinese universities and how Chinese universities constrained returnees' strengths and advantages from the structuration theory. It also discusses how cultural identity change influenced returnees' reentry experience from the perspective of cultural identity change theory. Based on the discussion, the chapter then presents the implications of the study both for Chinese universities and returnees.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by outlining the major findings of the study. Then the

contribution of the study is presented in the chapter with respect to two aspects: the theoretical contributions and the practical contributions. The research limitations and future research directions are discussed at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter begins by outlining the theoretical framework for the current study, particularly the structuration theory and cultural identity change model that have been applied to explain the dynamic reentry experiences of foreign-educated Chinese students returning to work in Chinese higher education in Section 2.2. Chinese higher education has unique characteristics of academic organisational management. Giddens' structuration theory assists understanding the reentry experiences of returnees from the perspective of social systems, whereas the cultural identity model assists explaining the returnees' cultural re-adaptation behaviours and activities from the perspective of reverse cultural shock. Following the theoretical framework, the chapter provides a basic review of reentry adaptation and reverse cultural shock concerning the issues of reentry from a wider context in Section 2.3.

The chapter then reviews the literature related to the experiences of Chinese returnees as well as their cultural identity changes in Section 2.4. Reviewing earlier studies provides the necessary contextualisation and enables an understanding of the positioning of the current study. The review of the literature indicates that when these students return to their home country with their transformed cultural values, beliefs and expectations, they have difficulties in re-adapting. Disparities in expectations and misunderstandings seem unavoidable for both returnees and local organisations. In China's hierarchical society, lack of understanding of the culture and its expectations can be problematic. This is especially true for returnees, as they often have high expectations when returning to China and their universities also have high expectations of them (Gu, 2009). When such expectations from different parties are mismatched, the direct consequences can lead to constraints on the efforts by returnees and universities and can make the water "choppy" for returnees (Wheeler, 2012). Lack of understanding of the changed Chinese context also influences the returnees' life and work back in their home country. Therefore, these returnees experience reverse cultural shock in the process of cultural reintegration.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks of the study

2.2.1 Structuration theory

Structuration theory has become a dominant theory in social sciences since the 1980s, when it was recognised as a richly grounded theory, and it has been increasingly adopted to examine aspects of organisational communication (Pozzebon, 2004; Seyfarth, 2000). It also has been used as an alternative approach to study numerous organisational phenomena (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005) as well as human experiences (Conrad, 1993). This current research has adopted Giddens' structuration theory as one of the theoretical frameworks for investigating the re-entry process of foreign-educated returnees working at Chinese universities from an organisational perspective. As organisational institutes, the environments within them influence individuals' behaviours and activities, as each organisation sets up certain policies and rules to guide their members' daily interactions, practices and activities (Kim, 2005). An individual's cultural identity within the organisation is constructed by the organisation's norms, values, attitudes and cultural practices (Jameson, 2007). Therefore, structuration theory can provide a comprehensive approach to the organisational issues of Chinese universities.

Structuration theory deals with the creation and maintenance of ideas and structure in social interaction (Staber & Sydow, 2002). It provides a basic framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between the activities of human "actors" and the structuring of social systems by employing the concepts of duality of structure and structuration (Macintosh & Scapens, 1990; Staber & Sydow, 2002). Giddens (1984) believes that human actors' activities shape, and are shaped by, the structure(s) of the institution. There is a dual relationship between them. That is to say, human actions both produce and are mediated by the structure (Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998). According to Giddens' theory, all social interactions are situated in time and space. Structure, which is produced out of time and space, is instantiated in social interactions situated contextually. Contextuality is defined largely by locales, which become the settings in which the routine activities of different individuals intersect (Giddens, 1984). In these locales, routine activities are the predominant forms of day-to-day social life and these locales both produce, and are produced by, the content of individuals' interactions (Scott et al., 1998).

Structuration theory consists of three core concepts: structure, agency and duality of structure. The following subsections will explain these concepts in detail and discuss the way structuration theory has been applied in the current study.

2.2.1.1 Structure

Structure, according to Giddens (1984), refers to structuring properties that allow the binding of discernibly similar social practices into social systems. These properties enable social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and give these social practices a “systemic form” (Giddens, 1984, p. 17) and “they are available to agents as blueprints for action in specific time-space” (Macintosh, 1994, p. 170). Structure, Giddens argues, also refers to the recursively organised sets of rules and resources that are “out of time and space, save in its instantiations and co-ordination as memory traces, and is marked by an absence of the subject” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25).

In structuration theory, Giddens (1984) distinguishes between social systems and structure. For Giddens, social systems comprise discernibly similar social practices that are reproduced across time and space through the actions of human individuals. Social systems are not structure; rather, they exhibit structural properties that are both the medium and the outcome of the practices. Social systems, in which structure is recursively implicated, comprise the situated activities of human agents who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action context. He defines structure(s) as the rules and resources, or sets of transformation relations, organised as properties of social systems; systems are the reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organised as regular social practices. Social systems refer to the surface patterns of interactions, whereas structure is the virtual order of generative rules and resources available to individuals that are capable of bringing about certain states of affairs (Bryant & Jary, 1991; Scott et al., 1998).

Rules, according to Giddens (1984), “are procedures of action, aspects of praxis” (p. 21). Such rules include codes of communication and norms of behaviour (M. L. Jones, 2007). They can be formal or informal, explicit or implicit, and are the principles and ethics that guide and affect individuals’ behaviour and social interaction (M. L. Jones, 2007). Giddens (1984) also distinguishes between the rules of social life and formulated rules. Rules of social life are those that are “techniques or generalizable procedures applied in

the enactment/reproduction of social practices” (p. 21). Formulated rules are those that “are given verbal expression cannons of law, bureaucratic rules, and rules of games and so on” (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). Formulated rules are codified interpretations of rules.

The term “resources” refers to both the ability of people to use resources to influence material objects and means, as well as nonmaterial capacities to harness the activities of other human beings (Healey, 2006; M. L. Jones, 2007; Lyytinen & Ngwenyama, 1992). That is, resources constitute *allocative resources*, which refers to “transformative capacity generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena” and *authoritative resources*, which refers to “transformative capacity generating commands over persons or actors” (Giddens, 1984, p. 33). Both rules and resources attempt to mentor and control actors’ behaviour and actions (M. L. Jones, 2007).

2.2.1.2 Agent and agency in structuration

The term “agent” refers to the individual actors who are guided in their social interactions by structures (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). Although structures guide individual actors’ behaviour in contexts of co-presence, they are potentially alterable by agents in social interactions (Busco, 2009). That is, “to be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon these reasons” (Giddens, 1984, p. 3). To be an agent is to be able to “deploy a range of causal power to make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Giddens argues that agents cease to be such if they lose the capability to act or to “exercise some sort of power” (p. 14). He notes that agency refers to the intentions and capability of individuals to conduct, create, produce and reproduce structures through enacting rules and resources. So agents (actors) cannot be simply conceptualised as social dupes who are governed by independent structures (Busco, 2009; Macintosh & Scapens, 1990), “but rather as existential beings who reflexively monitor their conduct and make choices in social settings” (Busco, 2009, p. 254). These reflexive abilities make social agents “not only able to monitor their activities and those of others in the regularity of day-to-day conduct; they are also able to ‘monitor that monitoring’” (Giddens, 1984, p. 29). This reflexivity is replicative, in that it facilitates unconsciously the production and reproduction of social structures (Busco, 2009).

Agents know what they do and why they act, based on their implicit stocks of mutual knowledge, which are not directly accessible to the consciousness of individual agents (Macintosh & Scapens, 1990). This “knowledgeability” of individual agents is expressed in their agency (Banks & Riley, 1993), which enables individuals to understand their own behaviours and at the same time monitor their own and others’ actions and activities (Giddens, 1984). Agents, according to Giddens, are also able to explain (rationalise) the grounds of their actions if asked, even if they are not aware of the consequences of them.

2.2.1.3 Duality of structure

Giddens employs the concept of duality of structure to explain the dynamic relationship between human actors and the structure of social systems (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Giddens (1984) explains duality of structure as follows: “... the structure properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise” (p. 25). That is, human action both produces and is mediated by structure (Scott et al., 1998). This is the basic concept of structuration. In social interactions, human agents produce and reproduce social structure according to certain sets of social practices that are transformed across time and space (M. R. Jones & Karsten, 2008). These processes are related to structure in that practices are embedded in the system which, depending on how it is structured, either enables or constrains individuals’ action (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Thus, according to Giddens (1984), “the moment of the production of action is also one of reproduction in the contexts of the day-to-day enactment of social life” (p. 26).

Giddens (1984) identifies three structural dimensions in analysing the duality of structure: signification, domination and legitimisation.

2.2.1.3.1 Signification

According to Giddens (1984), structures are rules and resources that facilitate and constrain individuals’ actions during social interaction. The structure of signification refers to semantic rules. Such rules include beliefs, principles and values that guide and direct individuals in their behaviours and ascribe meaning to their action (“This is how we do it in this organisation”) (Staber & Sydow, 2002, p. 412) and thus inform individuals’

understandings of the settings in the interaction, such as settings in a workplace (M. R. Jones & Karsten, 2008). These rules are implied in the day-to-day interactions and are tacit (Giddens, 1984). They help to explain how an organisation or individuals use interpretive schemes to functionally communicate their own and others' actions and share mutual understandings and meaning through structural signification (Busco, 2009; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009).

2.2.1.3.2 Domination

The structure of domination refers to the resources that may be brought to a situation of interaction (Bryant & Jary, 1991; Giddens, 1984). It focuses on the distribution and the exercise of power within an organisation, or who is responsible in the organisation (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Giddens (1984) distinguishes between allocative and authoritative resources in domination. As mentioned earlier, the term allocative resources refers to the individual's capability to control material resources (or economic capacity) and authoritative resources refers to the control over people (or the ability to organise and coordinate) (Giddens, 1984; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). According to Giddens (1984), domination is a fundamental aspect of structure in that it explicitly affects the existence of signification. Domination takes place when social individuals use their personal influence, skills and expertise in a given setting, using the facilities and resources of power at their disposal while at the same time conforming to existing codes of practice and holding others accountable for particular activities (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009; Macintosh & Scapens, 1990). Power, in this context, refers to the transformative capacity of individuals (Bryant & Jary, 1991; Giddens, 1984; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Some individuals have more power and by using it well, achieve domination. Those who have more power and domination can influence others and gain their cooperation (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009).

According to Giddens (1984), all social actors have some sort of power, since they have at least some sort of resource at their disposal; otherwise they cease to be social agents. However, in organisational settings, the organisations attempt to exercise their power and achieve domination by using allocative and authoritative resources (Busco, 2009; Halperin & Backhouse, 2007; Stein & Vandenbosch, 1996). Both allocative and authoritative structures aim to achieve an organisation's objectives through dominating its members (Yuthas & Dillard, 1999) "in the wielding of power" (Rose & Scheepers,

2001, p. 220).

2.2.1.3.3 Legitimation

The third dimension of structure, legitimisation, reflects the norms, values and ethics that guide individuals' behaviour and make sense of their actions. It refers to how things should be done in an organisation (Staber & Sydow, 2002). All organisations have formal and informal norms, rules and principles that determine the acceptance of individuals' behaviours and actions (Halperin & Backhouse, 2007; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). According to Giddens (1984), legitimisation structures comprise all types of rules that are drawn upon as norms in the evaluation of conduct, with social agents "reflexively monitoring the flow of interaction with one another", and thus normative elements of rules are "contingent claims" (Giddens, 1984, pp. 30-31). During this process, legitimisation structures such as policies, strategies, methodologies and objectives can be produced and reproduced (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Individuals constantly refer to the organisational way of working to ensure their actions fit into the framework, whereas organisations' rules (such as policies and guidelines) can be discussed and reframed to better suit the organisation's management, thus producing new legitimisation structures (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Both individuals and organisations seek to practise reciprocal rights and obligations to ensure that legitimisation exists (Busco, 2009).

Although analytically separable, these three dimensions are inextricably linked (Giddens, 1984; Macintosh & Scapens, 1990). They show the blending of enablement and the constraint of structuration theory, which represents the duality of structure in social interaction (Bryant & Jary, 1991). Rules regarding beliefs, principles and values (signification) inform and direct individuals' actions in an organisation (M. R. Jones & Karsten, 2008; Staber & Sydow, 2002). Individuals make sense of behaviour and events through their interactions and communications with others, thus reproducing the rules (Staber & Sydow, 2002). By using their facilities to mobilise available resources, an organisation exercises power over individuals, thus turning power into domination (Staber & Sydow, 2002; Yuthas & Dillard, 1999). By using norms to sanction behaviours and actions, the rules of an organisation are followed and legitimacy is conferred (Staber & Sydow, 2002; Willmott, 1981). Consequently, "the institutionalisation of a socially constructed order may be achieved" (Busco, 2009, p. 251) by relying on the structures and the related interaction of these three dimensions.

Structuration theory has been employed in a wide range of research studies and has been used as a theoretical approach for examining and understanding organisational communication (Scott et al., 1998). Although structuration theory is viewed as a social theory by Giddens, it can also be applied to understand social relations at the organisational and inter-organisational level (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Structuration theory offers a conceptual scheme for understanding the relationship between individual actors and organisations and it helps to explain how organisational structures enable and constrain individual actors' behaviours in an organisation (Staber & Sydow, 2002).

2.2.2 Culture and cultural identity change theory

Students who study abroad become part of a new culture. All individuals who immerse in a different culture undergo cultural identity shifts because of the cross-cultural transitions or cross-cultural adaptation. According to Adler (1981), because of this cultural shift, re-adaptation or readjustment to one's home culture is more difficult than the adjustment to living in a different culture. To understand the process of the re-adaptation experience further, the following section applies Sussman's cultural identity and cultural transition model to explain cultural identity and cultural identity change.

2.2.2.1 Culture and characteristics of culture

Culture, as defined by Fiske (2002), "is a socially transmitted or socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices, competencies, ideas, schemas, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artefacts and modifications of the physical environment" (p. 85). Sussman (2000) believes that "culture imperceptibly forms a mental framework through which individuals define their ontology, motivate and select their behaviours, and judge and evaluate the actions of others" (p. 356). She argues that when that culture is disassembled, it can be difficult for individuals to find meaning for a while. Zapf (1991) points out that culture is like a network of shared meanings that have been taken for granted as reality by those who interact within the network. A community of people who share the same world view "construct a common model or map of the world derived from their shared experiences" (Zapf, 1991, p. 105) and "without such a model or map, people would experience the world as totally chaotic and unpredictable" (Zapf, 1991, p. 106). When the familiar

norms, symbols and values change, it can be difficult for the people in the community to find the meaning of the culture. He further argues that culture also includes a conceptual style. The style “reflects more a manner of organising things, of putting things in a certain way, of looking at the world in a distinct fashion” (Price-Williams, 1980, p. 157, cited in Zapf, 1991).

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) define culture as the “mental programmes” or the “software of the mind” (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 5) of a person. According to them, every person carries within them their own patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting, which are learned throughout the person’s lifetime. Much of the culture is acquired in the person’s early childhood. They also argue that before the person is able to learn something different, he or she must unlearn the patterns that have become established within their mind, and the unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. A person has a basic ability to deviate from these old programmes and to react to them in ways that are new, creative, destructive or unexpected (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). This cultural identity comes from a person’s life experiences and the source of the mental programmes lie within the social environments in which he or she grew up and had his or her life experiences (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Culture is always a collective phenomenon, shared with the other people who live within it, and is composed of the written and unwritten rules of the “social game” (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). People do things according to the “schemas, symbols, values, norms, and beliefs” (Fiske, 2002, p. 85) that their group of people already carry with them.

Cultural identity may not be explicitly recognised until an individual comes into contact with people from other cultures (Sussman, 2011; Zapf, 1991), because a person may not consciously be aware of the particular patterns of assumed meaning if they are interacting only with others who share the same cultural background (Zapf, 1991). Zapf argues that “It is through contact with persons who see the world differently that an individual can become acutely aware of the cultural patterns he or she is using” (Zapf, 1991, p. 106). Cultural acquiring is the unconscious process of getting symbols (such as language), heroes (such as parents), rituals (such as dating) and most importantly, individual values (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Once the culture is acquired, a person cannot escape it (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.2.2.2 Chinese and Western cultural characters

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov propose five dimensions of national cultural identities. Each country can be characterised by a score on each of the five dimensions and each country can be pitched along these five dimensions to confirm its cultural type (Lu & Francesco, 2010). Comparing the raw scores on these dimensions (as measured by their model) for China with those for most Western countries (G. Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010), two main dimensions – collectivism/individualism and high power distance/lower power distance – can be detected to portray the cultural divergence between the Chinese and Westerners. “Collectivism/individualism” pertains to societies in which the ties are between individuals and between the individual and the cohesive in-groups (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). In the individualistic society of Western countries, ties between individuals are loose, whereas in the collectivist society of China, individuals are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. “Power distance” defines the degree to which individuals expect and accept inequality as normal and fair (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). In the Chinese culture, individuals tend to accept inequality between people as part of the hierarchical levels of the Chinese social structure (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Therefore, Chinese culture is characterised by collectivism and large power distance, while Western countries are characterised by individualism and low power distance (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010).

Chinese foreign-educated returnees, who have studied or worked in Western countries for some years and have experienced different cultures, may carry with them changed cultural identities due to their overseas experiences and they may have developed a new intercultural personhood (Gaw, 2000; Gill, 2010; Kim, 2001, 2008). When they return to China from individualistic, low power distance cultures to a collectivist, large power distance culture, problems can appear (Gaw, 2000; Kim, 2008). For returnees, failing to understand the Chinese culture again can result in difficulties in re-adapting to the home country (Gill, 2010). Over the period spent in another culture, both the returnees and the home country have greatly changed, giving rise to conflicts between their newly assumed identity and their home cultural identity (Adler, 1981; Zapf, 1991). Returnees may have to face a different home culture from the one that was once familiar to them.

2.2.2.3 Sussman's cultural identity change model

To understand the psychological adjustment process and cultural identity changes, Sussman (2000, 2011) proposes the cultural identity change model containing three fundamental elements: identity salience, sociocultural adaptation and self-concept-cultural identity changes during cultural identity change process. She points out that these features which interact within a larger cyclical framework of cultural transition to predict consequences for the transition process made evident during repatriation. She argues that during cultural transition, self-concept disturbances are unavoidable and these self-concept disturbances and subsequent shifts in cultural identity are the critical mediating factors in explaining and predicting psychological responses to the cross-cultural transition process.

2.2.2.3.1 Cultural identity salience

Sussman (2000, 2011) claims that people have multiple beliefs about themselves; that is, they have many self-schemas, including self, self-concept and cultural identity. Culture is part of the self, but cultural identity is not explicitly recognised by individuals (Sussman, 2000). She points that a person's sense of their cultural identity is “[like] [being] a fish in water” (Sussman, 2000, p. 363), and individuals seldom recognise “the imprint of their own culture and its ubiquitous nature” (Sussman, 2000, p. 363). She notes that it is during a cultural transition that one's cultural identity emerges and becomes salient. Immersed in a new social environment, where behaviour and thinking are different from one's familiar cultural context, one's awareness of the profound influence of his culture on behaviour begins to grow. The cognition of cultural identity salience and out-group membership appear to strengthen the identification with the home culture (Sussman, 2000, 2011).

2.2.2.3.2 Sociocultural adaptation

After the cultural salience phase, the model posits that the sojourners recognise the discrepancy between their cultural selves and the new context they are facing. Realising that one set of cultural cognitions and behaviours are no longer appropriate within the new cultural context, individuals may modify their behaviours, cognitions or both, which leads to an awareness of cultural identity. During this process, sojourners encounter a continuum of adjustment choice, ranging from the maintaining of their own cultural self

and behaviours to developing a new cultural self and new behaviours that fit into the host culture; in other words, they “go native” (Sussman, 2000, p. 364). Three main factors (task centrality, identity centrality and cultural flexibility) influence the degree of the sociocultural adaptation process of individuals (Sussman, 2000). This period of adjustment is one in which the sojourner makes the “person-environment fit” (Sussman, 2000, p. 364). These modifications mark the beginning of the pursuit of self-knowledge (Higgins, 1996) and self-concept disturbances (Sussman, 2000, 2011).

2.2.2.3.3 Repatriation

As a result of cultural adjustment, the changed identity of an individual’s self-concept and their changes in cultural identity become salient on the commencement of repatriation. In the host cultural context, sojourners adapt to their new cultures by changing their behaviours and social thoughts and thus, their cultural identity is modified. On their return, repatriates then evaluate their personal values, cognitive maps and behaviours against the prevailing cultural norm in their home country (Sussman, 2000, 2011). They may find that there is no longer a fit between their newly formed cultural identity and that of their home culture and that the new cultural scripts are not appropriate when they are back in their home country (Sussman, 2000). Sussman adds that most repatriates experience the most severe level of stress at this point than at any other time during their cultural transition. They may feel their affective response is overwhelmingly negative cognitively, and behaviourally (Sussman, 2000, 2011). Repatriates may feel they are “not fitting in” (Sussman, 2000, p. 365) with work life and family life. They may find they are now members of a new out-group within the home country because their home cultural identity no longer matches (Sussman, 2000, 2011).

Sussman (2000, 2011) states that as a result of the interaction of identity salience, the adaptation process, the adjustment outcome and self-concept changes, four cultural identity shifts might emerge: namely, *subtractive*, *additive*, *affirmative* or *intercultural*. Both subtractive and additive shifts lead to repatriation experiences such as stress and discomfort in interpersonal relationships. At the extreme, subtractive repatriates may feel a lack of cultural identity or see themselves as a “marginal man” (Park, 1928, cited in Sussman, 2000, p. 366). In contrast, additive repatriates might seek to interact with people of their former host cultures (Sussman, 2000). An affirmative shift results in sojourners becoming less adapted to their host country and tending to congregate together

in that country. The affirmative sojourners' home-culture identity is maintained and strengthened throughout the transition cycle; thus, their cultural self-concept remains highly stable and unambiguous. Consequently, their repatriation experience is low in distress, as coming home may be a welcome relief. An intercultural identity shift gives repatriates a sense of being world citizens who can interact appropriately and effectively in many countries or regions (Sussman, 2000).

In summary, the culture in which individuals are raised influences the way they are socialised and it provides both a frame of reference for self-definition and a frame of reference for ordering social relationships (Higgins, 1996; G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Individuals' cultural identity is influenced far more by their experiences than by their genes (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Individuals raised in different cultures bear with them different cultural identities, such as different norms, ideas and beliefs. Cultures of individualism and collectivism have direct effects on individuals because the culture provides the norms and rules that guide the behaviours of individuals (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010; Koch & Koch, 2007). Cross-cultural contacts give individuals chances to negotiate new social norms, develop language skills and respond to the new surroundings, thus forming a new cultural identity (Gudykunst et al., 1996). As mentioned above, China is a country with the characteristics of large power distance and collectivism (G. Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). When individuals from China go to individualistic low power distance countries, they have to learn the norms, rules and values of the host countries and adopt Western ways of thinking and behaviour, which to some extent, make them more individualistic (Huang, 2008). They have to learn various patterns of the norms, rules and values of the host cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996). With this newly acquired cultural identity from the host country, returning home is likely to give rise to problems (Huang, 2008). Thus, reverse culture shock is likely to be unavoidable (Adler, 1981; Butcher, 2002; Feng & Feng, 2009) and returning home is "not so sweet" (Sussman, 2000, p. 355).

2.3 Reentry adaptation and reverse culture shock

Reverse culture shock received scholarly attention as early as 1944 (Gaw, 2000) when Scheutz (1945) studied the difficulties of returning armed forces veterans. In Schuetz's *The Homecomer*, he called those who came home as homecomers and those who stayed

home as welcomers. The homecomers underwent serious emotional issues as well as psychological difficulties after returning home. Adler (1976, P. 7) defines reentry as “the transition into one’s home culture after having lived and worked abroad”. According to Wang (1997, p. 112), “Re-entry shock, or reverse culture shock, is losing the signs and symbols of social intercourse during the transition into one’s home culture after living and working in another culture”. She argues that there are three terms which are used to discuss the reentry experience, cultural reentry, reacculturation, and reverse culture shock, with reverse culture shock the most commonly used (M. M. Wang, 1997). Just as Wang points out, “Reenteres, their families, and their friends, are most likely to use this term, because with all its negative implications, it describes their experience very well” (M. M. Wang, 1997, p. 116).

Many of the problems listed in studies on reentry are paralleled in literature relating to culture shock (McGrath, 1998). Lysgaard (1955) proposed the model of U-curve theory to stress the psychological stages of the individuals when they enter another culture. In order to study their adjustment patterns, Lysgaard interviewed 200 returned Norwegian Fulbright scholars. The sojourners experienced three stages of feelings, from initially liking to rapidly disliking the new culture, then as they began to learn the cultural cues and norms, they became more comfortable with their existence in the culture (McGrath, 1998), or as what Gaw (2000, p. 86) called “initial euphoria, then depression, and finally resolution. He described the pattern of culture shock as a graphical “U-shape adjustment curve with well-being on the ordinate axis and time on the abscissa axis of a Cartesian graph” (Gaw, 2000, p. 86). The U-curve hypothesis “has been adapted to show that sojourner moves from feelings of fun, through a phase of avoidance, then, anger, but eventually ends up with making a fit or accommodation with the host culture” (McGrath, 1998, p. 19).

Lysgaard’s ideas was soon followed by Oberg (1960) when he first proposed the term “culture shock”. Oberg (1960) describes culture shock as “an occupational disease precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (p. 177), and “He or she is like a fish out of water (p. 177). Oberg (1960) thought that there were four stages for individuals to face culture shock, the honeymoon stage, the hostile-and-aggressive attitude stage (aggression), the adjustment stage and the recovery stage. During the 1960s and 1970s focus and attention on the concept of culture shock increased (McGrath, 1998). Understanding cultures became important as

culture shock became increasingly widespread. Similarly, P. Adler (1976) defined culture shock as:

Culture shock is primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences. It may encompass feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fears of being cheated contaminated, injured or disregarded. (p. 13)

Gaw (2000) argues that P. Adler's definition of culture shock is "psychologically more descriptive and explanatory" (p. 85) while N. Adler's definition highlights "the chaotic and fatiguing nature of culture shock" (p. 85) when she defined the construct as, "the frustration and confusion that result from being bombarded by unpredictable cues" (N. J. Adler, 1981, p. 343).

The understanding of reentry, in many respects, began to be assumed as having similar aspects to entry in terms of the adjustments encountered (McGrath, 1998). While admitting the apparent limited validity of the U-curve, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) recommended "W-curve" hypothesis". They applied the culture shock construct to study returning United States scholars. After studying 5300 returning scholars by collecting data through interviews and surveys, they put forward the idea that the reverse culture shock pattern of adjustment is similar to the U-curve adjustment (Gaw, 2000). It is simply a repeated process of Lysgaard's U-curve concept as an individual returns. Hence they introduced the W-curve hypothesis. The W-curve is "an extension to the U-curve that was originally assessed when a student studied abroad" (Roberts, 2012, p. 15). Gallahorn and Gullahorn (1963) indicate that the U-curve becomes a W-curve when the student returns home and re-adjusts to his home culture, thus theoretically accounting for reverse culture shock. The idea contained in the W-curve is that reentry is just a repeat of individual's entry experience. Upon returning to their home country, sojourners experience a second decrease in adjustment followed by a second recovery stage. Returning sojourners may be out of phase with their home culture (Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010). The hypothesis implies that sojourners often have difficulties fitting into the home culture when they return home after a period of stay in other cultures. The first half of the W-curve describes the experiences of the individuals when they go across cultures. After experiencing the four stages, they become adjusted to the host cultures

at some point, and when they return to their home country, the home cultures become unfamiliar to them because they have learned the cues and norms of the host countries, thus they go through the four stages again of the U-curve concept.

According to Gullahorn and Gullahorn, adapting to a new culture might cause sojourners' changes of expectations and behaviours, which is the main difference between reverse culture shock and culture shock. Sojourners often expected to return to an unchanged home as unchanged individuals, but it is impossible for them to do so (Gaw, 2000). Furthermore, because they know there are differences between cultures, when sojourners enter a new culture, they are more or less cognitively prepared for entering into a different culture, this potentially minimized the effects of culture shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Weissman & Furnham, 1987). Gullahorn and Gullahorn also argue that students suffer more problems than the faculty returnees because faculty have established more firm perceptions of themselves. Students are more likely in a state of identity change before, during and after an overseas experience while faculty sojourners might have more firmly set identities (Gaw, 2000). The W-curve has been critiqued from its inception, because Gullahorn and Gullahorn did not have any empirical study to support their hypothesis. For example, Adler (1981), having studied the reentry process of two hundred corporate and governmental employees returning to Canada after working overseas for an average of two years, argues that the transition should be a flattened U-curve. Though there are negative assessments of the W-curve model, it is still a useful and dominant theory to explain reentry transition. Like that of the original U-curve, this W-curve model is "simple and clear and easy to understand and very appealing as an explanation of the whole of the process of reentry experience" (McGrath, 1998, p. 24). When foreign-educated Chinese return to work in Chinese universities, many experience various levels of reverse culture shock and face enormous visible and invisible challenges (Feng & Feng, 2009; Y. Huang, 2008). According to Martin, re-adjusting to one's home culture may be more difficult than adjusting to the foreign culture (Martin, 1986). Students returning home from study abroad face reentry adjustment issues (reverse culture shock) (McGrath, 1998). Wang (1997) also pointed out that reverse culture shock may be most intense immediately after sojourners come home or it may develop, becoming more and more pronounced over time as sojourners stay at home longer. The next section will discuss the literature about Chinese returnees, especially those who return to work at Chinese education sectors. It is argued that returnees have played an

important role in Chinese higher education, but they also have to face different kinds of reentry challenges and difficulties. It is inevitable for them to face reverse culture shock. Thus it is necessary to understand their reentry experience and to help them re-adapt better.

2.4 Returnee scholars in Chinese universities

This section focuses on the existing literature regarding Chinese returnees. Rather than discussing every piece of the literature, only the literature relevant to the current study was examined, to clarify the focus of the research questions in the study.

2.4.1 Elites with privileges

During the past two decades, the Chinese government has intensified its drive to send university faculty members to study overseas and recruit those who have acquired foreign degrees to build world-class universities and research institutes at home (Li, 2004). By 2011 foreign-educated returnees accounted for 81% of the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, 54% of the members of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, 78% of Chinese university presidents, and 72% of senior positions at the leading state and provincial research centres (H. Wang, Zhang, & Alon, 2011). In universities in Shanghai in 2009 about half of the faculty were returnees (Lin, 2009).

In higher education, Chen and Yuan (2000b, pp. 15-16) noted that returnees had made significant contributions in the following five aspects:

- lifting Chinese academic and research benchmarks
- introducing new disciplines and programmes
- educating a new generation of discipline and programme leaders
- improving and upgrading teaching and research capabilities
- engaging in international academic exchanges .

Foreign-educated returnees play a critical role in academic and scientific research. Academic research capacity, as measured by such output indicators as publications and patents, has rapidly increased in China. There is steady growth of publications in internationally recognised journals and proceedings in science and engineering (Wu, 2010). Research by faculty is clearly driving the rapid rise of China as a leading source

of publications across several major world citation indices (Wu, 2010). Li (2004b) points out that “returnees already dominate the political and academic leadership of Chinese higher education” (p. 1). They have become valuable in China because they possess new ideas, technologies and information and “transnational human capital” (D. Zweig et al., 2004).

Dean Xu (2009), who worked for six years at Guanghua School of Management, Beijing University, identifies two opportunities for Chinese academic returnees. One is to help China-trained academia “integrate into the international academic community, and play a leading role in this process” (p. 21). In his view, it is important to help Chinese academia who can read English but have never published articles in English journals (let alone in top-tier international journals) to become aware of the norms and conventions of international journal publications. Training was necessary for senior Chinese scholars whose academic contributions are often “disconnected from global conversations” (Meyer, 2006, cited in D. Xu, 2009, p.31). He noted that such practice is perpetuated because a school’s own graduate students are employed in the organisation, making cross-school fertilisation of ideas and consensus on the domain, paradigm and methods difficult. The second opportunity identified by Xu (2009) is to train research-oriented doctoral students. His research found that “historically, there was not a single research-oriented PhD programme in Chinese schools” (p. 31) and he argued that such an educational approach produced doctoral students who could not conduct research. Therefore, Western-trained returnees could play an important role in arming young Chinese scholars, who could become future academic leaders in the country, with research capabilities. Returning scholars have emerged as a special elite class in China (D. Xu, 2009).

Returnees are often associated with “technological progress, economic prosperity, political legitimacy and social respect” (Xiang & Wei, 2009, p. 520). Xiang and Wei (2009) also note that returnees benefit more from the positive social perceptions of them than from the economic gains of the government’s preferential policies. These positive perceptions are formed through government-controlled media, the state machinery of propaganda, and “ritualised activities” to validate the social and cultural capital of foreign degrees (Xiang & Wei, 2009). These activities are ritualised in the way that “government officials hand out awards to a handful of successful returnees, give speeches, invite returnees to banquets, and attend contract signing ceremonies” (p. 520). Xiang and Wei (2009) argue that the human capital underlying returnees’ individual attributes

could be easily converted to “financial, social and political capital” (p. 521).

In this way, the Chinese government policies and initiatives contribute to the emergence of an elite class. Within such a sociocultural and political environment, returnees are automatically drawn into the established political order (Xiang & Wei, 2009; Li, 2006). Li's (2006) study found that many returnees assumed leadership roles at universities and in the government and they had become a powerful force in transforming the Chinese political landscape and the academic arena. However, Yang (2005) held a different view. She argued that many returnees, “lured by the promise of power … have abandoned their professional and academic specialties and have become parasites of the Chinese Communist regime”, which allows them to wield immense power and eventually, “they become virtually indistinguishable from uneducated, corrupt officials who never left China” (p. 75).

This special status and privilege can create a communication barrier and misunderstanding between foreign-educated returnees and their colleagues, widening the gap between foreign-educated returnees and the general public (Zhang, 2011). Social stratification and inequality can lead to tensions between newly appointed foreign-educated returnees and China-educated faculty and “old” returnees (S. He, 2009; Zhang, 2011), because these China-educated faculty and old returnees only earn a fraction of the income of the “new” elite returnees. For example, the Chinese government launched the “Thousand Talents Programme” in 2008 (Zhang, 2011). Successful appointees could be offered an allowance of up to one million yuan (\$US158,000) plus high salary, favourable research support, better housing and better schooling for their children (Jia, 2009). However, according to Rosen and Zweig, these policies are aimed to recruit “the best and brightest” (2005, p. 2) foreign-educated returnees to come back home but thousands of returnees do not profit from the policies. For example, in 2009, 108,000 overseas-educated Chinese returned to China, while in 2011, this number was 186,200 (“China News,” 2012). However, by 2011, only 1,510 of the returnees had been recruited through China’s Thousand Talents Programme and only 248 were recruited as distinguished professors and chair professors by the Cheung Kong Scholar Programme (“Ministry of Education,” 2012). As many returnees are unable to obtain decent jobs after their return, they can even end up as *haidai* (unemployed returnees) (Huang, 2008).

According to Yin (2002), the returnee who has acquired foreign citizenship “is given the

best of both worlds: he enjoys all the benefits of a national, at the same time he has also all the rights and privileges accorded to foreigners" (Y. W. Yin, 2002, p. 388). Such privileges entail high expectations, realistic or unrealistic, on the part of Chinese institutions. Dissatisfaction is likely to occur when returnees fail to meet these expectations (Gu, 2009). Their high status and privileges are likely to prevent foreign-educated returnees from integrating with their Chinese-educated colleagues and as a result, large numbers of returnees have uncomfortable experiences, feelings of disappointment and in some cases, severe depression and regret about coming back home (Wheeler, 2012).

The perceived inequality leads to resentment in early returnees, who are worried about the situation of unfair competition for resource distribution, and in Chinese-educated co-workers, who are dwarfed in comparison with both early and new returnees (S. He, 2009; Wheeler, 2012). Jealousy, hostility, turf war, rejection and resentment are expressed by Chinese-trained colleagues within the organisational culture of some universities in which returnees are not welcome and the Chinese-educated faculty's enthusiasm is harmed (Rosen & Zweig, 2005). Within such a culture, conflicts in peer relationships emerge and communication is blocked. Eventually, the returnees can become marginalised as a small minority and the knowledge-sharing process between local academia and returnees is impaired (S. He, 2009).

Government efforts to attract first-rate overseas academics have had mixed results. In Cao's (2008) observation, permanent academic returnees (mostly doctorate holders who have spent several years abroad) are those who are less likely to find good permanent positions and tenure abroad. As a result, they have to come back to the home country. Few of them are comparable to non-returnees in terms of education quality, achievements, international reputation and prestige and some may simply be taking advantage of the opportunities currently unavailable abroad (Cao, 2008). For example, in the case of stem cell research, some of the best Chinese scientists working in this area have returned from Stanford University because stem cell research is not endorsed in the US (Dennis, 2002). Some academics who return home may be taking time off from their permanent positions to run laboratories in China, while others who have permanent positions overseas also work in China to maximise the benefits from both positions (Cao, 2008).

In summary, returnees have been prescribed socially and culturally as elites in China and

have been given many incentives and privileges (Xiang & Wei, 2009; Zhang, 2011). The Chinese government and universities have tried to lure the top-level foreign-educated Chinese to return home. For the majority of returnees, returning home is not easy. Misperceptions, misunderstandings and inequality between the returnees and local graduates cause serious conflicts, which can contribute to the difficult re-entry experiences of many foreign-educated returnees. This problem appears to have been compounded by returnees' special privileges and status that entail high, even unrealistic, expectations. These special privileges can prevent foreign-educated returnees from communicating well with their Chinese-educated colleagues and as a result, large numbers of returnees experience feelings of disappointment or even severe depression. Barriers between returnees and non-returnees seem unavoidable.

2.4.2 Chinese universities' and returnees' expectations

The following subsections will discuss Chinese universities' expectations of foreign-educated returnee and foreign-educated returnees' expectation of returning to China. Though different universities have different expectations, most of them expect to recruit foreign-educated returnees to update these universities' teaching and research standards. Most returnees expect to find better opportunities back in their home country because of the booming economy in China. Section 2.4.2.1 will explore universities' expectations while Section 2.4.2.2 will talk about foreign-educated returnees' expectations in detail.

2.4.2.1 Chinese universities' expectations

Encouraged by the government's call to build globalised universities to "enhance China's national competitiveness and increase its profile in the international community of science and technology" (Pan, 2011, pp. 120-121), Chinese universities and colleges vie with one another to recruit foreign-educated returnees. Some universities believe that returnees will fulfil their requirement for *rencai* (talented people) (Ngok, 2008). Returnees can improve the prestige of their universities as they can write articles in English (D. Xu, 2009; Pan, 2011). Other universities may have different motivations and expectations, but they all have the same purpose – to "create world-class universities" (D. Zweig et al., 2004, p. 740). For most universities, the most effective way to bridge the huge gap between world-class universities and Chinese universities and catch up with

the world top universities is to invite talented people from all parts of the world (Ngok, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, the central government has several programmes to attract top scientists and academics to come back to China to boost the country's scientific and innovative capabilities. A large amount of money has been allocated to universities for using to attract scholars, so universities and colleges compete with one another to obtain the government-allocated budget to attract *rencai*, many of whom come from overseas (D. Zweig et al., 2004). Universities can recruit returnees to improve their reputation or to use their international academic perspective (Pitts, 2009). Most universities, according to Zweig (2006), want people who can publish in Western journals to improve universities' academic research. To publish in Western journals may be easier for returnees who are fluent in English. Universities that recruit returnees to work or teach in China have expectations that the returnees will adapt their advanced technologies and ideas to upgrade the teaching and research in the home university (C. Li, 2005a; Pan, 2011). As *rencai* are a critical element in the intense competition between universities, those who have foreign-educated experience are highly sought after (R. J. Liu, 2010). The universities that receive significant extra funding because of the government's recruitment policies experience greater strength in teaching and research (Ngok, 2008).

2.4.2.2 Foreign-educated returnees' expectations

Foreign-educated returnees also have their own motivations and expectations regarding returning to work in Chinese higher education. According to Chen and Yan (2000b), the most important reason of returners coming back to China is to find better career opportunities in their home country because of China's booming economy. The central government's recruiting policies, together with local government and universities' recruiting incentives, all create a positive inducement (Kou, 2011; Nawab & Shafi, 2011; Pan, 2011). Some returnees have an expectation of receiving better research funding (C. Li, 2004a; Nawab & Shafi, 2011). Many returnees have a number of motivations and expectations with regard to returning to China. Many of them expect better economic opportunities (Gill, 2010; Wadhwa, Jain, Saxenian, Gereffi, & Wang, 2011). A survey of returnees by Wang (2011b) found that 80% of respondents expected to be "better off when armed with either higher professional degree or skills learned in Western countries" (p. 35) and some of them expected to have a better quality of life back in China. Other

studies found that returnees expected to do what they wanted to do and enjoy higher social status in China (Wadhwa et al., 2011); some had a desire to “play a part in the transformation of modern China” (Gill, 2010, p. 368) because they had acquired “foreign technology and foreign capital” (D. Zweig et al., 2004, p. 747) and they could put what they had learned overseas into use in China; and some expected to use the advantages of their foreign experience in their teaching practice (D. Zweig et al., 2004). Those returnees who had not been able to find a suitable job in their host countries expected to find a good job back in China with their overseas education background (C. Chen & Yan, 2000b; H. Wang, 2011b). For most returnees, reuniting with family members was a main motivation for returning home (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a; H. Wang, 2012). Cultural considerations were also a factor, as returnees wanted to return to the feeling of belonging in the Chinese culture (C. Chen & Yan, 2000b).

To summarise, returnees’ expectations can be categorised into professional or academic expectations (Gross & Connor, 2007; Gu, 2009; Wadhwa et al., 2011; H. Wang, 2011b), cultural expectations (familiarity with the culture) (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; H. Wang, 2011b), economic expectations (motivations) (H. Wang, 2005, 2012; D. Zweig et al., 2004), and social expectations (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; Gu, 2009; H. Wang, 2011b). No matter what their expectations, all these expectations of returnees became pull factors to attract them to return to their home country. The following subsection will discuss the disparities between universities and returnees. It is argued that both universities and returnees are not satisfied with each other because of their unmatched expectations. Problems may occur and the returning of returnees may be full of challenges.

2.4.3 Disparities between universities’ and returnees’ expectations

As mentioned in the previous section, returnees (*haigui*) are considered talented persons in China and the government and universities regard them as elites who can help to globalise China’s education (D. Zweig et al., 2004; R. J. Liu, 2010)). The whole society has high expectations of returnees. However, differing expectations and perceptions by all participants can lead to conflict (Gudykunst et al., 1996). For returnees, universities and local communities, different understandings of one another can lead to returnees

having a range of different re-entry experiences. Returnees, local colleagues and universities all enact behaviour that is based on their perspectives, beliefs and expectations, and their interpretative frameworks (He, 2003; Shao & Truex, 2012). They perceive and interpret the context according to their different expectations and perceptions, and behave differently because of their different values (Gudykunst et al., 1996), which can lead to problems between the different parties. This section reviews the literature regarding these issues in returnees' re-entry experiences.

Returnees' job performance was highly associated with their met expectations (Blackl, 1992). The Chinese government and universities expect returnees to globalise China's education with their knowledge and skills acquired in Western countries (C. Li, 2005a; Pan, 2011; D. Zweig et al., 2004). This role expectation has been prescribed by the government and universities. However, Gu's (2009) study indicated that 50% of returnees have overestimated expectations of themselves. His study also found that other locals such as colleagues and administrators of schools and universities have high expectations and requirements on returnees (Gu, 2009). When these expectations are not matched, problems may occur and returnees may experience difficulties (Gu, 2009). There was a significant discrepancy between the way returnees viewed themselves and the way that others viewed them. Dissonance occurs with mismatched expectations and perceptions and some returnees are perceived negatively by local communities (Shao & Truex, 2012). According to Liu (2008), the performance of some returnees disappointed many universities and the role of returnees became questioned because of their:

- liberal ideas learned in the West
- lack of interest in, and misunderstanding of, the Chinese political system
- lack of interest in social and administrative responsibilities
- incompetence in work performance
- constant complaints and unreasonable requests
- arrogance and pride
- unwillingness to learn
- poor ability to adapt to the new organisational environment.

He (2003) commented that the "halo" surrounding returnees was beginning to disappear and they no longer were seen as elites. The public began to reassess the value of these

returnees (He, 2003; Shao & Truex, 2012). He (2003, pp. 3-4) found that their foreign education, ideology and behaviour were largely divorced from China's cultural and sociocultural realities and management practice, and that the following characteristics of returnees contributed to this overall change of image of them:

- the strong elitism syndrome in the returnees
- their out-dated understanding of Chinese culture and realities
- unreflective thinking in returnees
- their Westernised behaviour being incompatible with the Chinese culture
- their dependency on government preferential policies and grants
- their overrated self-value
- their inability to deal with role change
- their inability to integrate into the local community.

Returnees have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the home universities. In a survey involving 471 returnees from 22 universities in eight large cities, Lou, Chen and Gao (2000) found that 31.5% were dissatisfied with the treatment they had received from the universities. This included inadequate housing, extremely low remuneration, broken promises, little support for academic and research activities, low social status in the education sector, complicated *guanxi* (interpersonal relationships), managers' manipulation of power, and lack of opportunities for professional development. Another survey of 287 returnees at 10 universities in Shanghai, the biggest city in China, showed the overall level of satisfaction was 3.41 on a five-point Likert scale and the level of satisfaction with "academic support" was low, at 2.92 (Xu, 2009). This survey found that these teachers were unhappy about the lack of possible career development, poor work resources, the unhealthy and unproductive academic environment, and poor material and psychological rewards. The situation in other less developed provinces and regions was even worse. Liu's (2008) survey of 212 returnees at universities in Guizhou Province showed that only 17% were satisfied with their universities and 57.1% were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with them. Some of the recruited top-level returnees were finding their way back to their host countries (Feng & Feng, 2009).

2.4.4 Organisational culture of Chinese universities

In spite of the many preferential policies and initiatives, the literature showed that few returnees were satisfied with their work environment and organisational culture. Yi (2011) found that when returnees start to work at Chinese universities, they often experience culture shock. The suicide on 17 September 2009 of 32-year-old post-doctorate scholar Tu Xu, only three months after his return from the US North-western University, shocked the public. His suicide note described the academic culture of his home university, Zhejiang University, as “brutal, untrustworthy and merciless” (Y. He, 2009, para. 1). He Yong, a professor at Central South University, Hunan, attributed Tu’s death to economic and academic pressures, unkept promises by the university, the unhealthy, unfair and unreasonably demanding research environment monopolised by a few academic hegemonies, poor prospects for career development, and rampant misconduct in the Chinese scientific community.

The discourse of the knowledge economy dictates the behaviour of returnees in terms of outputs (Yi, 2011). China’s unreasonably strict performance evaluation puts much pressure on returnees and is debated and criticised by many returnees (Yi, 2011). As the number of scientific discoveries, patents, and research outputs is used to legitimise the unique elite class status of returnees, they are under extreme pressure to produce rapid results within a context in which less than 2.5% of Chinese GDP is invested in applied research, compared with 15% in the US and the UK (Catcheside, 2011). Under such a pressure, returnees are pushed to produce as much as possible in a short time, to meet the nation’s ambitious goals. Quantity, not quality, matters; research output, not teaching, is required, and this has a devastating impact on returnees, ruining “the academic ethos” (Yi, 2011, p. 502).

Yi (2011) found that these bureaucratic demands and unreasonableness gave rise to negative feelings in returnees and Liu (2010) found organisational cultural made their re-entry experience even more difficult. Extreme cases were academic plagiarism and fraud. Li Liansheng, former professor of Xi’an Jiaotong University, was awarded the State Scientific and Technological Progress Award in 2005, but the reward was revoked in January 2011 because it was found that he had plagiarised others’ works and fabricated the data in his winning project on key technologies for designing and manufacturing scroll

compressors ("Plagiarism tolerated" 2011). In another case, Chen Jin, a 37-year-old distinguished returnee computer scientist at Shanghai Jiaotong University, was made a national hero for his breakthrough in 2003 in creating China's first microchips (*hanxin* in Chinese) that could be used for mobile phones, camera and other electronic devices (Barboza, 2006). Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited his laboratory after the announcement of the innovation and Jin received many awards and millions of RMB in research grants. However, three years later (2006), his research was found to be a fraud. He had faked his research and "simply stolen his chip designs from a foreign company, then passed them off as his own" (Barboza, 2006, p. 4). Chen's misconduct sparked a hot debate and an online survey attributed these events to institutional deficiencies (Yi, 2011). In such an environment, Yi (2011) contended, professional ethics are not adhered to and "the epidemic of academic misconduct is inevitable and it is even more serious with domestic scholars" (p. 503).

It is well-known that culture influences one's behavioural traits, perceptions and psychology (Neuliep, 2015). Chinese culture functions psychologically to affect the behaviour and performance of Chinese returning scholars. The university's auditing regime of their academic performance is governed by the intricate hierarchical structure of the organisation "that places little emphasis on professionalism and a great deal of reliance on overt managerialism" (Shore, 2008, p. 290). In this governing system, cadres and new oligarchies have sole authority to allocate resources at will and make decisions favourable to them only, without considering the interests of those in lower positions, whose duty is to implement what has been decided (Yi, 2011). In such a bureaucratised university structure, power is to be acquired and to be converted to capital (Nonini, 2008). As a result, many returnees aspire to acquire these cadre positions in order to have the power to appropriate public resources of all kinds, which in turn can move them to a position of higher power and more prestige (Nonini, 2008).

Power struggles between young and senior returnees, and locally trained and well-established senior scholars, can become fierce and sometimes violent (Cao, 2008). Cao points out that the more important factors that prevent overseas-trained academics from returning to China are those embedded within Chinese institutions (Cao, 2008). The most vulnerable people in the system are young scholars, either educated locally or in foreign countries, as organisationally allocated resources and invisible and cultural capital are monopolised by a tiny group of senior scholars. These scholars tend to employ a

“protective screen” by blocking the communication channels and using their power to sabotage and stop the “rising star” and junior colleagues in the organisation from having access to any valuable resources, in order to “safeguard their vested or potential interest” (Yi, 2011, p. 504).

In Yi’s (2011) view, this governing regime and organisational culture have “blocked rather than facilitated the formulation of a communication-oriented academic community in China” (p. 504), and thus undermine the expected role of returnees. Zhu (2009) reported that in 2009, 90% of the recipients of the National Awards for Famous Teachers in Higher Education were university senior officials such as presidents, vice presidents, universities’ Communist Party secretaries and deputy secretaries, and assistants to presidents. Zhu called for the end of such a bureaucratised rewarding system in which frontline academics are side-lined. Within such a bureaucratised organisational environment, collegial exchanges are non-existent and the establishment of an “invisible college” (Yi, 2011, p. 504), in which academics can exchange their views and engage in pedagogical and research activities, becomes impossible, especially for those interested in research in the social sciences and humanities, in which social interaction and engagement are essential (Cao, 2008; Yi, 2011). Yi (2011) found that social and academic disengagement built an “uncommunicative culture” (p. 504) and led to mistrust, fear of competition for resources, and unnecessary involvement in the complicated web of *guanxi* (interpersonal) networks.

Similarly, Shi and Rao (2010), two top returned scholars, found that China’s research culture was dictated by bureaucrats and their favourite experts. Within such an organisational culture, “to obtain major grants ..., it is an open secret that doing good research is not as important as schmoozing with powerful bureaucrats and their favourite experts” (pp. 1,228).

Chen (2011) found that half of the recruited returnees studied were not satisfied with the organisational environment, feeling they had been “parachuted” into an academic system that was essentially formed and reinforced by Chinese-educated academics. Within this organisational environment, they often found themselves alienated and this culturally derived alienation impeded the full utilisation of their talent and cultural capital. They became culturally incompatible with the existing system and organisational structure. Chen suggested that Chinese universities must improve their “soil” for the recruited

talents to healthily grow and integrate into the world academic community.

Paradoxically, such a cultural practice has been accepted as normal by most Chinese academics, including returned scholars who had to adapt to the culture very quickly and spend much of their time weaving *guanxi* networks and building connections, rather than spending “enough time attending seminars, discussing science, doing research, or training students (instead, using them as labourers in their laboratories)” (Shi & Rao, 2010, pp. 1,228). When such unhealthy cultural practices were accepted as normal by the majority of academics and management, they became self-perpetuating (Shi & Rao, 2010). These researchers expressed concern that in spite of state grants increasing by more than 20% each year, the system underpinning the Chinese research culture is restraining the pace of innovation. They called for change in the current research culture that “wastes resources, corrupts the spirit, and stymies innovation” (Shi & Rao, 2010, p. 1228).

To summarise, the above literature review highlights some of the major issues influencing perceptions of the roles played by returnees. It is argued that from a broad perspective, generations of returnees have played a critical role in shaping and transforming the Chinese economy, society, politics and higher education. The Chinese government has had limited success in luring top-level scholars to return to China to participate in its drive to modernise and internationalise higher education. The literature reveals that the bureaucratised hierarchy and organisational culture in higher education benefit only the small group of elite returnees who can convert their cultural capital (in the form of foreign qualifications and experiences) to economic, social and political capital, but they have devastating effects upon a large number of returnees, especially young returnees. Tensions arise between young returnees, senior returnees, local scholars and management, and in spite of positive social perceptions and stereotypes, returnees face many challenges in the process of cultural re-adaptation and reintegration. Conduits of communication are often blocked and knowledge sharing and transfer are unlikely to occur. There is a significant discrepancy between the expectations of returnees and the receiving universities. The organisational culture, social expectations and the overall socio-cultural contexts in universities both facilitate and impede returnees’ organisational learning, knowledge sharing and transfer, communication and cultural integration.

2.4.5 Returnees' reverse cultural shock

It is argued that returnees' changed identity has a significant effect on their returning experience. There is a misperception that those who have been born in China and later receive foreign higher education will not have any problems in cultural adaptation and reintegration when they return to work in the Chinese sociocultural context (Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Such a misperception fails to recognise that culture plays a primary role in shaping people's knowledge, behaviour, psychology and social relationships (Neuliep, 2009). These returnees bring with them technological knowledge and expertise. What they have acquired from foreign countries is heavily embedded in the values, beliefs and expectations that were formed, shaped and consolidated during their sojourn in the host countries (Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Cultural clashes are likely in the process of knowledge sharing and transfer from one cultural context to another (Selmer, 2002).

According to Martin (1986), readjusting to one's home culture actually may be more difficult than adjusting to the foreign culture and individuals returning home from study abroad face re-entry adjustment issues (reverse culture shock) (Wang, 1997). This certainly applies to Chinese foreign-educated returnees. When they return to work in Chinese universities, many experience various levels of reverse culture shock and face enormous challenges, both visible and invisible (Feng & Feng, 2009; Huang, 2008) and they may find "the waters have not been smooth" (Wheeler, 2012, p. 1). As (Wang, 1997, p. 67) points out, "reverse culture shock may be most intense immediately after re-entry or it may develop, becoming more and more pronounced over time". Returnees with changed cultural values, beliefs and expectations may have difficulties re-adapting once back at home.

Huang's (2008) study of Chinese returnees found that compared to the older generations of returnees who chose to return to China mostly in the name of patriotism, the new generations of Chinese returnees seem to have a "sense of ambiguity" (Huang, 2008, p. 142) with regard to their identity and sense of belonging. Some returnees experience "a sense of loss or nostalgia" and many maintain a "fluid identity" (Huang, 2008, p. 142), in which they operate in highly contextualised ways, depending on the situation. Some utilise their experiences and social status as "sea turtles" (*haigui*) for the sake of their individual well-being, but some tend to avoid being marginalised by the local Chinese by

preventing themselves from being recognised as “sea turtles”. Some even identify themselves as a “world citizen” (Sussman, 2000, p. 368) instead of identifying themselves as Chinese or foreigners. This identity shift is also noted in Gill’s (2010) study, which found that returnees formed a firm sense of intercultural identity and called themselves “quan-qiu-ren” [international citizens] (Gill, 2010, p. 372). This identity distinguishes the returnees from the local graduates. In contrast, Ip’s (2006) research found that Chinese students who trans-migrate between the home and host country develop a sense of belonging to both cultures, having a hybrid cultural identity which, according to Chan (1997), is a sense of marginality, of a homeless mind, an inner turmoil feeling they are at the margin of two worlds, never accepted by either culture. From the viewpoint of local communities, some returnees are too “Westernised” and they are treated as strange (Huang, 2008), which according to Adler, creates a “xenophobic” (Adler, 1981, p. 351) atmosphere that makes it more difficult for them to settle back at home.

2.4.6 Research gaps

This literature review has discussed the relationship between individual actors and social structures by applying structuration theory. It has also explored the cultural identity change of returnees and their experiences in Chinese universities. The literature indicates that no single study has included the perspectives of all participants – returnees, non-returnees and administrators, and no research has been from the perspective of social structuration or cultural communication.

According to Kou (2011), previous studies about Chinese returnees have been mainly focused on three major issues. The first issue is the “brain drain” from China to Western countries, as many Chinese students decide to stay in their host countries instead of returning to China after finishing their studies abroad. These studies have mainly focused on the reasons for this brain drain, including issues such as China’s political stability, personal political freedom, career concerns (career mobility and work environment), research facilities, family and economics (Cao, 2004; Chang & Deng, 1992; Orleans, 1988; D. Zweig, 1997; D. Zweig, Chen, & Rosen, 1995).

The second issue is the “reverse brain drain” or “brain gain”, which occurred when the number of foreign-educated returnees increased dramatically in the 1990s after China’s rapid economic growth and the government’s series of policies to attract overseas-

educated Chinese to return home. Most of these studies focus on two aspects regarding this “brain gain”: the social capital that returnees obtain by studying abroad and China’s policies to attract returnees. With regard to the latter, these studies describe China’s strategies to encourage the return of overseas professionals, such as providing them with preferential financial support and easing the government restrictions regarding returning. For example, Zweig’s (2006) study explains how the Chinese government developed strategies to appeal to foreign-educated Chinese and skilled professionals to serve their home country without necessarily returning to China permanently, thus successfully reversing the brain drain and gaining transnational human capital. Zhao and Zhu’s (2009) study compares central government and local government initiatives to attract global talent. Wang’s (2005, 2007, 2011a) studies mainly focus on returnees in the Chinese economic sector and examines their contribution to globalising China’s economy. Other studies have investigated returnees’ status and mobility in China’s higher education. Gou’s (1998) study explores how different generations of returnees have changed China’s higher education. Li (2004a, 2005a) examines returnees’ political and leadership roles in Chinese higher education. He argues that Chinese returnees have played an important role in China’s higher education and returnees have already dominated the political and academic leadership of Chinese higher education.

The third issue is the way China has experienced “brain circulation”. Studies have examined the way returned highly skilled professionals and scholars create development opportunities for their home countries as they build professional and business connections to the home countries while also maintaining close ties with their host countries. By studying information technology in China and India, Saxenian (2005) claims that Chinese-born engineers are accelerating the development of information technology industries in China while maintaining close ties to the market in America. Wang (2009) also insists that Chinese foreign-educated returnees have become a bridging link between China and the rest of the world by globalising China’s economy, especially through entrepreneurial endeavours and international trade and business.

All these studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of Chinese foreign-educated returnees, their contribution to China, factors influencing their return, their status and mobility in China’s economic, political and social landscape, as well as their performance in Chinese higher education. However, there has been little research from the perspective of organisational and cultural communication in terms of returnees’ life

and work back in China's higher education system and even less from the viewpoint of multi-parties (returnees, local colleagues and university's managerial levels).

Gill (2010) conducted a study on returnees through interviews with returned postgraduates from the UK, investigating their motivations for returning to China, readjustments to life in China, and their perceptions of the impact of their overseas experiences, as well as the returnees' sense of identity. However, his research did not involve returnees in Chinese higher education and studies would be required to investigate the experiences returnees have when returning to work in the Chinese education sector. Xu's (2009) research explored the effects of social and political factors on returnees. Although he mentions culture shock and returnees' perceptions of their relationships with others, especially with neighbours, his study relies mainly on self-reports, which are subjective and are also not about returnees working in Chinese universities. Further, his study was conducted in coastal cities and was not focused on returnees in higher education. Huang (2008) investigated the reasons and motivations for Chinese return migration, but this study was conducted with qualitative research with a relatively small sampling. The findings are not comprehensive and representative of skilled Chinese returnees.

None of these studies is from the perspective of returnees in Chinese higher education. He (2009) studied the peer relationship between returnees and locally educated Chinese employees in the Chinese education sector, but more culturally appropriate surveys with more in-depth qualitative studies are required. Li's (2005) study is more closely related to Chinese returnees in Chinese higher education, but is more concerned with Chinese returnees' political influence and their leadership role. Guo (1998) divided Chinese returnees into five generations and studied their roles before the 1990s. However, this study is not empirical or from the perspective of the returnees themselves. The work of Wang, Zweig, Chen and Rosen (H. Wang, 2009; H. Wang, Zweig, & Lin, 2011; David Zweig, 2006; D. Zweig et al., 2004; D. Zweig & Chen, 2007), is also worth mentioning here. All of them have studied returnees' roles in the Chinese economy and they maintain that Chinese returnees, together with the Chinese diaspora, have played an increasingly important role in China's globalisation. However, their studies have not aimed to investigate returnees in Chinese higher education.

Overall, the way Chinese foreign-educated returnees re-adapt to Chinese higher education

and perceive their re-entry experiences in the Chinese academic sector has been largely neglected in the literature. Thus, the present study has focused mainly on these issues and offers systematic and empirical understanding on this aspect that has been missing in the study of Chinese returnees.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter presents an overview of the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and explains why the study employed a mixed method to explore the re-entry experience of Chinese returnees. The method was determined by the nature of the research problems identified in the previous chapters. In-depth interviews and quantitative questionnaires were the main data collection instruments of the study. The first part of this chapter (Section 3.2) deals with the theoretical consideration of the methodology selection. The rationale for the research designs is discussed, followed by an explanation of the data collection procedure (Section 3.3). The data collection method will be discussed in Section 3.4. Then the data analysis process will be presented in Section 3.5. Ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter in Section 3.6. Section 3.7 will summarise the main points of this chapter.

3.2 A theoretical consideration—Mixed research methods

3.2.1 A pragmatic view of mixed methods

Creswell (2009) suggests that in preparing research, individuals should identify and make explicit the larger philosophical ideas they have adopted. Doing this helps to explain their reasons for choosing a specific research method. In the current study, a pragmatic view was used to guide the study of the research.

Pragmatism suggests that when we judge ideas regarding the best way to do the research and practical ways of solving problems, we should consider the empirical and practical consequences of those ideas (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Patton, 1990). Pragmatism advocates that instead of focusing on methods, researchers should emphasise the research problem in social science research and then use pluralistic methods to derive knowledge about the problem (Patton, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Creswell (2009) claims that individual researchers should be free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet the research needs and purpose. Pragmatic researchers also emphasise that the world is not “an absolute unity” (Creswell,

2009, p. 11), which means researchers should ideally look to many methods for collecting and analysing data rather than only a single way (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2011). With regard to this pragmatic view, the current study used mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to serve the purpose of this study.

Mixed methods fit the current study well because the essence of mixed methods, as pointed out by Creswell (2009), is to focus on what works best to provide the best understanding of a research problem. Taylor (2005) believes that in choosing one method, the main issue should be to assess which method best serves the research under investigation. Trumbull (2005) argues that, “The selection of the method depends upon the nature and scope of the problem being investigated ... the receptivity of individuals in the field in which the study is conducted, types of participants chosen ...” (p. 105). Ritchie (2003) agree that the research methods chosen should be determined by the nature of the information that the research needs to provide. Qualitative and quantitative methods each have their specific strengths and limitations. The combining of quantitative and qualitative research methods can compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses (Kelle, 2006) and can help the research better answer the research questions.

The following sections provide detailed discussion of the features of qualitative and quantitative methods and of the mixed methods used in the current study.

3.2.2 Qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods

3.2.2.1 The qualitative research method

Qualitative and quantitative methods comprise distinct methods and each of them features different ways of gathering data. Qualitative research methods focus on exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009). A major advantage of the qualitative method is its ability to describe phenomena as experienced by the study participants, in fine-tuned detail and in the participants' own terms. It deals with detailed descriptions and rounded understandings that are based on, or offers an interpretation of, the perspectives of the participants in the social setting (Ritchie, 2003). It gives participants opportunities to describe what they experience through their own senses (Patton, 1990, 2002).

Qualitative methods take researchers closer to the phenomenon of interest and can help to explain people's beliefs and theoretical models for the way they perceive and organise their life activity and routines in subjectively meaningful ways (Lieber, 2009). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that these methods can help researchers to understand more context-independent and particularistic phenomena and holistic experiences lived by individuals, generating rich information for deeper understanding of human experience.

Qualitative research involves the collection of a variety of empirical materials (e.g. case studies, personal experience and life stories, etc.) that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The qualitative method enables a researcher to explore the complex nature of the research questions of a study, to investigate things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, the phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them (Ritchie, 2003). A qualitative method gives the researcher insight into the participants' views, thoughts and feelings as much as possible, to gain a greater understanding of the arena of everyday life, action and experience (Ross, 1992).

3.2.2.2 The quantitative research method

Quantitative research involves surveys, in which data are collected using standardised methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews (Bowen, 2008). This research method focuses mainly on deduction, confirmation, theory/hypothesis testing, explanation and prediction. It is focused on standardised data collection and statistical analysis. The quantitative method can provide precise, quantitative numerical data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This method conceptualises reality in terms of variables as well as relationships between them (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

The main strength of this method is that the data are in the form of numbers (Punch, 2009), thus enabling standardised, objective comparisons to be made (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Data from this method are to bring an extent of objectivity to the research (which means it increases the chances that the findings of the analysis will not depend on the perspective of an individual) and the findings from this method are reported in terms of aggregates and groups properties and averages (Bowen, 2008; Creswell & Clark, 2007). According to Punch, this method "rests on measurement, and therefore pre-structures data, and

usually also research questions, and conceptual frameworks and design” (Punch, 2009, p. 307).

A quantitative research method is deductive and certain types of important questions can be systematically answered (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Punch, 2009). Further, it can provide a wide coverage of a range of situations. Therefore, when statistical results are sought, a quantitative method can be used for the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.2.2.3 Differences between the methods

As both qualitative and quantitative research methods derive from entirely different perspectives, they have several inherent differences and stress different aspects of research questions (Duffy, 1987). Qualitative research focuses on induction, discovery, exploration and theory generation, while quantitative research focuses on deduction, confirmation, theory testing, explanation, prediction and standardised data collection (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). While qualitative research is concerned with theory generation, quantitative research is concerned with theory verification (Punch, 1998). Knowledge produced from qualitative methods cannot be necessarily generalised to other people or other settings and the results can be influenced by the researcher’s personal experiences (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Conversely, in quantitative research the knowledge produced may be too abstract and general, meaning the knowledge has limitations in respect of specific situations, contexts and individuals. Also, the researcher using this method may not have access to phenomena occurring to specific individuals (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, using mixed methods can enable “the researcher to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, p. 15).

3.2.2.4 The mixed research method

Based on the pragmatic view, and also based on the strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative methods stressed above, this study applied a mixed research method to investigate Chinese returnees’ reentry experiences into their home country’s higher education. “Mixed methods research”, as defined by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17), is “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines

quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study”. It is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the overall strength of a study using mixed methods under some circumstances is greater than either a qualitative or a quantitative study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

According to (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, pp. 14-15), mixed method research has the following characteristics:

- Mixed methods research can answer research questions that other methodologies cannot.
- Mixed methods research provides better (stronger) inferences.
- Mixed methods provide the opportunity for presenting a greater diversity of divergent views.

3.2.2.4.1 Matching the research questions with the mixed method

In Chapters 1 and 2, the background of the current study and the existing literature on this topic were reviewed and some research gaps concerning returnees’ re-entry experiences were identified (see 2.3.6). The research questions for the current study were also established (see 1.6). Establishing research questions is very important, because research questions determine the research methodology used, the research setting and the respondents involved, and the search for relevant, comprehensive and rich information (Ritchie, 2003).

The research questions became the framework within which the questions for in-depth interviews and the quantitative survey questions were developed. With these three research questions established, the current study aims to discover what experiences returnees had during their re-entry, why they had such experiences and how they managed the process of re-adapting into home culture. It intends to interpret the situations that these foreign-educated returnees experienced in their home country’s academic and sociocultural contexts, to answer the research questions regarding individuals’ personal perspectives. The questions also try to explore the difficulties and challenges that these returnees faced when they went back to China. Possibilities and suggestions were solicited for people at the management level and for Chinese students who were studying

overseas and intended to return to. At the same time, as outlined in the research questions, the study was also interested in exploring the attitudes and views that non-returnee colleagues and administrators held towards returnees regarding returnees' role and performance at these universities and the reasons behind these attitudes and views. It intends to provide multiple sources about returnees' re-entry experiences when they returned to work in Chinese universities. Evidence gathered from multiple sources is more accurate and more convincing than evidence obtained from a single source of information (Yin, 2014) and it helps to support research credibility (Davis, 1995).

While qualitative research could provide the researcher with rich information about returnees' experiences, it was not enough to provide a general perspective for the studied groups. If only a qualitative method was used to collect and analyse data, the findings of the research would be produced without any means of statistical results and further, the findings could be influenced by the researcher's personal biases. However, the use of a quantitative approach alone would not be adequate for exploring the research questions in depth or probing into participants' feelings and experiences. Therefore, a mixed method could help to best answer the research questions and to compensate each other's strengths and weaknesses in answering the questions

3.2.2.4.2 Providing stronger inferences and the opportunity for greater divergent views

Further, a mixed method could provide better inferences and present a greater diversity of divergent views. As Morse and Niehaus pointed out (2009), qualitative methods can provide a micro-level understanding of the research problem, while quantitative methods can help to obtain an answer on the macro level. The current study aimed to build a multi-layered picture of the Chinese returnees' reentry experiences. The micro level involved the perspective of each individual's attitudes and views on returnees' reentry experiences in Chinese universities, exploring the in-depth reasons for those attitudes and perspectives through qualitative methods, whereas the macro level involved the overall views of each interviewed group, examining the general attitudes and views each group held towards returnees' re-entry experiences, through quantitative methods.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative research approaches was thus appropriate for this study and could maximise the effectiveness of the research design and minimise mistakes, as recommended in the literature (Creswell, 2012; R. B. Johnson & Christensen,

2012; Punch, 2009). The qualitative method allowed the researcher to probe deeply into the phenomena of the research questions. It was valuable for the researcher to understand returnees' experience of life and to measure "what the interviewees wanted and to answer why they behaved in the certain way" (Tenopir, 2003, p. 16). Moreover, it was helpful to provide a rich understanding and description of how the study groups make meaning of their social life (Hesse-Biber, 2010), whereas the quantitative method could complement the data, adding strength to the research design and providing a general numerical description of the research questions. Further, it enabled the researcher to compare the attitudes and views of these three different groups (returnees, non-returnees, and administrators) towards the same issues, thus building an understanding of different perspectives regarding returnees' re-entry experiences. It provided the researcher more options to answer the research questions from different perspectives, and to help further probe into the phenomena being investigated. Thus, the mixed method approach helped to maximise the effectiveness of the research design and to facilitate the gathering of comprehensive data.

3.2.2.5 The embedded mixed design

Creswell and Clark (2011) argue that once the researcher has identified that the research requires a mixed method approach, then he or she should consider a specific design that can best fit the problem and the research questions being investigated. In the current study, an embedded mixed QUAL-quan design was adopted to collect the data. Capitalized "QUAL" refers to stressing the priority of qualitative method in the study and the "quan" refers to the supportive role of quantitative component in the study. As outlined by Creswell (2009), this mixed methods design has its own strengths and one form of data collection can be embedded (or nested) within the predominant method and given a lower priority. Morse (1994) also points out that a primarily qualitative design can be embedded with some quantitative data to enrich the research questions being investigated. For the current study, the embedded mixed design allowed the researcher to collect the quantitative data at the same time as gathering the qualitative data. The qualitative nature of this study's research questions meant the qualitative design was dominant, with the quantitative method in a supportive role.

3.2.2.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

In the current study, semi-structured spoken interviews (see Appendix 3) were conducted with the three groups of individuals described earlier. These open-ended interview questions allowed the participants to articulate their experiences regarding Chinese returnees' reintegration experiences in Chinese university academic settings. Doing this interview aimed to create an atmosphere where the self (Chinese returnee) and the others (the local colleagues and the administrators) could all reflect on what had occurred, the different opinions and interpretations they shared. The opinions and attitudes of the local colleagues and the administrators were important because they were the people with whom returnees had direct contact during their work. Their perspectives played an important role in returnees' academic and sociocultural transition and they provided another perspective on returnees' re-adjustment experiences in their academic and social life.

Eisner and Peshkin (1990, p. 147) comment that when several kinds of evidence converge on the same themes, "any particular bit of evidence can be interpreted in the context of other bits to determine its meaning". Therefore, in-depth interviews with the three groups of participants not only allowed the collection of many possible kinds of evidence, by participants expressing their views in their own words, but also the creation of a many-sided, complex picture of the subject. During the interviews, these three groups were asked the same or different interview questions which were related to the theme of the study, but from different perspectives.

3.2.2.5.2 Questionnaire survey

Before the interview, participants were invited to complete the questionnaire survey that had been designed for their group, to collect numerical information. Although the questionnaire and interview questions for each group were slightly different, all of them stressed the same themes; namely, how returnees viewed their experiences and how non-returnee colleagues and administrators of the universities regarded returnees in terms of their academic and social re-adjustment. Conducting the questionnaire before the interviews allowed the researcher to form a general idea about the participants' feelings and opinions, which could then be examined more deeply in the interviews.

As there was no existing questionnaire found relevant to the topic of this study, the questionnaire questions were designed by the researcher, and a five-point Likert scale was used. All three questionnaires (see Appendix 4, 5 and 6) were related to the interview questions. Some of the survey questions for the three groups were the same, to investigate the same issues from different perspectives. The questionnaire survey mainly included five parts:

1. Demographic information of the three groups
2. Returnees' views and attitudes towards their returning academic life
3. Returnees' view on their role in the universities regarding their teaching and research performance
4. Non-returnee colleagues' attitudes and perceptions on returnees' role in and contribution to the universities
5. Administrators' attitudes and perceptions on returnees' role in and contribution to the universities.

3.2.2.6 Validity of the study

The mixed method does have potential limitations, and combining qualitative and quantitative research involves addressing the validity issues not only in the two separate methods, but also issues from the integration of them (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Flick (2007, 2009) points out that it is difficult to obtain a convergence of findings in mixed method research. Creswell (2012) also says that the sequence of conducting the two sets of data collection can affect the results of research. Thus, to reduce the possible problems in conducting mixed-method study, the following part of this section and Section 3.2.2.7 in the chapter will discuss this issue in detail.

In the current study, a number of strategies were used to minimise the drawbacks of using mixed methods. As data from qualitative and quantitative questions can be difficult to compare, because they often ask different forms of questions, one solution is to try to ensure compatibility between the two types of questions (Creswell, 2012). To achieve this, the questions in the questionnaire surveys were all related to the interview questions; that is, they all explored the attitudes and opinions that the three groups of participants held regarding returnees' re-entry experiences, ranking their level of agreement with the statements on a five-point Likert scale. After that, the in-depth interview questions

aimed to explore why participants held such views and attitudes. All of the questions in the questionnaire survey and interviews aimed to seek the same information about the research questions but to a different depth. For example, one of the items in the questionnaire for non-returnees was “Returnees’ participation is important in updating the teaching standards of the university”. According to their responses to this item, during the interview participants were asked why they had their views and attitudes, giving them the opportunity to explain in detail. Thus, the questionnaire and the interviews addressed the same questions, with the former obtaining information regarding the *what* perspective and the latter the *why* perspective in more probing information.

According to Creswell (2012), the sequence of conducting qualitative and quantitative data collection can have an impact on the result. He argues that introducing qualitative data collection before the quantitative can influence the responses to the questionnaires. In-depth interviews may take a much longer time than the questionnaires and after a long period of talking, participants might feel tired. To reduce this risk, quantitative data collection was conducted at the early stage of the data collection, before the in-depth interviews were conducted.

The survey and interview questions were written in English, translated into Chinese, then back-translated to ensure equivalence. As the researcher is from China, the survey and interview questions were first translated into Chinese and then a colleague was asked to translate them into English again. Then this translation was checked with an English-speaking teacher at the Students’ Learning and Help Centre at Massey University, to ensure there was no ambiguity and the questions asked exactly were what was required for the study. In addition, a pilot study was conducted before the final data collection, to ensure the validity and the reliability of the current study.

3.2.2.7 The pilot study

The aims of a pilot study are to develop and test the adequacy of the research instruments, assess the feasibility of a study, and assess the likely success of the proposed recruitment approaches (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Yin (2014) also claims that the purpose of a pilot study is to verify whether the proposed procedures and the question items are viable, to help the researcher to refine the collection plans in terms of the content of the data and the procedures to be followed. One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study,

according to Teijlingen and Hundley (2002), is that it can indicate areas where the main research project could fail, where research protocols might not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments might be inappropriate or too complicated.

From August to September 2013, two rounds of pilot studies were conducted: the first at Massey University and the second (via the internet) in Kunming, where the final survey was to be conducted. Three people were involved in the first pilot study: two Chinese students who were studying at Massey University and an English-speaking teacher who was working at Massey University but had many years of work experience overseas. The purpose of this pilot study was to test whether the survey and interview questions were understandable and whether the layout of the survey items and interview questions were in an appropriate order. Their suggestions led to changes in some of the questions.

Two returnees were involved in the second pilot study in Kunming: one returnee teacher, one non-returnee colleague, and one senior administrator of a school of a university. The purpose of this pilot study was to test the length of time required to conduct the survey and interviews, the wording of the survey and interview questions, and the process of the interviews. Their suggestions led to the following changes:

1. The survey items and interview questions changed the term “Chinese-educated teachers” or “Chinese-educated colleagues” into “non-returnee teachers or non-returnee colleagues”.
2. The order of some survey questions and interview questions was changed. For example, the participants suggested that two interview questions for returnees (10 and 11) were too similar. A review of these two questions showed that they were actually different but they were displayed consecutively, so the order of the questions was changed to avoid confusion.
3. Items 7-16 in the questionnaire for returnees were reworded from questions into statements to maintain consistency with the rest of the survey questions.
4. Items 1-2 in the questionnaire for non-returnee colleagues, and Items 13-15 in the questionnaire for senior administrators were also reworded for the same purpose.
5. One further question was added to the interviews for returnees: ‘Overall, reflecting on your returning experience, in what ways has your overseas experience been worthwhile professionally?’ This was to allow returnees to

make a general comment about their experiences after the interviews.

In summary, to strengthen the reliability and validity of the current study, two rounds of pilot studies were conducted together with other measures, such as consulting a native English speaker and asking advice from overseas Chinese students. After the pilot studies, the questionnaires and interview questions were revised, with some questions modified and one question added. The layout of the questionnaire survey was redesigned and the order of some interview questions was adjusted. Another native speaker working at Massey University was invited to help check if all of the interview questions addressed the three research questions being studied.

Creswell and Clark (2011) point out that checking for validity should not only cover analysis, but also the other processes of research, such as data collection and interpretation. Johnson and Christensen (2012) also suggest that to ensure validity, the whole process should be kept consistent, including data collection, analysis and interpretation. A later section of this chapter explains the process of the data collection, interpretation and analysis in more detail.

3.3 Data collection procedure

3.3.1 Location and time

Patton argues that “... individuals, groups and settings are considered for selection if they are information rich” (p. 169). Six universities in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China were chosen. Kunming is the capital city of Yunnan Province, located in southwest China, with 36 institutions of higher learning and 6.3 million people. The six universities were Yunnan University (YU), Yunnan Normal University (YNU), Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST), Yunnan University of Nationalities (YUN), Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (YUFE) and Southwest Forestry University (SFU). These universities were chosen because of their large number of foreign-educated returnees. Yunnan University is a state-funded 211 Project university and the other five universities are province-funded.

Collectively, these six universities represented the overall picture of this province’s tertiary education. It was felt that undertaking the research in these six universities was

likely to deliver findings typical of the re-adaptation experiences of Chinese returnees elsewhere in China, because historically, Yunnan Province has been underdeveloped economically, compared with coastal areas. In the past, many returnees were more likely to choose Shanghai, Beijing or Shenzhen as their new place of work. Employment pressure became a serious issue for returnees in these cities. Over the past 20 years, as the economy of Yunnan Province has developed, it has become more able to attract foreign-educated returnees and its universities have been given many advantages by government recruitment policies. These factors mentioned above have led to a dramatic increase in the number of returnees in Yunnan Province in recent years and studies regarding their experiences can enhance understanding of the way foreign-educated returnees re-adapt in their home country's academic environment.

The Kunming data collection process began on 18 October 2013 and lasted until 13 January 2014. This period was chosen for the data collection because in China, the new school year starts in September, which is usually a busy time for both universities and staff doing administrative requirements and preparing for the courses. October to January was a more convenient time for the data collection. The initial plan was to collect data from 20 foreign-educated returnees, 10 administrators and 10 non-returnees, but for a range of reasons, the final numbers were 24 returnees, nine administrators and 11 non-returnees. The reason for choosing the initial ratio of the three groups was that returnees were the main study group of the study, thus the number of returnees was more than that of the other two groups. The other reason was that the researcher wanted to get an even number of the three groups for the convenience of the data analysis. One more reason was out of the consideration that the researcher might not get access to large number of potential participants during the data collection. The following table shows the general demographic information for the participants in the six universities.

Table 3. 1 Universities and participants' numbers in six universities

University	Returnees	Non-returnees	Administrators
YUN	6	5	1
YUFE	6	2	
YNU	4	1	3
YU	5	1	3
KUST	2	1	1
SFU	1	1	1

3.3.2 *Research sampling*

Since the 1980s, a large number of Chinese have studied in foreign countries and returned to work as academics, managers and senior leaders at universities (C. Li, 2005a; Cheng Li, 2005; H. Wang, 2005, 2009). The lengths and purposes of their studies vary. The largest group is the “Visiting Scholar” category. Visiting scholars, who are on Chinese government scholarships, normally stay in a foreign country for about six months to one year, without acquiring foreign degrees. They are different from degree-holding returnees in many ways. They are all sponsored by the government and they go to foreign countries as “scholars” instead of students. To distinguish between visiting scholars and returnees for the purposes of this study, the latter group have been referred to as “degree-holding returnees”.

Most degree-holding returnees have studied and possibly worked in a foreign country for at least one year and up to 10 years or more. They would normally be expected to have a deeper cultural understanding of the host society and its educational system, and more foreign work experience, than visiting scholars because these degree-holding returnees have been either scholarship-sponsored or full-fee-paying international students and have not been required by the government to return to China to serve the country. Their degrees can range from bachelor to doctoral degrees, or even post doctorate, and cover all disciplines. Some of them might have gained citizenship or residency status in the host country. The current study focused on degree-holding returnees who might have worked for some time overseas after their graduation. As the minimum requirement for recruiting academic staff in Chinese universities is a master’s degree, the current study mainly aimed to study returnees with master’s, PhD or post doctorate credentials.

As mentioned above, the two other groups of participants were non-returnee colleagues and administrators of universities. The criteria for non-returnee colleagues also started from master's degree holders who gained their credentials from Chinese universities with different disciplines. The criteria for administrators were those who were the heads of schools of the universities. They were of different education background and typically had been in their management position for some years. Initially the researcher intended to collect data from 20 returnees, ten administrators and ten non-returnees. During the data collection, 24 returnees and 11 non-returnees were recommended to the researcher and all of them agreed to participate in the current study. For the administrator group, 11 potential participants initially agreed to participate. However, during the data collection, two participants later told the researcher that they were too busy and they could not participate in the study with one being transferred to another city and the other one being busy applying for a project. At last, this left nine participants remaining in the study.

In all three research groups, the participants were selected through a 'snow-ball' sampling technique where the existing research subjects recruited future research subjects from among their social networks until a sufficient sample had been reached. Snow-ball sampling allows the researcher to make systematic unbiased estimates of potential participants (Balzer, 2010), whereas biased estimates may be unavoidable in respondent-driven sampling (Levin & Xu, 2006). As I (the researcher) had previously been an English teacher in a university in the province, I contacted colleagues and friends who were staff members in either my university or other universities. They were invited to participate in this study and at the same time, each of them was asked to identify candidates they thought might be interested in participating in this research. After they had contacted potential participants on my behalf, I telephoned to introduce myself and explain this study to them. If they were interested in the study, a suitable time to meet was arranged. Each of these participants was asked to suggest further potential participants, and then these new participants were also asked to suggest potential participants. In addition, some of the researchers' friends and relatives were also encouraged to introduce potential participants who were interested in the study. Thus, the number of interviewees increased until there appeared to be enough participants to provide a good range of in-depth views. In order to make participants feel relaxed about discussing their feelings freely, all the participants from the three groups were asked to

choose a convenient place for the interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted at interviewees' workplaces or in quiet teahouses and restaurants. The participants' demographic information is detailed in the next sections.

3.3.2.1 Returnee participants

Twenty-four foreign-educated returnees were interviewed. Their overseas education varied in many aspects, including host countries, disciplines studied overseas and degrees held. Table 3.2 shows the following demographic information for the returnee participants: age, gender, host country, degrees held, job title, length of time overseas and length of time since returning.

Table 3. 2 Demographic information for returnees

Returnees	Gender	Age	Job title	Host country	Duration of overseas stay	Degree	Length of time back
R1	F	29	L	Britain	1 year	Master	4 years
R2	F	35	L	New Zealand	5 years	Master	9 months
R3	F	34	L	USA	1 year	Master	5 years
R4	M	27	TA	Sweden	2 years	Master	3 years
R5	F	24	TA	USA	9 years	Master	9 months
R6	M	39	L	Australia	1.5 years	Master	6.5 years
R7	F	48	P	USA	5 years	Master	11 years
R8	M	45	P	Hong Kong	4 years	PhD	2 years
R9	F	45	L	Britain	1.5 years	Master	8 months
R10	M	40	AP	Germany	6 years	PhD	4 years
R11	F	40	AP	Australia	4 years	PhD	1 year
R12	F	41	RA	USA, France, Thailand	6.5 years	PhD	3.5 years
R13	M	53	P	Japan	6 years	PhD	13 years
R14	M	50	P	USA	7 years	PhD	6 years
R15	M	36	L	USA, Australia	6 years	PhD	2 years
R16	F	26	L	Britain	1.5 years	Master	1 year
R17	F	32	L	Thailand	2 years	Master	5 years
R18	F	28	TA	Germany	4 years	Bachelor	3 years
R19	F	27	TA	Thailand	2 years	Master	2 years

Returnees	Gender	Age	Job title	Host country	Duration of overseas stay	Degree	Length of time back
R20	M	37	P	Canada, Ireland	8 years	Postdoctoral	3 years
R21	F	44	R	USA	3 years	Postdoctoral	3 years
R22	M	48	AP	Australia	4 years	PhD	7 years
R23	F	25	TA	USA	2 years	Master	4 months
R24	F	41	AP	Australia	1 year	Master	12 years

Note: L=Lecturer; AP=Associate Professor; TA=Teaching Assistant; P=Professor RA=Research Assistant; R=Researcher

Of the 24 foreign-educated returnees, 15 were female and nine were male. They were aged from 24 to 53 years, with the average age of 37.25 years. Seven of them were in their twenties, six in their thirties, nine in their forties and two were over 50. The length of overseas stay ranged from one year to nine years. One held an overseas bachelor's degree; 13 had master's degrees; eight had PhD degrees; and two were post doctorates (see Table 3.3). Among them, eight of them were lecturers, five were teaching assistants, four were associate professors, five were professors, one was a researcher and one was a research assistant. Their length of time back to China ranged from four months to 13 years.

Table 3. 3 General information for returnees

Female	Male	Age average	Age range	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Post doctorate
15	9	37.25	24 –53	1	13	8	2

3.3.2.2 Non-returnee participants

Eleven non-returnee participants took part in the interviews for: nine males and two females. Their ages ranged from 28 to 55, with the majority in their thirties. Nine of them held master's degrees and the other two held doctoral degrees. Six of them were lecturers, one was a teaching assistant, three were associate professors and one was a professor. Their length of current employment ranged from three years to 35 years. Table 3.4 presents a summary of the non-returnee participants' demographic information.

Table 3. 4 Demographic information for non-returnees

Non-returnees	Gender	Age	Job title	Length of current employment	Degree
NR1	M	33	L	4.5 years	Master
NR2	F	34	AP	7 years	Master
NR3	F	28	TA	3 years	Master
NR4	M	35	L	9 years	Master
NR5	M	32	L	10 years	Master
NR6	M	30	L	4 years	Master
NR7	M	38	AP	3 years	PhD
NR8	M	55	P	35 years	Master
NR9	M	42	AP	18 years	PhD
NR10	M	32	L	11.5 years	Master
NR11	M	35	L		Master

Note: L=Lecturer; AP=Associate Professor; TA=Teaching Assistant; P=Professor

3.3.2.3 Administrators

Bowen (2008) argues that researchers should interview informants who best represent the sample and who have a broad general knowledge of the research topic being discussed. Therefore, nine university administrators were interviewed in my research. Most of them were deans or deputy deans of schools, with only one being the vice-president of a university. Deans of universities were invited to participate in the study (rather than presidents) because they are directly and mainly assigned to be in charge of school affairs. As they are responsible for the management of a school, it is likely that they know their academic staff well. The only vice-president in the study was once a school leader and he was in charge of international affairs at that university when the interviews were being conducted. He had many opportunities to contact returnees and he understood their issues because he was one of the university committee members who recruited returnees. All except one of the administrators had overseas experiences. Table 3.5 shows the demographic information for the administrators.

Table 3. 5 Demographic information for the administrators

Manage leaders	Gender	Position	Length of position	Overseas experience
M1	M	D	4 years	Yes
M2	M	DD	15 years	Yes
M3	M	VP	5 years	Yes
M4	M	DD	4 years	Yes
M5	F	PS	6.5 years	Yes
M6	M	DD	12 years	No
M7	M	DD	5 years	Yes
M8	M	DD	4 years	Yes
M9	M	DD	7 years	Yes

Note: D=Dean; DD=Deputy of Dean; VP=Vice-President; PS=Party Secretary

3.4 Data collection method

Johnson and Christensen (2012) suggest that in mixed methods research, the researcher should consider all the major methods for collecting data to address the research questions being investigated. In this study as already explained, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used, to maximise the richness and validity of data and to “provide a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 5). As mentioned earlier, two data collection methods (questionnaires and interviews) were adopted for this study. Details of these are outlined in the following sections.

3.4.1 *The questionnaires*

As outlined earlier, three sets of different questionnaires were given to the three groups. The questionnaires were mainly designed to identify the three groups’ attitudes towards and opinions of returnees. In addition to the demographic information (age, gender, job title, etc.), the questionnaires for the three groups (see Appendices 4-6) covered the following areas:

- returnees’ views towards the academic environment in Chinese universities
- returnees’ views towards the management culture of Chinese universities

-
- returnees' attitudes towards their social relationships with colleagues and university administrators
 - returnees' expectations of work and life, especially university life, back in China
 - returnees' views towards their job and contribution to the universities
 - returnees' attitudes towards their own overseas education
 - non-returnee colleagues' attitudes and perceptions regarding returnees' teaching and research performance at the universities
 - administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding returnees' teaching and researching at the universities.

The questionnaires were designed with Likert scale statements. All the questions in the questionnaire were closed, rather than open-ended. As the main data collection method in the study, the interview questions had already covered the questions that the researcher wanted to investigate in the in-depth spoken interviews; thus the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were designed to provide numerical statistics for the study. Each group was asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements, on a scale of 1 to 5. As explained earlier, the questionnaires were given to the participants at the first stage of data collection, before the interviews were conducted. The questionnaires were prepared in English and presented to all three groups in simplified Chinese (see the description in Section 3.2.2.7).

The questionnaire questions were designed in consultation with the researcher's supervisors Professor Frank Sligo and Dr. Mingsheng Li and other Massey University staff to ensure they covered the research questions and would elicit the required information. Table 3.6 shows the demographic information for the three groups.

Table 3. 6 Demographic information for the three groups

	Returnees	Non-returnees	Administrators
Number	24	11	9
Gender	F=15 M=9	F=2 M=9	F=1 M=8
Age	Average=37.25 20-30=7 30-40=6 40-50=9 Over 50=2	Average=35.82 20-30=1 30-40=8 40-50=1 Over 50=1	
Degree	Bachelor=1 Master=13 PhD=8 Post doctorate=2	Master=9 PhD=2	Master=7 PhD=2
Job title	TA=5 L=8 AP=4 P=5 RA=1 R=1	TA=1 L=6 AP=3 P=1	D=1 DD=6 VP=1 PS=1

Note: L=Lecturer; AP=Associate Professor; TA=Teaching Assistant; P=Professor RA=Research Assistant; R=Researcher; D=Dean; DD=Deputy of Dean; VP=Vice-President; PS=Party Secretary

3.4.2 Interviews

Once the survey questionnaire was completed with the participant, the interview began. During the interviews, the semi-structured interview questions were asked, based on the interview guide (see Appendix 7). The participant was encouraged to express their opinions and feelings freely and except for asking some questions to probe further, they were not interrupted and no comments were made, to ensure that the process was as objective as possible.

3.4.2.1 Interviews with foreign-educated returnees

The foreign-educated returnees were asked the semi-structured interview questions to

investigate their experiences of re-entry into Chinese universities. The questions focused on:

1. their reasons for and expectations of returning to work in Chinese universities
2. the challenges they faced on their return and the strategies used to meet such challenges
3. their feelings and opinions regarding the academic environment of the Chinese universities and their academic life in those universities
4. reasons for these feelings and opinions
5. ways of adapting to and reintegrating into the home culture
6. the social networks available to them
7. their contribution to the universities
8. their suggestions for other overseas students who might consider coming back to work in China.

They were also asked to comment on the support of their university and to make suggestions for management regarding ways to make use of returnees' social and positional advantages.

All the interviews were conducted in Chinese and were digitally recorded, and later transcribed by the researcher into Chinese. The average time of the interviews was about 47 minutes, with the shortest one being 18 minutes and the longest one being one hour and 54 minutes.

3.4.2.2 Interviews with non-returnees and administrators

The interview questions for the 11 non-returnees and nine administrators were also semi-structured interview questions, focusing on their:

1. opinions regarding the academic role of returnees at the universities
2. expectations for and evaluations of foreign-educated returnees
3. opinions on the trend for overseas graduates to return to China
4. impressions of and interaction with returnees
5. opinions regarding recruiting policies for returnees.

The interviews were conducted in Chinese, digitally recorded and then transcribed by the researcher into Chinese. The average interview time for non-returnee group was 27 minutes, with nine minutes being the shortest and one hour 55 minutes being the longest. The average interview time for administrators was 43 minutes, with 25 minutes being the shortest and one hour 47 minutes being the longest.

To create an environment that allowed the participants to talk freely, the interviews always began with greetings and light conversation until they appeared relaxed and comfortable. The first question for returnees was always to ask them why they had come back to China, as it was a direct question which would be straightforward to answer given that that returnees had volunteered to tell their stories. All the interview questions for three groups were a guide only, as some interviewees could answer three or four of the questions in one response and sometimes the order of questions needed to be adjusted accordingly. Some interviewees were very talkative and they were not interrupted unless they deviated from the topic, in which case the interview questions were used to lead them back to the topic. Most of the interviews went smoothly and some interviewees thanked the interviewer for giving them the chance to tell their stories. One of the interviewees was so excited that she even had tears in her eyes when she told the researcher about her reentry experience. She thanked the researcher for giving her the opportunity to tell her story. The researcher sometimes had to stop for a while to let her come down and comfort her. This interview was the longest one and the interviewee provided rich information about her returning experience at the university where she was employed.

3.4.2.3 Interviewing language

As mentioned earlier, all the interviews were conducted in Chinese, as a shared language (between the interviewer and interviewees) is very important for clarity in interviews (Patton, 2002). If the interviewer and interviewees do not speak the same language, the logistics and procedures to generate data can be affected, influencing the validity of the data and ultimately, the conclusions drawn from the research (Williamson et al., 2011). Before each interview, all participants were told that they could choose English or Chinese for the interviews. Even though many returnees could speak English, all of them chose to be interviewed in Chinese (either Mandarin Chinese or Kunming dialect),

as they felt this made it easier and more comfortable for them to express what they wanted to say and to articulate their ideas.

Fontana and Frey (2005) point out that the interviewer and interviewees sharing the same language and having a similar cultural background helps in maintaining the original meaning of responses as much as possible and minimising misunderstandings. As a Chinese native speaker, I could communicate well with the participants in their own language, which helped with gathering clearly expressed information. My background as an overseas PhD student and a university teacher also assisted in my understanding of the participants and helped with the establishment of a warm relationship with them, which encouraged them to share their stories more fully.

3.5 Data analysis

Previous section (see Section 3.2.1) in the current study has argued that this study was based on a pragmatic view to investigate Chinese returnees' reentry experiences at their home country's higher education. The nature of this study required mixed methods and strategies. As Creswell (2009) points out, data analysis in mixed methods research is related to the type of research strategies that are chosen for the procedures. In this study, "mixed methods analysis" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 203), involving both qualitative (description and thematic text analysis) and quantitative (descriptive) strategies, was used to analyse the data. The data from the quantitative analysis were compared with the themes from the qualitative data. That is, the transcriptions of the recorded data from the interviews and the questionnaire surveys from the same participants were analysed and then these two sets of data were compared and merged. Table 3.7 shows the analysis process of the study and the following sections describe it in more detail.

Table 3. 7 Analysis process of the study

Types of methods	Types of data analysis	Data analysis steps
Mixed concurrent design	Merged data concurrently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse qualitative data (the primary data set for the study). • Analyse quantitative data (the secondary data set for the study). • Decide how the two data sets could be compared (e.g. dimension, information). • Interpret how the primary and secondary results answer the research questions.

3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis

Creswell and Plano (2011) emphasise that it is important for the researcher to choose the analysis strategy that best suits the study. In the current study, thematic analysis was adopted as the analytical tool because of its flexibility and effectiveness. This approach can be applied to qualitative study, quantitative study or even mixed method study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Most importantly, it is a method which can be used for identifying, analysing and reporting themes for qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It can also minimally organise and describe the data set in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the benefits of this analysis method is its flexibility with theoretical freedom, which enables it to be “a flexible and useful research tool”, and “potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The qualitative data analysis in this study consisted of the analysis of the interviews from the three groups, using a systematic procedure because this “helps to organize [a] large database” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 207). For the current study, the Chinese transcripts from the interviews for the three groups of participants totalled nearly 200 pages. Following Creswell and Clark’s (2011) and Braun and Clarke’s suggestions, three stages were used to analyse the data: exploring the data, coding the data, and generating categories and themes.

The first stage was to explore the data. The main purpose of this stage was for familiarising the researcher with the data. Though all the data were transcribed by the researcher, it was very important for the researcher to be familiar with all aspects of the data, as doing this provides the bedrock for the rest of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase included two steps. First, each interview was thoroughly listened before being summarised in memo format (see a sample in Appendix 8) after all the data collection was finished. This enabled the researcher to get a basic idea about each interview and to get a general impression and feeling about the interviews. These memos were short phrases or ideas and included the researcher's reflections about the interviewees. Creating these memos was an important first step in forming broad categories of information (Creswell & Clark, 2011), which were valuable in the subsequent steps of further clarifying categories and themes in the data analysis. Then all the data were read and reread by the researcher for searching for meanings and patterns. During this step, the researcher began to take notes or use highlighters to underline those parts which the researcher thought were important.

The second stage, coding the data, started when the researcher had read and familiarised with the data, and had generated initial ideas about what was in the data and what was interesting to her. The transcripts were divided into small units such as phrases, sentences or paragraphs according to key words (e.g. academic, salary, new ideas, academic circle, advantages, etc.). As suggested by Creswell and Clark (2011), this process was done by coding directly onto the printed transcript, with code words for text segments recorded in the left margin and broader themes recorded in the right margin. The code words were then sorted into groups of similar meaning and a theme was identified and documented accordingly. During this process, highlighters and coloured pens were used to indicate potential patters or segments of data. Codes were initially identified, and then were matched with data extracts that demonstrated the codes (see Table 3.8 for an example). Each data item was given full and equal attention in the coding process, and interesting aspects in the data set were identified that might form the basis of repeated themes.

Table 3. 8 Codes with data extract

Data extract	Coded for
The biggest challenge is to adapt. Since you have come back to China, you ... have to do things according to the domestic norms here. All these norms, way of doing research, life styles and rules, you should ... re-adapt to them. We cannot change it. Maybe the pain is that I cannot change it, right! Therefore, what you have to do is ... adapt to it.	1. Talked about cultural re-adaptation 2. Attitudes towards re-adjusting 3 .Modify oneself to fit in

Creswell (1997) suggests that to analyse data, all the collected information should first be studied to gain an understanding of the overall data, and then it should be reduced to categories, themes and patterns. Stage three started when all the data had been initially coded. During this stage of data analysis, the researcher's attention was focused on the broader level of themes and central ideas generated from categories, and all the different codes were sorted into potential themes. Relevant coded data extracts were collated within the identified themes. In this stage, the transcripts were thoroughly examined again, first, to make sure the themes were related to the data set, second, to recode any data within themes that might have been missed in earlier coding process. After this stage, five broad initial categorisations were identified:

- reasoning for coming back
- non-returnee colleague and administrators' views towards returnees
- returnees' academic adaptation
- returnees' sociocultural adaptation
- returnees' institutional adaptation.

Cresswell also notes that an important step at this stage is to begin to develop a list of tentative categories and then expand these categories. Thus, the themes from the previous stage were recorded under these categories and grouped according to interviewees' common responses with the same implied meaning. This thematic analysis method was very helpful during the analysis process as it contributed to the

understanding of the story line of returnees' experience and non-returnee colleagues' and administrators' views on returnees.

3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis

As mentioned earlier, in the current research the purpose of the quantitative data was to support the qualitative data, with a set of 5-point Likert scale questions for each group to investigate their respective perceptions of and attitudes towards returnees. The survey questions aimed to find out how much the participants agreed or disagreed with the statements and all the questions were closed questions. The essential characteristics of the data were described in quantitative forms of frequency distribution and graphical displays (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The analysis technologies used were Microsoft Excel and SPSS, which were used together to analyse interviewees' demographic information, frequency of variables, range, mean and median. As the total number of questionnaires was relatively small (44 in total), the figures of the data were manually entered by the researcher into Excel worksheet and SPSS sheets. Excel technologies were used to display the percentages of the data, whereas SPSS was found more appropriate to explore such information as frequency, mean and median of the data. During the analysis process, five items in the questionnaire surveys for non-returnees (items 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19) and items (16, 17, 19, 20 and 21) for administrators were reworded, according to SPSS requirements, because they had been negatively worded.

Creswell and Plano (2011) suggest that once the mixed methods data analysis is complete, mixed methods interpretation should then be used to examine the quantitative results and qualitative findings, as data comparison and integration is important for mixed research studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). For the current study, data transformation, as suggested by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003), was used to analyse the data, with the themes or factors created from the quantitative data compared with the themes and categories from the qualitative data. A matrix was created to display the combined information from both databases. A variety of tabular and graphical forms, as well as charts, were used to display qualitative as well as quantitative data. When displaying qualitative data, tables were applied to display the data, with columns indicating numbers of participants, content, and the researcher's comments. Quantitative data were mainly used to support theses and categories from qualitative data because it was in a supportive

role in the study as mentioned earlier. All the findings were reported in the next two chapters (Chapter 4 and chapter 5).

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Ritchie (Ritchie, 2003), any research study raises ethical considerations, particularly studies involving qualitative research. The author notes that any study topic can raise sensitive issues for people, uncover painful experiences and lead people to disclose information that they have rarely (or never) shared before. Researchers should avoid harming participants involved in the research process by respecting and taking into account their needs and interests (Flick, 2009).

As the current research mainly focused on qualitative data, with quantitative data being in a supportive role, some degree of risk was unavoidable. But as pointed out by Flick (2009), “Thinking about ethical dilemmas, however, should not prevent you from doing your research, but should help you do it in a more reflective way and to take your participants’ perspective on a different level” (p. 43). While the issue of research ethics is important, it is possible to find solutions to problems if research is undertaken sensitively (Flick, 2009).

For the current study, ethical approval was gained from the Massey University Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1). In accordance with the university guidelines, all participants were provided with copies of the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 2) and Participant Consent Form (see Appendix 3) in Chinese prior to data collecting, to protect their ‘dignity and rights’ (Flick, 2009, p. 40). These two forms were signed by participants prior to the beginning of each interview. At the start of each interview, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions or clarify any issues that were related to the research and their involvement. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and the venue settings were chosen with regard to safety, privacy and convenience for the participants. As well as these measures, the researcher attempted to be as objective as possible and tried to consider the participants’ roles and think from their perspectives during the data collection and data analysis.

To guarantee participants’ confidentiality, the following conditions were met:

- All data was recorded anonymously
- The researcher was the only person who could access the recorded interviews
- All the materials related to the interviews were stored safely during the course of the study and will be destroyed after the completion of the study
- All the information provided by the participants was used to fulfil only the current study
- In analysing the data, interpretations were grounded in the data instead of in personal judgements
- All of the interview data collected from the 44 participants were transcribed solely by the researcher.

3.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has outlined the methodological choices made in the current study. In the study, a pragmatic view was used to guide the research. As qualitative and quantitative methods each have their own strengths and weaknesses, the current study applied a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative to compensate for each other's weaknesses. To explore the research questions, a qualitative-driven embedded mixed method design, which integrated the qualitative and the quantitative research methods, was adopted for the research, with the qualitative method taking the priority and the quantitative method being a supportive method. The integrating characteristic of this mixed methods design was reflected throughout the research stages of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data of the study. Multiple sets of data, including qualitative and quantitative data, were collected from the three groups of participants. A mixed methods analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was merged and compared with the themes and categories from the qualitative data. Research validity and ethical considerations have also been discussed in this chapter. The next chapter describes the findings generated from the qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter 4 RECRUITMENT POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATORS' AND NON-RETURNEES' VIEWS OF RETURNEES

4.1 Preview of this chapter

This chapter reports the results of this research from the perspectives of universities' recruitment policies and administrators' and non-returnees' views of returnees. Section 4.2 examines the recruitment policies of these universities and Section 4.3 explores the views of administrators and non-returnees towards returnees. Of the nine interviewed administrators, eight reported that their universities had returnee recruitment policies that usually provided returnees with some financial support for settlement, a certain level of research funding, and housing to attract them to their universities. Some even provided jobs for the returnees' spouses. Some returnee recruitment policies classified returnees in the same category as domestically trained, talented people, meaning returnees needed to be identified as top-talented personnel if they were to compete to have better preferential treatment. As more and more returnees were coming back to China to search for jobs, university recruitment policies were becoming more demanding and less generous than years ago, indicating that returnees were not as highly regarded as in the past. The data showed that administrators and non-returnees had both positive and negative views regarding returnees' overseas experiences. They regarded returnees as agents who brought with them new ideas and new concepts. Returnees had the ability to globalise these universities. Their new teaching and research methods had also become one of their overseas advantages. However, administrators and non-returnees had negative views towards returnees. They were not that satisfied with returnees' teaching and research performance.

4.2 Recruitment policies

Most of the universities had recruitment policies to attract returnees to come back to work there, but these policies differed in specific details. For most of them, the minimum criterion for returnees to qualify for financial assistance was a doctoral degree. There was no preferential treatment for master's degree holders. Nearly all the universities had two different strategies for recruiting returnees: one that focused on recruiting "top-level" returnees, who received preferential treatment including research funding, housing or a housing subsidy, and a job offer for the returnee's spouse if the spouse met the

requirements of the university; and one that focused on the other ordinary returnees. A3 said:

We have two recruiting policies. One is for recruiting top returnees. The other is for normal ones. The recruiting requirements depend on the level of the graduation university, the subjects they studied and their research overseas. If they meet different requirement levels, the treatment is different.

He said the money that was used to recruit returnees could range from RMB 150,000 to RMB 1,000,000. The criteria for deciding whether a returnee was top level or not depended mainly on his or her research, such as having patents, or publishing articles on *Nature*, *Science* or *Nature Communication* in prestigious journals. It also depended on whether the returnee had undertaken any research projects overseas or not. Of course, he admitted that top-talented returnees were given much better treatment than ordinary returnees were. They were granted more money, more research funds, better housing and job offers for their spouses. A2 also said that one of the criteria at his university was aimed at whether the returnee had published articles in *Nature* or *Science*, or were a professor or had any international research awards. A1 said that at his university, those who had high degrees and high titles, which ranged from doctoral degree holders to academics, received preferential treatment such as money, housing, research funding and office facilities. A7 said the money used for recruiting returnees at his university, where the minimum criterion was doctoral degree holders, ranged from RMB 100,000 to RMB 200,000, including research and settlement funding. A6, A8 and A9 said at their university, the basic criteria for recruiting returnees depended on their overseas research and the financial incentive ranged from RMB 100,000 to RMB 1,000,000. For all the universities, money was the major focus for attracting returnees to work for them.

However, the data showed that for most universities, the recruitment criteria had changed significantly over the years, as explained by A2:

The [criteria for recruiting returnees are] not the same as years ago. For example, 10 years ago, the criteria [were] lower, but now they are becoming higher and higher. Under the same treatment, the requirements for individuals are higher, such as what awards you have, what research you have done, or even whether you have the experiences of being a professor in universities in the US or the UK. Ten years

[ago], a doctoral degree holder, or even master's degree holders could have this good treatment [mentioned above].

Similar to A2, A3 said his university had also changed its criteria for recruiting returnees. He said that the university used to offer a job to a returnee's spouse if the returnee had an overseas doctoral degree, no matter whether the spouse had degrees or not. These days the minimum degree requirement for the university to offer a job to a returnee's spouse was a master's. He attributed these changes to the increasing number of returnees. Because more and more returnees were returning for searching jobs in Chinese universities, the requirements were becoming more demanding.

4.3 Administrators' and non-returnees' views regarding returnees

This section examines the views and attitudes of administrators and non-returnees towards returnees. It explores how these two groups regard returnees' roles in and contributions to the universities. It first outlines the positive views and attitudes of administrators and non-returnees regarding returnees, followed by the negative views and attitudes of these two groups.

4.3.1 Agents of new knowledge, new concepts

The data showed that non-returnees and administrators saw returnees as people who held new knowledge, new concepts and new methods, including teaching pedagogies and research methods acquired in their years of study in Western countries. Returnees were said to stand at the frontline of the development of science and technology in the world. They knew what was happening in Western countries. They had access to the newest research results and more advanced research methods. It seems that new knowledge and new concepts had become important characteristics of these returnees. A5, a university administrator, said:

Returnees do bring new things to the university; especially they bring new things to the students, such as new knowledge ... including knowledge in natural science and social science. [They brought with them] new conceptions of research methods, the

ways of doing research. Returnees bring all of these back.

Because you can see different things when you study in different environment. Definitely, [universities] hope returnees [will] bring back foreign countries' advanced ideas and their own learning and study experiences to the research and teaching. This is the main reason that the university welcomes returnees to come here to work.

She insisted that Chinese universities could learn from Western countries through the returnees, who knew how to do research in a specific field because of their overseas experiences and could distinguish between useful and inferior methods. She argued that as most returnees had a background of overseas postgraduate study or PhD study, they could identify inadequacies in higher education in China and introduce new concepts. Their new perceptions on writing articles and doing research could contribute to the development of China's academic world. A1 said he believed that returnees had "been to the source of knowledge" and they returned with ideas that could be applied directly in Chinese universities.

It seems that universities wanted to take advantage of the foreign-educated returnees' new ideas and perspectives, to facilitate the development of the universities. A7, the vice dean of a school at one of the universities, said:

In terms of the quality of research and teaching, it is a very big improvement. Absorbing new ideas from outside can input new things to the university. I think these are the basic reasons for recruiting returnees.

A2 had a different angle on this issue. He claimed that many Chinese people believed that things from foreign countries were better than those in China and overseas graduates would bring in new ideas that domestically trained personnel did not have. A6, A8 and A9, who were from the same university, said their organisation wanted to use returnees to take a leading role in some subjects, or to fill shortages in some disciplines. A8 said:

When it comes to the development of universities, in fact you need a broader vision, a higher and more comprehensive vision ... you can absorb some better human resources to improve your own development.

Thus, returnees' overseas experiences were an advantage that distinguished them from non-returnee colleagues because they were able to view issues from a different

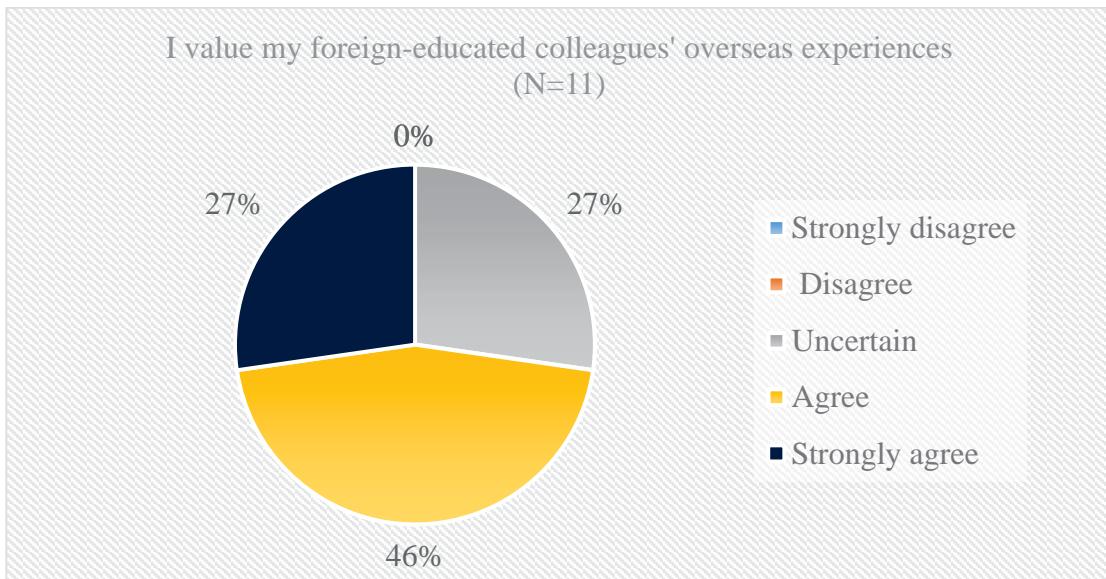
perspective and approach them with new concepts. A5, herself a foreign-educated returnee PhD from Australia, said, “People’s experiences are very important for them. It is these experiences that make them different from those who do not have these experiences, and make them view things differently”. She believed that returnees’ overseas experiences have changed returnees, their ideas, their ways of thinking, and ways of doing things. She thought it would be a pity to not have such experiences in a foreign culture, especially for a person who majored in English language and foreign literature.

This attitude towards returnees was also evident in non-returnee colleagues. They believed that returnees’ overseas experiences had made them different from non-returnee colleagues. This characteristic of returnees had become one of their assets. NR9 said:

Returnee teachers’ advantages are related to their overseas experiences. If they really have learned something in foreign countries, and if they have immersed in that culture deeply, they actually have many advantages. They become open-minded and understand the home country’s culture much better.

NR4 expressed a similar view, saying, “I think it is a good thing to have overseas experiences. They [returnees) can expand their visions, and they can bring us new things, advanced things [from foreign countries) to our universities”. He believed that when returnees returned to China, they could make very positive contributions to the country. Figure 4-1 illustrates the views of non-returnee colleagues regarding foreign-educated returnees’ overseas experiences.

Figure 4-1 Non-returnees' views on returnees' overseas experiences



The data shows that of the 11 non-returnee colleagues interviewed, 46% of them agreed that they valued their returnees' overseas experiences, and 27% of them strongly agreed with this statement, which means that all together, 73% (N=8) agreed that they valued returnees' overseas experiences. This positive attitude towards returnees' overseas experiences was consistent with the data from the interviews. It showed that returnee colleagues' overseas experiences were valued by non-returnees and some non-returnees even expressed their desire to go overseas to have such experiences, whether as visiting scholars or as students.

Another important characteristic of returnees is their new perspectives compared to non-returnee colleagues. Having new perspectives was one of the main factors that identified them as being different and enabled them to view Chinese higher education from a very different perspective. All of the non-returnee colleagues and administrators appreciated returnees' new global outlook. When A3 was asked about any new ideas, perspectives and ideology that returnees had brought to his university, he said:

Returnees bring international perspectives. They bring new education pedagogies, new methods, and new research results (to China). They also bring democratic ideas about education. ... Anyway, they bring new ideas about education; advanced new perspectives, such as research and professorial management.... Whether in education philosophy, research philosophy, teaching philosophy, management philosophy, and logistics concepts, all these are completely new things.

4.3.2 Agents for internationalisation in higher education

The data showed that although different universities had different expectations of returnees, they all wanted to use the returnees' knowledge and overseas experiences, which they thought would help the universities to become globalised. They considered the returnees' ability to look at issues from a different point of view, their "globalised horizons and perspectives", as a main attraction to the universities that aimed to internationalise their organisation. For example, A7 claimed that recruiting returnees was for the purpose of internationalisation, as his university wanted to improve its reputation domestically and internationally. He claimed:

It is globalisation. I think this is the most important thing. Our school has promoted the idea of globalisation for ... more than 10 years I think, starting from 1995. We already encouraged the idea of globalisation at that time, namely going out to connect with international universities. On the one hand, this can promote the university's reputation. On the other hand, this can greatly improve the teaching and research quality of the university. Absorbing new ideas can bring new perspective to the university. I think this is the major reason (to employ returnees). (A7)

A7 also noted that returnees could establish a relationship between local and overseas universities in terms of research. He said, "This is very important, because it can make the university keep pace with the whole world".

A2 explained his university's expectations from a different perspective. He believed there was a common perception in China that foreign-educated returnees, especially those from the UK, the US and Western Europe, had broad and globalised horizons that would be helpful to the universities' reform and internationalisation.

It seems ... that returnees from such advanced countries like the UK, the US and Europe are thought to have visions that are more open and more globalised horizons. This could be helpful in universities' reform, or even in universities' internationalisation. I think this is one of the factors [for which] universities employ returnees. (A2)

A3, A4 and A5 were all from the same university. They also believed that the main reason for recruiting foreign-educated returnees was to improve the university's research

standards and to internationalise the universities. As one of the administrators pointed out:

Nowadays, universities [in China]) advocate the ideas of internationalisation. They intend to have a group of people who have advanced international strength and overseas education background, to bring different things from their perspectives to input new ideas and concepts to the university. (A5)

A9's view was that returnees brought international cooperation and connection to his university, making international conferences and cooperative research projects with other countries possible. A4 had a similar view, saying:

I think returnees' main contribution to the university is on international communication, communication between the university and foreign countries. Most returnees who came back to our university work at the department of foreign affairs or schools of foreign languages. ... Most of them are in charge of foreign affairs and international communications. This is an advantage. Furthermore, if the university wants to communicate with foreign countries, whether we go out or invite them [universities overseas) to come to our university, these teachers are always invited to do the job. They serve as a bridge.

One interesting finding from the data was that managers were more likely to mention returnees' globalised perspectives and globalisation roles, while non-returnee colleagues were more likely to focus on returnees' new knowledge and new ideas. Although they focused on two different aspects, they both expressed the attitude that returnees were different from non-returnees because of their overseas experiences. These overseas experiences meant returnees could access the latest research results in the world, which enabled them to have different ideas and perspectives and made them "globalised people". Figures 4-2 and 4-3 show the responses from administrators and non-returnee colleagues regarding returnees' new roles in bringing new ideas and globalisation to their universities.

Figure 4-2 Administrators' views on returnees' roles in bringing new ideas and globalisation to universities

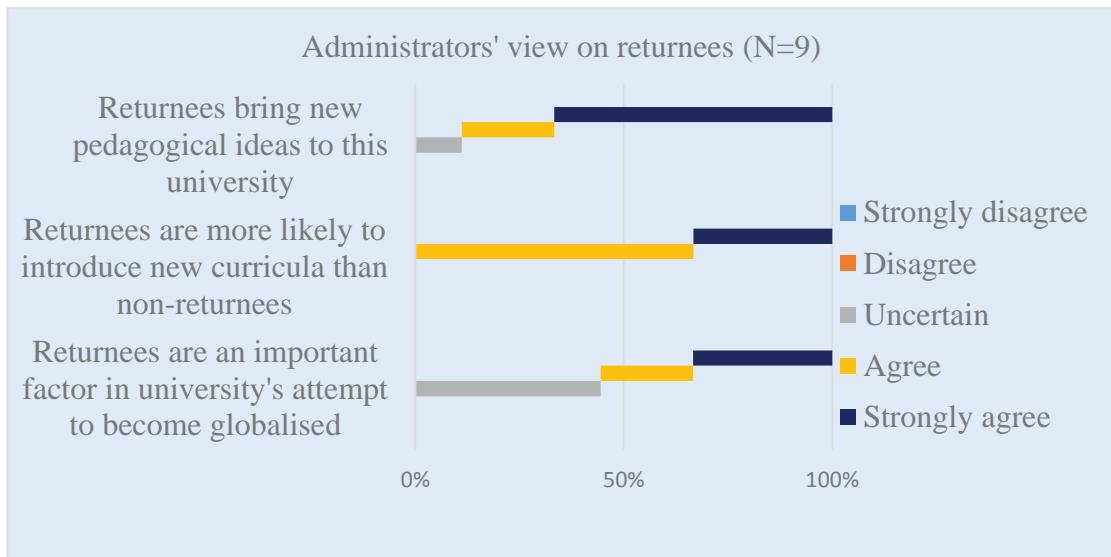
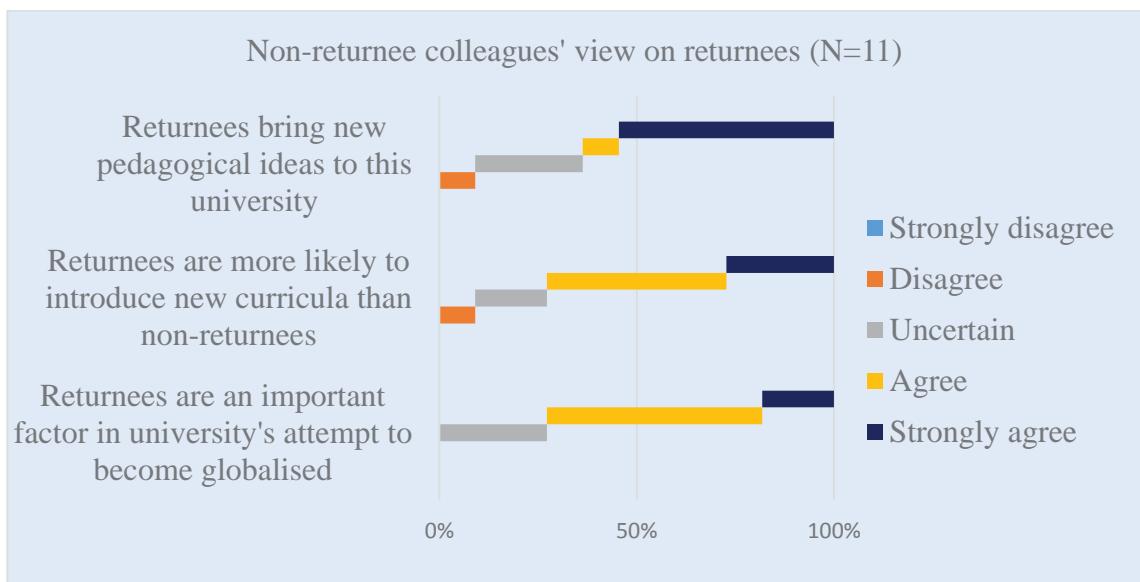


Figure 4-3 Non-returnee colleagues' views on returnees' roles in bringing new ideas and globalisation to universities



This data shows that nearly 89% (N=8) of the administrators thought that returnees brought new pedagogical ideas to the university and 100% (N=9) of them agreed that returnees were more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnees were. In terms of returnees' contribution to the globalisation of the university, more than half (N=5) of them agreed that returnees were an important factor in their university's attempt to become globalised. No respondents chose 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree'. Although the proportion for "uncertain" was 44.5% (N=4), it was less than the "agree" rate. Of

the 11 non-returnee colleagues, nearly 64% (N=7) thought that returnees brought new pedagogical ideas to the university and nearly 73% (N=8) agreed that returnees were more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnees were. Nearly 73% (N=8) thought that returnees were an important factor in their university's attempt to become globalised.

4.3.3 More open-minded and more creative in thinking

Some non-returnees and administrators reported that returnees were more open-minded and more creative in their thinking because of the new perspectives from their overseas study. Their “globalised horizons” enabled them to see issues from a wider perspective, which made them more likely to have creative ideas. A2 said, “Returnees are good at adopting and receiving new things”. A7 also stated that compared to their non-returnee colleagues, returnees were quick to understand new ideas; non-returnee colleagues usually needed a longer time to understand a new idea because their thinking was less open. He said:

Returnees’ strengths are their more broadened vision. Their visions they look at problems are much wider. They are better on this aspect [broaden vision]. ... They know more about the latest research on the disciplines. ... In addition, I think returnees also have creative ideas. They would like to try what they want to do in all kinds of ways, in research or teaching.

He thought that non-returnees were more likely to focus on one research area for a very long time, and they were slow to accept new ideas and to make any changes, which made them less creative. Compared to non-returnees, returnees had the abilities to bring new curricula and new pedagogical ideas to the universities. These abilities indicated that because returnees’ overseas experiences had opened their minds, they were more likely to bring reforms to the universities and to be more creative in connecting with other universities around the world than non-returnees.

4.3.4 Introducing new teaching methods

The interviews revealed that the teaching methods of returnees are usually different from those of non-returnee colleagues. Some respondents said that returnee teachers created a more dynamic, student-centred teaching environment that promoted students’ learning

interests, and their democratic attitude towards their students and their consideration of their students' feelings made their teaching more active and more flexible. They also tended to have a more rigorous research attitude than non-returnee colleagues. One non-returnee said:

I think in teaching, for example, some returnees' teaching methods are relatively more flexible. They encourage students' participation in classroom activities, which I think is relatively better. ... They encourage students to open their mouths and to think actively. Relatively, they do better than non-returnee colleagues in this aspect.

(NR1)

Thus, it seems that flexible teaching methods and a democratic attitude towards students were two valued characteristics in returnees' teaching methods that make their teaching more active and flexible. Conversely, the main teaching methods in China tend to be teacher-centred, with the teachers leading and explaining and the students passively listening to the teacher. According to NR1, returnees were more likely to create a dynamic atmosphere that allowed students to participate in discussions. NR6 had similar view. He commented that returnee teachers could introduce all kinds of non-Chinese traditional teaching methods to China, to achieve better teaching results. He stated, "Our traditional teaching method is not as flexible as foreign teaching methods. The traditional method has always been that the teacher usually stands in front of the class and the students sit there, listening to the teacher passively". He felt that non-returnee teachers should do more to encourage their students' enthusiasm and follow the returnees' example of encouraging students to solve problems together with them. In the opinion of this respondent, this kind of teaching method or teaching ideology was definitely better than the traditional Chinese teaching approach.

It seems that from the non-returnee colleagues' viewpoint, this kind of teaching method was seen as much better and more flexible than non-returnees, because it encourages students to participate in the whole learning process, stimulates their interests and creates a more open environment in the classroom. All of the non-returnee colleagues and administrators mentioned returnees' effective teaching methods as a positive factor. One non-returnee mentioned one of the teachers in his master's study. He commented:

I think in terms of teaching, they (returnees) have foreign experiences, so they bring

new things. Just like my teacher I mentioned before, he thought that the teaching method he had learned overseas in his overseas study was better, so he applied it to his teaching, which I think is a good teaching method. (NR4)

This teacher always asked the students to make presentations in the classroom, asking them to read widely first to find the materials they needed and to read the hand-outs that he gave them. Then during the next lesson, students were invited to make presentations. Compared with the traditional Chinese teaching method of students passively taking in what the teacher tells them, this method encouraged the students to take part in the whole process of learning and encouraged the students to read more widely. Another non-returnee colleague (NR5) also mentioned a returnee teacher who was involved with his master's degree study. This teacher gave the students the course outline at the beginning of the semester, so the students had an overview of the course. He would also tell the students the whole course outline for that semester. This meant the students knew the books they needed to read, when they needed to finish the assignments. In his opinion, this was better method than that of non-returnee teachers.

4.3.5 Different research methods

The research methods of returnees were also mentioned in this research. A1, A3, A7, A9, NR1 and NR10 all said that returnees' research methods were more rigorous than those of non-returnees and more like Western standards. A3 even stated that most returnees not only knew how to do better research than non-returnees, but their research projects were always the latest in the world and stood at the frontier of research. One non-returnee colleague (NR5) argued that returnees were more concerned about academic ethics and were more likely to consider participants' feelings. He said:

I think returnees' merits are that they are more likely to share their research ideas with others. This is their greatest strength. Furthermore, they have the idea of equality. They pay more attention to academic ethics. If they want to do any research, they ... ask for the participants' views. In research, they will first ask for participants' agreement to participate. This is different from non-returnees.

NR5 claimed that if non-returnees wanted to do a research project at a school, they would ask the leaders to hand out the questionnaires directly instead of asking for participants'

agreement. He also argued that as returnees usually had a more broadened vision, influenced by foreign advanced academic ideas, their research methods were more probing and more specific. They were more likely to use case studies, while non-returnees were more likely to be interested in general topics. A7 shared similar views on returnees' research methods and his comment was even more specific:

You know the way of doing research in China is different from that in foreign countries. It is much more rigorous in foreign countries. ... So foreign-educated returnees are more likely to be interested in and focused on some specific problems, which are usually ignored by non-returnee teachers. Non-returnee teachers are more likely to do general and non-experimental problems and they seldom do actual study.

He thought that non-returnees were more likely to focus on something with potential individual benefit and do research that might enhance personal benefit, such as titles, position and income, saying:

It seems that not only returnees' way of doing research is different, but also their attitude towards research is different, especially when it comes to their interest in doing research. ... Returnees are more likely to value their development and improvement in a specific academic area (instead of profits). I think this is an essential and big difference between returnees and non-returnees.

That is, A7 believed that the research of non-returnees was likely to be benefit-oriented whereas that of returnees was more likely to be interest-oriented. This difference shows different attitudes towards doing research between returnees and non-returnees and differences between the Western and Chinese academics regarding research. Western academics are thought to do research based on their interests and they are more concerned about their personal development in the area. The personal benefit-oriented aspect of Chinese academia is further discussed in Section 5.3.3.2.

The data from this research also showed that proficiency in English is another significant asset for returnees to China, allowing them to access the latest research and technology from the Western world, and to publish articles in English. Fluent oral English and a deep understanding of Western cultures also make their classroom teaching more attractive to students and give it more credibility. NR2 pointed out that because most returnees went to English-speaking countries, what they could demonstrate to students

was different from their non-returnee colleagues (e.g., their English-speaking ability and their understanding of English-speaking countries' cultures). A3 reported that in addition to their new ideas and new perspectives, returnees could provide bilingual courses that were much better than those of non-returnee colleagues. A9 believed that the ability of returnees to give bilingual lectures to undergraduate and postgraduate students was better than at any previous time at his school. He argued that not only did they have a very good command of the English language, but they also knew their disciplines well.

As mentioned earlier in Section 3.2, non-returnees and administrators were presented with the following three statements, designed with a five-point Likert scale to identify their level of agreement, to assess their attitude regarding returnees' performance at their universities:

- 1) Returnees' participation is important in updating the teaching standards at this university.
- 2) Returnees' participation is important in updating the research standards at this university.
- 3) There is no point recruiting foreign-educated returnees.

Figures 4-4 and 4-5 show the distribution of the responses of non-returnees and administrators to these questions.

Figure 4-4 Non-returnee colleagues' attitudes regarding returnees (N=11)

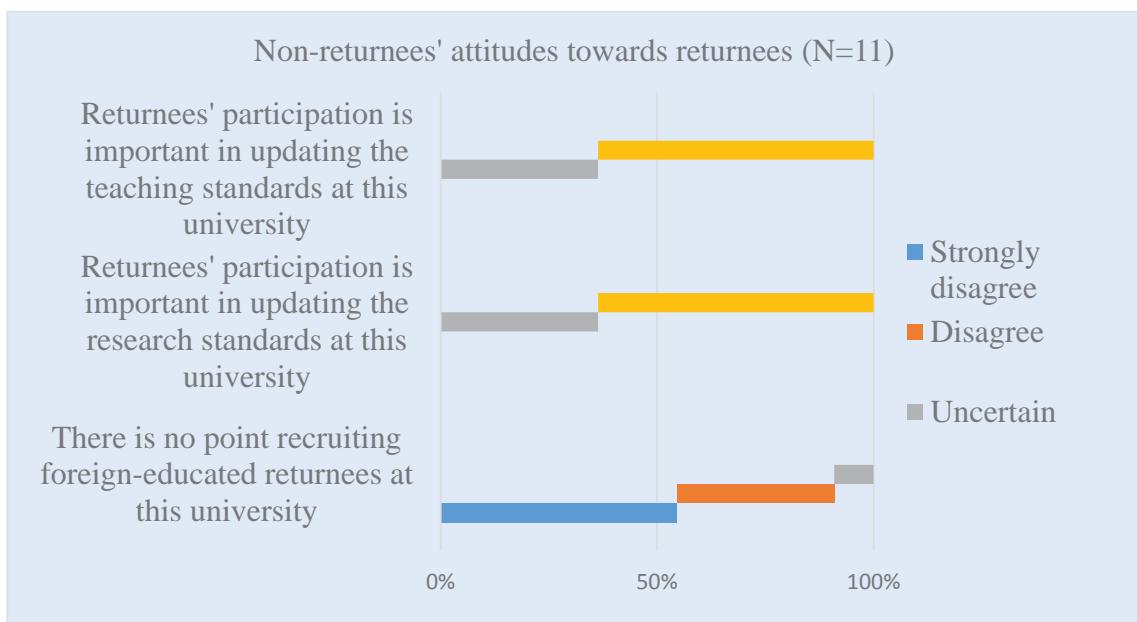
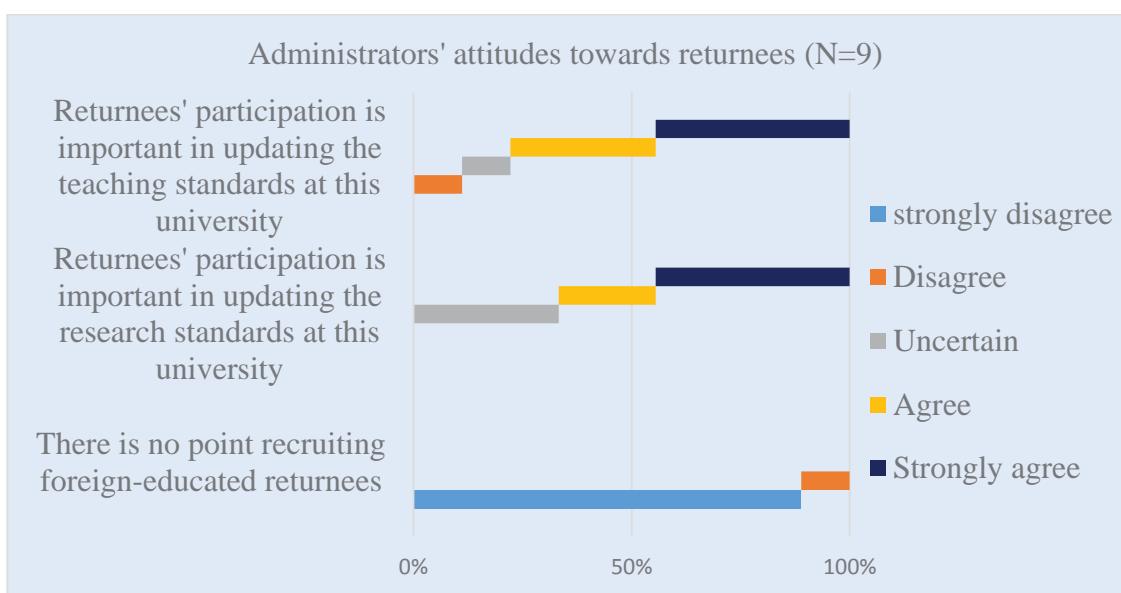


Figure 4-5 Administrators' attitudes regarding returnees (N=9)

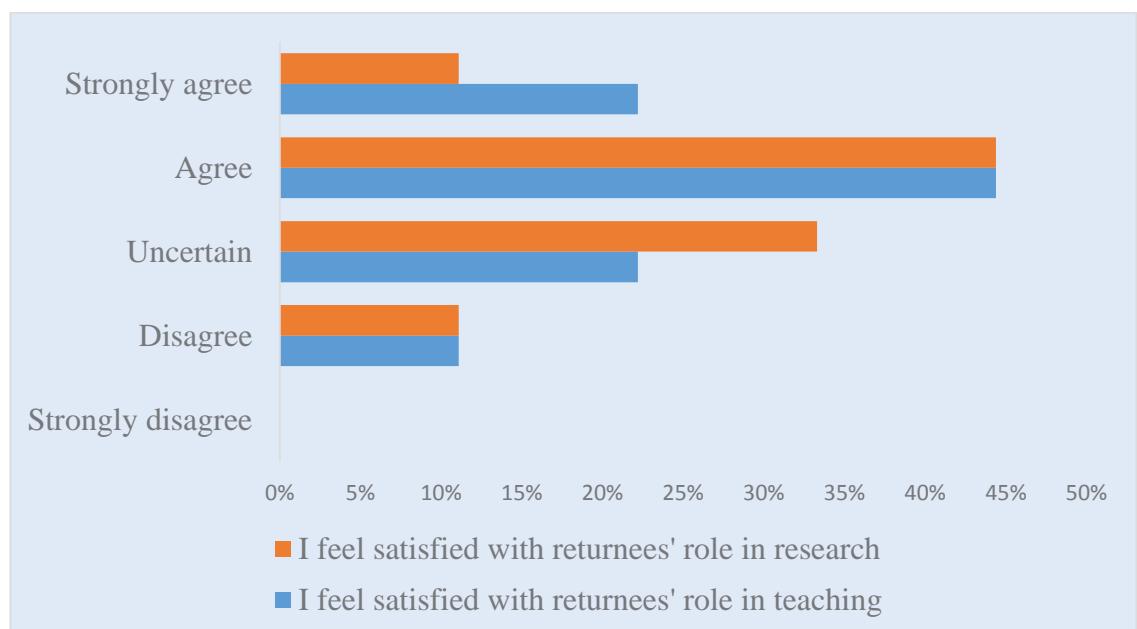


The data regarding the first two statements showed that nearly 67% (N=7) of the 11 non-returnee colleagues agreed that returnees were important in updating the teaching standards of the universities, while the proportion for the nine interviewed administrators was nearly 78% (N=8). Non-returnee colleagues held a similar view on the returnees' role in updating the research standards of the universities, with approximately 67% (N=7) choosing "strongly agree". Nearly 67% (N=6) of the nine administrators agreed that returnees' participation was important for updating the research standards of the

universities. For the third statement, regarding the way these two groups perceived universities' employment of returnees, nearly 55% (N=6) of the non-returnees chose strongly disagree and nearly 36.4% of them selected disagree. One chose uncertain. This result showed that ten non-returnees disagreed that there was no point recruiting foreign-educated returnees, which indicated that they had positive attitude towards universities' employment of returnees. The portion for administrators was also positive. It showed that 89% (N=8) of the administrators strongly disagreed that there was no point recruiting foreign-educated returnees, and one chose disagree, which demonstrates that all nine administrators agreed on universities' policies of recruiting foreign-educated returnees. The data implied that most of the non-returnees and administrators interviewed believed that it was necessary to recruit returnees.

Both the interviews and the responses to the questionnaire survey were consistent with these views. Nearly 67% (N=6) of the administrators were satisfied with returnees' academic role in teaching and 55.5% (N=5) were satisfied with returnees' academic role in research (see Figure 4-6). Clearly, although administrators generally had positive attitudes towards returnees in terms of their teaching and research performance, they were more satisfied with the former. This issue is explored in detail in the next section.

Figure 4-6 Level of administrators' satisfaction with returnees' role in teaching and research (N=9)



4.3.6 Negative feelings towards returnees

While the data showed mostly positive attitudes regarding returnees, there were also some negative issues. Both non-returnee colleagues and administrators agreed that although it was necessary to recruit returnees, they should focus on attracting top-level returnees. In their view, not all returnees who had come back to China were top returnees. They realised that it was necessary for universities to employ top returnees instead of normal ones, as shown in Figures 4-7 and 4-8.

Figure 4-7 Administrators' views regarding recruiting top-level returnees

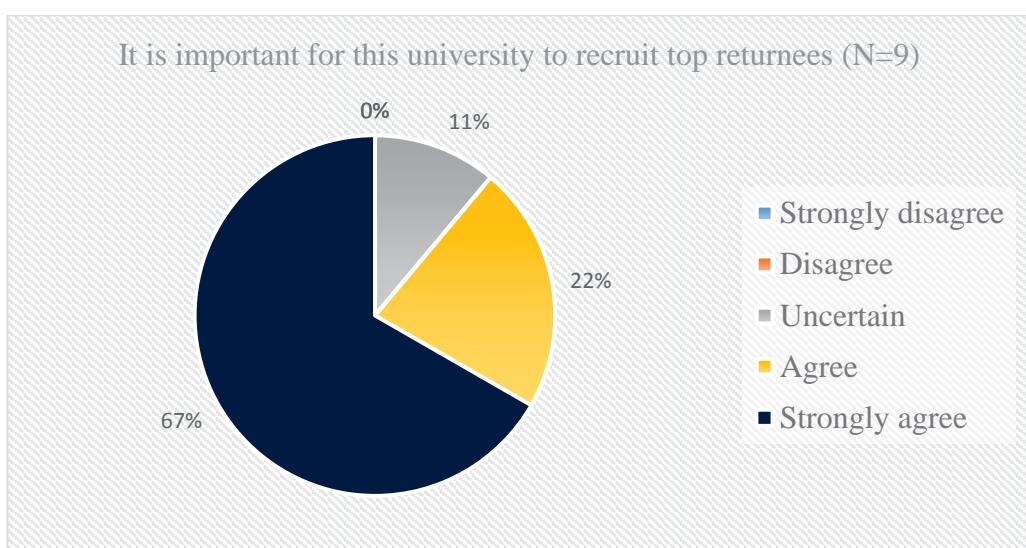
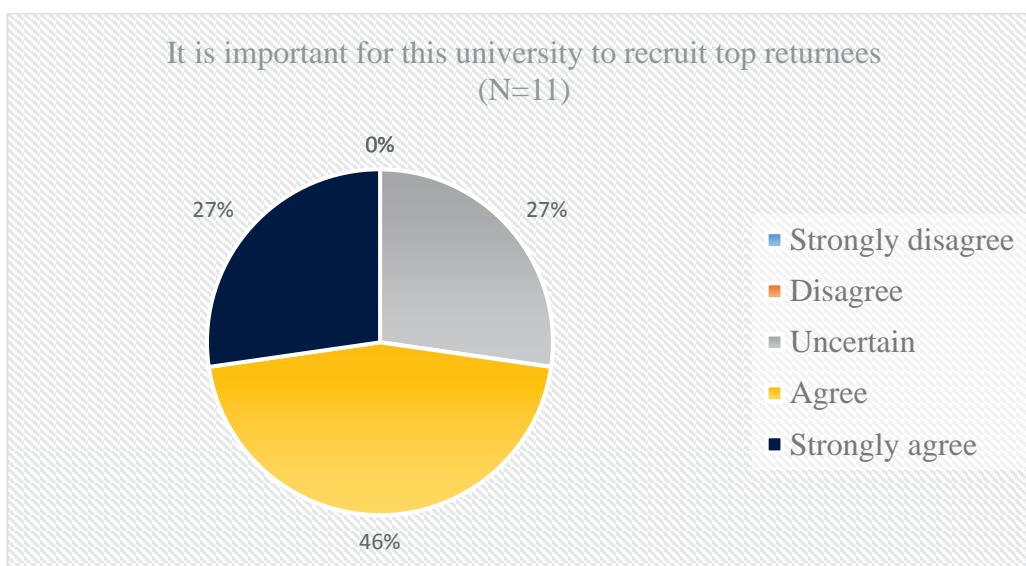


Figure 4-8 Non-returnee colleagues' views regarding recruiting top-level returnees



The data indicated that both groups preferred universities to recruit top-level returnees. It showed that nearly 83% (N=8) non-returnees and nearly 89% (N=8) administrators agreed with this statement. However, the data also showed some difference between the groups, with nearly 67% (N=6) of administrators choosing “strongly agree” and 22.2% (N=2) choosing “agree”, whereas 27.3% (N=3) of non-returnees chose “strongly agree” and 45.5% (N=5) chose “agree”. Administrators, who viewed this issue from a management perspective, seemed to be more concerned about it.

The responses to the interview questions also supported this attitude regarding recruiting top-level returnees. NR1 commented that there were differences between returnees who held a master’s degree and those who held a doctoral degree in terms of their strengths and disadvantages. He commented that:

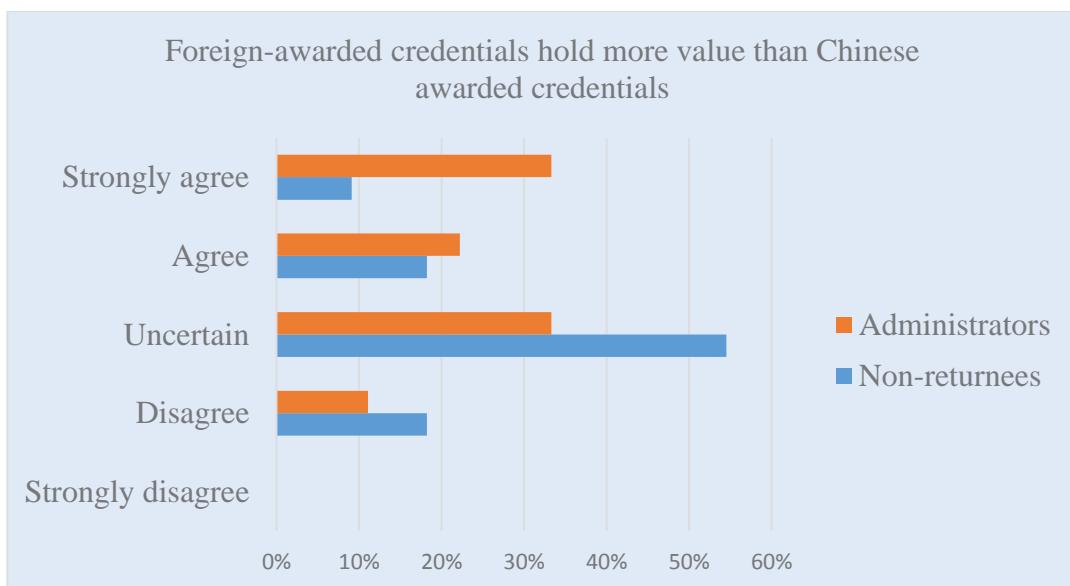
As far as I know, the length of study for a master’s degree is only one year in some foreign countries. Therefore, in terms of the difference between returnees and non-returnees, there is none. ... However, as for returnee doctorate holders, I think most of their [returnees’) advantage is shown in doing research. Returnees [with a] PhD are much better. ... Moreover, as for teaching, they probably have different teaching methods from those who are educated in China.

Clearly, some non-returnee colleagues thought that universities should recruit returnees with a doctoral degree, rather than a master’s degree. The data also showed that the attitudes of Chinese people towards foreign-awarded credentials were changing. Although non-returnee colleagues and administrators agreed that returnees brought with them new ideas, new knowledge, new teaching approach and new research methods, they were very cautious about foreign-awarded degrees, which were no longer valued as highly as they used to be in China, particularly in terms of returnees’ practical research abilities. NR2 argued that a person’s ability to do research depended on the time and effort that individual would spend on the project, not necessarily on whether he or she had an overseas background. Even if a student stayed in China and focused on one field for long enough, NR2 thought their research would not necessarily be less robust than that of returnees. She further argued that the quality of a teacher’s research depended on the research field. NR4 also thought that returnees were not necessarily better than non-returnee colleagues in teaching and research. He said:

The difference between returnees and non-returnees in terms of their teaching and research is not obvious. Maybe there is a little bit of a difference ... but when it comes to some specific research. It depends on one's own ability. It depends on your own effort and your research focus. Whether you have stayed overseas for a few years or not does not necessarily mean you have a high level of research ability. It [overseas experience) may give you some direction or vision, but doing research needs your effort.

Figure 4-9 shows the attitudes of non-returnees and administrators regarding foreign-awarded credentials.

Figure 4-9 Non-returnees' (N=11) and administrators' (N=9) views regarding foreign-awarded credentials and Chinese awarded credentials



The data showed that only 27.3% (N=3) of the non-returnees agreed that foreign-awarded credentials held more value than Chinese-awarded credentials. The administrators were more confident about foreign-awarded credentials, with 55.5% (N=5) agreeing with the statement. This difference in attitude could be related to the backgrounds and positions of the administrators, who would view this issue from the perspective of management. As one of the purposes of the universities' policies to recruit returnees was to use the returnees' foreign credentials to enhance the teaching and research quality of the universities, they would have to have confidence in the returnees they employed. Further, eight of the administrators (almost 90%) had overseas experience themselves, either as visiting scholars or as members of cooperative projects, which would also make

them more confident regarding foreign-awarded credentials.

The administrators had a range of opinions regarding returnees' teaching and research performance. Some administrators, including A1 and A2, thought that returnees' teaching was better than their research. He attributed this to the returnees' overseas educational background. Most of them had been to English-speaking countries, where they were immersed in a real English environment, meaning their English-speaking ability was very good and they knew the Western cultures well. A2 thought that returnees' level of initiating research was lower than that for non-returnees and that in the social sciences, non-returnees were better than returnees at publishing articles. In his view, although returnees might have the chance to publish articles in international journals, that kind of chance was rare, because it was not that easy to publish articles in international journals. He stated that non-returnees and returnees both had their advantages and their contribution did not necessarily depend on whether or not they were returnees. Similarly, A6 and A8 also expressed their concerns about this issue, saying:

From my point of view ... there is not much difference between them [returnees] and 'normal' teachers [non-returnees]. Most of the time, they are almost the same. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. The thing is that one person's performance in the workplace is not directly related to his overseas background. It is related to his attitudes towards work and his effort to work. (A6)

At our school, for example in evaluating academic titles or research performance, all these are relevant to one's research results. It is not that because you are foreign-educated returnees, we have preference for you. It depends totally on your research. If you have no research outputs, you do not have any privileges even if you are returnees. (A8)

Figures 4-10 and 4-11 show the responses of administrators and non-returnees regarding returnees' teaching and research performance.

Figure 4-10 Non-returnees' views regarding returnees' teaching and research performance

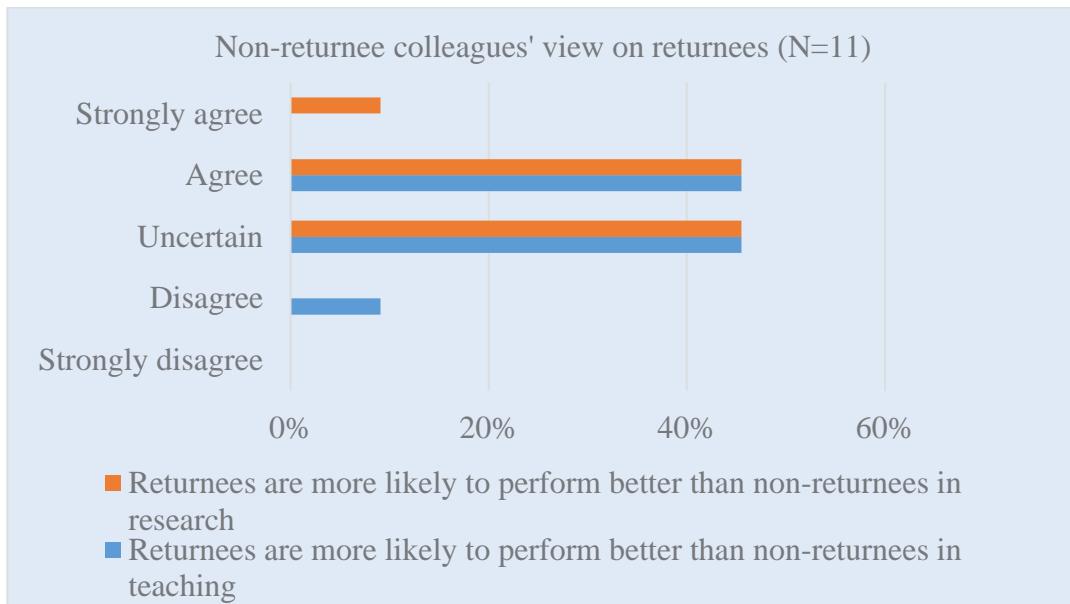
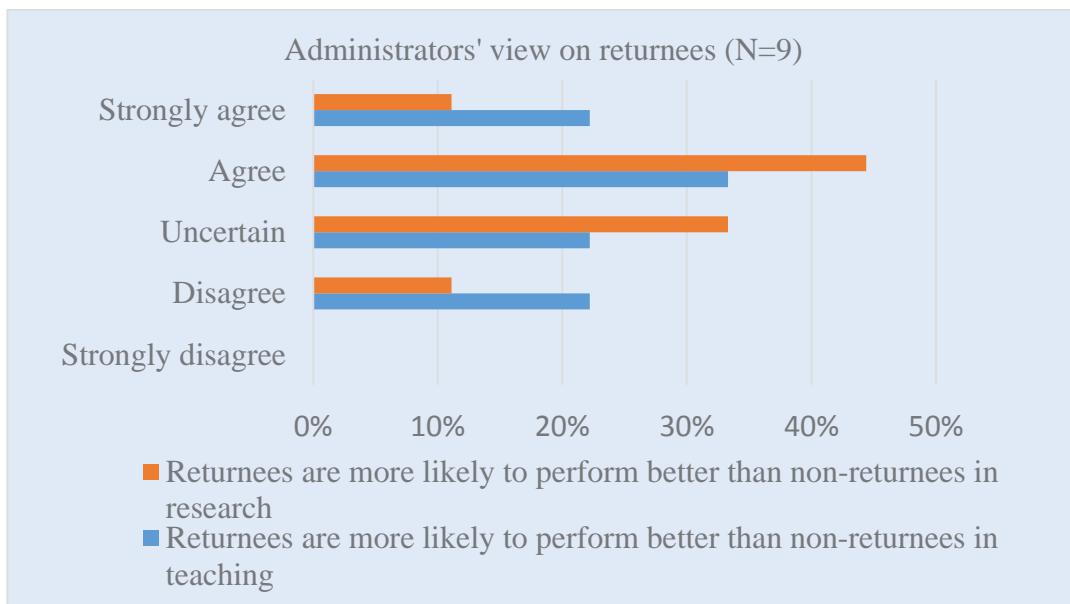


Figure 4-11 Administrators' views regarding returnees' teaching and research performance



The data indicated that almost half (N=5) of the non-returnees agreed that returnees were likely to perform better than non-returnees in teaching, and the proportion for research was more than half (N=6). Of the nine administrators, almost half (N=5) agreed that returnees were likely to perform better than non-returnees in teaching and in research, more than half (N=6) thought that returnees were likely to perform better than non-

returnees. Although the data regarding these two items were not completely negative, they indicated that both groups were not very positive about returnees in respect of their teaching and research and there seemed to be a gap between the expectations of non-returnees and administrators regarding returnees' performance in teaching and research and their actual performance, compared with non-returnees.

4.4 Summary of this chapter

In summary, the data showed that the universities expected returnees to facilitate the internationalisation of the universities and to use their new knowledge and ideas to update the research and teaching quality of the universities. The data also indicated that most universities had recruitment policies to attract returnees to work for them. Returnees could be provided with preferential treatment such as settlement support funding, research funding, housing or housing subsidies, and even employment arrangements for their spouses. Different universities set different recruitment requirements for returnees to meet their own development purposes. All the universities were more likely to recruit top-talented returnees to enhance their reputation, but treated the "ordinary" returnees the same as domestically trained graduates. The data from the interviews and questionnaires also showed that foreign-educated returnees were regarded as new knowledge holders by non-returnees and administrators. Returnees' overseas experience enabled them to view issues from different perspectives and they brought new teaching and research methods to the universities. In research, they were more likely to be interest-oriented than personal benefit-oriented. In classroom teaching, they paid more attention to stimulating the interests of students and introduced interactive teaching methods such as presentations and seminars. Instead of using the traditional teacher-centred approach, returnees' teaching approach was more student-centred and flexible. In addition, they were regarded as important aspects of the universities' efforts to become globalised. Their role in introducing new curricula and pedagogical ideas to the universities was accepted by both non-returnees and administrators.

Thus, it seems that new knowledge, new ideas, flexibility and globalisation are thought to be important characteristics of returnees. Previous studies have argued that foreign-educated returnees lifted Chinese academic and research benchmarks, improved and upgraded teaching and research capabilities, and engaged in international academic

exchanges (Chen & Yan, 2000). Returnees are valuable in China because they possess new ideas, technologies and information (Zweig, Chen, & Rosen, 2004). This current study agrees with the literature. Returnees working at these universities had brought with them new ideas, perspectives and the latest information, which locally trained non-returnee colleagues could not access. They served as a bridge in connecting these universities with foreign countries.

However, the contribution and performance of some returnees had left much to be desired. Foreign credentials were gradually losing their appeal in China because not all returnees were regarded as top-level personnel and they were not necessarily better than non-returnees in terms of their teaching and their research. Some thought they were not as good as their non-returnee colleagues in research. Administrators and non-returnees had mixed attitudes towards returnees. Although both administrators and non-returnee colleagues held positive attitudes towards returnees' new knowledge and new methods, as well as their ability to assist with globalisation, they agreed that an individual's performance in and contribution to the universities depended on that person's attitude, effort and commitment more than on their overseas credentials. They indicated that returnees' overseas experiences were valuable, but they were not deciding factors in their performance in their teaching and research. This attitude regarding returnees indicated that there was a gap between the expectations of returnees and administrators. The next sections explore these issues from different angles and further examine the re-entry experiences of foreign-educated returnees.

CHAPTER 5 REENTRY ISSUES FOR RETURNEES

5.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter reports the reentry issues of foreign-educated returnees at the universities where they were employed. It mainly present the voices of the 24 returnees, sometimes together with the 11 non-returnees and nine administrators. As explained in Chapter 3, the three groups of participants (returnees, non-returnees and administrators) were interviewed and surveyed, with the aim of gaining a multidimensional understanding of the returnees' reentry experiences into Chinese academic communities. The returnee participants presented their own reflections on their reentry experiences and non-returnee colleagues and administrators offered their views concerning foreign-educated returnees. All the participants' stories, together with the questionnaire surveys, provided rich insights into the research issues, allowing an in-depth understanding of returnees' reentry experiences.

These findings are reported in three sections. Section 5.2 explores the reasons behind the return of these foreign-educated returnees. Section 5.3 investigates the academic re-adaptation challenges encountered by returnees. Both the in-depth interview data and the quantitative data were utilised to analyse the responses to these issues. Section 5.4 examines returnees' reentry experiences in facing Chinese bureaucratic management system. It outlines the institutional difficulties and challenges returnees faced, utilising both in-depth interview data and quantitative data. Section 5.5 discusses the cultural re-adaptation experiences of returnees and the strategies they used to re-adapt to the academic and sociocultural changes in their lives, and their methods of managing this process.

5.2 Reasons for returning

The data showed that although individuals' reasons for returning to China varied, there were three main reasons: family connections, career and cultural considerations. Each of these reasons gave rise to different expectations regarding their return to China.

5.2.1 *Family connections/association*

Each returnee was asked at the beginning of their interview about their reasons for

returning to China. Nearly 80% of the returnees mentioned family connections as part of their decision-making, particularly filial piety. Many interviewees said that as they were the only child in the family, they wanted to come back to be close to their parents, as shown in the reports below.

I think the main reason for me to come back is family reason. My parents were back here in China. (R1)

My reason to come back is mainly out of family consideration. I am the only child in the family. Anyway, in long term, it is very hard to take care of my parents while I am overseas. It is also hard to take them to live in Germany because of the language. (R18)

I finished my undergraduate study in another province. After that, I furthered my master's study (overseas). I think I reached a time when I really wanted to find a feeling of belonging. I really wanted to come back. My parents also think that since I am the only child in the family, I should come back. (R19)

R19's reflection represented most returnees' feelings. In some returnees' eyes, this feeling of family belonging included their feeling of responsibility to stay close to their parents and take care of them. R 22 also agreed with these reports. He said:

The main reason for me to come back is mainly about family ... My mother was old. Maybe it was personal reason, because almost all the friends (I knew) overseas stayed in Australia; even some who were not so young stayed (there). (R22)

R22's report implied that he actually wanted to stay in Australia like other friends, but he had to come back to China to look after his mother. R3, who returned to the university in which she used to work, expressed her feelings about family from another perspective. For her, one reason for coming back to China was that she found it was a little bit 'twisted' to leave her family behind in China while she was overseas.

For some returnees, staying close to family members such as husband and child(ren) was also an important factor in their decision to return. R21 took her son to the US while she did her postdoctoral study and they stayed there for three years. However, as her husband did not want to go to the US, she returned to China to keep the family intact. In the cases of R7 and R24, their young child became a major reason for them to return, as

well as the parents issue. R7 said that although she worked in the US for about three years after her master's study and almost gained permanent residency, she decided to return to be close to her young child. R24 also said that the old parents and a young child were her reasons for returning from Australia. While R2 also returned to China because of family considerations, her story was a little different from that of the other returnees. She had a baby during her stay overseas, so her primary reason for returning to China was that she needed her parents to help take care of the baby. She also said that it would be difficult for her to take care of her elderly parents if she stayed overseas. Unlike other returnees, R6's decision to return was to reduce the financial pressure for his family. He said:

The reason for me was the pressure of finance. In fact, I had a chance to study my doctoral degree. However, you know I have a family, family pressure. ... Because if I chose to work first, I could reduce the financial burden of the family. ... Therefore, I think I should work right after my master's study.

5.2.2 Career considerations

Many returnees reported that career consideration was a major reason for their return to China. Some believed that as China was developing very quickly, there were more chances for them to gain a job and individual development there. Some returnees thought there were more opportunities for them to realise their individual and social values back in China. For example, R20 had gained his PhD in Ireland and his post doctorate fellowship in Canada. However, he believed there were more job opportunities back in China, as Western countries were no longer developing because they had reached a mature and stagnated state, which he thought limited career development opportunities. He said:

Life (overseas) is very comfortable. Nevertheless, in terms of job opportunities, there are not many. For example, if you want to do something that is developed in foreign countries, [but] in China not so many people have done [it], then that is a chance for you. Therefore, this is what I value a lot. (R20)

Similar to R20, R14 also believed he had more opportunities to realise his individual and social values in China. R14 had gained his doctoral degree in the US and stayed there

for seven years, but then returned to his original university in China to work. R4, R8, R9, R14 and R18 also reported that they returned to China for career development. For some returnees, career considerations stemmed from the difficulty in finding a job overseas. It became one of their main reasons for returning to China. They claimed that because of the global economic crisis, many Western countries had changed their policies regarding international students and they found it difficult to find employment there. For example, R12 went to the US and gained her doctoral degree there in 2008, when the country was in a depression. Her doctoral study was about higher education and she wanted to find a job in an American university, but because of the economic crisis, they had a hiring freeze policy. Therefore, she had to come back to Yunnan Province, her birthplace, to find a job. R16, who went to the UK for her postgraduate study, also held a similar view. She said:

I wanted to stay [in the Great Britain] at that time. The government stopped offering a job visa to the international students, so it was very hard to stay there. All the Chinese students around me who graduated the same year went back to China. No one stayed there. They [The British government] cancelled the job visa and changed their policy, which made many international students have no chance to get a job there ... because the rate of unemployment was very high there.

R2 also said that one of her reasons for returning was that because of the subject she studied, it was hard for her to find a job that was as good as her previous one in China. She majored in English language and English literature in her undergraduate study and in applied linguistics in her postgraduate study overseas. She stated that going back to China could give her more chances for career development. R5 had a different reason to return to China. After she graduated from a university in the US, she spent a short time doing an internship in a bank there. Even though she already had permanent residency, she found there were limited development opportunities for her in a foreign country because of her Chinese nationality. She said that having permanent residency did not increase her opportunities to find work; rather, more chances were given to local people. Finally, R 5 admitted, this employment discrimination made her decide to return to China.

5.2.3 Sense of belonging

Although family reasons and career considerations were the two major factors in

returnees' decisions to return to China, for some, cultural differences and emotional links to the Chinese culture were important. They reported that they wanted to find a sense of cultural belonging. For example, R10 said it was hard for him to fit into the culture in his host country, Germany. He could not find an emotional connection with his host country, nor did he have a sense of belonging there. He thought that was because he felt 'homeless' there. He stayed in Germany for six years by himself. He said:

I think the main reason is I felt I could not stay [immigrate] there during this period I was there. One reason was because of the culture and language. I applied to study there in English not in Germany. Most of the daily language was Germany. My wife did not go there with me....So the will to stay there was not that strong. It is like I stayed there by myself. The sense of belonging to there was not strong. I felt I did not have a home there. The main reason (for me) was family reason. If I stayed there and if this problem (having a home there) was not resolved, and also because it is not an immigration country, it was hard for my parents to go there....Living there by myself was boring.

Similar to R 10, R19, who was the only child in her family, believed that yearning for a sense of belonging to the family and the Chinese culture influenced her decision to return to her home country. For most these returnees, even though they had stayed in their host culture for some years, they still felt their Chinese cultural identity and wanted to return to that culture. For some returnees, these cultural links also meant a familiar and suitable life style back in China. R 3 was one of them. R3, who gained her master's degree in Australia, said that one of her reasons to return was that she wanted to find a suitable life and work style. She found that the overseas life and work style did not suit her, and staying overseas was not as good as she had expected. She explained by saying that:

I think this is a personal decision. China is a country of collectivism. Others would ask you why you come back. They would think that staying overseas is better. Actually, I do not agree with this. [It is important] to find a job which is most suitable to yourself, or to find a life style which is most appropriate to you. And also, family is the most important thing. All your family stay here [in China]....After you go overseas, all your families were in here [in China]. It is not convenient. I felt that after I went out, I found that it was a little bit twisted [with my family leaving behind me in China].

This evidence indicated that for some returnees, searching for cultural belonging and links made them decide to return to China. Cultural differences between China and host countries became one of the pull factors for them to come back to their home culture, either for emotional links to the family and culture or for appropriate life style back home.

5.2.4 Summary of reasons

In summary, the main factors that affected returnees' decisions to come back to China were related to family (e.g., returning to take care of their parents or to be reunited with their family members). Nearly 80% of returnees reported that family was their focus when they considered coming back to China. In addition, many returnees believed there were more job opportunities in China than in Western countries. The third reason, although less significant for most, was to return to their cultural and emotional links in China. The following table summarises the reasons of these interviewed participants for coming back to China.

Table 5.1 Returnees' reasons for coming back to China

Returnees	Reasons for returning (Family)	Reasons for returning (Career)	Reasons for returning (Cultural sense)
R1	Parents were in China, coming back to stay with them		It was easier to fit into the life back in China
R2	Parents could help take care of child(ren)	It was hard to find an equivalent job as good as in China	
R3	Family members were in China		There was suitable work and lifestyle in China
R4	It was hard to immigrate to the host country	There were more job opportunities back in China	
R5		There was employment discrimination towards Chinese people overseas	
R6	He wanted to reduce the financial burden of the family		
R7	She had a young child and she was sick overseas		
R8	Family members were in China	It was for career considerations	
R9	Family members were in China	He wanted to work in China	
R10	Family members were in China		Lacked emotional and cultural links to host country
R11	Family member was lost back in China, and she returned to take of the parents		
R12		It was hard to find a job overseas	
R13	It was hard to get settled with family overseas	She was on a government scholarship	
R14	Family members were in China	There were more opportunities to realise individual and social values in China than overseas	

R15		He felt a responsibility to do something for Chinese education
R16		It was hard to find a job overseas
R17	She wanted to stay with the family	
R18	It was hard for parents to fit into the culture overseas	She wanted to pursue further study in China for better career development
R19	She was the only child in the family	She wanted to have a sense of belonging
R20		There were more career development opportunities in China
R21	She wanted to have a family reunion back in China	
R22	He returned to take care of his old mother	
R23	She was the only child in the family	She enjoyed the work environment in the Chinese university
R24	She had old parents and a young child	She wanted to be loyal to her original university

The next section explores the challenges and difficulties that returnees had to face. It will examine the academic and institutional challenges and difficulties returnees encountered during their reentry to these universities. It will also report the cultural re-adaptation returnees had when they returned to their home country's sociocultural context.

5.3. Academic re-adaptation challenges faced by returnees

As discussed in the previous chapter, returnees were regarded as holders of new knowledge and new ideas. They had new perspectives and what they had learned overseas was the latest knowledge in science and technology. They also brought different teaching and research methods to Chinese higher education. All of these characteristics of returnees were consistent with the government's goals in attracting overseas-educated graduates to come home and they had been accepted by Chinese society. However, it would be naïve to believe that the Chinese universities' views towards returnees' role in Chinese higher education was always positive and their experiences of re-entry were always smooth.

The data from the interviews and questionnaire survey indicated that returnees faced a range of difficulties and challenges when they returned to work in Chinese universities. Re-adjustment was not as easy as they had imagined. They were *shuitubufu* (unable to adapt) in Chinese universities and reverse culture shock seemed inevitable for them. This section examines these issues in returnees' re-entry experiences by investigating three aspects: the academic re-adaptation challenges returnees had to face; the different institutional system that returnees had to deal with; and the cultural re-adaptation challenges they encountered.

5.3.1 *Interpersonal networks (guanxi) and difficulties accessing resources*

Guanxi refers to the “cultural morals” (“Guanxi: The Chinese cultural concept”, 2012) of Chinese. It includes the cultivation of interpersonal relationships that bring benefits for both parties of the relationship. During interview, when returnees were asked what had

been the major challenges in their adaptation back to the life, most of the returnees said the complex interpersonal relationships (*guanxi*) and their lack of domestic interpersonal networks in China were two important challenges in their re-entry experiences. Most of the returnees felt that they were isolated by the local academics and they could not get access to academic resources in China. It was very hard for them to build the required interpersonal networks in a short time. R3 said that domestic-educated PhDs had their own academic circles but the returnees' academic networks were overseas. R8, who earned a doctoral degree from the University of Hong Kong, said:

For returnees, it is hard for them to get domestic (research) resources. Because of their overseas experiences, they may get overseas resources and interpersonal networks, but it is hard for them to get domestic resources.

This lack of domestic networks made it difficult for returnees to apply for research funding, whereas it was easier for those who gained their degrees in China, because all the members in the research evaluation committees were from China. In other words, a lack of domestic resources, including interpersonal networks, meant returnees were disadvantaged in the competition with non-returnee colleagues for funding. As a result, some returnees found that their research results were not as good as those of their non-returnee colleagues were. R11, who had stayed in Australia for five years, said:

The biggest challenge for me is to apply for research funding. Like other returnees, my supervisors are from overseas and they don't have any influence in China. Compared to those Chinese-educated PhDs, our strength is very limited. We don't have networks in the Chinese academic circle. We have an international background, but we don't have Chinese networks. [To build a network] needs time. It won't get better until you publish your articles. However, in research, we are very lonely.

R11 suggested that to build the required interpersonal networks in Chinese academic communities, overseas students who were considering returning to China to work should find a Chinese university and a well-known supervisor to support their post-doctorate study. R22 also said his biggest challenge was applying for funding for projects. He said that even if his research project was better than those of domestically trained colleagues (who had their networks), he usually could not gain the research funding because the experts in the evaluation committee did not know him.

In this respect, the returnees' overseas education was a disadvantage in terms of accessing domestic networks and resources in Chinese academic circles. This disadvantage not only blocked them from entering Chinese academic circles, but also affected their academic performance in applying for projects and publishing articles. For domestically trained graduates, who had Chinese supervisors with some influence in their research fields, it was easier to publish articles or apply for funding for their research projects. These phenomena have become the "hidden rules" in Chinese academic circles. This was described in R8's comments:

All you have is just overseas networks. You have no domestic resources. This is a big problem for you. Then at last, when you want to apply for academic promotion or apply for projects, you will find you even cannot find a referee for yourself. In terms of publication, if you get your degrees in China, your supervisors usually are editors of well-known journals, and then it is much easier for you to publish your articles.

For some returnees (R12, R22), their overseas experience had created a gap in their life and career in China. They had interpersonal networks before they went overseas, in both their personal lives and in their professional careers, but now all these networks were gone and had to be rebuilt. In some cases, returnees regretted going overseas to study, or returning to China. R12 returned to China because she thought that China was developing rapidly and she did not want to miss this development and wanted to be one who could witness it. She believed that she could benefit from this development. To her disappointment, the situation was different from what she had expected. She said, "The big society has its unique system. People should have a platform or network; otherwise it would be very difficult to get opportunities to develop single-handedly". Some returnees even reported that they could find no "roots" in Chinese academic circles when they returned home. Thus, many returnees found it very difficult to re-enter Chinese academic circles, at least in the early period, because they did not have domestic networks.

Administrators also believed that a lack of domestic networks made it hard for returnees to fit in with Chinese academic circles. A3 suggested that after they returned to China, returnees should apply to be visiting scholars at well-known Chinese universities, to build personal networks for themselves. A5 said that returnees' stay overseas was a

disadvantage and a sad issue for them. She argued that the returning process could be very “struggling” and said, “[returnees] often feel very frustrated as they feel they cannot do anything and they feel they cannot get into the flow”. Similar to A5’, A6 also believed that returnees’ overseas background has become “a disadvantage and weakness to them to some degree”, which made them not able to access the local interpersonal networks, thus preventing them from getting into an academic circle.

China is a country that values interpersonal relationships and authority (“Guanxi: The Chinese cultural concept”, 2012). It is no surprise that returnees found themselves isolated from Chinese academic circles, particularly with regard to research funding, where “decision making is related to someone’s interpersonal relationship or academic authority” (A6). In China, higher positions and higher titles represent more opportunities to gain resources. The responses in this study showed that for foreign-educated returnees, their re-entry into Chinese universities was not smooth, even though they could contribute to Chinese higher education. Their lack of domestic interpersonal networks was a hindrance because building interpersonal networks not only takes time, but also commitment.

The need for domestic interpersonal networks to gain acceptance into academic circles and access to resources for publishing articles and for research funding indicates a major issue in Chinese academic circles; namely, the hierarchical nature of the academic community. Well-established professors and heads of schools and universities have priority access to research resources and can allocate them to those people with whom they have an interpersonal relationship. Thus, it is important for students to find a well-known professor to be their supervisor, as A3 explained:

In China, to be a supervisor means you have some achievements in your research. Furthermore, regarding the social status, usually leaders prefer to become supervisors. Then naturally, you will have an interpersonal network. You have many students. In China, people value that very much. This concept started from the Confucian time. All these students form a very big network, and then your supervisors’ friends work in all kinds of academic journals and all kinds of fields. It is easy for you to get someone to be your referee when you want to apply for a research project. When you want to publish an article, it works well with your supervisor’s name on it.

In Chinese universities, well-known professors are more likely to become heads of schools or universities and administration heads are more likely to become professors. This is because in Chinese academic circles, becoming a supervisor of doctoral candidates represents status, different treatment and more opportunities to access resources (whereas in Western countries, being a supervisor is just a job). Therefore, many professors seek power and administrators seek the title of professor, so their universities can access more resources, including the students they have supervised or other people in their circle. To maintain their networks, professors and heads of schools and universities have to spend a lot of time socialising. One returnee said:

These supervisors are busy dining with others and busy hanging out in the circles. So I think for research in China ... in social science and humanities, it is very bad. This is what we call the hidden rules. (R24)

R14 also mentioned this “leaders” privilege’ in accessing resources. He went to the US to study and then returned to his original university, where he became the vice dean of a school. Compared to other returnees, he confessed that he had more opportunities to access resources because of his position and therefore had more career development opportunities than others did. He believed these opportunities made his returning experiences much easier. For returnees whose networks were overseas, the “closed” nature of the *guanxi* network was a major factor in determining their ability to access resources and their ongoing professional development, rather than the individuals’ commitment or ability. Their success was determined by who they knew and with whom they had relationships. This *guanxi* issue was a significant challenge for R20, who said:

The [biggest] challenge is the domestic *guanxi* network. Because in foreign countries, doing things is simple. You do it according to the procedures ... while here in China, no matter whether it is applying for projects, or becoming professors and supervisors of PhD students ... you have to use many networks. Your ability is not a problem, right? However, others have *guanxi* ... This is the problem here in China. It is not wholly related to ability. This is a big problem.

According to R20, becoming one of those who did things according to *guanxi* had to be accepted and became normal because otherwise, an individual would become isolated. For him, *guanxi* was an important factor in determining his ability to do research.

Of course, with such hidden rules, resources are likely to become traded between people with power. Leaders are the most likely groups of people who can access resources, so seeking power or seeking relationship with those in power is the norm in Chinese academic circles. As R24 explained:

It is the networks/connections. For example, if we want to apply for the same project such as the National Social Science Research Fund, it is the leader who decides who might have the chance to win and ... if you have a relationship with him, then he will give you priority to apply for it. However, he would join into your team and might become the main person in the team. Then your will have to come after them. All these are true and most of them [leaders] are just like this.

R24 said this undermined the individual's passion and enthusiasm for research and the relationships with leaders were ruined if you did not comply with the leaders' will. A2 agreed with this perception. He had been the vice dean of a school for 15 years and knew these hidden rules well. He said:

For example in our school, the Dean and the Party Secretary usually did not major in English. They do not know much about this major. ... Nevertheless, they have power. If there are research projects from the Provincial Education Department for which one can apply ... they usually use their power instead of academic standards to decide.

Those who had interpersonal relationships with leaders, he further contended, could succeed in applying for research projects even if their research capability was inferior. Of course, under this philosophy, abuse of power was inevitable in terms of resources and research. As R3 noted, academic research was vulnerable:

Except for my teaching, I don't participate in any work at the university. This is because at the university, bureaucratic power is much bigger than academic research. There is no way for you if you want to keep on doing research. ... Even if you do well in your research, so what? If you don't have the bureaucratic [*guanxi*] to support you, you can do nothing.

A2's and A3's comments indicated that in their experience of Chinese higher education, this combination of academic status and power certainly excluded returnees because they

were not in the academic circle. Almost without exception, returnees expressed their concerns about this *guanxi* (interpersonal relationship) phenomenon. This power-speaks-louder phenomenon is part of the bureaucratisation of Chinese higher education, which is discussed later in this section.

5.3.2 Difficulties in knowledge transfer and knowledge localisation

5.3.2.1 Applying new knowledge in teaching

As well as finding it difficult to get access to the local interpersonal networks and resources, returnees also had difficulties in applying what they had learned overseas to the local context. Although they had new ideas, new perspectives, and new teaching and research methods, they could not necessarily apply them in the universities because they were not familiar enough with the rules in Chinese higher education and their new knowledge was not always well received. Further, what they had learned overseas and wanted to apply in China might not be compatible with the needs of the local education system. One of the most used expressions to describe returnees was *bujiediqi* [不接地气] or *shuitubufu* [水土不服] in Chinese, referring to returnees' lack of the ability to adapt to Chinese higher education, both academically and culturally. R6, who graduated from Australia and was an English teacher at a university in China, claimed:

The confusion for me is that what I am doing now is quite different from what I have learned which means that I don't know how to completely and effectively transfer what I have learned (overseas) into classroom practice. What I have learned is about how to teach English to non-native speakers ... to help those whose native language is not English to improve their English. All I learned is about theories, but it's a different story in practice.

He claimed that the theory he had acquired overseas recommended that teachers should create an “English atmosphere” for students by speaking in English throughout the teaching time. However, the “English atmosphere” in classroom could only be temporary because the students’ ability was not high enough to understand him if he used English all the time. As a result, the effectiveness of speaking English in classroom

settings was not obvious. Further, his new student-centred teaching methods were also hard to practise in the Chinese classroom, because they required the students to participate actively. However, as students were passive in both classroom and out-of-classroom activities, the effectiveness of doing student-centred teaching was restricted. He became uncertain and struggled with the differences between teacher-centred and student-centred methods. Gradually, he abandoned the student-centred method and returned to traditional Chinese teaching methods. He explained:

The method I advocated did not seem to work in practice. It's a confusion, a loss. Therefore, I have to go back to a traditional role ... because I find this (traditional way) may be more effective than I imagined. I go back to use English as a supportive language and Chinese as the main instruction language. (Sigh).

R6's comment highlighted an embarrassing situation for returnees. They wanted to put what they had learned into practice in Chinese universities, to help improve the teaching standards of Chinese higher education, but when they returned, they had to face the reality that what they had learned was not necessarily applicable in Chinese universities. R 16's situation was similar to R 6. She found that it was hard to maintain the balance between English and Chinese in the bilingual courses she taught.

R7 attributed the difficulty of knowledge localisation as one of the hidden games of Chinese education and the Chinese institutional system. After he returned, he had to teach a subject that was not related to his PhD study. He said that once someone had taught a course for a long time, it was hard for others to have opportunities to teach that course, even if it was related to their study. As a result, he had to teach a course which was not related to his subject. Thus, it seemed to him that what he had learned overseas was not only inapplicable in Chinese universities, but also useless. R15, an English teacher, who had stayed in the US for two years and in Australia for four years, shared a similar view. He claimed that even if there were many theories about English teaching around the world, he still taught students according to the methods he had experienced as a college student in China.

Some returnees attributed the difficulty in knowledge localisation to the large class size that is common in Chinese universities. Large classes made it hard for them to conduct classroom activities such as discussions and oral presentations. R17 said her class in

China had more than 60 students, compared with only 10 in her master's class overseas, in which it was possible to assign a topic to each student and all of them had opportunities to talk about their work. Consequently, she felt that what she had learned overseas was not useful in her teaching in China and like R15, the methods she now used in her teaching were those she had experienced when she was studying for her undergraduate degree in China, as well as methods learned from other colleague teachers. For R23, large class sizes not only made it impossible for her to apply what she had learned overseas, but also made it hard to correct students' assignments and give them feedback. She found it hard to keep a balance between the knowledge learned overseas, which seemed ideal to her, and what she experienced in the Chinese classroom. According to R17, what she had learned overseas was ideal, but in practice, it was a different story because of the large number of students. Instead of using the theories she had learned overseas, she now had to work out for herself how to teach these students. R19 claimed the large class sizes and the traditional classroom environment, in which students always sat in the same seats, made it hard for her to "facilitate dynamic organisation" and to maintain this in the classroom. Unlike the other returnees, R19 said that although it was hard to adapt to Chinese teaching methods and to apply what she had learned overseas, she was satisfied with her teaching. She believed she could mix her interest with what she had learned overseas through her teaching, which made her feel more competent. She was pleased she could get feedback from students on whether they liked her class or not. The reason for this comment, she confessed, was that she had to do some office work while she was engaged in her teaching role, helping her realise that teaching gave her much more satisfaction than office work.

Some administrators attributed returnees' difficulties in knowledge localisation to their lack of understanding of the Chinese students. This lack of understanding of the Chinese students made it difficult for them to adapt (*bujiediqi*) to their home universities. For example, A1 believed that Chinese students were different from foreign students and when returnees returned to China, they needed to adjust their teaching to suit the characteristics of these students. The teaching methods they had learned overseas were useful for foreign students, but not for Chinese students, who had a different perception on learning. To him, foreign students had their own cultural backgrounds and learning attitudes and were happy to participate actively in classroom discussions, but Chinese students were more reserved and did not like to reveal themselves. He believed that in

this situation, the effectiveness of returnees' student-centred teaching methods would be limited. A8 presented a similar view. He even believed that Chinese students would object to such teaching methods and they would not be satisfied with the teaching. According to him, foreign students were more focused on self-study, while Chinese students were used to learning according to their teachers' guidance. Returnees found it difficult to adapt to this situation.

These challenges in applying their overseas skills and knowledge diminished the perceived advantage for returnees. According to A2, the best that returnees could do was to simply introduce some new elements into their teaching, instead of applying a new systematic teaching method. They could not change the teaching philosophies of the Chinese universities. Although they might believe that they had learned many good things overseas and want to put them into practice when they returned to China, their passion and enthusiasm diminished with time as they found they could not do this. A2 also believed that the “test-oriented” Chinese assessment system, compared with the ‘quality-oriented’ system used in foreign countries, was another limitation for returnees wanting to apply their skills and knowledge, especially for returnees who taught English. China conducted the College English Test, Band 4 and Band 6, every year and the pass rate of the test was used to define the teachers’ performance.

5.3.2.2 Applying new knowledge in research

Returnees also had difficulty in applying their new knowledge to their research. To apply for projects or publish articles, some returnees had to change their research directions or try to follow the government requirements regarding research directions. For example, R6 said that his research after he returned to China was not related to his discipline. He wanted to conduct research in language teaching, but he believed it would be difficult to distinguish himself in this area, as he thought Chinese universities focused on encouraging teachers to apply for research projects and regarded the actual teaching as secondary. He thought he would find it difficult to publish articles on teaching. Therefore, he decided to study foreign students who came to study in Chinese universities, which was very different from his overseas major. R8 expressed his concerns in this regard from a different perspective. He claimed that it was hard for him to apply for research funding because his area of interest (applied linguistics) did not correspond with the government’s concerns. He thought his subject area was very popular and “at the

front line” in the rest of the world, but the Chinese government was not interested in it.

Some returnees found it difficult to understand what would be accepted in China with regard to research projects. R11 attributed this difficulty to the different way of applying for research funding in China. She thought that in China, the results of applications were decided on multiple factors (e.g., interpersonal relationship with leaders, networks in the academic circle) instead of academic factors. Not knowing the application review committee’s interests also made it hard to apply for funding for projects, which she found very frustrating. R14 shared a similar view. He claimed that when he returned, he found it hard to make his own research directions conform to Chinese domestic research directions. He said:

They said I was *bujiediqi*. It’s hard for me to keep to my research direction. When I wanted to write articles about a specific area, it turned out that someone seemed to have [already] applied for that if you checked the National Social Science Fund. Then I had to give that up [and] shift to other directions. I have not decided which direction to pursue. Sometimes in order to get a project, I even gave up writing articles that I wanted to write.

The comments from these returnees indicated that it was hard for them to keep the knowledge and skills they had learned overseas when they returned to Chinese universities and this restricted their ability to contribute to those universities. They found difficulties in putting what they had learned overseas into practice.

5.3.2.3 Mismatched expectations

The data also showed that returnees, non-returnees and administrators seemed to hold different views toward returnees’ abilities to apply their skills and knowledge and to re-adapt to these universities. The returnees felt confused when facing this situation whereas for some non-returnees and administrators, this confusing of returnees was *shuitubufu* or *bujiediqi*. It seemed that the expectations of both the returnees and the universities were not met: universities felt disappointed with returnees and returnees were not satisfied with the universities or even themselves. For A8, this inability to fit into Chinese universities was one of the biggest problems that returnees had to face. He believed returnees’ misunderstanding of the real domestic situations in Chinese higher

education and their unrealistic expectations prevented them from re-adapting to Chinese universities. He claimed:

There are some teachers, some PhDs from overseas. We hoped that they could have excellent performance in teaching and research. However, they could not adapt when they came back. You face foreign students when you are in foreign countries but when you come back, you face Chinese students. Their cultural backgrounds are different. Their [Returnees'] behaviours and the content of their teaching cannot be accepted here. As in research, we thought that they have stayed overseas for so many years, so they could have some influential results, but they didn't.

He believed that returnees were more likely to attribute their unsatisfactory performance to the working conditions, such as inadequate laboratories or lack of support from the university, whereas non-returnees understood the real situation and could make full use of the limited conditions without complaining as much. To him, non-returnee teachers were more realistic, whereas returnees had unrealistic expectations. A2 expressed similar concerns regarding returnees. He believed most returnees at his school did not fulfil the expectations that was expected by the universities. A5 suggested that returnees should try to become familiar with the culture of the universities before they returned and understand the institutional management, the culture, and the research and teaching environment of the universities. This understanding would help them to adjust their expectations and accept the reality. They should not have high expectations. NR2 expressed a similar view. She argued that because returnees had usually stayed in foreign countries for quite a long time, they were not familiar with the real situation in Chinese universities. Therefore, when they returned they could not adequately apply their theories to the reality, as a result. Even the returnees themselves had negative feelings about their own achievements in teaching and research. Table 5-2 shows returnees' confusion and struggle with their reentry experiences at these universities (see Appendix 4 of the questionnaire questions).

Table 5.2 Returnees' attitudes regarding their teaching and research

Survey questions	Rate of agreement
Returnees are an important factor in universities' attempts to become globalised.	39.1%
Returnees are more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnees.	66.7%
Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnees in teaching.	50%
Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnees in research.	37%
Returnees' participation is important in updating the teaching standards of this university.	58.4%
Returnees' participation is important in updating the research standards of this university.	37%

These six questions aimed to examine returnees' views and feelings about their roles in teaching and research. Except for their role in introducing new curricula and updating the teaching standards of the universities, the data indicated that returnees had more negative perceptions regarding their re-entry experiences. They were not satisfied with what they could do in these universities. They were not satisfied with the treatment they received, the academic culture and the environment of the Chinese universities. The data indicated that the returnees themselves believed that they were holders of new knowledge and new perspectives. They had the abilities to introduce new curricula than non-returnees and update teaching standards in the universities. This was consistent with their characteristics of holders of new knowledge and new perspectives, as discussed in the previous section (4.3.1). However, the data showed that returnees found it hard to apply their new perspectives, ideas, and what they could do was very limited. Their difficulties in applying their skills and knowledge meant their expectations were not met and they were not satisfied with their experiences in teaching and research. The lowest satisfaction rate for returnees was in the area of their role in research. Only 37% (N=9) of the 24 returnees believed they were likely to perform better than their non-returnee colleagues. This level of dissatisfaction was repeated for the last question, with the data showing that only 37% (N=9) of the returnees thought they had an important role in updating the research standards of the university. Conversely, their views on their teaching were more positive, with half of them (50%) believing that the returnees were likely to perform better in teaching than non-returnees, and nearly 58% believing that they had an important role in updating the teaching standards of their universities. These findings were consistent with the data from the interviews. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 illustrate returnees' satisfaction levels with their academic roles in teaching and research.

Figure 5-1 Returnees' satisfaction with academic role in teaching (N=24)

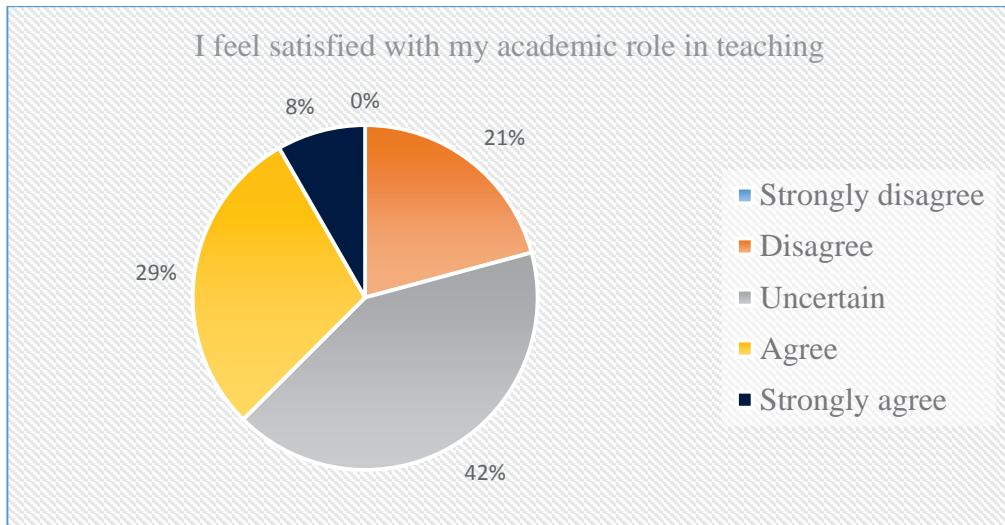
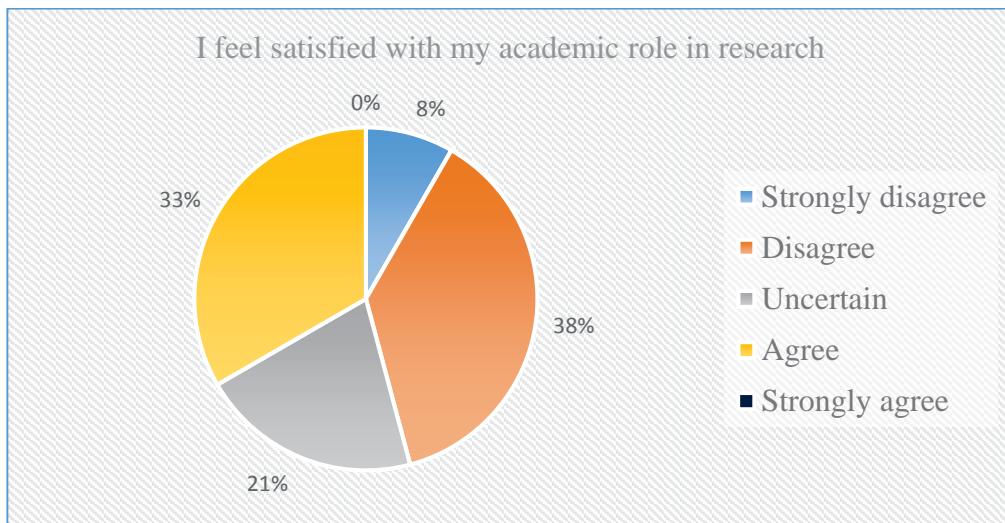


Figure 5-2 Returnees' satisfaction with academic role in research (N=24)



These two figures clearly show returnees' negative views regarding their roles in teaching and research. Only 37% (N=9) of them were satisfied with their role in teaching and the rate for research was only 33% (N=8). The data further indicated that returnees' academic experiences were negative and they had difficulties in utilising their knowledge in Chinese universities.

5.3.3 *Different academic environment for conducting research*

5.3.3.1 *Facing the Chinese auditing system*

The returnees reported a range of challenges in conducting research in their domestic

universities. One problem was that the auditing system in China is different from that in Western countries and it has its own rules. Returnees reported difficulties in adapting to this system and noted that the criteria for assessment of research in Chinese universities were one of the challenges they faced. They said that Chinese higher education focused on the quantity rather than the quality of articles, which resulted in a publication-oriented academic culture and ruined the academic ethos. One returnee, who finished his study in Sweden, said:

I can't adapt to the domestic research system. China's current research is just like the Great Leap Forward in the sixties, which means it only focuses on quantity instead of quality of research, while quantity and quality depend on whether you have enough resources to do research. Most universities in China require teachers to publish four or five articles annually, or even in every semester. However, the real research projects, especially those that need empirical study or experiments, may need 10 years. If you publish one article per month, the quality of these articles is obvious to everyone. (R4)

He believed this assessment requirement lowered the academic level of Chinese higher education instead of raising it. Returnees who had become accustomed to a different research system had difficulties in adapting to the Chinese system, which seemed to separate research output from the researcher's real ability to conduct research. Another returnee (R 3), who had graduated from Australia, shared similar views. She thought that in China the number of people who could write creative and valuable articles was declining, as people wrote articles to gain promotion, which she believed was unethical. She did not want to write such articles. She did not want to conform to this academic system. She thought she was becoming marginalised.

Most returnees reported that according to the assessment requirements, an individual's annual academic performance was converted into credits, which were directly connected to cash rewards and ultimately, to their promotion. Failure to meet the requirements meant that an individual did not pass the annual assessment. Therefore, many teachers had to write articles for publication so they could meet the assessment requirements. This issue was also mentioned in some administrators' interviews. One administrator said:

Returnees are *shuitubufu*. ... In foreign countries, one research project may need 10 years to do it. However, in China, you have to publish articles every year. Otherwise, you will fail in your annual performance review, and your income will be affected. (A2)

Thus, passing the assessment became the main motivation of doing research, and the quality of articles was ignored. A2 noted that this assessment resulted in personal benefit-oriented research instead of interest-oriented research, saying:

It is a different story doing research in China. That is to say, when we do research, we do it for profits, for example for reward, for credits for your assessment, and for promotions. All these are very profit-oriented and practical.

As the number of publications was one of the main criteria for assessing a teacher's performance and was closely related to teachers' promotions and treatment, teachers needed to publish as many articles as possible. To many returnees, focusing on quantity instead of quality created an unfair competition. R14, who had returned from the US, said:

Some teachers did not do any research and they could publish 17 or 18 articles in one year. While for myself, I spent several months or even a couple of years to do a research [project] and got the articles published. They count the number of your articles instead of quality. I think I was disadvantaged. They never care about what you could contribute to research. They only care about how many articles you have published. I think this is very unfair.

R24, a postgraduate from Australia, had a very negative attitude toward her university, saying it was not even as good as that of India. She claimed:

The university didn't give me any other benefit except for my salary. I had to wait in line for allocated housing and promotion. However, my articles were lower in number than those which were just made for quantity requirements. I think this is very ridiculous.

R14 claimed that these assessment requirements destroyed a person's passion and enthusiasm for doing research. This unfairness was also evident in the review committees' attitudes towards the place of publication for articles. Some returnees said

that articles they published in some overseas journals were not counted in the assessment requirements, which was very frustrating. One returnee said:

Maybe going overseas to study is one of our disadvantages. The articles we publish overseas, the things we have tried so hard to get published in overseas journals, are not counted as your outputs when you apply for promotions. One example is X. What she published overseas was not counted in Chinese Catalogue B, not even in Catalogue C. Because of that, she failed in her application for professorship. (R14)

The person the returnee mentioned here participated in the pilot study undertaken for this study (Section 3.2.2.7). She had a very negative feeling about her treatment. She said that most of her articles were written in English and published overseas; however, they were not counted as her “outputs” at her university. She felt the value of her articles was underestimated by the university. An administrator also confirmed the unfairness of this assessment by saying:

In terms of the research assessment, we just have the domestic criteria. No overseas journals are included in [these] criteria, even those top ones. No, not at all. No policies ... mentioned that. Even if there would be any [such] policies, it would be unreasonable. (A1)

R14 and A2 both thought that domestically trained colleagues had more advantages than returnees because they were very familiar with the hidden rules and used them well (*fushuitu*), so they could publish many articles in order to meet the assessment requirements. To meet this publication-driven culture, some inferior publications were produced and many of the journals increased their profit by publishing and selling the articles. Non-returnees also knew they might need to pay money to get their articles published. This kind of research culture led to a major difference between returnees and non-returnees, with regard to their research. A14, R24 and A2 said the whole academic culture was deteriorating and only those who could adapt to this culture would survive. R3, R14 and R24 reported that they encountered difficulties in adapting to this assessment system because they maintained their professional ethics and rigour in conducting research. R24 said that as she wanted to do original research only instead of copying others, and she was very rigorous in choosing research topics and analysing the data, she produced fewer articles than her domestically trained colleagues did. Many of the

returnees felt marginalised, unfairly treated or even worse, with some of them losing their interest and enthusiasm for conducting research.

5.3.3.2 Facing different philosophies in doing research

The returnees also thought the attitudes and methods of conducting research in China were unreasonable and unacceptable. They felt that a research culture with a profit-oriented and quantity focus prevented creativity and rigorous approaches. R5 claimed:

I found that many professors in China are not doing very good things to students. Why American universities are so good is that they firmly believe that education should be like software, to be updated constantly. They don't stay in one place. They would introduce new things to students. However, I have found many professors here, though they kind of do research, actually do nothing. Their research outputs are outdated. They still teach students outdated things. I think this is inappropriate. ... Sometimes they even don't give lectures themselves. They ask some of their postgraduate students to give lectures instead.

R20, who returned to a Chinese university as a post-doctorate in geology and was focusing on studying lakes, confirmed this view. Of all the interviewed returnees, he was the only one for whom the university had built a laboratory and he had received the best treatment. Although he was satisfied with his work conditions, he was disappointed with Chinese higher education. He said the textbooks that were used were the same as those used before he went overseas and the teaching philosophy was still the same. In such an environment, he felt that students lacked in creativity and critical thinking, let alone their ability to do independent research and teaching. Within this culture, he said non-creative research outputs were inevitable and worse, data was faked to meet the “hypotheses”. He said that returnees who would not accept this way of conducting research or research projects that did not meet their academic ethics were “out of place”. It seemed that this research culture made returnees feel it was hard to do rigorous research.

Indeed, the participants thought that this academic culture had led to different attitudes towards natural science and social science studies. The returnees drew attention to the difference in the treatment of students involved in the natural sciences and those involved with the social sciences and humanities. Most returnees who studied social science had

more difficult experiences. Returnees in natural sciences (e.g., R20) could enjoy favourable conditions and receive more financial support for their projects, whereas returnees who studied social sciences and humanities seemed to have less chance of gaining funding for their research. Further, they faced more difficulties in publishing their articles. R8, who graduated from the University of Hong Kong, observed:

The main challenge is research funds. In China, there are fewer funds in social science and humanities. This is a bad thing. If you need to do field study, you need funds. You need funding to do everything ... In Hong Kong, the [research fund] support for social and humanities study is astronomical figures.

The difference between the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities indicates different philosophies in Chinese higher education, where it is believed that natural science study was more important. It takes a much longer time for research outputs in the studies in the social sciences and humanities to have an influence (R24). He said in a profit-oriented academic culture, inevitably, this type of research was ignored by the education system, particularly regarding the allocation of research funding and the publication of articles. R8 said the highest level of research funding for natural science studies could be up to RMB 60 billion, whereas the highest level for the social sciences and humanities was only RMB 180,000. This meant that returnees in the social sciences and humanities could have lower research outputs than domestically trained teachers who were more familiar with the research culture.

Political control and censorship of research also made it difficult for some returnees to apply for funding for research projects or to publish articles that did not conform to the ideology of the government, particularly in the social sciences and humanities which are seen to be related to ideology. This political control of research meant some returnees had to restrict their research in certain areas. One non-returnee said:

There are many restrictions in China if you want to do research or teaching. If you want to publish an article, all these journals are controlled by the government. As part of the ideology, they are controlled directly by the government ... If you want to get your articles published, your articles must comply with the rules. You must not cross the line. (NR8)

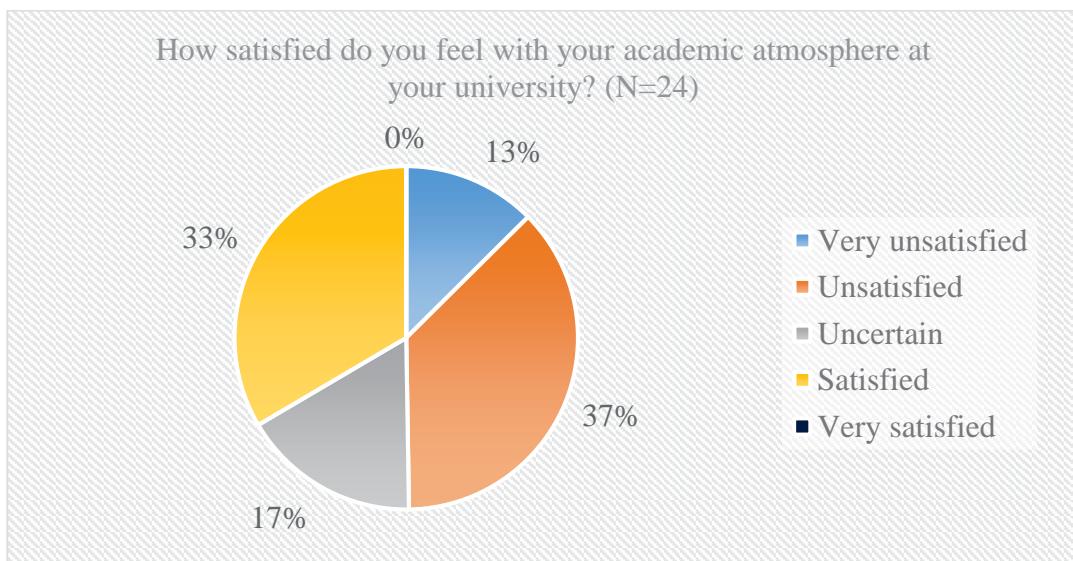
With regard to applying for funding for research projects, NR8 reported:

If you want to apply for funding for research projects, all research projects are controlled by different levels of departments ... those research projects which are said to be very important to the ideology are encouraged. Whereas many which are regarded as less important to the ideology are not encouraged or not listed in the guidelines of research by the government.

R3's agreed with this view that there is a lack of freedom in research subjects. When she was asked by the researcher to suggest ways the government and universities could make better use of returnees' social and cultural capital, she said that as teachers were not allowed to speak the truth, let alone give suggestions to the government and universities, it was useless to make any suggestions.

The scarcity of certain academic activities in the universities, such as presentations and seminars, was also criticised by some returnees. R8 reported that such academic activities were very popular in his university (the University of Hong Kong). R20 also said there were no requirements for postgraduates to do presentations at the university he worked in, whereas in foreign countries, this was usually common. In this research environment, most returnees were not satisfied with the academic environment in Chinese universities after they returned. Figure 5-3 shows returnees' views on the academic environments at the universities.

Figure 5-3 Returnees' views on the universities' academic environment



This figure shows that of the 24 interviewed returnees, only 33% were satisfied with the

academic environment at their universities. This figure was consistent with the responses from the interviews. Some returnees believed that domestically trained teachers with doctoral degrees, who were familiar with the Chinese approach, were better than returnees in research. R16 even claimed she wished she had studied her PhD in China because domestically trained PhD students had advantages in publishing articles. In this research environment, all of the returnees felt they had little advantage over non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research, as illustrated in R6's comment when he was asked about the differences between returnees and non-returnees in their research performance:

The differences may be ... hmmm ... I think that difference is not obvious. From my point of view, in our school, I mean ... especially in research I think there is not much difference. Non-returnees may be ... currently ... hmmm ... in our school, non-returnees are better than returnees (in research).

R11's attitude was even more negative. She felt that returnees' overseas study might be a disadvantage for returnees, rather than an advantage. The following figure illustrates returnees' views of themselves in terms of their research.

Figure 5-4 Returnees' views on themselves in their research

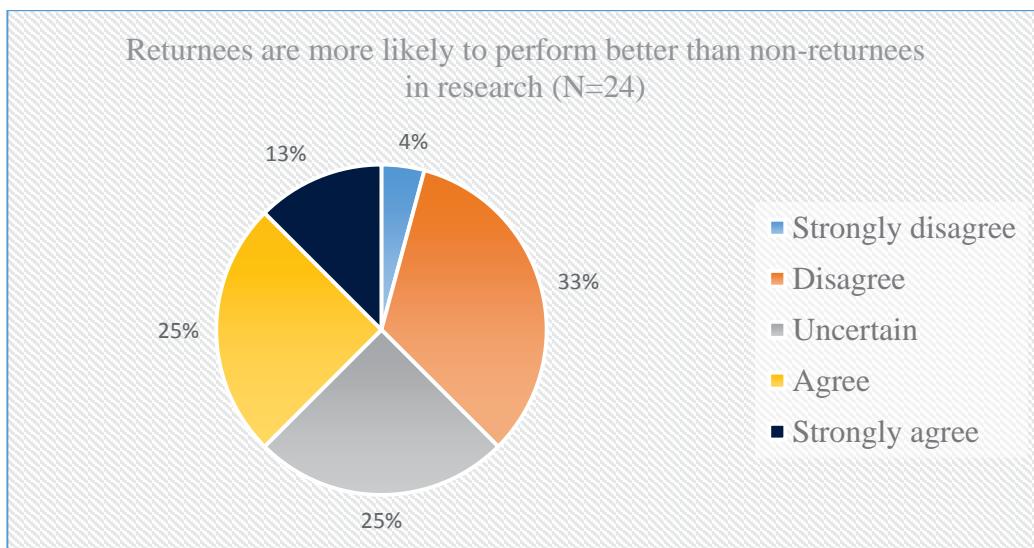
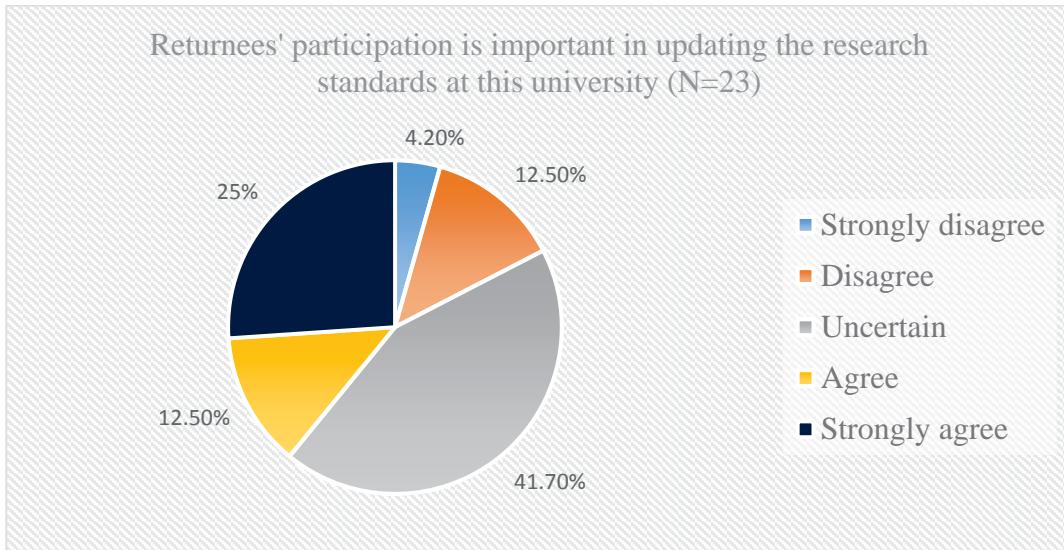


Figure 5-5 Returnees' views of their role in updating research standards at their university



Of the 24 returnees interviewed, only a little over a third (N=9) agreed that they were likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in research. Of the 23 returnees interviewed, only 39% (N=9) agreed that returnees had an important role in updating the research standards at the university. This was consistent with the data from the interviews. Although returnees were regarded as people with new ideas, new knowledge and new perspectives, these advantages could not be used fully in their universities. The administrators and non-returnee colleagues shared similar views on this topic. When asked about the differences between returnees and non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research, one administrator said:

I think there are no obvious differences. Why? It might be related to the domestic research system. (A6)

A8 and A2 also held this view that there was no difference between returnees and non-returnees in term of research. The responses to the interview questions indicated that except for A3, most administrators believed that returnees were not necessarily better than non-returnees and each group had their own advantages. A3 was the only administrator who believed that returnees were better than non-returnees in terms of their research, especially those returnees who had a doctoral degree. Some non-returnees said returnees were at a *disadvantage* with regard to doing research because of their lack of understanding of Chinese higher education. NR5 said:

I think returnees have disadvantages. Most of the time, they still do things according to foreign ideas. ... I mean, sometimes they may ask the teachers here to do things according to foreign standards, which may lead to unexpected results, because most of the time, Chinese rules are not like that.

Figures 5-6 and 5-7 illustrate non-returnee colleagues' and administrators' views regarding returnees' understanding of Chinese higher education.

Figure 5-6 Non-returnees' views regarding returnees' understanding of Chinese higher education

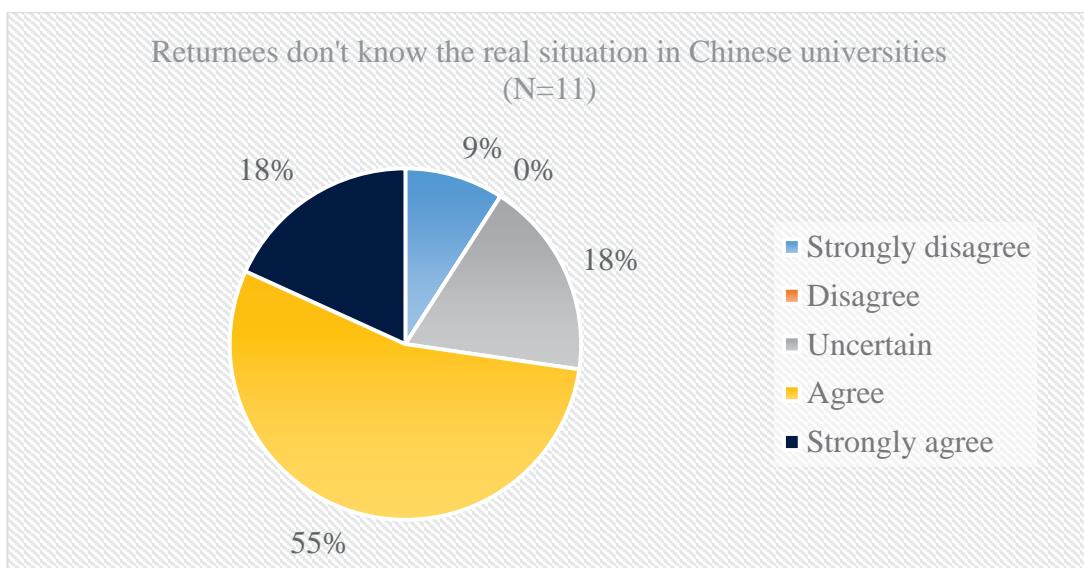
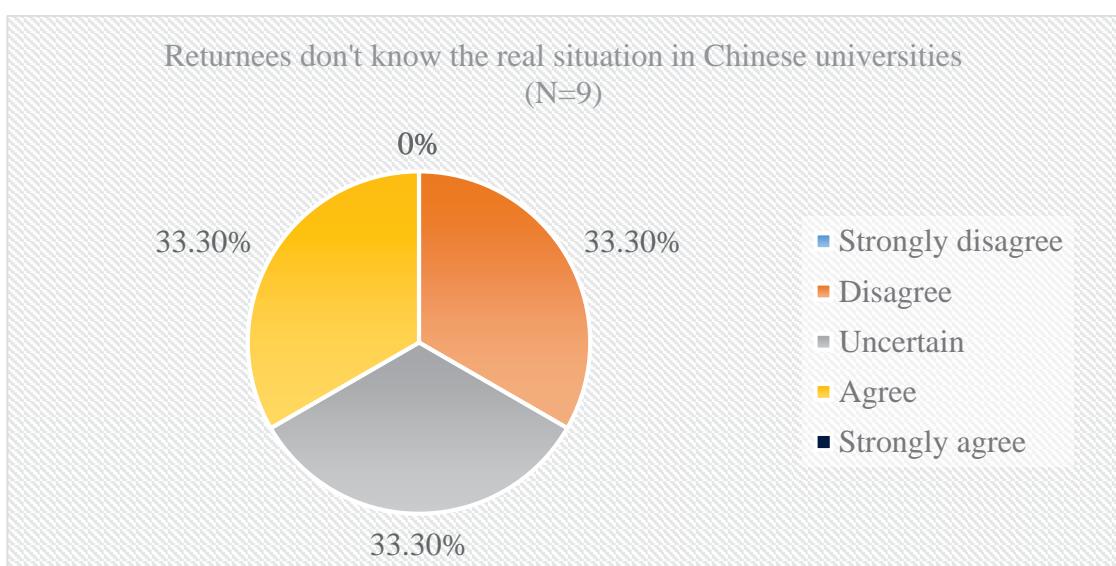


Figure 5-7 Administrators' views regarding returnees' understanding of Chinese higher education



These two figures show that nearly 73% (N=8) of the 11 non-returnees agreed that returnees did not know the real situation in Chinese universities (see Figure 5.6). This contrasted with the views of administrators. Of the nine interviewed administrators, only one third of them (N=3) believed that returnees did not know the real situation in Chinese universities (see Figure 5-7). Although these findings appeared to be contradictory, further investigation supported the perspective of the non-returnees. They had direct contact with the returnees and both groups faced the same research assessment. Non-returnee colleagues could know the returnees better than administrators in terms of this issue.

5.4 Facing the bureaucratic system and having little influence in the Chinese academic community

5.4.1 Facing the different institutional system

The Chinese institutional system is different from that in Western countries. The institutional system in Chinese higher education is known as “bureaucratisation of universities” (*daxue de guanliaohua*), in which a university’s operating system focuses on managerialism instead of professionalism (Shore, 2008). Yi (2011) says that combined with conventional Chinese paternalism, this reinforces the “one-says-yes” governing system in which ideas or policies are transmitted bureaucratically or vertically for those in a lower position to practise or implement (Kong, 2009; Yi, 2011). Challenging those in power is neither esteemed nor acceptable. As well as facing the difficult research environment and the issue of the *guanxi* (interpersonal) network discussed in the previous section (see Section 5.3.1), the returnees struggle to adapt to this bureaucratic style of management, which sees those in management as superior to those at lower levels. This management ideology cannot focus on humanistic notions. Some returnees found it very difficult to return to this system. R2 reported:

In foreign countries, they are people-oriented. The persons who are at the management levels think they are there to give service to others. ... Then it is different while coming back (laughing). ... It's like "I am the person from the management level; you are the person who is governed by me (laughing). You have to do it according to me (my rules). ... I am governing you and you must listen to me,

no matter where you are from, no matter which country you return from. As long as you come back, you must listen to me”.

After four and a half years’ study in Australia, R11 sometimes regretted coming back to her original university and felt frustrated and depressed by this management system:

I came back last year. Because I have to solve my daughter’s issues of going to primary school here, I have had to keep going to the administration building for lots and lots of times [to solve the problem]. Every time when I came back (from there), I felt ... regret. Why did I come back to this university again? ... Every time after I came back from them, I felt they treated me like ‘What’s the big deal? Even if you are a returnee (*haigui*) you are still governed by us people with only undergraduate degrees! You could go nowhere.’

Under this type of governing ideology, respect and fair treatment for returnees did not appear to be an expectation. Disrespect for and neglect of returnees’ feelings were noted by participants. R5 felt that this was ill treatment, with her university managers criticising her for even very small mistakes. For R20, this top-down governing style meant that those in the management level had access to better treatment, such as better salaries and subsidies. He attributed this to the difference in assessment requirements for teachers and management personnel; the assessment requirements for teachers were much tougher than those for management personnel and these double standards in the assessment requirements gave normal teachers a lower status than those at in management, including their income. He pointed out:

[In China], many things are hard to say. People, who do research like us, to be frank, are no different from migrant workers. ... Even a director of a division who does management work has much higher income than a professor.

He believed that this unbalanced relationship between administrators and academics resulted in managers paying little attention to the feelings of returnees, as providing a supportive atmosphere for returnees was not in their working schedules. Rather, they needed to try to please their superiors in order to move up the ladders. Thus, introducing foreign talent, according to R20, was an “All talk and no action” thing. He believed that only professors who were well known overseas were welcomed and were the interest of the universities. For other foreign-educated Chinese, there was not a good environment

for them:

There are problems in introducing [a] research team from overseas. To be frank, for those who are directors or leaders, what they are interested in is their own promotions. It is not their business whether you come back or not from overseas. At this university, if you want to leave, you leave. It has nothing with them. They are still the heads, as long as the superiors are satisfied with them ... This system, I am not optimistic about it.

R 20 felt that the unbalanced relationship between common teachers and management made administrative power more important than academic research. In this hierarchical structure, where common teachers were at the lower level and management were at the higher levels, equality was impossible between those from a lower position and those from a higher position. That was why, in one returnee's words, leaders had the absolute power. R12 reported:

I think the whole system of the university is a hierarchy, meaning it has its own hierarchical structures. Leaders have absolute power. It is not like Western countries. You don't know which position you are until you come into the community. You must be very cautious when you do things or when you say something. ... I can see these different levels in the hierarchy. Nothing can change it or challenge it.

Under this governing culture, administrative interference was inevitable. According to R12, a teacher's abilities were not the deciding factor in their performance; rather, it was the leaders' decision. This became a psychological pressure for returnees and meant they could not apply their real skills. Dealing with this kind of governing culture was a challenge for returnees, leading them to think they had little chance of changing it. Most leaders in the schools or the universities were domestically trained graduates and it was difficult for returnees to become leaders. When R8 was asked to give suggestions regarding ways to make use of returnees' social and cultural capital, he said:

No. They [leaders] are inefficient. Overall, the university lacks a systematic management (of how to make use of returnees). First, there must be a group of returnees [becoming leaders]. Returnees have no influence. If returnees could [fill] two-thirds of the management levels, they could do something ... but at this

university, almost all of the management leaders were trained at this university. ...

It's so normal for returnees to be just teachers here.

For R8, this bureaucratic management style, with domestically trained graduates filling most management positions, was an obstacle to universities changing, as the leaders were the people who could access the resources, leaving little opportunity for returnees to make any changes:

It is impossible (for returnees) to make any changes now, because in China, it is not professorial management of universities, it is bureaucratic governance. Even if returnees could become leaders, the first thing they would do is to maximise their personal benefit, because in China, only leaders can get access to resources, including academic resources, and research funds. They [universities] cannot be run according to foreign methods or foreign models or foreign ways of management. [If doing that], it is doomed to be a failure.

Thus, it was hard for returnees to have any influence in the universities. Those who had power controlled and manipulated resources. This phenomenon was also evident in one administrator's comments. A2 said:

Yes. They [leaders] can say yes [to who can apply for the projects]. For example, if someone has a good relationship with the leader and the leader thinks this guy is nice, even though this guy may not be that good at research, [the leader can give the project to him or her].

For A2, one of the consequences of this bureaucratic management was that academic research was damaged by it because power could say yes and those leaders did not necessarily have the ability to tell whether proposed projects were creative or were outdated, nor to identify what had already been done overseas or domestically:

They [leaders] don't have the ability to tell the level of the projects. Therefore, they are more likely to decide with power instead of academic [ability] (laugh). This is related to politics. Because in Chinese universities, if we don't de-bureaucratise the management and everything is governed with bureaucratic management, then definitely universities are measured by this bureaucratic system ... well, you can do nothing to that.

R24 shared this view that de-bureaucratisation was essential to solve the problems of Chinese higher education. Without de-bureaucratisation, even if there were 100% returnees in Chinese higher education, returnees could not realise their ambitions because the environment was repressive. The returnees would become submerged in the environment and lose their passion and enthusiasm. For R3, this bureaucratisation management reflected the inefficient and hierarchical management systems of Chinese universities. An issue could be discussed by management for two or three years but never resolved. She felt marginalised at her university because she did not want to waste her time on such inefficient meetings or activities.

Under such bureaucratic management, it was evident that some returnees felt depressed and disappointed and some, such as R3, R12, R11 and R21, had cynical views towards their universities. The returnees' re-entry path was full of challenges and difficulties in this academic and managerial environment. Returnees could not have much influence on the universities, nor could they change the management or the environment of the academic circle. Some of them had to yield to the environment or become complicit to it, thus losing the advantages of their overseas education.

5.4.2 Low salaries

Low salary, and lack of support from the universities were also reported by returnees. This meant that for some returnees, they had to take extra measures to increase their income, such as taking a part-time job or running training courses outside the universities. Their overseas experience helped them establish their status for this endeavour. R3 said:

[] Salary is very low. It's not low; it's really *very* low. ... I am a lecturer now and I have worked quite a few years. Compared to some of my colleagues, it's already not that bad. Two of my colleagues' salary [that] is much lower than mine. ... The money can't let teachers have a decent life. Some of our colleagues have to do business. They have no choice; otherwise, how could they make a living?

R3 herself was running a company that provided English training for students. R24 provided English training courses for undergraduate students who wanted to further their postgraduate study. They both did very well in their small businesses. Most returnees reported that their low salaries were a challenge. Some of them took other measures to

deal with this problem. R9, who returned to the university in which she had worked before she went overseas, claimed that having low expectations was important:

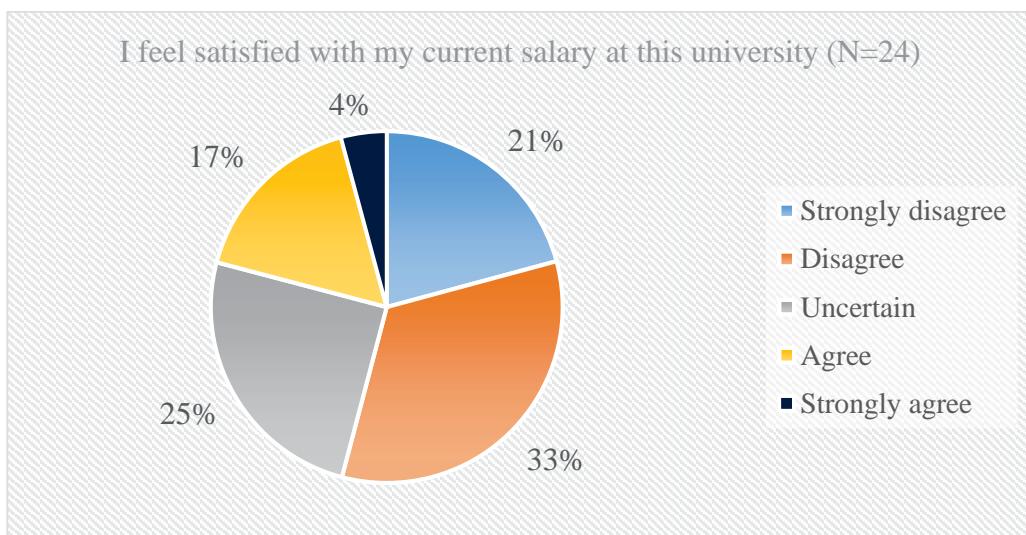
Hmm, I think [returnees] need to adjust themselves, especially those who stayed overseas for a long time. One of the things is the income. I know what my income was like before I went overseas, so I didn't feel so annoyed. However, compared to foreign countries, the difference was very big. When my supervisor asked me about my income when I was overseas, I felt hard to tell him, because it was so low.

For R8, the low salary scale was one of his biggest challenges:

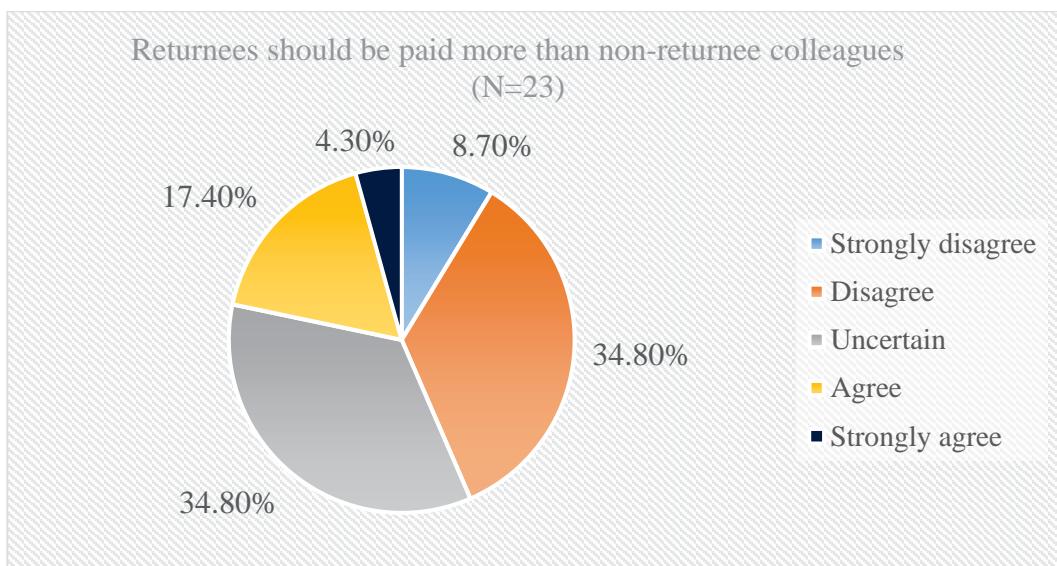
The most challenges now are those from life. We have to pay the mortgage. ... It is true. The salary in mainland China is the lowest. Our school has done a survey. For professors and associate professors, their monthly income is \$US500 lower than that in India. You have no choice. If your kids want to go to a good school, you have to compromise.

Figure 5-8 shows returnees' views regarding their salaries.

Figure 5-8 Returnees' attitudes regarding their salaries



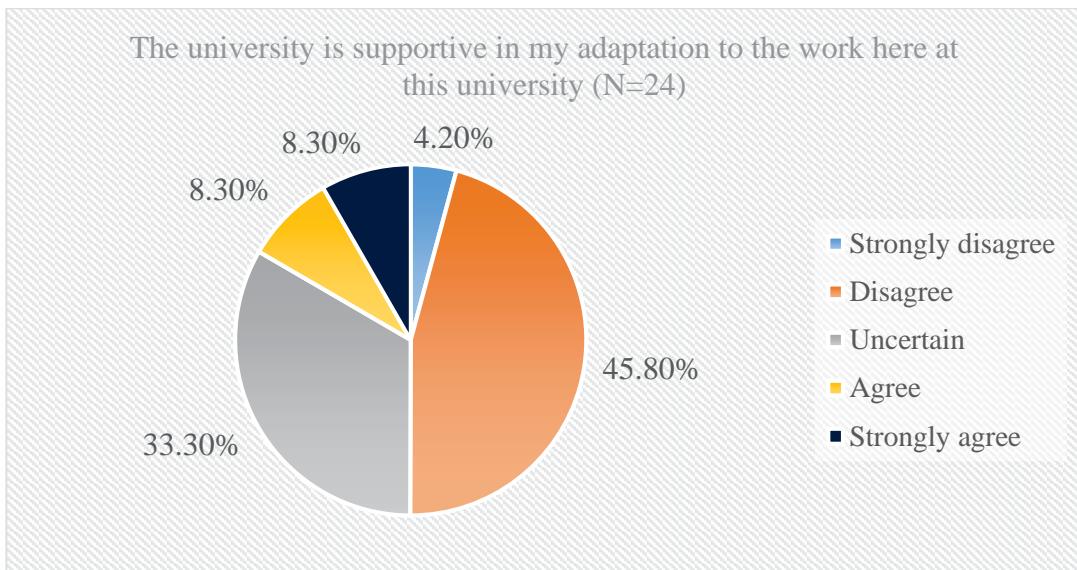
The data shows that only about a fifth (N=5) of the returnees were satisfied with their current salary. The next figure shows returnees' attitudes towards their salaries compared with non-returnees' salaries.

Figure 5-9 Returnees' attitudes regarding their salaries and non-returnees' salaries

This data shows that only 21 % (N=5) of the returnees (one is missing in this item) believed they should be paid more than their non-returnee colleagues. This indicates that most returnees feel they were not treated as special, talented people from overseas. They were regarded as common teachers, equivalent to non-returnees. Furthermore, few returnees reported being supported by their university, as shown in Figure 5-10.

5.4.3 *Lack of support from the universities*

Besides the low salaries, some returnees also reported their dissatisfaction with the support from the universities. Lack of support from the universities added extra difficulties and challenges for returnees' reentry experiences. Figure 5-10 shows returnees' satisfaction scale with the support from the universities.

Figure 5-10 Returnees' views regarding support from their universities

This data indicates that only about one-sixth (N=4) of returnees thought the universities were supportive in their adaptation to the university. This lack of support was also evident in the interviews. R2, who returned to the university in which she worked before she went overseas, said:

I think there is no support [from the university]....At least from the aspects of my expectation, there is no support or help from the university. On the contrary, they set many obstacles for me and asked me to sign many contracts that benefited them only. They give me no financial or academic support, nor even emotional support. They are very cold to me, very cold.

With no one caring about their work and life in the universities, returnees simply had to accept the reality, as expressed by R12:

I have to accept all these unfair treatments here. The Dean told me that I should not always think about the unfairness I had. "This is the Chinese society, and you have to accept it before you get more chances". I am very disappointed about it. It makes me feel they just want to use you. They don't care who you are. They don't care whether you are well or not. The university never ever cares about you.

Thus, all the data from the interviews and survey indicated that the universities did not provide support for returnees. The management leaders were perceived as focussing more on their power than on the work and life of returnees and some returnees reported

they were neglected and even badly treated by the management when they first returned. Many of them expressed their disappointment about the universities' management. R11 said she did not receive her salary until three months after she started work. R12 reported that apart from being given RMB1,000 per month for basic living expenses, she did not receive her salary until eight months after she started work. After the university offered R21 a position, she had to wait for a whole year, with no pay and no work, for the administrative process to be completed. This lack of support was also reflected in returnees' work conditions. As a post-doctorate fellow in biochemistry, R21 reported that because the university provided no laboratory, she and her colleagues had to create a laboratory themselves from one colleague's office.

5.4.4 *Minimal influence in the Chinese academic community*

Many returnees found they had little influence in their universities because of the effect of the management system and the general environment there, which they reported ruined their passion and enthusiasm regarding research and teaching, as well as their creativity and the potential to take a leading role in Chinese higher education. Most of them said they had little influence on universities' management, changing universities' teaching pedagogy, or the curricula. NR8 said he believed that because returnees had so little influence on universities in terms of changing universities' teaching concepts and academic culture, if they became heads of schools or universities, they would be assimilated by this environment. R2 said that returnees who wanted to do things according to their own philosophies would end up as failures because they did not keep the rules. Thus, their overseas experiences would become just "a good memory".

A2's and NR8's concerns were reasonable. Without exception, all of the returnees felt they had few advantages over domestically trained non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research and status at the universities. Most of them said they kept a low profile when they were asked whether there were any differences between returnees and non-returnees in terms of their research and teaching. One returnee said that in order not to arouse others' jealousy, returnees should try to "stay low", to avoid resistance from domestically trained colleagues. Almost none of them had been asked to set new curricula in their universities or had their overseas education background utilised. Only two returnees felt they had been "winners"; the university had built a laboratory for one,

and the other had become the vice dean, which had given him more access to resources and opportunities for career development. Most returnees felt their overseas cultural and social capital was a disadvantage in terms of entering the Chinese academic circle.

5.4.5 Summary of academic re-adaptation challenges

In summary, the academic reentry path for returnees was not an easy one. The data in the study showed that lack of domestic interpersonal networks makes returnees feel it was hard for them to access the local resources and to get into the Chinese academic circle. They reported alienation from the domestic academics. Furthermore, Chinese universities' academic culture made their re-entry more difficult. Further, the different institutional management philosophy also added difficulties and challenges for returnees in the reentry path. They felt disappointed and frustrated when facing the bureaucratic management of Chinese universities. The “returning waters” for these returnees (*haigui*) were not as smooth as they had expected. They were said to be *bujiediqi* or *shuitubufu*.

Importantly, the data showed that foreign-educated returnees had little influence in these universities. They had difficulties in applying their new knowledge and skills in Chinese universities. Their overseas education advantages could not be demonstrated in their academic life. Some returnees felt confused about how to use their newly acquired teaching methods and could not find a balance between the Western and Chinese traditional teaching methods. They held negative feelings towards their roles in teaching and research at these universities and found that what they could do at these universities was limited. Returnees' overseas education advantages could not be fully adopted during their academic life back. Conversely, for some returnees, their overseas education has become a disadvantage for them. They did not necessarily have advantages over non-returnee colleagues regarding their teaching and research. Returnees' social and cultural capital, which was regarded as the main attracting factor of returnees by these universities, could become diminished at these universities.

5.5 Cultural re-adaptation experiences and changes of returnees

This section explores the cultural re-adaptation experiences of the returnees who

participated in this study. Most of them initially had difficulty re-adapting to the Chinese cultures when they first came back, ranging from major to minor re-adjustment issues. For some returnees, reverse cultural shock seemed unavoidable. Some said that because of their overseas experiences, they now had different values and perceptions with regard to Chinese and Western cultures. The data revealed that the returnees' cultural re-adaptation experiences were determined by the way in which individuals perceived and responded to their home culture. It also showed that an individual's response to their re-adaptation process was contingent on their attitudes and motivations. Significant re-adaptation experiences caused them to re-evaluate their values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

5.5.1 Dealing with interpersonal relationships

Chinese culture is very different from that of Western countries. It has its own cultural norms and values (Buttery & Leung, 1998). The way people talk to each other and resolve issues is different from that in foreign countries, especially in terms of people facing management staff, who are seen as having more privileges than "common people" (Buttery & Leung, 1998) and people value "We" respect (collectivism) instead of "I" respect (individualism) (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). When they talk to others, Chinese people are not as direct as people who are from other countries. Thus, returnees who had accepted Western values and norms no longer were sure what they should or should not say. R7, who had stayed in the US for seven years, said it had become natural for her to say her thoughts directly and she did not know how to say good words to others, which she felt made her unpopular. In China, to be indirect or to say nice words to others is regarded as respecting others, even if what you say is not the truth. This was one of the most difficult and challenging readjustment problems in her returning experiences. Consequently, she sometimes had to lie or be very cautious if she wanted to say something and she found it difficult to keep a balance between these two norms. R4, who went to the US as a teenager and stayed there for nine years, had a similar view:

After I came back, I found that my thinking was different from others. I am very direct. I directly say what I want to say, which makes some Chinese people feel uncomfortable. You know Chinese people are very indirect. Many teachers [her colleagues] say that I am 80% more like an American.

This description gives an insight into some of the cultural differences that returnees such as R4 and R7 had to face when they returned to their home culture. Because they had been immersed in different cultures for many years, they had accepted the cultural mores of the host culture. When they came back to China, they had to re-adapt to the Chinese culture. R11 had a similar view. She had stayed in Australia for five years and then returned to the university in which she had worked before she went overseas to study her PhD. She acknowledged that because she had stayed in Australia for several years, her thinking and views had changed, which sometimes made her feel uncomfortable after coming back. She said:

In terms of the re-adaptation after coming from the foreign country, I think much of it is about the re-adaptation to the life and interpersonal relationships here. The interpersonal relationship is very complicated here. I feel I am like an idiot after coming back. I feel I am like a person coming from [the] countryside. My thinking is simple. My way of talking is direct. My thinking is direct. Then I encountered some unexpected frustrations.

The way people deal with interpersonal relationships indicates a country's cultural norm. Chinese cultural norms were derived from the Confucian philosophy, which says people should be moderate and not go to extremes (Buttery & Leung, 1998; Sussman, 2011). Thus, Chinese people are reserved and indirect in dealing with others. In contrast, people in Western countries are more direct in their communications, so when returnees come back to the indirect culture, they can feel lost and confused. R11 said:

Anyway, when I first came back, I couldn't adapt to the traffic, the complicated interpersonal relationship between people. Even now, I still cannot adapt to many things here. However, I force myself to adapt. I force myself not to think about those things [lives overseas] on purpose, not to think about Australia, not to think about those simple lives. You have come back. You need to settle down, and then you need to accept it. You have to go with ... the flow. ... However ... I feel exhausted and messed up, so I still don't feel good.

For R11, forcing herself to adapt to the life back at home was the only choice for her, but the cultural differences between China and Australia made this re-adaptation difficult. To R11, interpersonal relationships in Australia were simpler than that in China and

people dealt with others in a simple way. The rituals people dealt with interpersonal relationship and practices of Australian life had become her personal values and everyday practices. For her, discarding her newly acquired cultural habits from her host country and trying to re-adapt to the culture in China were full of challenges.

R12 had a similar experience. She studied in Thailand (MBA) and France (Masters in International Finance) before she returned to work at the banking industry and international companies. Having difficulty adapting to the life back in China, she then went to study for a PhD in higher education in the US. At the time of this research, she had been working at a Chinese university for three and a half years. Her experience of working at this university helped her understand the Chinese culture fully and realise how different this culture was from those in other countries. She reported:

I think if I had not come to work at this university, I would have never known how the Chinese social system was running. It was like a reflection of the society. From this miniature of the society, I learned more about China from this small university work environment. ... After I came back, it is working at this university that made me understand the way Chinese people work and the way they live.

I had difficulties in adapting to all kinds of things. The society makes it difficult for me to adapt. I think that in Thailand, the relationship between people and their attitudes towards doing things between them are very simple and convenient. People are respected. Then it is the same in European countries.

To R12, the rules, norms and the hierarchical structure at the university made her realise that Chinese people were deeply influenced by the culture and nothing could change it. She believed that respect for others was also a Western and Thai cultural value and implied that the relationship between people in those countries was more equal than in China. Like R11, when she compared Chinese cultural values with those in the countries in which she had stayed, she preferred the relationship between people in Thailand and the Western countries. She carried with her the cultures of those countries, which made it hard for her to accept some aspects of the Chinese culture when she returned.

5.5.2 Readjusting and communicating --- ways of managing the process

The returnees had a range of views on methods of re-adapting to the Chinese culture. R14, who had stayed in the US for seven years and finished his PhD and then returned to the university in which he had worked before he went overseas, said trying to re-adapt to Chinese rules and norms and even the living environment were the most challenging for him:

[In terms of re-adaptation], the living environment is obvious. Sometimes when I think of the traffic here, I really want to go back to the living environment of America. The living environments are so different. When I first came back, I could not even go across the road. I was always slower than others. I could not move when vehicles came. Now I have become braver.

“Becoming braver” in this context can be interpreted as R14 believing that even though it was difficult for returnees to re-adapt to the home country’s life and culture, they have to accept the truth. He said:

The biggest challenge is to adapt. Since you have come back to China, you ... have to do things according to the domestic norms here. All these norms, way of doing research, life styles and rules, you should ... re-adapt to them. We cannot change it. Maybe the pain is that I cannot change it, right! Therefore, what you have to do is ... adapt to it.

From R14’s perspective, the onus was on the returnees to change themselves or to modify their thinking and behaviour to re-adapt to the norms, rules and lifestyle in China. This view is interesting. On one hand, it could mean that returnees could see the differences between these different cultures and they now held different values towards the Chinese culture, seeing its shortcomings. On the other hand, it could suggest that returnees should drop their newly acquired cultural values and try to fit into the Chinese culture again, and embracing the norms, rules and behaviours of China.

R1, who stayed in the UK for one and a half years to obtain her master’s degree, also believed that returnees should make the effort to adapt themselves to the domestic culture:

At first, I felt unable to adapt to the life here. I should say the normal life here; for example, how to go across the road, people's qualities, and such things. I felt it a little bit difficult to adapt to them. Then I gradually become used to them.

When she was asked what suggestions she would like to give to overseas Chinese students, R1 said:

[My] Suggestions are that [returnees] should not view these Chinese organisational settings from a foreign aspect. [They should] learn to adapt to every aspect here in China, such as the bureaucratic culture, the working environment and the academic atmosphere, etc. They should readjust themselves if they come back.

R1's comments indicate that returnees themselves must decide whether or not to accept the norms and values in China and that their concepts and attitudes were very important in this process. She believed that failing to modify their behaviour to fit back into Chinese culture could result in returnees failing to re-adapt.

Some returnees, such as R11 and R12, had traumatic re-adaptation experiences. Others, such as R1 and R14, reported that they finally re-adapted to the cultural norms and values again. Some returnees readjusted quickly and tried to take measures to fit into the home culture. For example, R18 had studied at a Chinese university for three years before she went to Germany for four years. She had the opinion that compared with her friends who worked as entrepreneurs or government employees, it was easier for her to re-adapt to the university culture:

I had some experience studying at one Chinese university [before going overseas], so the environment is familiar to me. So I think I am better [in re-adaptation] than some of my friends who came back to work as entrepreneurs or in government offices. [There is] too much difference for them. I feel easier than them in re-adaptation. Sometimes, at the ... beginning, I found it difficult to re-adapt, such as in interpersonal relationships. I feel like I had become used to the way of yes-is-yes and no-is-no overseas. I directly expressed my ideas [overseas]. I directly told (others) I was not happy when I was not happy. However, here in China, you need to be moderate and sensitive. You cannot be direct in all ways. Usually after one year, you will feel better.

R18 managed to re-adapt after adjusting her own attitudes, particularly by communicating with others:

I think you should stay with your friends quite often. When I first came back, I had some friends here who grew up with me. I then communicated with them a lot. This is also a process of re-adaptation. Colleagues in your workplace are new to you. So you can try to make as many friends as you can to practise how to get along with your new colleagues. Going out with new friends can let you know what you can say and what you cannot say. [Re-adaptation] really needs such a process.

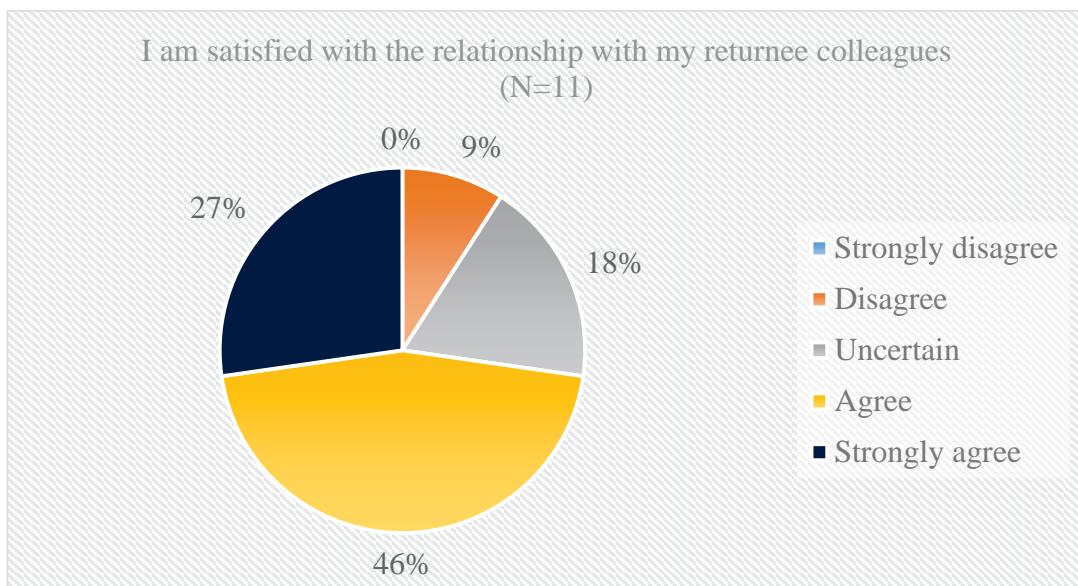
For R18, spending time with old and new friends was a way for her to remember the rules and behaviours of handling interpersonal relationships, which she could then apply to deal with the workplace culture. She believed returnees must readjust themselves and not continue to behave as they did overseas. R21 also mentioned these issues. She had finished her post doctorate in the US and then returned to a university in Yunnan Province. She said that although in the US she could argue with her boss and share her feelings directly with her colleagues, China was different and this was a little difficult to handle. She said she was misunderstood by her colleagues for some time until she managed to blend in to this culture:

[The biggest challenge for me] I think was the relationship with my colleagues. ... [Overseas] was very open. You became very direct when you were talking. Because in foreign countries, it was no good if you didn't tell your boss the truth. You could argue [with him or her], which would not lead to misunderstanding and distance between you and your boss. After you came back, your thinking was so different. You said what you wanted you say. Maybe you did it unconsciously, but your words had gone out and could not be taken back, which made you so embarrassed. Even those colleagues whom you had never talked with and whom you never knew thought you were very arrogant.

The relationship between my colleagues and me was tense. However, after a couple of years, you find other staff actually are quite nice. ... This is related with the environment. You need time to let others know you and you get to know others. Then finally, you know others, and then you will find this guy is nice, and that guy is nice too.

R21's experience shows that being accepted by local colleagues is very important to re-adaptation, suggesting the desirability of returnees adjusting their behaviour by fitting into the workplace. Returnees' behaviour can be misunderstood by local colleagues which can become an obstacle to getting along. R21's use of the word "arrogant" demonstrates the different understandings and practices of different cultural values. Interestingly, the data from the questionnaire survey showed that non-returnee colleagues seemed to have a positive attitude towards returnees in terms of their relationships, as shown in Figure 5-11.

Figure 5-11 Non-returnee colleagues' satisfaction of relationship with returnees



The data shows that 73% (N=8) of the non-returnee colleagues were satisfied with their relationships with returnees. It seems that for most returnees, even if at the beginning they found it difficult to fit back into the Chinese culture, they could eventually find a way to be accepted by their non-returnee colleagues. The comments from R21 and R18 indicate individuals' attitudes towards the Chinese culture was very important to facilitate their readjustment. They also show that for returnees, modifying their own behaviour, communicating with colleagues and friends were significant methods of relearning the norms and rules, thus to help them to re-adapt to the home culture again.

R9 also found that communication was critical to her readjustment. She said she was in a panic when she first returned and had to deal with interpersonal relationships with her colleagues, which, she believed, was not a concern overseas. She said it was through communication that she got to know her colleagues and learned about the norms of social

interchange again, which then moderated her thoughts and behaviour:

I didn't need to consider the interpersonal relationship when studying overseas. My thinking on this issue was not activated [when overseas]. ... After coming back, I still handled things with that thinking and only found that my thinking was too simple and then I felt a little bit of panic. However, later I have found actually all problems need communication. The only way is to communicate, to know about it. Some of my colleagues have many strengths of their own. They know a lot about communication. I can learn a lot from them by communicating with them.

5.5.3 *Changes in returnees*

5.5.3.1 *Changed cultural values*

Some returnees found that because they had accepted the host countries' culture while they were overseas, their personal and cultural values had changed and it was hard to find a balance between these two different cultures when they returned to China. The descriptive details provided by R11 in the previous section about the complexity of interpersonal relationships in China, compared with the simpler life in Australia, are one example of this. Her perception of "the simple life in Australia" not only implied that the cultural values in Australia were congruent with her, but also that she perceived shortcomings with regard to these values in her home country. The conflicts between these two cultures made her feel "lost" when she re-adapted to life back in China.

A number of the other returnees also found that their overseas experiences changed their values and norms, including their thinking, perceptions and behaviour. They realised that they were now different and they had to readjust themselves once back in China. Figures 5-12, 5-13 and 5-14 illustrate returnees' agreement with the questions related to changes in outlook and cultural values.

Figure 5-12 Returnees' changes in outlook

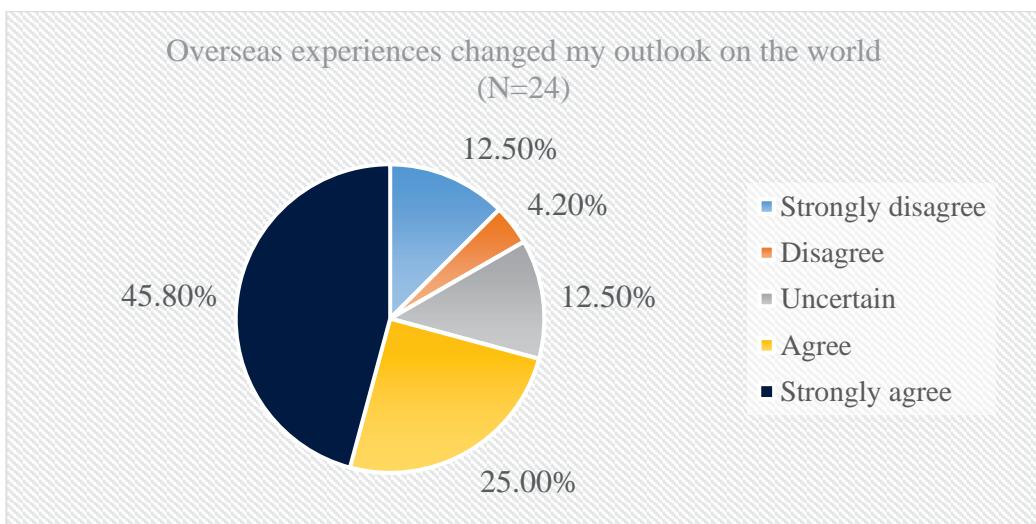


Figure 5-13 Returnees' changes in perception regarding the Chinese culture

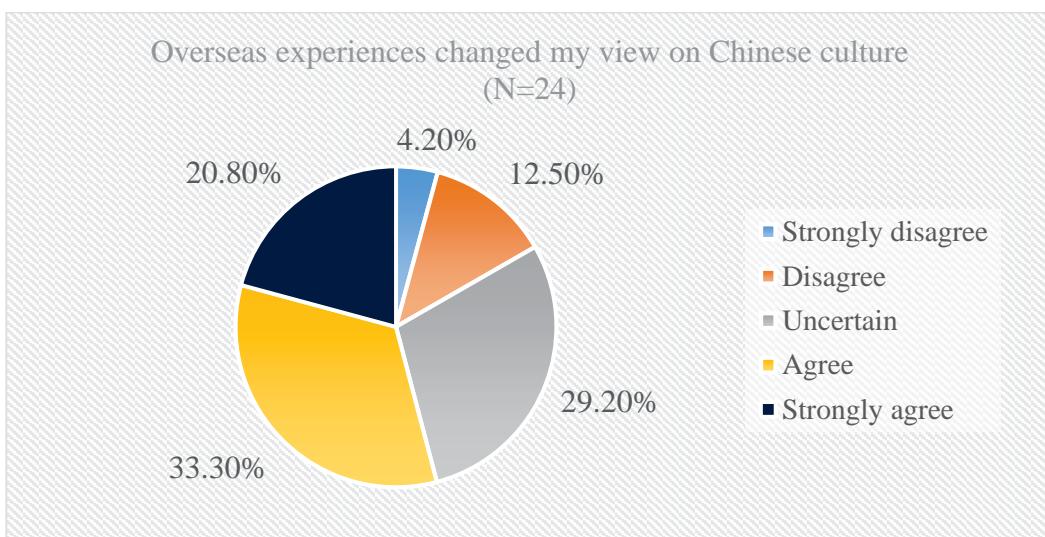
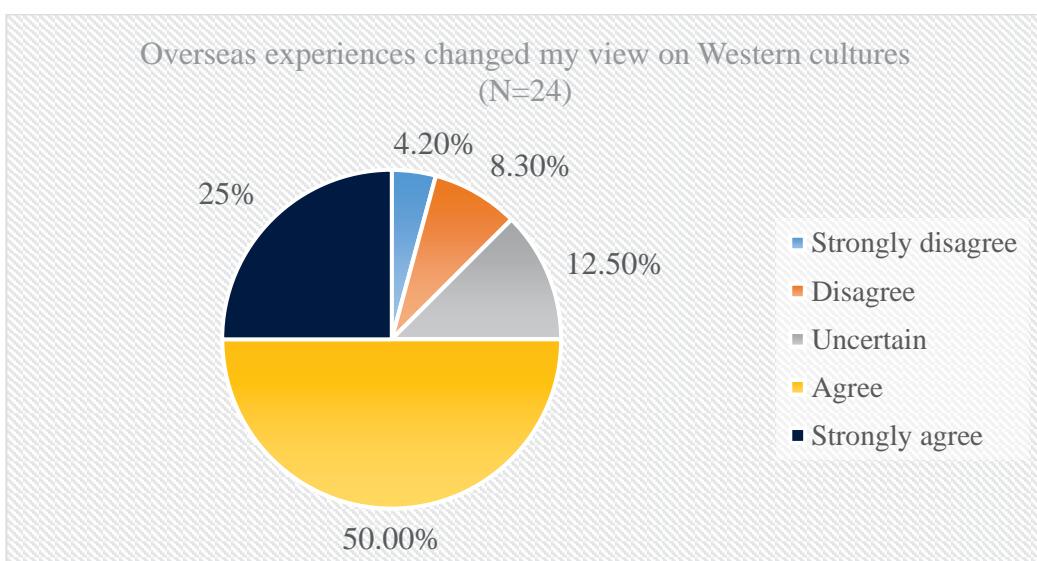


Figure 5-14 Returnees' changes in perception regarding Western cultures



The results from these questions were consistent with the qualitative data. Of the 24 interviewed returnees, 78% thought that their overseas experiences had changed their outlook on the world (see Figure 5-12). More than half thought that their overseas experiences had changed their perception of the Chinese culture and three-quarters of them believed their experiences had changed their perception of Western cultures (see Figure 5-13 and Figure 5-14). Although the rate of agreement with the statement in the second item (Figure 5-13) was lower than that for the first (Figure 5-12) and third item (Figure 5-14), it indicated a change in cultural values. These changed cultural values made it difficult for them to re-adapt to their home culture.

R19 did not realise how much she had changed until she had to think in the Chinese language. For her, thinking in English had become her habit and when she had to think in Chinese, the switches between these two languages reflected the changes in her cultural values.

The biggest challenge for me, I think, also included the language. ... Even if you ... used English for long ... you ... thought you would not forget your native language. However, sometimes on some occasions, on some formal occasions, you cannot even remember a word [in Chinese] ... then you realise that you have changed a lot for these past years. It means that I already have another language context in my mind, a more comfortable language context. ... Because you stayed overseas by yourself, you had to adapt.... Gradually [the language] became your comfort zone. And then you came back, you had to move out of that comfort zone, which would lead to a culture shock, even though it is your home culture.

R19's comments indicated that for her, cultural changes were first reflected in her reduced ability in her native language. Then these changes were demonstrated in her thinking. Her thinking of needing to "move out of the comfort zone" could mean that she had accepted the host country's culture and the language she used overseas had become her working language. The impetus for this change was her intention to be accepted by the host culture. To adapt to that culture, she needed to try hard to know the norms and values in the host country, including trying to improve her language ability. Her return to China, moving away from an English-thinking zone, exposed the change in her cultural values as well as the conflicts between these two cultures. To deal with this reverse culture shock, she said she had to read Chinese books to change her way of thinking back

to Chinese:

Then it is from the language and the way of thinking to [change myself]. You cannot say you are individualised [here]. I could express my opinions on something from my perspective before [coming back]. However, you find you cannot do that [after coming back]. You have to focus on collectivism here. In English you can say "I" but in the Chinese context, you say "We". You should bear this "We together" in mind....At the beginning, I was so opposed to this in my mind. Not everything was right for me. ... However, gradually I find I can accept this. I can try to change. Then you find it is not that bad.

R19's shift of thinking in terms of "we" and "I" precisely illustrates the two very different cultural values. "We" represents the collectivism characteristic of Chinese culture is, while "I" shows the individualism characteristic of Western cultural values. R19 found it hard to deal with the cultural differences between these two "mental programmes" when she first returned. Her later acceptance of the Chinese values showed that she had developed two different perspectives on these two cultures. She believed that her overseas experiences made her know "a different possibility. You can do this. You can do that. You can reach out to the world", showing that she could maintain two cultures at the same time. She no longer belonged to one culture; rather, she now belonged to two cultures.

R2 also believed that her overseas experiences gave her the ability to reach out to the world and made her more open and flexible in her thinking and ideas. Her overseas experiences influenced her ideas about life, including her personal worldviews. She found she had become more objective in her attitudes towards life and work. Most importantly, she believed that she could look at the world from more than one viewpoint and she did not belong to only one place:

From my point of view, going out and coming back, you have an objective attitude towards life. Everything, including the living environment, is not absolute. You will feel hmmm ... Your thinking is more flexible You don't necessarily stay in one place. Maybe I come back now and put what I have learned into where it is needed. Then tomorrow I may feel I want to improve myself, and then I go out again.

Thus, R2's overseas experiences enabled her to have more than one cultural identity and

she believed she belonged to *both* cultures. Like R19, she believed she had developed the ability to reach out to other cultures and other parts of the world. For both of these returnees, reaching out to other parts of the world itself implied their changed worldviews towards Chinese culture and the Western cultures. They had become more open-minded and their thinking was no longer restricted to one culture. They had become “multicultural persons”. For R2, this also showed in her attitude that she was “more capable to balance all problems in life”.

5.5.3.2 Changes in cultural attitudes

As illustrated above, knowing two cultures enabled some returnees to have an objective attitude towards Western and Chinese cultures. By going overseas and having contact with a different culture, they have the opportunities to compare these two cultures and reflect on their home culture, developing a positive attitude towards it. The following statements made by R4 give an insight into his views on Chinese culture:

Hmmm, cultural shock is there. It would not come out suddenly. It comes out when you meet problems. However, I think I can handle this well, because countries are different and we know what Chinese culture is like and what foreign cultures are like. Then, if we look at this with an objective attitude, it is easy to handle. . . There exist some problems that we really cannot understand [in our culture], such as the bureaucratic culture at my workplace . . . but because it exists, it has a reason to be there. . . Therefore, I think all those who come back from overseas should accept this. It is very important to look at this positively.

Understanding and accepting these differences between cultures meant a development of the returnees’ worldviews. R4 clearly found that understanding and accepting the Chinese values in the workplace was important and he believed that attitudes were critical in acceptance. R4 further explained:

The values in the Western countries are different from those in China. . . It is hard to change the natural and social environments by oneself. . . I cannot change them by myself. However, I can make more people be open to that through my effort. As a college teacher, I hope more students can pay more attention to our environment, and pay more attention to what kind of values we should have. [They should know]

what kind of dreams and aims they should have, and then try to work for our future.

R4's comments indicate that he not only noticed the differences between these two cultures, he also wanted to develop students' cultural values. For him, understanding and accepting were important, but even more important was that he wanted to do something about it.

For some returnees, their cultural changes were reflected in their attitudes towards the shortcomings of their home culture. They had become more objective and more open-minded when viewing their home culture. R16 believed that her views on China had become more open and less narrow-minded than before she went overseas. She now believed that although there were some problems in China, these problems were temporary because China was in an era of transformation. To her, Chinese people were diligent and they made the country develop so rapidly. She believed that her overseas experiences opened her vision and made her "jump outside the circle" to think a great deal. Thus, when she looked at China again, she was more understanding of the culture, rather than complaining about it. R19 had a different perspective. She believed that even though she could not do much to change Chinese society, at least she could change herself to be more accepting, saying, "Let all unreasonable things stop at me, and let all reasonable things start from me". R21 also believed that her overseas experiences had made her become more positive about life and work, stronger in facing all problems, misunderstandings with others or conflicts in her life. She believed that her overseas experiences had enabled her to become more rational regarding the conflicts between the two cultures and helped her understand the meaning of patriotism. Thus, for some returnees, their overseas experiences not only opened another world for them, but also let them be more open and receptive to different cultures, including their home culture.

5.5.3.3 Changed attitudes towards students

For some returnees, their changes in values also changed their attitudes towards the students they taught. They treated students more equally, respectfully and democratically. R14 explained how his perceptions towards his students had changed:

I think teachers coming back from overseas have a different relationship with students compared to domestically trained teachers. [They have] two different ways.

Most returnees are respectful to others, to their students. When I go into my classroom, I respect every student in my class. Whereas for some domestically trained teachers, they think that undergraduate students are not qualified to speak to them. Only PhD students can come to their office to talk to them. They think they are more superior to others. ... Their attitudes towards students and towards other people are quite different.

R14's comments highlight a number of issues. Foreign-educated returnees and domestically trained teachers have different perceptions regarding equality. Exposure to different cultures has shaped the returnees' values regarding others and they are more likely to have the values of equality. R14 believes that the value of equality is demonstrated in returnees' respect for others. His perception of the differences between returnees and domestically trained colleagues in terms of their attitudes towards students is based on his observation and personal experience of behaviour, practices in the classroom and self-reflection. Thus, his values are different from those of his non-returnee colleagues because of his overseas education. R14 also observed differences in attitudes towards people. He believed that Western cultures were more likely than the Chinese to focus on the humanities, but as a returnee, he felt a responsibility to spread this idea to his students, as he felt that respect for others and equal treatment for students are contained in the ideas of the humanity. This perception of how to treat people not only shaped his classroom practice but also his views on how the university should be managed:

[In the] Humanity in Western cultures, this philosophy is [different from that in Chinese cultures). ... If I were the head of the school, I would pay more attention to the issue of humanity to my staff and the students. For example, when I came back from the US, I have noticed that there are no lifts in our classroom building. No humanity consideration! How can disabled people go upstairs to study? How can such important thing be neglected? ... In terms of humanity and individual quality, in Western cultures, they focus on equality. Then in your teaching, you may influence your students. Your students will respect you. You are well educated. You are qualified. These may give the students important influences, or even further, influence their whole life.

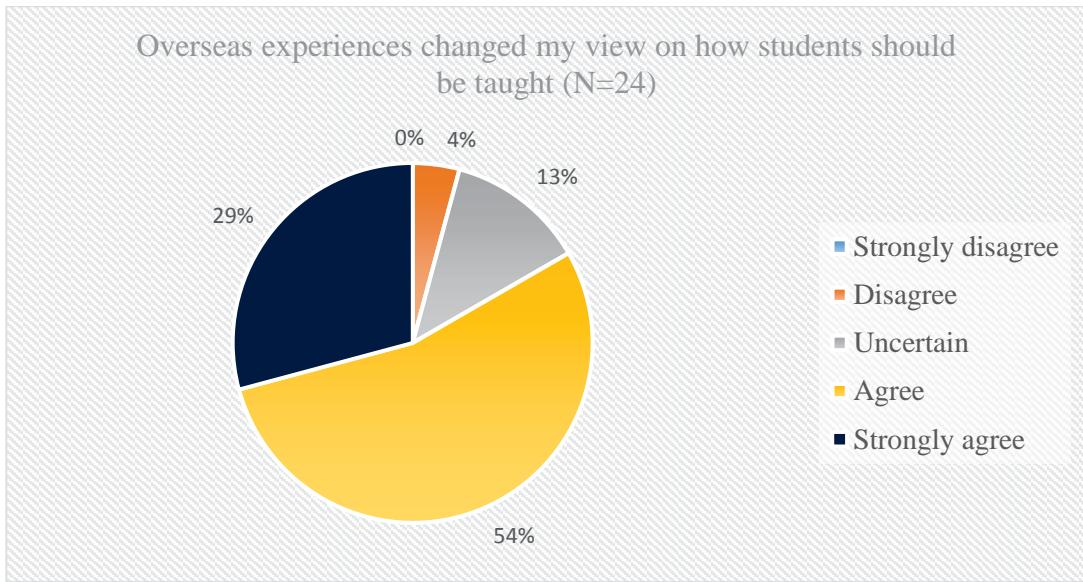
R18 also reflected on her attitude of equality towards students and explained how her

overseas experiences had influenced her to have a more equal attitude towards her students, which she believed allowed her to put herself at the same level with them:

Well, when I face the students, I am more likely to consider things that are beneficial to them. Because I experienced a lot alone overseas, I ... consider their feelings. The relationship with them is equal. I don't think because I am the teacher, so I should be the way of a teacher. This is related with one's experiences [overseas]. Furthermore, equality is advocated in foreign countries. I think it is the change of values. I look at everything from equal aspects to my students. We are like friends but still with some boundaries. I mean I ... consider their feelings, listen to their ideas and be more democratic.

R18's interpretation of her attitudes towards students are based on ideas of equality, but she also takes it a little further by considering students as friends, but with some boundaries. In her view, the teacher is not the absolute authority in classroom but is equal with the students and therefore should consider the students' feelings.

Other returnees reported different views of their changed attitudes towards students. R11 wanted to develop a cooperative relationship with the students she was supervising, as her own supervisor had done when she was studying her PhD overseas. R15 said that his overseas experiences had given him the "keys for teaching", allowing him to look at students from a different viewpoint. Consistent with the interview data, the questionnaire data indicated that most returnees had developed different values regarding students and the way they should be taught at universities. Figure 5-15 shows the attitude of returnees on this issue.

Figure 5-15 Returnees' views on the way students should be taught

This figure shows that 83% (N=20) of the interviewed returnees believed that their overseas experiences had changed their view on how students should be taught. They had developed different attitudes towards students and the way they should be treated. These changed teaching values reflected their changed attitudes. For some returnees, the relationship between teachers and students should not be hierarchical; rather, it should be more equal, as in Western countries. Thus, their experience of living within Western cultures had changed their personal values. When they returned to China, this influenced the way they treated their students.

5.5.3.4 Changed attitudes towards life

For some returnees, their overseas experiences had also changed the way they viewed life and dealt with relationships at work and in their families. They now held different attitudes towards life and work compared to their views before they went overseas. R2 explained how her overseas experiences had influenced her values:

For me, no matter whether it is a family or a career, I have a more objective attitude to balance these two things. I am not like what I used to be. I do not focus on work and neglect my family anymore. I used to go extremes. Now I am more able to balance all problems in my life.

This statement implies that in Western countries, people have different values in life,

regarding life as important as work. People do not sacrifice life for work. Under these cultural values, people consider that family is more important than work. R2's statement also implies that in Chinese culture, people sometimes think that work is more important than life and sacrifice their family for work.

R4 also believed that his overseas experiences had changed his views on life and work. He had not had any work experience before he went overseas, so he made his observations from a different standpoint:

What overseas study has influenced me for my career, I think, shows two aspects. One is the attitude towards work. It greatly helps me really know what work means to a person. Maybe for many students who study in China, work is all to them. However, for me, work maybe is just part of life. The country I went to is Sweden, which is a comfortable place. People there spend one-third of their time on work and two-thirds on life, whether it's about staying with their family or doing charity, or something they are interested in. They take all these as things that are more important. These [values of life] influenced me a lot.

The comments from both R2 and R4 indicate that the Chinese perception regarding work is quite different from that in Western countries, particularly with regard to family. When they returned to China, they brought these values into their everyday practices in their life and work. R9 had a different understanding of the way her overseas study had changed her views. She believed that her experiences had enabled her to develop a more positive attitude towards life and work and for her, holding a positive attitude towards life was important. This positive attitude helped her communicate with her colleagues. She also believed that her overseas experiences had made her more confident, which helped her do more of what she wanted to do in her work and life.

5.5.3.5 Summary of cultural re-adaptation experiences

This section has highlighted the many complexities and dynamics of cultural re-adaptation faced by returnees. The returnees' interviews and questionnaire surveys indicated that cultural change and the re-adaptation process were unique to each returnee, as they involved various dynamics as experienced and perceived individually. The responses of returnees made it clear that they had experienced a range of feelings in terms

of cultural changes and the re-adaptation process. For some, the different cultural values and the complex interpersonal relationships in China created difficulties and frustrations when re-adapting to the home culture. Some returnees reported positive changes, such as a flexible attitude and open-mindedness. Most returnees reported a change in their cultural values because of their overseas experiences. Some of them found that they had a sense of belonging to two cultures and they had become multicultural persons. Several returnees said that their overseas experiences had changed their attitudes towards students, attitudes of greater equality, as well as their values regarding life and work. Some returnees found that that their overseas experiences had enabled them to look at Chinese and Western cultures more objectively.

The accounts of the participants indicated that in their homecoming process, each person invariably went through a period of readjustment and re-adaptation. For some returnees, the process was slow and for others, the process was fast. Some measures were used to manage the process of cultural re-adaptation, such as communicating with colleagues and friends or readjusting their own thinking. Many of them needed to readjust their attitudes towards the return process and accept their new reality. No matter what re-adaptation measures they had used and what attitudes they held regarding their returning experiences, the returnees' accounts indicated that their overseas experiences had changed their cultural values and they had to face cultural re-adaptation and readjustment when they returned to China. The data show that returnees must decide whether or not to accept the norms and values in China and that their concepts and attitudes were very important in this process. For some returnees, failing to modify their behaviour to fit back into Chinese culture could result in their failing to re-adapt.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview of the chapter

The changes that have taken place in the Chinese economy and Chinese higher education have provided opportunities for foreign-educated Chinese students to return home and put their knowledge to use in the Chinese tertiary setting. The overseas experience of these returnees becomes a major reason for Chinese universities to recruit them. Both the Chinese universities and the returnees hold similar expectations with regard to utilising their knowledge in the development of Chinese higher education and this study has found some positive elements related to their overseas education. However, it also found that it is not always easy for returnees to return to Chinese higher education to pursue their career development. The organisational culture and academic environment of Chinese universities and the changes within the returnees themselves can all make returnees' re-entry experiences more difficult.

This chapter discusses the returnees' experiences of re-adaptation to Chinese higher education, both positive and negative, from the perspectives of structuration theory and cultural identity change theory. It argues that as social systems, the structures of the universities reproduced over time and space constrain the returnees' strengths in the Chinese academic sector. Furthermore, the cultural change that returnees experienced while overseas meant that the returning journey was not as easy as returnees expected and they had to re-evaluate and readjust themselves when facing the Chinese culture, as well as the organisational culture.

Section 6.2 focuses on the returnees' reasons for coming home and the positive aspects of their experiences. Section 6.3 uses the perspective of structuration theory to discuss the way the universities' organisational structure appeared to constrain the returnees' social and cultural capital and explains why returnees had little influence on these universities. Section 6.4 discusses how overseas cultural contact changed the returnees' cultural identity and led to their reverse culture shock, from the perspective of cultural identity theory. Section 6.5 explores the implications of this study's findings and suggests recommendations for dealing with these issues, for both the Chinese academic institutions and the foreign-educated Chinese students. Section 6.6 offers a summary of this chapter.

6.2 Reasons for returning and positive aspects of returnees' experiences

This study found that the main factors for returnees deciding to return to their home country were family considerations, career development opportunities, and seeking cultural belonging. This was in agreement with previous studies that indicated that personal development, including more chances to pursue their dreams in China, better career potential and higher social status were important reasons for returning home, with personal values being the major “pull” factor (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; Gill, 2010). Previous studies also found that family members’ attitudes (e.g., parents and spouses) were important factors, as well as wanting their children to be educated in the Chinese culture and linking themselves back into the Chinese culture (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; Gill, 2010; Gross & Connor, 2007; Wadhwa et al., 2011).

As most of the returnees were the only child in their family, choosing to return and take care of their parents was a major factor for the majority of returnees (see Section 5.2.1). In addition, the current study also found that the changes in the economic situation of Western countries and the fast development of China’s economy meant that returnees believed there were more opportunities for personal development back in China (see Section 5.2.2). The differences between the Chinese and host countries’ cultures, and the returnees’ need for cultural belonging and links, were another consideration for returnees to return (see Section 5.2.3).

This current study identified several positive aspects regarding returnees’ contributions to Chinese universities. The study found that returnees were regarded as people who held new knowledge, new concepts and new teaching and research methods that they had acquired in their years of study in Western countries. They were said to stand at the frontline of the development of science and technology in the world. They knew what was happening in Western countries and they had access to the newest research results and more advanced research methods. They were said to have the ability to update universities’ teaching and research standards and the ability to look at issues from different and globalised perspectives (see Section 4.3.2). These findings were in line with the literature that saw returnees as an important force that could make changes within Chinese higher education (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; C. Li, 2005a; C. Li & Xu, 2004;

D. Zweig et al., 2004). Previous studies have found that returnees had the ability to lift the research benchmarks and could improve the teaching capabilities in Chinese universities (C. Chen & Yan, 2000b; C. Li, 2005a), and their social and cultural capital of new ideas, technologies and information were valued in China (Rosen & Zweig, 2005; D. Zweig et al., 2004). The current study agreed with these earlier studies and argues that these characteristics make returnees different from their non-returnee colleagues. This study has also contributed to the literature about foreign-educated returnees' overseas education background being the main reason for universities to recruit them, seeing them as the potential force that could internationalise Chinese universities and integrate them into the world academic community (C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; C. Li, 2005a; C. Li & Xu, 2004; M. Yang & Tan, 2007; D. Zweig et al., 2004). This view is consistent with the Chinese government's attempt to attract overseas-educated Chinese students to come back to serve the country (Cao, 2008; C. Li, 2004b; Nawab & Shafi, 2011; Rosen & Zweig, 2005; Zhao & Zhu, 2009).

However, this current study found that the universities' recruiting policies were not an important factor in returnees' deciding to return to work at these universities. Rather, the majorities of returnees decided to return for the other reasons mentioned above. The recruiting policies of Chinese universities had changed in recent years and were now mainly focused on recruiting top overseas Chinese scholars (see Section 4.2). The current study found that though the universities and Chinese government have launched series of programmes to attract foreign-educated Chinese students to return to serve the country, the returnees were not attracted by these programmes. In this case, recruiting policies were not as important as other factors such as economy, personal considerations and cultural links.

Considering these findings and the literature, this study argues that when Chinese universities attempt to recruit returnees, they need to keep in mind the main factors that influence the returnees' decision to come home and what role they expect returnees to take in their universities. Providing specific support and considering returnees' emotional needs are more necessary than launching recruitment programmes. This would improve the returnees' reentry experiences as well as their role and contributions to the universities. This issue is discussed further in the following sections.

6.3 Elites with privileges?

This study found that returnees had difficulties in re-adapting back into the academic environment of Chinese universities, agreeing with other studies that have found that what is perceived to be bureaucratic management and Chinese universities' academic culture and environment were the most critical influences on returnees' re-entry experiences (Cao, 2008; C. Chen, 2011; C. Chen & Yan, 2000a, 2000b; Feng & Feng, 2009; Y. He, 2009; Shi & Rao, 2010; Shore, 2008; Wheeler, 2012; Xu, 2009; Yi, 2011). The gap between the expectations of the universities and those of the returnees, in terms of their role in these universities, made it hard for returnees to re-adapt to Chinese academic and sociocultural life. This current study has identified some negative aspects regarding the returnees' role and contribution to the universities as well as a number of challenges that were faced by returnees when they returned to Chinese universities.

One of the important themes that emerged in this study was the view of administrators and non-returnee colleagues who said returnees were *bujiediqi* (not understanding Chinese academic culture) or *shuitubufu* (not able to adapt to the Chinese sociocultural and academic environment). Returnees also expressed their own disappointment and confusion, often reporting feeling stressed and uncomfortable in the academic environment of Chinese universities. The main factors that affected the returnees' academic reentry experiences were what they thought to be lack of domestic interpersonal relationship networks, not understanding the local ways of doing research, such as the *guanxi* network, and the different academic environment, such as the different assessment system for teaching and research which they suggested focuses on quantity instead of quality and the bureaucratisation of Chinese higher education.

The findings indicated that even though returnees were regarded as persons who stood at the frontline of the world development and carried with them new knowledge and new technologies, they appeared to have little influence on universities' management and on changing the academic environment. They felt they had limited influence in updating the universities' research and teaching standards, meaning their strengths in teaching and doing research at these universities could not be maximised. Returnees felt they had little input into course development and course offerings, nor could they change the pedagogy at these universities. However in some instances they reported introducing

some new teaching elements in their classroom teaching, such as discussion, presentation and group collaborative study. Thus, instead of being an advantage, for some returnees their overseas education became a disadvantage because they thought it created a career development gap in their academic life back in China.

The findings of this current study challenged the view from some commentators that returnees were regarded as elites and had privileges at their universities. Most of the returnees in this study reported as being regarded as equal with domestically trained non-returnees colleagues. The returnees in the current study did not benefit more than their non-returnee colleagues and they were regarded as not being necessarily better than local colleagues in teaching and research output because they did not know the Chinese academic sector well. The current study also challenges those findings in the literature that suggest that returnees are automatically drawn into the established political order. It disagrees with previous findings that many returnees aspire to acquire the cadre positions in order to have the power to appropriate public resources of all kinds, which in turn can move them to a position of higher power and more prestige (Nonini, 2008). In the current study, what was perceived as a bureaucratised university structure and lack of local interpersonal network made it hard for some returnees to get access to local resources, let alone to acquire power to move them to a position of higher power and more prestige. In some cases, returnees reported that they had to try to keep a low profile to avoid causing jealousy in non-returnee colleagues. There were disparities between the views of the universities and the returnees regarding returnees' contributions to the universities. Returnees expressed their concerns and disappointment with their universities' academic and institutional management and bureaucratic culture, while the universities were disappointed with the returnees' contributions to upgrading their universities' research and teaching standards. Due to the increasing number of returnees and the changing situation, all the universities had changed their recruiting criteria with regard to foreign-educated returnees, with the current recruitment requirements being much higher than in the past. The academic environment and management system of Chinese higher education meant returnees stated that they had difficulty in re-adapting and had challenges in transferring their new knowledge that they had learned overseas to Chinese higher education. Thus, the organisational environment was reported as constraining the returnees' roles in Chinese higher education and their social and cultural capital could not be fully utilised. The already existing network circle and what was

perceived as the vertical management system of Chinese universities' hierarchy meant returnees felt they had had little influence in these universities. The current study is in line with previous studies that the governing regime and organisational culture of Chinese universities have blocked rather than facilitated the formulation of a communication-oriented academic community in China and thus undermines the expected role of returnees. Although the current study found that most returnees and non-returnee colleagues were satisfied with their relationship with one another, but none of the interviewed non-returnees colleagues reported they had worked in collaboration with foreign educated returnees in teaching and research.

What interviewees were reporting may be explored with Giddens' structuration theory (see Section 3.1.1), in which structure is described as the instantiated sets of rules and resources, reproduced out of time and space (Giddens, 1984). During social interaction, structure is exhibited in social systems; that is, these rules and resources have been structured out of time and space and are "marked by an absence of the subject" (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Giddens identifies three structural dimensions to analysing the duality of structure: signification, domination, and legitimization. Rules of signification and legitimization of structure tell the agents what is allowed in the organisation and how the agents should do things according to the rules. Domination of structure tells the agents who is in charge in the organisation, with reference to the distribution of power in the system, the controlling of material resources (allocative resources) and the controlling over persons (authoritative resources) (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Giddens argues that these three dimensions of structure (signification, domination, and legitimization) are connected to form the pervasive influence of power in social life.

At the Chinese universities in this study, the rules had been structured "through time and space" without the presence of the returnees. Whether these rules were tacit or openly stated, the returnees had to behave according to these rules. These rules constrained their actions at these universities. It was difficult for them to change the structured rules of the universities. Thus, when facing these rules, returnees felt it was hard for them to have any influence on the academic environment of the universities or their management and they could make few changes to the universities' teaching and research.

One aspect of Giddens' structuration theory is the role of agents. Social systems are produced and reproduced by agents who draw upon these rules during social interactions.

However, as agents, they need to have agency; that is, to be able to “deploy a range of causal power to make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Agents cease to be such if they lose the capability to act or to “exercise some sort of power” (p. 14). In this study, one of the emerging themes regarding returnees’ re-entry experiences was the “lack of domestic interpersonal networks” and “having difficulties getting access to research resources”. This meant that as agents to make any difference to the pre-existing state of these universities, the returnees thought they lacked “power” over persons or resources. The universities’ main goal in recruiting returnees was for them to bring new elements and change the research and teaching environments at the universities, making a difference to the existing situation at the universities. However, the pre-existing structure of the universities was perceived as constraining the returnees’ actions, thus limiting their ability to apply what they had learned in foreign countries to Chinese higher education.

Another concept in structuration theory is the duality of structuration. During the process of structuration, human actions both produce and are mediated by structures (Giddens, 1984). It is through the duality characteristic of structuration that social systems both enable and constrain agents’ actions, meaning that social systems are both maintained and reproduced by human individuals. However, in the structuration process of the social systems at the universities in this study, the process was thought to operate only in one direction, rather than a duality. Instead of empowering returnees during their interactions within these universities, the universities’ systems constrained their actions. Therefore, returnees felt they lacked the power to reproduce social systems.

It is not surprising that returnees had difficulties in knowledge localisation and had little influence on the universities’ academic environment and institutional management. As the academic environment and the management concepts had come into being during a period when returnees were absent, it was hard for returnees to be *fushuitu* (to adapt well to the local culture); therefore, being *shuitubufu* (unable to adapt) was inevitable. Not being able to understand the rules limited their actions and made them *bujiediqi* (unable to act according to the rules). On the other hand, universities also felt disappointed at the returnees’ performance because of their inability to make a difference. At this point, neither the universities nor the returnees were fully satisfied with each other in this situation. Thus, returnees were not treated as elites and nor did they have privileges of

the kind they may have hoped for. In the current study, rather, most of the returnees felt they were regarded as ordinary returnees and they regarded themselves as being treated in the same way as their non-returnee colleagues. It seems that the organisational culture and the academic environment of the universities were perceived in the study as undermining returnees' social and cultural capital, thus *bujiediqi* and *shuitubufu* were not a surprise for both returnees and the universities that recruited them.

6.4 Cultural identity change in returnees

Prior studies have found that the sociocultural context in the host country can change an individual's cultural identity and reverse cultural shock is unavoidable when they return to the home country (Adler, 1981; Sussman, 2000, 2011; M. M. Wang, 1997; Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010; Zapf, 1991). This current study provided further support for the idea that Chinese returnees had undergone cultural identity changes while overseas and experienced the need for (or pressures for) cultural re-adaptation and readjustment when they returned to their home country's sociocultural context. These cultural changes were suggested by their way of communicating with others in their work place and social life, including getting along with their colleagues, students, and friends. Some returnees had difficulties understanding Chinese norms and values when communicating with other colleagues and social associates. They sometimes felt confused and frustrated when interacting with people from their once familiar culture, such as dealing with the indirect way of Chinese people when talking to others and what they now perceived as the complicated interpersonal relationships between people.

Culture is known to have a primary role in shaping people's knowledge, behaviour, psychology and social relationships (Neuliep, 2015). Culture not only refines people's activities, but also the ordinary, everyday things in people's lives, such as greeting others, eating, and showing feelings (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). Chinese culture is shown in people's daily life and is embedded within their social interactions (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010). In the Chinese culture, the *guanxi* phenomenon involves being indirect when talking to others and being moderate when facing people in a superior position, reflecting the Confucian ideas of harmony and hierarchy (Buttery & Leung, 1998; Sussman, 2011). These ways of dealing with others represent the Chinese cultural norms and values, which are very different from those of Western countries (Buttery & Leung, 1998; G. H.

Hofstede et al., 2010; Sussman, 2011). Chinese culture is also described as having the characteristics of collectivism and high power distance, which contrast with the individualism and low power distance of typical Western countries. The former stress the interest of the group and accept inequality between people as part of the hierarchical levels of the Chinese social structure, whereas the latter focus on individuals' interest and believes that inequality is not normal and fair (G. H. Hofstede et al., 2010).

The returnees' confusion and frustration with regard to dealing with other people from their own culture indicated changes in their cultural identity and the conflict between different cultures. As returnees came back with the newly acquired cultural norms and values from their host countries, it is no wonder that they found their behaviours and thinking did not fit into the home culture and they had to readjust themselves again. According to Sussman (2000), when individuals are immersed in a new social environment, where behaviours and thinking are different from their own cultural context, individuals begin to be aware of the profound influence of their own culture on their behaviours. Realising that their set of cultural cognitions and behaviours are no longer appropriate within the new cultural context, individuals may modify their behaviours to fit into the new culture. As a result of this adjustment or adaptation, the individuals encounter some disturbance in their self-concept during repatriation and their cultural identity changes become salient when individuals return back and face their home culture again. The individual has to modify their behaviour and thinking once again, to fit into the home culture. The returnees in this current study realised that their thinking and behaviours were different from others in their home culture, saying that the way of relating with others in the Chinese culture was "complicated" and "indirect". These "complicated" and "indirect" ways of interacting with others are common norms of Chinese cultures; but not the cultural norms of the Western way. For these returnees, when they came back to their home culture context which has the characteristics of collectivism and high power distance, they were still bearing some Western cultural values with them. When they evaluated their personal values and behaviours in the prevailing cultural norm in their home country, they found that their newly formed cultural identity included thinking and behaviours that did not fit in any more. They had to change their thinking norm from "I" to "we". They had to put the groups' interest before their own interest. When facing the complicated interpersonal relationship between individuals, especially the relationship between superior and subordinate, the

Western values they acquired overseas made them feel stressed and confused. That is why most returnees reported having difficulties re-adapting to the Chinese organisational and sociocultural culture. This meant that cultural clashes during re-entry life were inevitable for some returnees.

This feeling of “not fitting in” reflects what Sussman (2000, p. 365) calls the “subtractive and additive” cultural identities of individuals. Sussman explains that during cultural contact, there are four kinds of cultural identity shifts: subtractive and additive cultural identity change, and affirmative and intercultural identity shifts. With affirmative cultural identity change, the sojourners’ home cultural identity is maintained and strengthened and returning home may be a welcome relief; with intercultural identity shifts, repatriates experience a sense of being world citizens who can interact appropriately and effectively in many countries or regions, or they feel they belong to both cultures. Previous literature has reported these changed identity features among Chinese returnees when they return to the Chinese cultural context (Gill, 2010; Ip, 2006).

This current study is in line with the findings that returnees developed a more objective attitude towards both the Chinese culture and the Western culture. Some returnees reported that they missed their overseas life, particularly the simple relationship between individuals, the relatively direct way of communicating with others, and the much simpler lifestyle there. They experienced stress and uncomfortable interpersonal relations with some colleagues and people from the management level after their return home. However, the study also showed that some returnees had become more open-minded about the Chinese culture. They perceived the differences between Chinese and the Western cultures, and they accepted their home cultural norms and patterns with a more open attitude. These returnees had a more stable and unambiguous cultural identity throughout their transition cycle, thus experiencing a low level of repatriation distress in their re-entry experiences. Some of this study’s returnees reported that they had developed the ability to reach out to the world and no longer belonged to just one place or one culture. They believed they had developed multicultural views because of the international cultural contact, which allowed them to know different possibilities about themselves and the world. In these instances returnees considered themselves now as “world citizens”.

6.5 Implications of this study

Based on the discussions presented above, there are several implications of this study for Chinese universities (discussed in Section 5.5.1) and foreign-educated returnees (discussed in Section 5.5.2).

6.5.1 Implications for Chinese universities

First, this study indicates that Chinese universities need to keep reassessing their concepts regarding recruiting returnees. The aims of the universities in recruiting foreign-educated talent are to help upgrade the teaching and research standards of Chinese universities, as well as to help the universities to become globalised. However, this study has shown that the recruitment policies, academic environment, the organisational culture of the universities, and bureaucratic management of Chinese universities are major factors that influence returnees' re-entry experiences. They also contribute to the main obstacles that prevent returnees from applying their knowledge in the home universities. All these factors, combined with some Chinese sociocultural characteristics that have already been described, made returnees' re-adaptation journey full of challenges that were perceived as undermining their social and cultural capital. This implies that Chinese universities need to refresh their thinking on how to utilise the cultural and social capital of returnees, as discussed in the next sections.

6.5.1.1 Improve service for returnees

Universities should improve their service for returnees when they come back to the universities. Clear guidelines and regulations should be laid down to support and help returnees successfully re-adapt to their re-entry work and life. Many returnees report feeling stressed when encountering their universities' administrative systems, which prevent them from smoothly re-adapting back to the Chinese higher education system. The returnees interviewed for this study were not satisfied with the support they had from their universities. They had new ideas and concepts and were potential agents to help universities integrate into the world academic community, in terms of updating universities' research and teaching standards, which was one of the main reasons that the universities had recruited them. Thus, providing sufficient support and help from

universities is not only necessary, but also essential to help reduce returnees' difficulties in re-adaptation life. The universities needed to support returnees to fit into the academic life there and thus allow them to make full use of their overseas education experiences. Recruitment policies are just the first stage of attracting returnees to return to work for Chinese universities. Establishing a considerate and helpful, supportive management system would help returnees to re-adapt to their Chinese academic life.

6.5.1.2 Build a healthy organisational environment

Creating a healthy organisational environment in Chinese universities would enable returnees to better utilise their talents and cultural capital for the universities' benefit. This could include having different performance assessment requirements for both returnees and non-returnees. This study found that the current system of research performance assessment, focusing on *quantity* of output instead of *quality*, had hindered returnees' professional development at these universities and both the universities and the returnees had not been satisfied with each other in terms of returnees' performance appraisal. The result of this assessment system is a profit-oriented research ideology that has damaged how interviewees perceive the ethics of doing research in Chinese universities. Thus, Chinese universities could explore possibilities for instituting an assessment system that is better suited to the needs of returnees to guide the research and teaching. Also, in an academic environment that is perceived to be healthier, research would not be connected with bureaucratic power. Returnees would argue that de-bureaucratisation (qxixingzhenghua) of the Chinese universities would support the goal of Chinese universities integrating more fully into the world academic community.

This study found that what was seen as bureaucratic management added extra stress and difficulties for returnees as they re-adapted to their universities, limiting their ability to influence and update the teaching and research standards of the universities. It also reduced their ability to help the universities to become internationalised.

6.5.1.3 Create a collaborative research environment

A collaborative research environment is also required for returnees to fully utilise their social and cultural capital back in their home universities. This study found that the majority of returnees were not satisfied with the academic environment, which is largely

formed and reinforced by Chinese-educated teams of academics. Many returnees said they were unable to integrate into the academic communities of Chinese higher education because they lacked the local interpersonal networks and had minimal access to research resources. This not only hindered their contributions to the universities but also prevented them from communicating with local colleagues. Returnees felt they had cultural difficulties in adjusting to the existing system and organisational structure. Thus, universities will benefit if they are able to build a collaborative culture between returnees and non-returnees, to maximise the advantages for both parties: that is, the returnees' new knowledge, research methods, and good command of foreign languages as well as the non-returnee's familiarity with the academic culture and local interpersonal networks. This collaborative culture would enable returnees and non-returnees to share and develop their expertise together and to promote their professional growth. The data in this study indicated that some returnees demonstrated their desire to build their research teams, but their lack of understanding of the Chinese higher education system made it hard for them to do this in the Chinese university context. For the universities, the primary aims were finding ways to maximise the foreign-educated returnees' strengths and to reduce their weaknesses. Therefore, establishing a collaborative culture may help reduce the disadvantages of returnees and promote mutual benefits.

6.5.2 Implications for returnees

This study found that for returnees, facing academic and cultural challenges was unavoidable once they had decided to return. No matter what their reason for returning, the process was not as good as most returnees expected. Thus, keeping reasonable expectations and positive attitudes towards Chinese academic and social culture was effective in managing the issues caused in the re-adaptation process. However, a number of effective strategies were adopted by some of the returnees who were interviewed for this study, as described below.

6.5.2.1 Appropriate cognitive expectations

Cognitive preparation was a very important aspect of returnees' preparations for coming home. No matter what the returnees thought of the academic and social culture of the home country, its norms, cues, and practices were embedded in people's everyday life

and work. Returnees need to modify their thinking and behaviour as quickly as possible, to readjust themselves to fit into the life and work. Expecting to return to an unchanged home as an unchanged individual would cause unexpected difficulties and challenges (Gaw, 2000). Therefore, anticipating the differences between the cultures was helpful in minimising the effects of reverse culture shock. The returnees in this study who kept thinking about their overseas life encountered more difficulties because they still carried the norms and cultural values of the host countries, which hindered their readjustment process and led to more stress and confusion when facing the home culture.

However, this does not mean that returnees should completely drop their newly acquired cultural identity. It is impossible to drop the newly acquired cultural identity because cultural identity change seems inevitable after cultural contact (Sussman, 2000). Rather, they need to keep an open mind about both the home culture and the Western culture. The data in the study showed that those who had objective views regarding the differences between the two cultures and those who had developed multicultural views coped better with cultural issues in the re-adapting process.

6.5.2.2 Communication

This study's findings showed that communicating with colleagues and friends such as talking with colleagues about work and inviting friends and colleagues for casual get-together is an effective way to deal with workplace cultural and sociocultural issues. Communicating with colleagues and friends allows returnees to become familiar with the cues and norms of the home culture and to fit into the home culture as soon as possible. It also helps returnees to establish interpersonal relationships with colleagues and friends and reduce the gap between returnees and non-returnees. This study showed that misunderstandings between returnees and non-returnees because of different understandings regarding cultural stances and norms could result in stress and broken relationships in the workplace. Thus, communicating with colleagues and friends may be a good tactic for returnees to adopt in their re-entry process.

6.5.2.3 Collaborative work

This study indicated that although returnees were regarded as agents of new ideas and concepts, their lack of domestic interpersonal networks and resources was a critical factor

in their re-adaptation. Returnees need to actively establish research teams that include both returnees and non-returnee colleagues. In collaborative work teams, returnees and non-returnees can complement each other, maximising the strengths of both parties. The data in the study imply that some returnees found this strategy was helpful to exert their knowledge learned overseas, and at the same time, to build effective interpersonal relationship with non-returnees and other returnees. It is suggested that similar strategies are used for returnees and potential returnees who might come back to their home country in the future.

6.6 Summary of this chapter

In summary, by using structuration theory and cultural identity change theory, this chapter has discussed the academic and social cultural challenges faced by returnees. It has been argued that universities are social systems, which are reproduced and transformed across time and space through the actions of individual participants. These social systems potentially constrain returnees' academic and social interactions when they come back to the home university context. For returnees, lack of allocative and authoritative resources, including domestic interpersonal networks and research resources, reduces their influence at these universities.

In addition, reverse cultural shock seems inevitable for returnees because of their cultural contact and cultural identity change. They felt confused and sometimes lost when facing their home culture again. They initially had to modify their behaviour to fit into the host cultures and when they returned home, their cultural identity needed to change again. The four possible cultural identity changes (subtractive, additive, affirmative, and intercultural) led to different re-adaptation experiences of returnees.

Based on the discussions of the findings, this chapter has also provided recommendations for both universities and returnees. It is suggested that both universities and returnees should try to take measures to maximise the returnees' strengths and advantages after they return. Universities could establish a healthy academic environment for returnees and returnees could hold objective expectations and attitudes with regard to their return.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Overview of the chapter

Li (2005b) has pointed out that “China’s study-abroad movements have always been catalytic forces for educational reform, cultural transformation, and social-political changes in the country” (p. 69). Foreign-educated Chinese returnees have made a special contribution to this interaction and communication with Western world. As a result of all the changes, China’s modern higher education system is now a direct result and product of this contact with the outside world — both West and East — which has made deep imprints in the Chinese system (Guo, 1998). China’s education system is now a mixture of selective borrowing from British, American, Russian, Japanese and French models, with Chinese characteristics (Guo, 1998).

As already explained in Section 1.3, the first Chinese foreign-educated returned student, Rong Wong (Yung Wing), initiated the study-abroad movement in China during the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) and in 1872, the Qing Dynasty “made the milestone decision” (C. Li, 2005b, p. 71) to send 30 school-aged students to study in the US (see Section 1.2). Since then, generations of foreign-educated Chinese returnees have played a critical role in the shaping of modern Chinese history. The most recent generation of foreign-educated returnees (1978–present) has become the driving force of the new economy and they are key players in China’s high-tech industries and education, and shapers of Chinese politics and international relations (H. Wang, Zhang, et al., 2011) (see Section 1.2). They have become leaders in science and technology, telecommunications, information technology, bio-pharmacy, economics, sociology, political science, demography and international studies. They have introduced modern management methods and advanced technology to China and have emerged as promoters of international integration (M. Yang & Tan, 2007). Their prestigious overseas qualifications, cultural capital, multicultural and multilingual skills, and their international experiences, which are not easily acquired by other Chinese, are highly prized and sought after by the government as well as the education and private sectors (Yang & Tan, 2007). As “movers and shakers in the political, economic and social domains”, they are shaping China’s future (M. Yang & Tan, 2007, p. 207).

However, in the 1980s, like other developing countries, China had to face the serious problem of a “brain drain”. In order to change China’s “brain drain” into a “brain gain”,

the Chinese government adopted various measures to attract its foreign-educated students and scholars to come back to the motherland to serve the country (see Section 1.2). China's leaders are aware of the importance of this "brain gain" and it is a significant element in the national strategy of "building the country through science and education" (Nawab & Shafi, 2011, p. 73). The dynamics of social change and the trend towards globalisation in education and the economy make China's leaders realise that the national education needs to recruit foreign-educated returnees (*haigui*). Chinese social needs, the public will and government imperatives enable foreign-educated students and scholars to participate in China's development and modernisation. Among this, the higher education is the sector in China that is most strongly influenced by returnees (C. Li, 2005a). With the development of the Chinese economy and the government's efforts to attract China's overseas-educated talents back from foreign countries, the number of returning Chinese (*haigui*) is increasing rapidly. However, as the number of returnees working in the higher education sector has increased, problems concerning their life and work have appeared, due to China's unique social and academic context (C. Li, 2005a) (see Section 1.5). There is a misperception that those who were born in China and later received foreign higher education would not anticipate any problems in cultural adaptation and re-integration when they return to work in the Chinese socio-cultural contexts because of the perceived cultural closeness (Selmer, 2002; Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Such a misperception fails to recognise that culture plays a primary role in shaping people's knowledge, behaviour, psychology and social relationships (Neuliep, 2015). These returnees bring with them technological knowledge and expertise. What they have acquired from foreign countries is heavily embedded in their values, beliefs and expectations which were formed, shaped and consolidated during their stay in the host countries. Cultural clashes are inevitable in the process of knowledge sharing and transfer from one cultural context to another. Lots of emerging evidence shows that overseas Chinese expatriates may experience special difficulties when they return to China (Selmer & Shiu, 1999) (see Section 1.5).

There is much literature on returnees' significant contribution to the development and transformation of China and their introduction of Western ideology, science and technology to this country. There is still some other literature on returnees' level of satisfaction, job employment issues, and their impact and influences on Chinese economy, education, politics and military. However, some other important issues are under-

researched, such as foreign-educated scholars' cultural identity change, Chinese returnees' reverse cultural shock, role conceptualisation and perceptions, the effects of organisational culture on returnees, cultural compatibility and organisational fit. It is also important to find out how socio-cultural challenges are resolved and how returnees' cultural adaptation and reintegration is managed (see Section 1.5). This study aimed to investigate these issues from cross-cultural perspectives. It attempted to study the reentry experience of returnees at Chinese universities in Yunnan Province, China (see Section 1.5). It has investigated the academic and bureaucratic challenges these returnees experienced in their home country's academic communities, the socio-cultural re-adaptation they encountered during their return process and the attitudes that these non-returnees and administrators had towards returnees regarding their role in and contributions to the universities (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). By presenting the voices of 24 returnees, 11 non-returnees and nine administrators, this study has offered a multi-dimensional picture of these returnees' experiences of work and life back in Chinese universities. The findings of this study may assist both overseas students and Chinese universities to understand the factors that affected the returnees' experiences and how these experiences were influenced by the participants' academic life in their universities. The following three research questions were central to this study (see Section 1.6):

1. What are the overall experiences of foreign-educated returnees as they re-adapt to their home country's universities in Yunnan Province, China?
2. How do returnees manage the process of re-adaptation into their universities?
3. How do non-returnees and administrators view foreign-educated returnees' role in and contribution to the universities?

In order to answer these questions, a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research method was used for this study. The qualitative method was applied as the major method and quantitative method being the support role (see Section 3.2.2.5). Between October 2013 and February 2014, all the participants mentioned above were interviewed after they had answered some general survey questions on the topic of the returnees' re-adaptation process (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4). Systematic analysis and thematic analysis methods were adopted in the data analysis process. Data from both the qualitative and quantitative methods were compared and merged during the data analysis (see Section 3.5).

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of this study, outlining the major findings (see Section 7.2) and identifying the contributions and implications of these findings (see Section 7.3). The limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are discussed in Section 7.4.

7.2 Major findings of this research

The findings from this study have shown that three main factors influenced the returnees' decisions to come home: family connections, career and cultural considerations (see Section 4.2). For most returnees, family considerations were a persuasive reason to return, particularly to be reunited with parents or other family members, such as husband, wife or their young child(ren). The sense of family belonging was important for returnees, especially for those who were the only child in their family. Many returnees chose to come back to their home country to stay close to their parents, thus to take care of them. The findings also indicated that career considerations were a major factor that drew returnees back home, because of increasing job opportunities in China and the stagnated development of Western countries. Many countries such as the US and some European countries (e.g., the UK) had changed their immigration policies due to employment issues and many returnees expected to find more professional opportunities back in China. Cultural differences between China and the foreign countries were another significant factor, with the sense of cultural belonging and their emotional links to the Chinese culture attracting many returnees to come back home. The data showed that it had not been easy for some of them to fit into their host country's culture.

This study found that although different universities had a range of different expectations regarding returnees, they all wanted to use the returnees' knowledge and globalised vision that they acquired overseas. The universities expected returnees to facilitate the internationalisation of the universities and to use their new knowledge and ideas to update the research and teaching quality of the universities (see Section 4.2). Thus, most universities had recruitment policies to attract returnees back to work for them. And most returnees could be provided with some preferential treatment, such as settlement support funding, research funding, housing or housing subsidies and even employment arrangements for their spouses if their spouses' qualifications met the universities' requirements. However, different universities set various requirements for returnees, to

meet their own development purposes. The preferential treatment for these returnees were different at different universities. Different universities provided different levels of settlement support funding, research funding and housing subsidies. All the universities aimed to recruit top-talented returnees, to enhance their reputation, but more recently, as the number of returnees has been growing dramatically, most universities have set up higher recruitment requirements and tended to treat the “ordinary” returnees the same as the domestically trained graduates, compared to years ago.

Although the social and cultural capital of returnees was accepted and recognised by these Chinese universities, the data indicated that returnees encountered challenges when they returned to work in the universities, both academically and culturally. The role of returnees in Chinese higher education was not always positive and their experience of reentry into Chinese higher education was not as smooth as they would expect. This study has provided empirical evidence that returnees had to face a variety of difficulties and challenges when they came back to Chinese universities. Re-adaptation was not as easy as they had expected. Returnees were said to be *bujiediqi* (not able to understand the Chinese universities) and *shuitubufu* (not able to adapt well in Chinese academic communities). Data from the interviews and questionnaire surveys indicated that the returnees experienced difficulties and challenges in readjusting to the Chinese universities’ academic environment and institutional system, and to the Chinese social culture (see Section 5.3 and 5.4). Lack of domestic interpersonal networks (*guanxi*) made returnees feel isolated from the domestic academic circle. They experienced difficulties in applying for research funding and being unable to access local resources affected their research performance (see Section 5.3.1). The academic environment of Chinese universities made it hard for most returnees to transfer their knowledge to their home universities and they had little influence on changing universities’ academic environment. Although they had new ideas, new perspectives, and new teaching and research methods, they could not necessarily apply them in the universities because they were not familiar enough with the rules in Chinese higher education and their new knowledge was not always well received. Further, what they had learned overseas and wanted to apply in Chinese universities might not be compatible with the needs of the local education system (see Section 5.3.2). The study found that returnees had to face a range of challenges in conducting research in their domestic universities. Because the auditing system in China is different from that in Western countries and it has its own rules, many returnees

reported difficulties in adapting to this system. The research performance assessment system in Chinese universities, focusing on what is considered to be quantity of output instead of quality, was reported by most returnees as one of the most difficult challenges faced by them (see Section 5.3.3.1). Returnees were said as not being necessarily better in teaching and research than non-returnee colleagues and their social and cultural capital could not be better exerted.

The data also found that the bureaucratic nature of the Chinese universities also created extra difficulties for the returnees (see Section 5.4). In Chinese universities, ideas and policies are transmitted bureaucratically and vertically to the lower levels, for implementation. This forms a hierarchical community in Chinese universities that returnees thought was unreasonable. Bureaucratic management, lack of sufficient support, lack of research funds and low salary often made returnees feel frustrated and stressed. The data from this study indicated that returnees had little influence in changing universities' disciplines and pedagogies. They felt the bureaucratic governance, instead of professorial management, made it hard for them to make any changes at their Chinese universities and they felt confused and lost when dealing with these issues. Most importantly, the data showed that foreign-educated returnees had little influence on changing these universities' management and academic environment (see Section 5.4.4). It was hard for returnees to make any bottom-up reform or changes to the universities under Chinese universities' management system. They had difficulties in applying their new knowledge and skills in Chinese universities, meaning their overseas education advantages could not be demonstrated in their academic life. Some returnees felt confused about how to use their newly acquired teaching methods and could not find a balance between the Western and Chinese traditional teaching methods. They held negative feelings towards their roles in teaching and research at these universities and found that what they could do at these universities was limited. Returnees' overseas education advantages could not be fully exerted during their academic life back. Conversely, for some returnees, their overseas education was reported as being a disadvantage for them. They did not necessarily have advantages over non-returnee colleagues regarding their teaching and research. They were regarded as equal as non-returnees colleagues with no special treatment. They felt that their social and cultural capitals, which were regarded as the main attracting factor of returnees by these universities, could become diminished at these universities. On the other hand, the

universities were not fully satisfied with the academic performance of returnees. Returnees were said to have unreasonable expectations and their research was not necessarily better than that of their non-returnee colleagues; in fact, sometimes it was said to be worse.

Besides the academic and institutional challenges, cultural re-adaptation was reported as one of the major challenges faced by returnees (see Section 5.5). This study found that cultural contact with another culture made returnees change their perceptions towards both the home and host cultures. Cultural identity changes were inevitable for people who studied overseas and reverse cultural shock was unavoidable for returnees coming home from different cultures. For some, the way Chinese people managing interpersonal relationships in China sometimes created difficulties and frustrations when re-adapting to the home culture. Some returnees reported that the indirect way of Chinese people talking to others made them feel lost. Most returnees reported a change in their cultural values because of their overseas experiences. Some of them found that they held a sense of belonging to two cultures and they had become multicultural persons. Several returnees said that their overseas experiences had changed their attitudes towards students, life and work, as well as their values regarding Chinese and Western cultures. They felt they had more flexible attitude and open-mindedness on these issues. They found that their overseas experiences had enabled them to look at their home culture and Western cultures more objectively.

All these findings answered the first and the second research questions. That is, even returnees were regarded as agents who had new knowledge and new perspectives, they had difficulties returning back to their home country's academic and sociocultural life. They had to face different kinds of challenges that they might not expected before they came back, ranging from academic challenges to daily life issues, such as applying for research funds, publishing articles, different administration system and child(ren)'s issues of going to school. Different experiences made returnees take different ways to manage the process of re-adaptation back to their home country. After coming back, they had to re-adjust themselves to fit into the home culture again, changing their ways of thinking, attitudes and even behaviours during their reentry experiences. Significant re-adaptation experiences caused them to re-evaluate their values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Those who could re-adjust their attitudes quickly and could get access to the social resources would fit into the life back easily, whereas those who still missed

their life in the host countries and who could not re-just themselves accordingly had more difficulties back home.

The current study also found that most non-returnees and administrators had both positive and negative attitudes towards returnees in terms of returnees' roles in and contributions to these universities, which answered the third research question. They regarded returnees as agents with new ideas and new concepts, possessing knowledge of the latest research methods and knowledge from the Western countries (see Section 4.3). Non-returnees and administrators believed that the returnees' overseas experiences enabled them to view issues from different perspectives and they had the ability to bring new teaching and research methods to the universities. Compared to non-returnees in research, they were more likely to be interest-oriented than profit-oriented. In classroom teaching, most of the returnees paid more attention to stimulating the interest of their students and introduced interactive teaching methods such as presentations, group collaborative study and seminars. Instead of using the traditional teacher-centred approach, they were more student-centred and flexible (see Section 4.3.4 and Section 4.3.5). In addition, they were regarded as important influences in the universities' efforts to become more globalised. Their role in introducing new curricula and pedagogical ideas to the universities was recognised by both non-returnees and administrators (see Section 4.3.2). Thus, the study found that new knowledge, new ideas, flexibility and globalised views were deemed to be important characteristics of returnees. These characters of returnees made them different from non-returnees and enabled them to stand at the front line in the development of science and technology, and they brought new elements to the universities, updating the universities' research and teaching standards. However, non-returnees and administrators also had negative views towards returnees. The contribution and performance of some returnees had left much to be desired. Foreign credentials were gradually losing their appeal in China because not all returnees were regarded as top-level personnel and they were not necessarily better than non-returnees in terms of their teaching and their research. Some even thought that returnees were not as good as their non-returnee colleagues in research. Although both administrators and non-returnee colleagues held positive attitudes towards returnees' new knowledge and new methods, as well as their ability to assist with globalisation, they agreed that an individual's performance in and contribution to the universities depended on that person's attitude, effort and commitment more than on their overseas credentials.

They indicated that returnees' overseas experiences were valuable, but they were not deciding factors in their performance in their teaching and research. Most importantly, returnees were regarded as *bujiediqi* (unable to understand Chinese culture) and *shuitubufu* (unable to adapt to Chinese culture well), which minimised returnees' influence in Chinese universities.

7.3 Contributions of this study

7.3.1 *Theoretical contributions*

This research has applied structuration theory to study foreign-educated returnees' reentry experiences into Chinese higher education. It has made a number of theoretical contributions to the literature on this subject. First, it has extended and enriched the extant literature on the organisational culture of Chinese universities from the point of view of structuration and has provided a new insight into the negotiation process of individuals' intercultural communication. Second, the study has mapped the relationship between the structural dimensions of signification, domination, legitimisation, agent and agency, and has explained the way these structures influenced the individual agents' (foreign-educated returnees') experiences during cultural re-adaptation. By applying structuration theory to investigate returnees' reentry experiences, the study has contributed to the increasing attention on the issues of cultural reentry. Crucially, the study has made an essential contribution to understanding the dynamic interactions and communications of individuals in the process of cultural and organisational re-adaptation.

Previous study has applied structuration theory in the analysis of organisations, inter-organisational networks and organisational accounting systems (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Universities, as social systems, are organisations that are reproduced and transformed across time and space through the action of agents (Giddens, 1984). As in societies, these agents are involved in universities' political processes, sense making and legitimisation, facing the same challenges as in larger social settings when they respond to and use the social structures in the university context. Structuration theory is particularly useful in revealing the internal and external factors that affected returnees' reentry experiences, the way returnees negotiated and communicated within these factors during the readjusting process, and the way returnees could (or could not) influence

university policies and practices. Using structuration theory, the study found that the universities' practices and policies (the structures of the universities) influenced and constrained the negotiation process of the returnees' contributions in constructing university structures. By studying the reentry experiences of returnees, this study has contributed to the knowledge regarding the behaviours and actions in the institutional realm of cultural re-adaptation and communication from the perspective of social system structuration.

The study has also reinforced the value of mixed methods for examining the lived experiences of returnees in Chinese academic organisational settings and understanding their reentry processes of academic, social and cultural re-adaptation. Using both qualitative methods (main method) and quantitative methods (in support), the study has demonstrated the importance and usefulness of in-depth interviews as an instrument for exploring participants' experiences in detail, along with quantitative methods providing numerical information with regard to the participants. This mixed method facilitated the study of the research questions both from the micro and macro angles and resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the reentry experiences of Chinese returnees. This method has added to the information regarding the use of mixed methods in social science research.

7.3.2 Practical contributions

This study has also contributed to the literature on cultural re-adaptation and communication from the perspective of cultural identity change. As a study that used mixed methods to examine the issues of reverse cultural re-adaptation of Chinese returnees in the Chinese university context, it focused on their experiences of readjusting and renegotiating in the process of their academic and social re-adaptation. The study has helped to shed light on the issues of repatriation and has added Chinese returnees' stories and voices to the information on Chinese repatriates experiencing reverse culture shock within their home country's culture. Given the rapidly increasing number of returnees coming back to work in Chinese higher education and other sectors, this research adds greater understanding of returnees and cross-cultural communication. Thus, this study adds to the existing body of knowledge about Chinese returnees' reentry issues as well as those of other repatriation personnel coming home from other countries.

The results have shown that the Chinese returnees in this study faced two levels of cultural re-adaptation: the organisational culture of the Chinese academic sector and the social cultural norms of Chinese values. The overwhelming issue was the organisational culture of Chinese universities, which constrained the returnees' actions and was their main obstacle to re-enter the academic community. These two levels of cultural re-adaptation did not work alone; they appeared in the whole process of returnees' reentry experiences and influenced their life and work back in their home country. One significant contribution of this study is the concept of the need for returnees to have realistic expectations about coming home and to readjust their thinking, attitudes and behaviours during their repatriation. As it is impossible for returnees to return to an unchanged home country with unchanged selves, the ability to readjust is important for them.

As little research has been conducted in the area of Chinese returnees' reentry experiences in Chinese higher education, this study is a rich source of information about the re-adaptation experiences of Chinese returnees in their cultural re-adaptation in their home country. The study has provided both Chinese academic institutions and Chinese foreign-educated students with an initial view of the issue of re-adaptation from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. It has also provided Western academic institutions with an important picture of the way Chinese returnees are regarded in the Chinese academic community. It offers useful understandings of the difficulties and challenges that Chinese returnees have to face, the most significant factors in their reentry, and the way they negotiate between home and host cultures to manage cross-cultural issues during the process of repatriation.

7.4 Limitations of this study

This study was carefully prepared and has achieved its aim of examining the experiences of returnees, the main factors that influenced their reentry experiences and the way they managed the process of re-adapting when they returned to work in Chinese higher education. However, as the research has reached its final stages, a number of limitations have become obvious.

First, as the fieldwork for this research was conducted overseas, the time frame for data collection was restricted by both the local academic schedule and the researcher's own

research schedule, with the data collected over a period of approximately three months, from October 2013 to February 2014 (see Section 3.3.1). This time frame did not allow the researcher to think in depth about the interviews and thus to readjust accordingly, to obtain richer information, as it was necessary to keep to the schedule to complete every interview. Although three months had seemed sufficient time for collecting the data, it was later realised that more time would have allowed the researcher to present the interview questions differently and communicate with interviewees in more depth, thus conducting the interviews in a more satisfactory way, such as the order of some interview questions, the time allocation for interviewing participants.

Second, the sample size was small, especially for the questionnaire survey. Twenty-four returnees, 11 non-returnees and nine administrators at these universities were interviewed and the same sample of participants was invited to do the questionnaire survey (see Section 3.2.2). Although this study mainly focused on using qualitative methods, with quantitative methods being in the support role, the sample size of the quantitative research was not large enough to gather persuasive numerical data. Further, the data was collected from six universities in just one province. Therefore, the results of the study may only represent Yunnan Province and may not be able to be generalised or transferred to all Chinese returnees at Chinese universities. Nor can the results be generalised to returnees who work in other sectors in China, such as the business sector or financial sector. The mixed method design, with qualitative data collection as the predominant method, was adopted to serve the researcher's purpose of gaining in-depth understanding of Chinese returnees' reentry experiences at the universities in Yunnan. To achieve generalisation, large-scale research with statistical analysis would be required and other areas such as the coastal cities, which are regarded as more developed, and big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, would need to be included.

Third, the data collection was uneven across the three groups (24 returnees, 11 non-returnees and nine administrators). This was due to the time limitation and the core purpose of this study being to focus on returnees, with non-returnees and administrators merely providing different perspectives. Thus, the number of non-returnee and administrator groups was smaller than the returnee group. In addition, two administrators, who had agreed to participate initially, had to drop out of the study because of career and personal considerations. This may have resulted in the

comparison of the data between the three groups being unbalanced.

Fourth, the current study did not include students as one of the study groups. Students are the people who have the most direct contact with teachers. They should know their teachers' teaching performance well and could provide useful comments on the differences between returnee teachers and domestically trained teachers. Their opinions and views could provide rich information on returnee teachers' roles in and contribution to Chinese higher education from a different perspective. Therefore, study on students' attitudes towards returnee teachers could provide more definitive evidence.

7.5 Recommendations for future research

Considering the issues discussed above, this study suggests a number of potentially rich areas for future research. First, a large-scale study on returnees' reentry experiences in Chinese universities could be undertaken, including the more developed coastal areas, large cities and the less developed inner provinces. This larger sample would offer a better understanding of the issue of returnees having difficulties (*shuitubufu*) in re-adapting back to the Chinese academic environment. It would also provide more rich information about returnees' reentry experiences in terms of their re-adaptation to life and work at Chinese universities, as well as a comparison between the coastal areas and less developed areas. This potential research could also be significant in assisting universities to take useful measures for re-introducing returnees so they can take advantage of their overseas education to develop transferrable cultural and social capital. This future study could also apply a quantitative method as the dominant method, with a qualitative approach in the secondary role. The quantitative method could expand the scale of the study and help identify the questions required for further qualitative, in-depth research.

Second, as mentioned above, students are the people who have direct contact with returnee teachers. Future study involving students' views would be of value in identifying returnees' roles in and contributions to Chinese higher education, enriching the results of the study. This study identified the difficulties that returnees encountered in their knowledge localisation, mostly from the viewpoint of returnees and partly from that of their non-returnee colleagues and administrators. Despite careful analysis, this source of information was insufficient to explore the factors that affect returnees'

knowledge transfer. Further research that includes students would provide a richer understanding of the role of returnees in Chinese higher education.

Third, the study applied structuration theory to analyse the way university structures constrain returnees' performance during their process of re-adaptation. This theoretical framework encourages cross-cultural communication researchers to rethink organisational cultural issues regarding the repatriation process, along the lines of the structuration approach. This study applied some of the concepts of structuration theory to examine the reentry experience of returnees in Chinese higher education. However, it does not claim to have provided a full empirical exemplification of the theory. It is only an attempt to apply the theory to explain some social phenomena. According to structuration theory, structures are both the media and the outcomes of individual agents in social interaction. Individual agents should be enabled to challenge and change existing structures of social institutions (Naidoo, 2009). The duality of structuration requires social systems to not only constrain individuals but also to enable them to reproduce structures. One particular question that was raised by this research and needs to be further investigated was: How can agents (foreign-educated returnees) draw upon the institutional contexts (Chinese universities) in which they are embedded to effect changes in those contexts? That is to say, further research could be conducted to examine ways the returnees can draw upon Chinese universities' structures to effect changes to universities, to utilise their knowledge after returning.

In conclusion, the aim for universities that recruit returnees is for them to apply returnees' knowledge to help upgrade the Chinese universities' research and teaching standards, as well to help Chinese universities integrate into the world's academic community. The nature of returnees is changing because of their cultural contacts. The Chinese higher education context is also changing regarding the use of returnees' overseas education advantages. Therefore, both the Chinese academic community and returnees need to make changes that will lead to better mutual understanding and thus lead to greater mutual benefits.

References

- Adler, N. J. (1977). *Growthful re-entry theory: A pilot test on returned Peace Corps volunteers*. Graduate School of Management, University of California. Los Angeles, CA Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsref&AN=RT.ADLER.GRADUATESCHOOLOFMANAGEMEN.AIGF&site=eds-live>
- Adler, N. J. (1981). Re-entry: Managing cross-cultural transitions. *Group & Organizational Studies*, 6(3), 341–356. doi: 10.1177/105960118100600310
- Adler, P. S. (1975). The transitional experience: An alternative view of cultural shock. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 15, 13-23.
- Bail, H. I., & Shen, W. (2008). *The return of the “brains” to China: What are the social, economic, and political impacts?* Brussel, Belgium: IFRI.
- Balzer, H. (2010). Learning to innovate? Education and knowledge-based economies in Russia and China. *Pro et Contra*, 14(3), 52-71.
- Banks, S., & Riley, P. (1993). Structuration theory as an ontology for communication research. In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 16* (pp. 167-196). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Barboza, D. (2006). In a scientist's fall, China feel robbed of glory. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/15/technology/15fraud.htm1>
- Blackl, J. S. (1992). Coming home: The relationship of expatriate expectations with repatriation adjustment and job performance. *Human Relations*, 45(2), 177-193.
- Bowen, G. A. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 137-152.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bryant, C. G. A., & Jary, D. (1991). Introduction: Coming to terms with Anthony Giddens. In C. G. A. Bryant, & D. Jary (Eds.), *Giddens' theory of structuration: A critical appreciation* (pp. 1 - 31). London, UK: Routledge.
- Busco, C. (2009). Giddens' structuration theory and its implications for management accounting research. *Journal of Management & Governance*, 13(3), 249-260. doi: 10.1007/s10997-008-9081-6

- Butcher, A. P. (2002). *No place like home? The experiences of south-east Asian international university students in New Zealand and their re-entry into their countries of origin*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Massey University. Albany.
- Buttery, E. A., & Leung, T. K. P. (1998). The difference between Chinese and Western negotiations. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(3/4), 374-389. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090569810204652>
- Cao, C. (2004). *The brain drain problem in China*. Singapore: East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore.
- Cao, C. (2008). China's brain drain at the high end: Why government policies have failed to attract first-rate academics to return. *Asian Population Studies*, 4, 331-345. doi: 10.1080/17441730802496532
- Catcheside, K. (2011). Chinese universities' recruitment drive targets overseas academic talent. *Guardian Professional*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/2011/apr/20/chinese-universities-seeking-academics>
- Chan, K. B. (1997). A family affair: Migration, dispersal and the emergent identity of the Chinese cosmopolitan. *Diaspora*, 6(2), 195-213.
- Chang, P., & Deng, Z. (1992). The Chinese brain drain and policy options. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 17(1), 44-60.
- Chen, C. (2011). Gejie "huizhen" gaoduan haigui "shuitu bufu" [Diagnosing cultural incompatibility of foreign-educated returnees], *Xiandai Jiaoyubao [Modern Education]*. Retrieved from <http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/204387/16651323.htm1>
- Chen, C., & Yan, Y. (2000a). Woguo liuxue renyuan huigui yuanyin yu fahui zhuoyong zhuangkuang de diaocha baogao (1) [A survey on returnees' reasons of coming back and their contributions to China (1)]. *Heilongjiang Research on Higher Education*, 5, 13-18.
- Chen, C., & Yan, Y. (2000b). Woguo liuxue renyuan huigui yuanyin yu fahui zuoyong zhuanagkuang de diaocha baogao (2) [A survey on returnees' reasons of coming back and their contribution to China (2)]. *Heilongjiang Research on Higher Education*, 6, 13-19.
- Chen, J. (2010). Nation aims to increase talent pool. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-06/07/content_9940774.htm
- Cheng, C. G., Lou, X. L., & Gao, L. Y. (2000). Weishenme huiguo, huiguo hou zenyang

- [Why coming back, how is it like coming back] --- A study on 471 Chinese returnees. *China High Education*, 13(14), 46-49.
- China News. (2012, February 10). *China News*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinanews.com/edu/2012/02-10/3660675.shtml>
- The Chunhui Plan of the Ministry of Education. (1998). Retrieved March 4, 2013, from <http://www.1000plan.org/qrjh/channel/45>
- Conrad, C. (1993). Rhetorical/communication theory as ontology for structuration research. In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication yearbook* (Vol. 16, pp. 197-208). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, P. V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, P. V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Davis, K. A. (1995). Qualitative theory and methods in applied linguistics research. *ESOL Quarterly*, 29(3), 427-453.
- Dennis, C. (2002). China: Stem cell rises from the East. *Nature*, 419(6905), 334-336.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Ding, X. (2004). The challenges faced by Chinese higher education as it expands in scale. *Chinese Education and Society*, 37(1), 36-53.
- Duffy, M. E. (1987). Methodological triangulation: A vehicle for merging quantitative and qualitative research methods. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 19(3), 130-133.
- Eisner, E. W., & Peshkin, A. (1990). *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate*. New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Feng, B., & Feng, J. (2009). Researching adaptation and living strategies of returned overseas scholars: Case studies from Bourdieu's perspective of cultural capital and habitus. *Studies in Culture & Art*, 2(5), 29-37.
- Fiske, A. P. (2002). Using individualism and collectivism to compare cultures—A critique

- of the validity and measurement of the constructs: Comment on Oyserman et al. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 78-88.
- Flick, U. (2007). *Managing quality in qualitative research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). *The interview: From neutral stance to political involvement* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gaw, K. F. (2000). Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 83-104.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Gill, S. (2010). The homecoming: An investigation into the effect that studying overseas had on Chinese postgraduates' life and work on their return to China. *Compare*, 40(3), 359-376. doi: 10.1080/03057920903464555
- Gross, A., & Connor, A. (2007). Managing Chinese returnees. *Mobility Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.pacificbridge.com/publications/managing-chinese-returnees/>
- Gu, X. (2009). *The challenge of return: Net effects of social and political factors*. (Unpublished Master's thesis), Erasmus University, Rotterdam.
- Guanxi: The Chinese cultural concept. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.hugchina.com/html/abc/5/2012020405463568.html>.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Ting-Toomey, S., Matsumoto, Y., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self construals and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22(4), 510-543.
- Gullahorn, J. T., & Gullahorn, J. E. (1963). An extension of the U-curve hypothesis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 19(3), 33-47.
- Guo, Y. (1998). The role of returned foreign education students in Chinese higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 2(35), 35-58. doi: 10.1177/1028315398002002003
- Halperin, R., & Backhouse, J., (2007). Using structuration theory in IS research: Operationalizing key constructs. Paper presented at the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), Research Methodology Track (Paper 127). Montreal, 10th-13th December.
- He, Q. (2003). Haigui rencai chuangye yu bentuhua [Haigui talents' entrepreneurship and

- localisation]. *Guancha Yu Sikao [Observation and Reflection]*, 4, 4-8.
- He, S. (2009). *Peer relationships among local and returnee Chinese employees*. (Master's thesis), Washington State University, America.
- He, Y. (2009). Haigui jiaoshi zisha qiaoxiang xueshu huanjing de jingzhong [The haigui lecturer's suicide rings alarm bells of the academic environment]. *Xinmingwang [Xinming Network]*. Retrieved from <http://scitech.people.com.cn/GB/10246973.html>
- Healey, R. L. (2006). Asylum seekers and refugees: A structuration theory analysis of their experiences in the UK. *Population, Space and Place*, 12(4), 257 - 271. doi: 10.1002/psp.412
- Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 455-468.
- Higgins, E. T. (1996). The "Self-digest": Self-knowledge serving self-regulatory functions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 1062-1083.
- Hofstede, G., & Minkov, M. (2010). Long- versus short-term orientation: New perspectives. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 16(4), 493-504. doi: 10.1080/13602381003637609
- Hofstede, G. H., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hu, J. (2011). Speech at a meeting commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China. Xinhuanet. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-07/01/c_13960505.htm
- Huang, Y. D. (2008). *Return migration: A case study of "Sea Turtles" in Shanghai*. (Unpublished Master's thesis), The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10722/52665>
- Hussain, Z. I., & Cornelius, N. (2009). The use of domination and legitimization in information systems implementation. *Information Systems Journal*, 19(2), 197-224. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2575.2008.00322.x
- Ip, M. (2006). Returnees and transnationals: Evolving identities of Chinese (PRC) immigrants in New Zealand. *Journal of Population Studies*, 33, 61-102.
- Jameson, D. A. (2007). Reconceptualizing cultural identity and its role in intercultural business communication. *Journal of Business Communication*, 44(3), 199-235. doi: 10.1177/0021943607301346

- Jia, H. (2009). Thousand talents tempted home. *Chemistry World*. Retrieved from <http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/Issues/2009/March/ThousandsTalentsTemptedHome.asp>
- Jiacheng, W., Lu, L., & Francesco, C. A. (2010). A cognitive model of intra-organizational knowledge-sharing motivations in the view of cross-culture. *International Journal of Information Management*, 30(3), 220-230. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2009.08.007>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher* (7), 14-26.
- Jones, M. L. (2007). *Action regulation theory as a tool for qualitative analysis*. Paper presented at the 4th International Qualitative Research Convention: Doing qualitative research-processes, issues and challenges, Malaysia, 3rd-5th September.
- Jones, M. R., & Karsten, H. (2008). Giddens's structuration theory and information systems research. *MIS Quarterly*, 32(1), 127-157.
- Kelle, U. (2006). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in research practice: Purposes and advantages. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(4), 293-311.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2001). *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2005). Association and dissociation: A contextual theory of interethnic communication. In W. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 323-449). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2008). Intercultural personhood: Globalization and a way of being. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 359-368. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.005>
- Koch, B. J., & Koch, P. T. (2007). Collectivism, individualism, and outgroup cooperation in a segmented China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 24(2), 207-225. doi: 10.1007/s10490-006-9004-5
- Kou, C. W. (2011). Elite recruitment and the duality of the Chinese party-state: The mobility of Western-educated returnee elites in China, 1978-2008. In S. P. Hsu, Y.-S. Wu, & S. Zhao (Eds.), *In search of China's development model* (pp. 166-185). London, UK: Routledge.

- Levin, H. M., & Xu, Z. (2006). Issues in the expansion of higher education in the People's Republic of China. In P. B. Hugh Lauder, Jo-Anne Dillabough & A. H. Halsey (Ed.), *Education, globalization and social change* (pp. 909-925). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Li, C. (2004a). Bring China's best and brightest back home: Regional disparities and political tension. *China Leadership Monitor*, 11, 1-19.
- Li, C. (2004b). Shaping China foreign policy: The paradoxical role of foreign-educated returnees. *Asia Policy*, 10, 65-85.
- Li, C. (2005a). Coming home to teach: Status and mobility of returnees in China's higher education. In C. Li (Ed.), *Bridging minds across the Pacific: US-China educational exchanges, 1978-2003* (pp. 76-95). New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Li, C. (2005b). Introduction: Open doors and open minds. In C. Li (Ed.), *Bridging minds across the Pacific: US-China educational exchanges, 1978-2003* (pp. 1-23). New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Li, C. (2005c). The status and characteristics of foreign-educated returnees in the Chinese leadership. *China Leadership Monitor*, 16, 1-21.
- Li, C. (2006). Foreign-educated returnees in the People's Republic of China: Increasing political influence with limited official power. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 7(4), 493-516. doi: 10.1007/bf02934906
- Li, C. (2010). Shaping China foreign policy: The paradoxical role of foreign-educated returnees. *Asia Policy*, 10, 65-85.
- Li, C., & Xu, Y. (2004). Haigui renyuan zai gaodengjiaoyue lingyue de diwei ji bianqian [Haigui's status and changes in China's high education]. *Fudan Education Forum*, 2(1), 26-38.
- Li, M. S. (2009). *Teaching English in cross-cultural settings: Challenges faced by English language teachers teaching English in China*. Mauritius: VCD Publishing House Ltd.
- Lieber, E. (2009). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Insights into design and analysis issues. *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research*, 3(4), 218-227.
- Lin, H. (2009). Daiyu yingcai, shiye liuren [Attracting talent through remunerations, retaining talent through career development]. Retrieved from <http://news.tsinghua.edu.cn>
- Liu, R. J. (2010). *The study about living environment and state of overseas returnees in four "985" Chinese universities in Shanghai*. (Unpublished Master's thesis),

Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai.

- Liu, Y. (2008). *Guizhou gaoxiao guiguo renyuan guanli yanjiu [A study of foreign-educated returnees at universities in Guizhou]*. (Unpublished master's thesis), Guizhou University, Guiyang, China.
- Lou, X., Chen, C., & Gao, Y. (2000). Woguo gaoxiao liuxue huiguo hou fahui zuoyong zhuangkuang yu fenxi [A study of the experiences of foreign-educated returnees at Chinese universities]. *Research on Education Tsinghua University*, 3, 89-96.
- Lysgaard, S. (1955). Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States. *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7, 45-51.
- Lyytinen, K. J., & Ngwenyama, O. K. (1992). What does computer support for cooperative work mean? A structurational analysis of computer supported cooperative work. *Accounting, Management and Information Technology*, 2(1), 19 - 37.
- Macintosh, N. B. (1994). *Management accounting and control systems — An organisational and behavioural Approach*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Macintosh, N. B., & Scapens, R. W. (1990). Structuration theory in management accounting. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 15(5), 455-477. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682\(90\)90028-S](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(90)90028-S)
- Martin, J. N. (1984). The intercultural reentry: Conceptualization and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 8(2), 115-134.
- Martin, J. N. (1986). Communication in the intercultural reentry: Student sojourners' perceptions of change in reentry relationship. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(1), 1-22. doi: 10.1016/0147-1767(86)90031-3
- McGrath, T. M. (1998). *Homecoming: Reverse culture shock. An investigation of New Zealand trained graduates returning home to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia*. (Master's thesis). Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2009). Retrieved 16 January, 2013, from http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/A04_gggs/201207/140059.html
- Mooney, P. (2006, 7 June). Chinese fail, *The Australian*, pp. 40-41.
- Morse, J. M. (1994). *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Morse, J. M., & Niehaus, L. (2009). *Mixed method design: Principles and procedures*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press.
- Naidoo, L. (2009). A structuration theory analysis of the refugee action support program in Greater Western Sydney. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(4), 40 - 50. doi: <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol34/iss4/5>
- National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2011). *China statistical yearbook*. Beijing: China Statistical Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2014). *China statistical yearbook*. Beijing: China Statistical Press.
- Nawab, S., & Shafi, K. (2011). Retaining the brains, policies adopted by P. R. China to attract and retain research talent. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(4), 72-77.
- Neuliep, J. W. (2015). *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ngok, K. (2007). Chinese education policy in the context of decentralization and marketization: Evolution and implications. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 8(1), 142-157.
- Ngok, K. (2008). Massification, bureaucratization and questing for “world-class” status: Higher education in China since the mid-1990s. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(6), 547-564.
- Nonini, D. M. (2008). Is China becoming neoliberal? *Critique of Anthropology*, 28(2), 145-176.
- Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 177-182.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Teddlie, C. (2003). A framework for analyzing data in mixed methods research. In A. J. Onwuegbuzie, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 351-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orleans, L. A. (1988). *Chinese students in America: Policies, issues, and numbers*. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.
- Pan, S.-Y. (2011). Education abroad, human capital development, and national competitiveness: China's brain gain strategies. *Front Education China*, 6(1), 106-138. doi: 10.1007/s11516-011-0124-4
- Park, R. E. (1928). Human migration and the marginal man. *American Journal of*

- Sociology*, 33, 881-893.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pitts, M. J. (2009). Identity and the role of expectations, stress, and talk in short-term student sojourner adjustment: An application of the integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(6), 450-462. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.07.002>
- Plagiarism tolerated in rat race for promotion. (2011). *Shanghai Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.shanghaidaily.com/article/?id=466146&type=Opinion>
- Polata, A. (1990). Returning home: Reentry programs and tracer studies. In M. Barker (Ed.), *Oriented for success Canberra* (pp. 36-47): Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Pozzebon, M. (2004). The influence of a structurationist view on strategic management research. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(2), 247-272.
- Pozzebon, M., & Pinsonneault, A. (2005). Challenges in conducting empirical work using structuration theory: Learning from IT research. *Organization Studies*, 26(9), 1353 - 1376. doi: 10.1177/0170840605054621
- Price-Williams, D. R. (1980). Anthropological approaches to cognition and their relevance to psychology. In H. C. Triandis, & W. Lonner (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes* (Vol. VI, pp 69-98). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Ritchie, J. (2003). The applications of qualitative methods to social research. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 24-46). London, UK: Sage.
- Roberts, K. L. (2012). *Studying abroad: The change does not stop when students come home*. Master's thesis, Kansas State University, Kansas.
- Rose, J., & Scheepers, R. (2001). *Structuration theory and information system development - Framework for practice*. Paper presented at the 9th European

- Conference on Information Systems. Bled, Slovenia, 27th-29th June.
- Rosen, S., & Zweig, D. (2005). Transnational capital: Valuing academic returnees in a globalizing China. In C. Li (Ed.), *Bridging minds across the Pacific: US-China educational exchanges, 1978-2003* (pp. 111-132). New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Rosovsky, H., & Bloom, D. E. (2000). *High education in developing countries: Peril and promise*. Washington, D.C: Task Force on Higher Education and Society, World Bank.
- Ross, P. G. (1992). Off the plane and into the classroom: A phenomenological explication of international teaching assistants' experiences in the American classroom. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16, 277-293.
- Saxenian, A. (2005). From brain drain to brain circulation: Transnational communities and regional upgrading in India and China. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 40(2), 35-61.
- Scott, C. R., Corman, S. R., & Cheney, G. (1998). Development of a structuration model of identification in the organization. *Communication Theory*, 8(3), 298 - 336. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.1998.tb00223.x
- Schuetz, A. (1945). The homecomer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 369-376.
- Selmer, J. (2002). The Chinese connection? Adjustment of Western vs. overseas Chinese expatriate managers in China. *Journal of Business Research*, 55(1), 41-50. doi: 10.1016/s0148-2963(00)00132-6
- Selmer, J., & Shiu, L. S. C. (1999). Coming home? Adjustment of Hong Kong Chinese expatriate business managers assigned to the People's Republic of China. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(3), 447-465. doi: 10.1016/s0147-1767(99)00005-x
- Seyfarth, B. (2000). Structuration theory in small group communication: A review and agenda for future research. In M. Roloff (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 23* (pp. 341-379). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Shao, Q., & Truex, R. (2012). zhongguo minzhong ruhe kandai haigui [How Chinese people perceive returnees], *New York Time (The Chinese version)*. Retrieved from <http://cn.nytimes.com/article/china/2013/01/02/cc02qiutaiqin/>
- Sheng, R., & Zhao, B. (2014). 2013 nian haigui renshu da sanshi wan, tamen weisha xianghuilai [Why they want to returnee, 300,000 haigui in 2013]. Retrieved from <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2014/0221/c83083-24424078.html>

- Shi, Y., & Rao, Y. (2010). China's research culture. *Science*, 329(5996), 1228. doi: 10.1126/science.1196916
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8(3), 278-298.
- Song, J. (2003). shidai liuxuesheng bainian jieli liuxuechao [History of the ten generations of overseas Chinese in a century]. Retrieved from <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/ch-yuwai/313757.htm>
- Song, W., & Liao, Y. (2004). Daxue jingzheng de zhengzhixue fenxi:yi '985 gongcheng' weili [A political analysis of college competition: A case of study of the '985 Project']. *Journal of Higher Education*, 25(6), 25-30.
- Staber, U., & Sydow, J. (2002). Organizational adaptive capacity: A structuration perspective. *Journal of Management*, 11(4), 408 - 424. doi: 10.1177/1056492602238848
- State plan seeks to attract talent and halt brain drain. (2011). *Qiushi [Seeking the Truth]*. Retrieved from http://english.qstheory.cn/society/201111/t20111123_125642.htm
- Stein, E. W., & Vandenbosch, B. (1996). Organizational learning during advanced system development: Opportunities and obstacles. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 13(2), 115-136. doi: 10.2307/40398218
- Sussman, N. M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4(4), 355-373. doi: 10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404_5
- Sussman, N. M. (2011). *Return migration and identity: A global phenomenon, a Hong Kong case*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Szkudlarek, B. (2010). Reentry -- A review of the literature. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(2010), 1-21.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, G. R. (2005). Establishing a conceptual framework for conducting research. In G. R. Taylor (Ed.), *Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in research* (2nd ed., pp. 77-88). New York: University Press of America.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences. In A. Tashakkori, & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 3-50). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

- Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2002). The importance of pilot studies. *Nursing Standard*, 16(40), 33-36.
- Tenopir, C. (2003). Information metrics and user studies. *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives*, 55(1/2), 13-17.
- Trumbull, M. (2005). Qualitative research methods. In G. R. Taylor (Ed.), *Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in research* (2nd ed., pp. 101-128). New York: University Press of America.
- Wadhwa, V., Jain, S., Saxenian, A., Gereffi, G., & Wang, H. (2011). The grass is indeed greener in India and China for returnee entrepreneur: America's new immigrant entrepreneurs – Part VI. Retrieved from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1824670> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1824670>
- Wang, G. (2011). More Chinese overseas students return home in 2010. Xinhuanet. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-03/11/c_13773804.html
- Wang, H. (2005). *Returning times*. Beijing: China Compilation and Translation Press.
- Wang, H. (2007). *Dangdai zhongguo haigui [Comtemporary Chinese returnees]*. Beijing: Zhongguo Fazhan Chubanshe.
- Wang, H. (2009). *China's diaspora and returnees: Impact on China's globalization process*. Retrieved from http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/3/1/3/9/1/p313910_index.html?phpsessid=0635136d1c88af74e37400afe363c84e.
- Wang, H. (2011a). China's new talent strategy: Impact on China's development and its global exchanges. *SAIS Review*, 32(2), 49-64. doi: 10.1353/sais.2011.0026
- Wang, H. (2011b). *Globalizing China: The influence, strategies and successes of Chinese returnees*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Wang, H. (2012). Chinese returnees: Impact on China's modernization & globalization. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/...china-returnees/20100406_china_returnees_html
- Wang, H., & Miao, L. (2013). *Blue book of global talent --- Annual report on the development of Chinese returnees*. Beijing, China: Social Sciences Academic Press.
- Wang, H., Zhang, W., & Alon, I. (2011). Introduction: Chinese returnees, a globalisation force in shaping modern China. In W. Zhang, H. Wang, & I. Alon (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial and business elites of China: The Chinese returnees who have*

- shaped modern China* (pp. xxvii-xxxviii). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Wang, H., Zweig, D., & Lin, X. (2011). Returnee entrepreneurs: Impact on China's globalization process. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20(70), 413-431. doi: 10.1080/10670564.2011.565174
- Wang, M. M. (1997). Re-entry and reverse culture shock. In K. Cushe, & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Improving intercultural interactions -- Modules for cross-cultural training programs* (Vol. 2, pp 109-128)). London, UK: Sage.
- Wang, Z. (2007). Key factors that influence recruiting young Chinese students. *International Education Journal*, 2007, 8(2), 37-48.
- Weissman, D., & Furnham, A. (1987). The expectations and experiences of a sojourning temporary resident abroad: A preliminary study. *Human Relations*, 40, 313-326. doi: 10.1177/001872678704000505 Wheeler, C. (2012). Sea turtles homing in on China must swim against academic tide. Retrieved from <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=419850>
- Wielkiewicz, R. M., & Turkowski, L. W. (2010). Reentry issues upon returning from study abroad programs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51, 649-664. doi: 10.1353/csd.2010.0015
- Williamson, D. L., Choi, J., Charchuk, M., Rempel, G. R., Pitre, N., Breitkreuz, R., & Kushner, K. E. (2011). Interpreter-facilitated cross-language interviews: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 11(4), 381-394.
- Willmott, H. (1981). The structuring of organizational structure: A note. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26(3), 470 - 474.
- Wu, W. (2010). Higher education innovation in China. Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEASTASIAPACIFIC/Resources/China-HigherEducationInnovation.pdf>
- Xiang, B., & Wei, S. (2009). International student migration and social stratification in China. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 513-522. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.04.006
- Xu, D. (2009). Opportunities and challenges for academic returnees in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 26(1), 27-35. doi: 10.1007/s10490-007-9075-y
- Yang, L. (2005). The boomerang effect. *The World Economy and Social Justice*, 3, 74-75.
- Yang, M., & Tan, S. H. (2007). Haigui in China's modernisation. In G. Wang, & J. Wong (Eds.), *Interpreting China's Development* (pp. 1-16). London, UK: World

Scientific.

- Yee, A. (2006). China's war for talent hots up. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/1/7a97b93a-9e4d-11da-b641-0000779e2340.html#axzz11SiAXG8F>
- Yi, L. (2011). Auditing Chinese higher education? The perspectives of returnee scholars in an elite university. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31, 499-508. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2011.03.003
- Yin, K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods (5th edition)*. London, UK: Sage.
- Yin, Y. W. (2002). China's drive to attract the return of its expatriate talents. In O. Wong, & L. Ding (Eds.), *China's economy into the new century: Structural issues and problems* (pp. 387-404). Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Yuthas, K., & Dillard, J. (1999). Teaching ethical decision making: Adding a structuration dimension. *Teaching Business Ethics*, 3(4), 337-359. doi: 10.1023/A:1009834424982
- Zapf, M. K. (1991). Cross-cultural transitions and wellness: Dealing with culture shock. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 14, 105-119.
- Zhang, J. (2011). Challenges ahead for China's returnee program. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/china/2011-11/30/content_24028722.htm.
- Zhao, L., & Zhu, J. (2009). China attracting global talent: Central and local initiatives. *China: An International Journal*, 7(2), 323-335. doi: 10.1353/chn.0.0025
- Zhou, Y., & Jiang, J. (2003). Miao zhun shijie yiliu, gou zhu rencai gaodi [Aiming to become a world-class university and building talented human resources]. *Shenzhou Xueren [China Scholars Abroad]*, 1(34).
- Zhu, J. (2009). Baiming gaoxiao mingshi jiucheng touding guanxian [Ninety per cent of 100 famous teachers in higher education hold a cadre title]. *Changjiang Ribao [Yangtze Daily]*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinanews.com/edu-xyztc/news/2009/09-11/1861366.shtml>
- Zhu, R. (2001). China's economy, greater opening-up and growing prosperity. Retrieved from <http://www.wcec-secretariat.org/english/inside/06/ZHU%20Rongji.pdf>
- Zweig, D. (1997). To return or not to return? Politics vs. economics in China's brain drain. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 32(1), 92-125.
- Zweig, D. (2006). Competing for talent: China's strategies to reverse the brain drain. *International Labour Review*, 145(1-2), 65-89.

- Zweig, D., Chen, C., & Rosen, S. (1995). *China's brain drain to the United States: Views of overseas Chinese students and scholars in the 1990s*. Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California.
- Zweig, D., Chen, C., & Rosen, S. (2004). Globalization and transnational human capital: Overseas and returnee scholars to China. *The China Quarterly*, 179, 735-757.
- Zweig, D., & Chen, Z. (2007). *China's reforms and international political economy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Appendix 1



16 September 2013

COPY FOR YOUR
INFORMATION

Min Wang
38A Totara Street
Woburn
LOWER HUTT

Dear Min

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 13/66
Homecoming: Foreign-educated returnees' experience of re-entry into Chinese
universities in Yunnan Province, China

Thank you for your letter dated 5 September 2013.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr M. Matthews".

Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Prof Frank Sligo
School of Communication, Journalism
& Marketing
WELLINGTON

Dr Mingsheng Li
School of Communication, Journalism
& Marketing
WELLINGTON

Prof Malcolm Wright, HoS
School of Communication, Journalism
& Marketing
PN254

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council
Research Ethics Office

Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 350 5573 F +64 6 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz www.massey.ac.nz

Appendix 2 (1)

Massey University
School of Communication, Journalism & Marketing

INFORMATION SHEET

Project title:

Homecoming: Foreign-educated Returnees' Experience of Reentry into Chinese Universities in Yunnan Province, China

Researcher Introduction

My name is WANG Min, a PhD student in the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing, Massey University, New Zealand. The project I am undertaking is to examine the reentry experiences of re-adaptation of foreign-educated returnees (*haigui*) who have completed their study overseas, earned a degree, and have returned to work at universities in Yunnan Province, China. I am also interested in the perceptions and perspectives of local colleagues and administrators, because their views can help better understand the reentry experiences of returnees.

Invitation

I am cordially inviting you to participant in this study.

The purpose of the study

The aim of this research is to seek answers for the following questions:

1. What are the overall experiences of foreign-educated returnees (*haigui*) re-adapting to the home country's university cultures in Yunnan Province, China?
2. What opportunities, challenges and problems do returnees (*haigui*) have to face during the process of reentry?
3. How do returnees, local colleague and managerial level (administrators) perceive returnees' contribution to tertiary education in higher education institutions in Yunnan Province?
4. Do returnees' overseas experiences influence their cultural identity change? If such change exists, in what way does this cultural identity change influence their reentry experiences?
5. What strategies have returnees used to adapt to the socio-cultural, academic and research environment at their home universities?
6. Are there any discrepancies of expectations between foreign-educated returnees and administrators? If there are any, what are these discrepancies and to what extent do these discrepancies exist?

The research will adopt qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain insights into the experiences of returnees. Returnees, local colleagues, and administrators' perspectives will be examined in interviews.

Participant identification and recruitment: The researcher will interview 20 returnees with master's and/or doctoral degrees, 10 local colleagues and 10 senior managers.

Participants will be interviewed face to face in terms of returnees' re-adaptation experiences in Yunnan universities and local colleagues' and senior managers' perceptions of returnees. The interviews will be digitally-recorded and transcribed.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated and helpful in building an understanding of returnees' experiences. This knowledge is expected to assist other returnees as they prepare for reentry, to help universities and government to adjust their recruitment policies as greater understanding is gained about foreign-educated returnees. If you wish to take part in the research, please sign the consent form attached to this letter. Participants who would like a summary of the study will receive one on completion of the thesis.

No participants will be identified in the reporting of this research. Only the researcher can get access to the interview transcripts.

All participants are free to choose how they would like to answer questions, or not to answer questions, or to withdraw from the interview.

Research contact details

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project can be raised with the thesis supervisors, Professor Frank Sligo (F.Sligo@massey.ac.nz) and Dr Mingsheng Li (M.S.Li@massey.ac.nz), School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 13/66. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 80877, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.”

Thank you very much for considering this invitation

Wang Min
Telephone: 0086 13987168855
Email: mevelynwang@hotmail.com
Massey University
New Zealand

Appendix 2 (2)

新西兰梅西大学交际、新闻及市场营销学院

项目研究简介

项目名称：云南高校“海归”留学归国教师归国经历研究

研究人简介：

我叫王敏，是新西兰梅西大学交际、新闻及市场营销学院的在读博士。我的博士论文是有关国外留学海归教师归国文化再适应研究，研究的对象是有国外留学经历，获得国外硕士或博士学位以及博士后回到云南高校工作的海归教师。同时，本研究还将调查非海归教师以及管理人员对海归教师的看法，因为他们的观点将有助于更好地理解海归人员的回归经历。

本人诚挚的邀请您参加我的研究。

研究目的：

本研究主要解决如下几个问题：

1. 在海归教师回到云南高校后，他们究竟具有什么样的经历体验？
2. 在适应过程中，他们拥有哪些机会，面临哪些问题和挑战？
3. 海归教师、非海归同事以及主管部门是如何看待海归教师在中国教育中的地位的？
4. 海外留学或工作经历是否影响海归教师的文化认同感？如果有影响，这种文化认同改变又是以怎样的方式影响海归教师的再回归经历的？
5. 海归教师在文化再适应过程中采取什么样的策略以适应大学的文化、学术以及研究环境的？
6. 海归教师和大学之间是否存在期望上的差异？如果有差异，这些差异是什么？差异的程度如何？

为了深入了解海归教师回归经历，本研究将才用定性和定量研究的方式进行以收集数据。本研究将对海归教师，非海归同事，学校管理人员三者进行深度访谈。

采访对象：

本研究将采访二十个具有国外硕士学位或博士学位，或者是博士后学位的海归人员和十个非海归同事以及十个学校管理人员。

本研究将对采访对象进行面对面的访谈，并对访谈进行录音，在采访对象同意的情况下对采访内容进行笔记。

非常感谢您能参与本研究，您的参与将极大的有助于对海归教师回归再适应经历研究，这将能让我们进一步了解海归教师，为他们提供有利的帮助，同时也能给大学和政府的政策调整提供依据，并且能帮助我们了解跨文化经历对留学人员的影响。如果您愿意参与本研究，本介绍后附有同意书。希望收到本研究结果的参与人员将收到一份最终的研究报告。

为保证您的隐私，所有参与者的名字都不会出现在研究结果中，只有本人及导师可以接触到原始数据，并且只有本人才有机会接触到存储数据的电脑。

所有参与者都可以自由选择如何回答问题，或不回答问题，或退出采访。

详细联系联系方式：

如你对本研究有任何疑问，请联系我的导师 Frank Sligo 教授，联系方式：梅西大学交际，新闻及市场营销学院，电子邮箱：F.Sligo@massey.ac.nz .

黎明生博士，联系方式如下：梅西大学交际，新闻及市场营销学院，电子邮箱：M.S.Li@massey.ac.nz.

本研究已经得到梅西大学人类伦理道德委员会的审查和同意，申请号为 Southern B, 13/66。如您对本研究有任何质疑，请联系梅西大学人类伦理道德委员会主席 Nathan Mathews 博士，联系电话：0064-06-3505799 转 80877，电子邮箱：humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

再次感谢您的参与！

新西兰梅西大学

王敏

电话：0086 13987168855， 电子邮箱：mevelynwang@hotmail.com.

Appendix 3 (1)

Massey University
School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR RETURNEES

Title of the project: Homecoming: Foreign-educated Returnees' Experience of Reentry into Chinese Universities in Yunnan Province, China

I have received and read the Information Sheet and have also had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

- I agree/do not agree to note being taken during the interview and the interview being digitally recorded.
- I agree/do not agree that I may withdraw from this project at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.
- I agree/do not agree if I withdraw, all relevant information including digital recording and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree/do not agree that the published results will not use my name, unless I have given consent in addition to this form and no opinions or quotations will be attributed to me or presented in any way that identifies me without my additional expressed consent.
- I agree/do not agree that the digital recording of the interview will be destroyed at the end to the project.
- I agree/do not agree that the data I provide will not be used for any other purposes or released to others without my written consent.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
- I wish/do not wish receive a copy of the summary of the research.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

Appendix 3 (2)

新西兰梅西大学交际、新闻与市场营销学院

项目参与同意书

项目名称： 云南高校“海归”留学归国教师归国经历研究

我已经收到和阅读了该项目研究简介，详细了解了本研究的内容，并就有关疑问的地方进行了询问，对这些问题的回答我很满意，我理解如果还有问题，我任何时候都可以再询问。

- 1、我同意/不同意采访中可以做笔记和录音。
- 2、我同意/不同意我任何时候可以依我自己之便退出本项目。
- 3、我希望/不希望数据保存于一个官方档案馆。
- 4、我如果同意/不同意如果我退出该项目，我提供的所有相关信息包括录音、记录、或任何与之有关的都将被销毁。
- 5、我同意/不同意没有我的同意，要发表的调查结果不能出现我的名字，也不能有任何和我名字相关的评论或引用，如果要出现我名字，必须有我额外许可。
- 6、我同意/不同意录音内容在研究结束后销毁。
- 7、我同意/不同意我提供的信息如果没有我本人书面同意，不能用于其他研究或泄露与他人。
- 8、我同意参与本项目的研究。
- 9、我希望/不希望收到一份研究结果综述。

签名:

日期:

Appendix 4 (1)

QUESTIONNAIRE TO RETURNEES

(ENGLISH VERSION)

Section I. Personal information

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Host country/countries:

Degrees from overseas:

Where you obtained your degrees:

When you obtained your degrees:

Disciplines you studied overseas:

Length of stay overseas:

Length of current work experience in

China:

Current academic position(s):

Job(s) you did before going overseas:

Section II. Quantitative questions:

Please indicate your view by ticking the box on each of the following statements (tick one only).

Legend:

1. Very little 2. Little 3. Some 4. Much 5. Very much

		1	2	3	4	5
1	How satisfied do you feel about your experience of re-adapting to China?					
2	How satisfied are you with the academic environment you now work in?					
3	In your view, how supportive is your current university in helping you adapt to the academic life of the university?					
4	Overall, how satisfied are you with your current salary as a returnee?					
5	As a returnee, how satisfied are you about your current academic role in teaching?					
6	As a returnee, how satisfied are you about your current academic role in research?					
7	As a returnee, how satisfied are you with the relationship you now have with your non-returnee colleagues?					

Please read the statements from 8-28 and indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements (tick one only).

Legend:

1. Very little 2. Little 3. Some 4. Much 5. Very much

		1	2	3	4	5
8	I think my overseas experience was helpful to me in obtaining my current job.					
9	I think my overseas experience was helpful to me to my teaching in my current university position.					
10	I think my overseas experience was helpful to me to my research in my current university position.					
11	I feel my overseas experience is valued by my non-returnee colleagues.					
12	Thinking of my expectations about work prior to my returning, my expectations have been met.					
13	I think my overseas experience has changed my outlook on the world.					
14	I think my overseas experience has changed how I look on Chinese-based culture.					
15	I think my overseas experience has changed how I look on Western-based culture.					

16	My Western education experience has changed my view on how students are being taught at my current university.				
17	Adaption to the life in my present university was difficult.				
18	Foreign-educated Chinese returnees are an important factor in this university's attempts to become more globalized.				
19	In this university, returnees are more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnee colleagues.				
20	In this university, returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their teaching.				
21	In this university, returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research.				
22	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in teaching that non-returnee colleagues cannot fulfil.				
23	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in research that Chinese educated colleagues cannot fulfil.				
24	I think foreign awarded credentials hold more value than Chinese awarded credentials.				
25	Foreign-educated returnees should usually be paid more than non-returnee colleagues.				
26	Foreign-educated returnees should be given preferential treatment such as salaries, research funds, house subsidies and jobs for their spouses when they return to work in this university.				
27	It is important for this university to recruit top foreign-educated returnees.				
28	Foreign-educated returnees bring new pedagogical ideas to this university.				

Appendix 4 (2)

QUESTIONNAIRE TO RETURNEES (CHINESE VERSION)

海归教师问卷调查表

第一部分 基本情况

性别： 男 女:

年龄:

学习国别:

获得的国外最高学位:

学位获得学校:

最高学位获得时间:

国外学习专业:

在国外的时间:

从回国到现在在中国从事的工作时间:

目前的专业技术职称:

出国前从事的工作:

第二部分 问卷调查

请您对以下观点发表您的看法，每句之后有五个选项，请在您认为最能代表您观点的选项前打钩（只选一个选项）。

符号标示：

1. 很不满意 2. 不太满意 3. 还算满意 4. 满意 5. 很满意

		1	2	3	4	5
1	您对您回国的工作经历有多满意？					
2	您对您现在工作的学术环境有多满意？					
3	在您看来，您目前工作的大学在帮助您适应大学的学术生活上支持的情况如何？					
4	总的来说作为一名海归，您对您目前的工资满意吗？					
5	您对您目前的教学工作满意吗？					
6	您对您目前的科研工作有多满意？					
7	在您看来，您对您现在和非海归同事的关系感觉满意吗？					

请仔细阅读 8-28 的内容，在复合您情况的陈述前打钩（只选一个选项）。

符号标示

1. 完全不赞成 2. 不太赞成 3. 有一些赞成 4. 赞成 5. 很赞成

		1	2	3	4	5
8	我认为我的海外经历对我获得现在的工作有帮助。					
9	我认为我的海外经历对我的教学工作有帮助。					
10	我认为我的海外经历对我的科研有帮助。					
11	我的非海归同事看重我的海外经历。					
12	就我回国之前对工作的期望来看，我觉得我的期望达到了。					
13	在我看来，我的海外经历改变了我的世界观。					
14	在我看来，我的海外经历改变了我对中国文化的看法。					

15	在我看来，我的海外经历改变了我对西方文化的看法。				
16	我的海外经历改变了我对目前就职的大学的授课方式的看法。				
17	刚回国时，很难适应学校生活。				
18	国外留学归国教师促进了这个大学的国际化。				
19	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师更有可能引入新的课程。				
20	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师在教学上表现更突出。				
21	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师在科研上表现更突出。				
22	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了教学水平。				
23	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了科研水平。				
24	在中国人们认为国外证书比国内证书更有价值。				
25	海归教师报酬应该比非海归教师高。				
26	海归教师来该大学工作时，应该给予他们优惠待遇（比如像工资、研究基金、住房补贴、给配偶安排工作等）。				
27	对该大学来说，招聘优秀海归教师来大学工作很重要。				
28	海归教师为该大学带来了新的教育理念。				

Appendix 5 (1)

QUESTIONNAIRE TO NON-RETURNEE COLLEAGUES

Personal Information

Background:

1. What courses do you teach?
2. How long have you worked at this university?
3. What is your highest degree/degrees you obtained?
4. When did you obtain your degree/degrees?
5. Where did you obtain your degree/degrees?
6. What is your professional title?

Quantitative questions:

Please **indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements** by ticking the box on each of the following statements (tick one only).

Legend:

1. Very little
2. Little
3. Some
4. Much
5. Very much

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Foreign educated returnee teachers are an important factor in this university's attempts to become more globalized.					
2	At this university, returnees are more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnee colleagues.					
3	Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their teaching.					
4	Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research.					
5	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in teaching that non-returnee colleagues cannot fulfil.					
6	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in research that non-returnee colleagues cannot fulfil.					
7	I think Foreign awarded credentials hold more value than Chinese awarded credentials.					

8	Foreign-educated returnees should usually be paid more than non-returnee colleagues.				
9	Foreign-educated returnees should be given preferential treatment such as salaries, teaching, research, promotion, housing, research funds, and jobs for their spouses when they return to work in this university.				
10	It is important for this university to recruit top foreign-educated returnees.				
11	Foreign-educated returnees bring new pedagogical ideas to this university.				
12	I am satisfied with the relationship with my foreign-educated colleagues.				
13	I value my foreign-educated colleagues' overseas experience.				
14	There is no point recruiting foreign educated returnees at this university.				
15	Returning teachers are not performing as well as expected at this university.				
16	The contribution by returnee teachers at this university has been exaggerated.				
17	The employment of foreign educated returnee teachers at this university is not as good as expected.				
18	Foreign educated returnee teachers are not as good as non-returnee teachers in terms of their teaching.				
19	Foreign educated returnee teachers are not as good as non-returnee teachers in terms of their research.				
20	Foreign educated returnee teachers are so Westernised that they don't know the real situation in Chinese universities.				
21	It is hard to maintain personal relationship with foreign educated returnee teachers.				
22	The knowledge and skills by foreign educated returnee teachers are not applicable in the Chinese context.				

Appendix 5 (2)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-RETURNEES (CHINESE VERSION)

非海归同事问卷调查

第一部分 基本情况

7. 您教的课程是_____。
8. 您在该校/系工作的时间_____。
9. 您的最高学位是_____。
10. 您获得学位的时间是_____。
11. 您获得学位的大学是_____。
12. 您的专业技术职称是_____。

第二部分 问卷调查

请您对以下观点发表您的看法，每句之后有五个选项，请在您认为最能代表您观点的选项前打钩（只选一个选项）。

符号标示

1. 完全不赞成
2. 不太赞成
3. 有一些赞成
4. 赞成
5. 很赞成

		1	2	3	4	5
1	国外留学归国教师促进了这个大学的国际化。					
2	在该大学里，海归教师比起非海归教师更有可能引入新的课程。					
3	在该大学里，比起非海归教师，海归教师在教学上表现更突出。					
4	在该大学里，比起非海归教师，海归教师在科研上表现更突出。					
5	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了教学水平。					
6	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了科研水平。					

7	在中国人们认为国外证书比国内证书更有价值。				
8	海归教师报酬应该比非海归教师高。				
9	海归教师来该大学工作时，应该给与他们优惠待遇（比如像研究基金、住房补贴、给配偶安排工作等）。				
10	对该大学来说，招聘优秀海归教师来大学工作很重要。				
11	海归教师为该大学带来了新的教育理念。				
12	我对我跟海归同事的关系很满意。				
13	我看重我海归同事的国外经历。				
14	我认为该大学没有必要聘用海归教师。				
15	在该大学，海归教师在教学上的表现没有像预期的那样好。				
16	在该大学，海归教师在科研上的表现没有像预期的那样好。				
17	海归教师对该大学的作用被夸大了。				
18	海归教师不了解中国大学的实际情况。				
19	海归教师带回来的知识和技能在中国不适用。				
20	海归教师常常有一种优越感。				
21	在我看来，拔尖的中国留学生仍然留在海外，回到国内大学工作的海归并非都是拔尖人才。				
22	在我们学校，有的海归教师在教学和科研方面都不及非海归教师。				

Appendix 6 (1)

QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADMINISTRATORS

Personal Information

1. How long have you worked at this university?
2. What is your present position?
3. How long have you been in your present position?
4. Have you studied overseas?
5. Which country/countries did you study in?

Quantitative questions:

Please **indicate your view** by ticking the box on each of the following statements (tick one only).

Legend:

	1. Very little	2. Little	3. Some	4. Much	5. Very much			
				1	2	3	4	5
1	Foreign-educated Chinese returnees are an important factor in this university's attempts to become more globalized.							
2	At this university, returnees are more likely to introduce new curricula than non-returnee colleagues.							
3	Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their teaching at this university.							
4	Returnees are more likely to perform better than non-returnee colleagues in terms of their research at this university.							
5	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in teaching that non-returnee colleagues cannot fulfil.							
6	In this university, foreign-educated returnees play a role in research that non-returnee colleagues cannot fulfil.							
7	Foreign educated returnee teachers' participation is important in updating the teaching standards at this university.							
8	Foreign educated returnee teachers' participation is important in updating the research standards at this university.							

9	I think foreign awarded credentials hold more value than Chinese awarded credentials.				
10	Foreign-educated returnees should be paid more than non-returnee colleagues.				
11	Foreign-educated returnees should be given preferential treatment such as salaries, research funds, house subsidies and jobs for their spouses when they return to work in this university.				
12	It is important for this university to recruit top foreign educated returnees.				
13	Foreign-educated returnees bring new pedagogical ideas to this university.				
14	I feel satisfied with returnee teachers' current academic role in teaching at this university.				
15	I feel satisfied with returnee teachers' current academic role in research at this university.				
16	There is no point recruiting foreign educated returnees at this university.				
17	Returnee teachers are not performing as well as expected.				
18	The contribution by returnee teachers at this university has been exaggerated.				
19	The employment of foreign educated returnee teachers is not as successful as expected.				
20	Foreign educated returnee teachers are not as good as non-returnee teachers in terms of their teaching.				
21	Foreign educated returnee teachers are so Westernised that they don't know the real situation in Chinese universities.				
22	The knowledge and skills by foreign educated returnee teachers are not applicable in the Chinese context.				

Appendix 6 (2)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

(CHINESE VERSION)

管理人员问卷调查

第一部分 基本情况

6. 您在该大学工作的时间_____。
7. 您目前的职位是_____。
8. 您担任目前职位的时间_____。
9. 您有海外学习经历吗？_____。
10. 您海外留学的国家是_____。

第二部分 调查问卷

请仔细阅读下列内容，在符合您情况的陈述前打钩（只选一个选项）。

符号标示

1. 完全不赞成 2. 不太赞成 3. 有一些赞成 4. 赞成 5. 很赞成

		1	2	3	4	5
1	国外留学归国教师促进了这个大学的国际化。					
2	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师更有可能引入新的课程。					
3	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师在教学上表现更突出。					
4	在该大学，比起非海归教师，海归教师在科研上表现更突出。					
5	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了教学水平。					
6	海归教师的参与帮助该大学提高了科研水平。					
7	在中国人们认为国外证书比国内证书价值更高。					

8	海归教师报酬应该比非海归教师高。				
9	海归教师来该大学工作时，应该给与他们优惠待遇（比如像研究基金、住房补贴、给配偶安排工作等）。				
10	对该大学来说，招聘优秀海归教师来大学工作很重要				
11	海归教师为该大学带来了新的教学理念。				
12	我对海归教师的教学的很满意。				
13	我对海归教师的科研很满意。				
14	我认为该大学没有必要聘用海归教师。				
15	海归教师在教学上的表现没有像预期的那样好。				
16	海归教师在科研上的表现没有像预期的那样好。				
17	海归教师对该大学的作用被夸大了。				
18	海归教师不了解中国大学的实际情况。				
19	海归教师带回来的知识和技能在中国不适用。				
20	海归教师常常有一种优越感。				
21	在我看来，拔尖的中国留学生仍然留在海外，回到国内大学工作的海归并非都是拔尖人才。				
22	在我们学校，有的海归教师在教学和科研方面都不及非海归教师。				

Appendix 7 (1)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO RETURNEES

(ENGLISH VERSION)

Teaching and research experiences since return

1. What major factors in particular influenced your decision to come back to China?
2. Could you please describe in detail how you have adapted to the way of life in this university since returning?
3. What have been the major challenges in your adaptation back to the life here? What have been the most difficult challenges?
4. What specifically have you done to resolve these challenges?
5. What support for you as a returnee have been put in place by your current university to help you re-adapt?
6. What were your expectations of work prior to your returning? Can you explain in what ways these expectations have been met (or not met)?
7. When you returned to work in this university, what did the university expect of you?
8. Would you please describe in detail about how you feel about your current academic role
 - a) In teaching?
 - b) In research?
9. What have you done to establish your identity as a professional member with overseas education experience in your teaching and research?
10. In what way have you made the most of any advantages of being a returnee in your school or university?
11. What has the university done to make the best use of your overseas experience?
12. What do you think the non-returnee colleagues' attitudes are towards you as a returnee?
13. Do you think there are particular differences between returnees and non-returnee colleagues in terms of their teaching and research? In what ways do you think they are different?

14. What new courses or new curricula have you introduced to the university?
15. What contribution have you made to change
 - a) The course content of the university?
 - b) The teaching pedagogies and approaches of the university?
 - c) The internationalisation of the university?
16. Overall and reflecting on your returning experience, in what ways has your overseas experience been worthwhile professionally?

Suggestions/Advice for Chinese students, administrators and universities

17. What advice would you give to Chinese overseas students who may be considering coming back to work at a Chinese university?
18. Do you have any advice for the university or the government concerning making full use of the cultural and social capital of returnees? What would you tell them?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO NON-RETURNEE COLLEAGUES

(ENGLISH VERSION)

1. Have you worked in collaboration with foreign educated returnees in teaching and research?
2. In your view, what are returnees' strengths and weaknesses? Please give me specific examples.
3. Can you be more explicit about how you value or not value your foreign-educated colleague's overseas experience?
4. Do you think there are any particular differences between returnees and non-returnee colleagues in terms of their teaching and research? In what ways do you think they are different?
5. Why or why not do you think returnees should be given preferential treatment in salaries, teaching, research, promotion, housing, research funds, and jobs for their spouses when they return to work in this university?
6. From your point of view, can you tell me the specific contributions such as in teaching, research and internationalisation of the curricula returnees have made to your university?
7. What new ideas, concepts, and ideologies do you think returnees have brought to the university?
8. Do you think you have any disadvantages facing returnees?
9. To sum up, nowadays, foreign-educated overseas Chinese are coming back in great numbers. How do you view this?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ADMINISTRATORS

(ENGLISH VERSION)

1. Are there any particular returnee recruitment policies or talent recruitment policies at this university? If there are such policies, can you tell me in detail about them? What kinds of incentives does this university use to attract returnees?
2. How many returnees are covered by such policies in this university? How do non returnee teachers perceive this?
3. In your view, what are the major reasons for your university to employ foreign-educated returnees?
4. What is your view about the major contributions returnees have made to your university? Can you give me specific details?
5. Do you think there are particular differences between returnees and non-returnee staff in terms of their teaching and research? In what ways do you think they are different?
6. In your view, what are returnees' strengths and weakness? Please give me specific examples?
7. What new ideas, concepts, and ideologies do you think returnee teachers have brought to the university?
8. What are the advantages of employing returnees? What are the disadvantages? What kind of risks do you think there may be? Can you tell me about some successful returnees and some unsuccessful ones?
9. From your point of view, what is your overall impression of returnees' performance at your university or school?
10. Can you tell me what specific support you have provided to returnees when they returned? What have you done to make best use of their social and cultural capital?
11. From a managerial perspective, can you give some advice to those who would consider coming back to China?
12. To sum up, nowadays, foreign-educated overseas Chinese are coming back in great numbers. How do you view this?

Appendix 7 (2)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO RETURNEES (CHINESE VERSION)

海归人员访谈

1. 影响您决定回国的原因到底是什么呢？
2. 您能具体谈谈回国后您是如何适应大学的生活的？
3. 在您的适应生活过程中，您主要面临哪些挑战？对您来说，最大的挑战是什么？
4. 您是怎么应对这些挑战的？
5. 作为一名海归，您目前就职的大学为您提供了什么样的支持和帮助？
6. 在回国之前，您对工作的期望是什么？您能谈谈这些期望在哪些方面达到了，在哪些方面没有达到？
7. 当您回国来该大学工作时，大学对您的期望和要求是什么？
8. 您能具体谈谈您对您目前的教学工作感受如何？对科研工作感受又如何？
9. 在您的教学和科研中，您是如何显示出您是一位接受过国外教育的专业人员的？
10. 在您工作的大学或学院，您在哪些方面充分利用您海归身份的优势？
11. 为了很好的利用您的国外经历，大学做了什么？
12. 您认为您的非海归同事对您是海归的态度和看法是什么？
13. 您认为海归教师和非海归教师在教学和科研上的主要区别是什么？这些区别又如何影响了该大学的教学、科研和管理？
14. 您对该大学开设了什么样的新课程？
15. 您在大学的课程内容设置上做了什么？在改变大学的教育理念和教学法上做了什么？在大学的国际化方面做了什么？
16. 总的来说，回想您回国的经历，您认为您的留学经历对您的职业而言，哪些方面最突出？
17. 您对那些有可能考虑回中国大学工作的中国留学生的建议是什么？

18. 您对学校或政府机构就如何充分利用海归的文化和社会资本有没有什么建议？这些建议是什么

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO NON-RETURNEE COLLEAGUES

(CHINESE VERSION)

非海归同事访谈

1. 您和您的海归同事在教学和科研上一起合作过吗？
2. 就您的观点来看，海归同事的长处是什么？不足是什么？请举例说明。
3. 您能具体说说您怎样看重还是不看重海归同事的国外学历和经历？
4. 您认为海归教师和非海归教师在教学和科研上有什么特别的区别吗？这些区别主要表现在哪些方面？
5. 您为什么认为应该（或不应该）在工资、教学、科研、升职、研究基金以及给配偶安排工作上给与海归同事优待呢？
6. 您认为海归教师对该大学在教学上，科研上以及课程国际化上作出了什么贡献吗？您能给出具体的例子吗？
7. 您认为海归教师为该大学带来了什么新思想、新理念以及创新意识？
8. 和海归相比，您有没有感到有什么可以像他们学习的地方？
9. 海外留学人员正大量回国，您如何看待这一现象？

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ADMINISTRATORS
(CHINESE VERSION)

管理人员问卷访谈

1. 该大学有没有任何海归招聘政策？如果有的话，您能具体谈谈吗？本大学用什么样的奖励措施来吸引海归教师？
2. 在该大学，有多少海归教师享受了该政策？非海归教师对此的看法是什么？
3. 在您看来，该大学聘用海归教师的主要原因是什么？
4. 您认为海归教师对该大学的贡献是什么？您能给出具体的例子吗？
5. 您认为海归教师和非海归教师在教学和科研上有什么区别吗？这些区别主要表现在哪些方面？
6. 在您看来，海归教师的长处是什么？他们的不足之处是什么？请您具体举例说说。
7. 您认为海归教师对该大学带来了什么新思想、新理念以及新的意识形态？
8. 聘用海归教师的有利之处是什么？不利之处是什么？您认为聘用海归教师有什么样的风险呢？您能给我讲几个成功和不成功的海归的事情吗？
9. 在您看来，您对本校或是本学院海归教师总的印象是什么？
10. 您能告诉我在海归教师回来时您对海归教师提供了什么特别的支持了吗？
您有没有采取什么措施以充分利用海归教师的社会及文化资本呢？
11. 从管理者的角度，您能给那些要考虑回国的留学人员一些建议吗？
12. 总而言之，当今，海外留学人员正大量回国，您如何看待这一现象？

Appendix 8

SAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS MEMO

R1: In her opinion, she thinks that returnees should not look at the Chinese organisational culture, such as bureaucratic culture, work environment and academic atmosphere, from foreign perspectives. If they choose to come, they need to re-adjust themselves to fit into the culture.

R2: R2 believes that adapting to the life back home is much easier than adapting overseas. The university did not provide any help after she came back. She also believes that she has new research concepts after her overseas research. New concept, new knowledge.

R3: She is disappointed about the university. In her opinion, university administrators put more focus on bureaucratic power, instead of research. Research of the university has been influence by bureaucracy.

R4: In his opinion, Chinese environment is bad, including natural and social. The knowledge learned overseas cannot be applied after coming back. Cannot adapt the research environment and research system in China. It focus on the quantity instead of quality.

R5: Little opportunities for promotion for Asian people in foreign companies in US because of her Chinese nationality. Cannot adapt to the academic culture. Professor don't provide students updated knowledge. Their knowledge is old.

R6: Confusion is what has been learned overseas cannot be applied in Chinese context. What has been learned cannot been transferred effectively into classroom teaching.

R7: R7 thinks that the most challenging thing is in communicating with others. She believes because she has stayed in foreign countries for long, she is used to say things directly and is used to tell the truth. This is quite different from others. She didn't know how to please others, to way good word to them. Culture is different.

R8: The most challenging thing is the lack of research funds in China, which is most upset thing for him. The support for science study and social study is different. Science study can get more research funding, whereas for social study, the funding is quite small. Huge difference.

R9: Adapting to the life back is not different, but the way of work and the way of thinking are quite different and challenging. She needs to readjust herself to these two aspects. Too much Interference in doing things in China, such as bureaucratic interference and *guanxi* interference.