

The Role of Leisure for Chinese
Immigrants at the *First Chinese Senior
Association of Vaughan*

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

There is a gap in our field regarding leisure research on specific ethnic groups. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the experience of leisure and of involvement in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan (FCSAV)* for Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have been living in Canada for at least five years. As this is a phenomenological study, the main focus is on the meanings and experiences of these participants.

Purposeful sampling methods were used to find participants who fit the study criteria of being a Chinese immigrant from Mainland China and/or Hong Kong, living in Canada for at least five years, between the ages of 50 to 65, a member of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, and participating in at least one activity at the Centre at the time of interview. Altogether, 13 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted over two weeks in July 2010.

Five main essences were developed from the analysis of the interview data: changing leisure with changing culture; achieving and maintaining health; experiencing freedom and choice; cultural expression and cultural learning; and feeling a sense of community. Interestingly, there was also an overarching theme of *leisure as an essential component to life*.

These findings exemplify the great value Chinese immigrants place upon leisure as they experienced it at the *FCSAV* as well as its connection to holistic health. Also, leisure at the club was described as a site for cultural expression and the development of community. Overall, implications of this study will be of most value to recreation practitioners and researchers by allowing for greater cultural sensitivity in developing and enhancing programs for this specific group.

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Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my family. I am grateful towards my parents who took a lead role in helping me with the translations and other various tasks necessary that require fluent Chinese skills. I would also like to extend this thanks to the various family and family friends who helped with this translation process and with typing in Chinese characters. I am very appreciative of my sister Vivian and her husband Howie for their support and for opening up their home to me during the last part of my masters. And of course, I would like to thank Wim for all his love, patience, and encouragement that remained true and constant throughout these years. Also, I would like to thank all my friends, you know who you are. I feel very fortunate to have had this great network of support.

Dedication

This thesis is first and foremost dedicated to my Grandpa Ng (*yeh-yeh*), who through his healthy lifestyle has influenced my topic choice. Although he has passed, he continues to be my daily inspiration and role model. I would also like to extend this dedication to both my Grandma Ng (*mah-mah*) and Grandma Tang (*poh-poh*) who passed away prior to completing my thesis. Lastly, I would also like to dedicate this to Grandpa Tang (*gong-gong*) for keeping strong. Without each of my grandparents, I would not be who I am today. Thank you for teaching me the value of elders, respect, traditions and, most of all, about Chinese culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Canada is a multicultural country. It is important to note that Canada's immigration rate has been increasing continuously over the years with the majority of immigrants currently coming from various parts of Asia (Statistics Canada, 2008a). More specifically, Statistics Canada (2005) predicts that in the year 2017, 40% of Canada's Chinese population will reside in Toronto. The field of leisure studies has progressed throughout the years and people are recognizing the pertinent role leisure plays in the health and lives of individuals and communities. According to the Canadian index of well-being (2011), leisure and culture is an important measure that composes one of the eight domains of well-being. However, very little research has examined leisure in the lives of immigrants.

The term 'cultural mosaic' is used to describe Canada's multiculturalism and the mix of ethnic groups co-existing in Canadian society (Chao & Moon, 2005). According to the Government of Canada (2009), Canada is a nation that values and respects the contributions of many different cultures. Thus, Canada values Canadian culture but also recognizes the importance of maintaining the cultural practices immigrants bring with them to this country. An important area of study is exploring how different cultures or individuals within different cultures adapt to a new society and what role leisure plays in the adaptation process. Earlier studies show how "increasingly 'new' minorities are less likely to blend into the 'American mainstream' than their predecessors from the turn of the 20th century and are more likely to preserve their original cultures and ties to their countries of origin." (Shinew, Stodolska, Floyd, Hibbler, Allison, Johnson, & Santos, 2006, p. 403-404).

It is interesting to note that within the leisure literature, there has been a growing trend in leisure and ethnicity studies. According to Stodolska and Walker (2007), “the 1990s and the present decade also witnessed a significant diversification in the topics examined by ethnic leisure scholars and in the ethnic groups that have been the focus of study.” (p. 7). This is reinforced by Morden and Hopp (2007), as they describe a fair amount of attention to issues of race, ethnicity, and culture by leisure scholars over the past quarter century. Previously, leisure studies that investigated ethnicity focused primarily on African-Americans. Now, research has expanded to study people of American Indian, Korean, Chinese, South Asian, and Polish descent (Stodolska & Walker). In a study by Li, Chick, Zinn, Absher, and Graefe (2007), it is concluded that ethnic groups should not be categorized as one general group (e.g., Asians) since there are individual cultural values within and between each sub-group (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.). These cultural values may, in turn, have an effect on the leisure perceptions of individuals within those ethnic groups. Therefore, this research begins with the acknowledgment that there is a gap in our understanding of the various aspects of leisure and how it applies to people of different cultures from all over the world. More specifically, there is a greater need for more in-depth research on the role of leisure in community centres for immigrants of all ethnicities.

Recently, there has been a growth in the number of researchers interested in studying the meaning and role of leisure for people of ethnic minorities. Understanding the meaning of leisure within cultures and ethnicity is an important precursor to ensuring the provision of inclusive leisure opportunities and leisure opportunities that meet the needs of diverse groups (Rogerson, 2006). As researchers have explored and come to better understand basic leisure concepts such as motivations and constraints, we can now explore further these variables for

various groups of people. According to Stodolska (2000), "...the literature has significantly expanded its scope both by turning to previously overlooked ethnic and racial groups and by shifting its general focus toward aspects of the leisure experience other than mere participation" (p.156).

Researchers such as Stodolska and her colleagues (1998, 2000, 2003, 2004); Walker and his colleagues (2007, 2008); Tirone and her colleagues (1997, 2005); and others have focused specifically on studying ethnicity within leisure. Related specifically to my interest in Chinese immigrants, some especially relevant studies include Allison and Geiger's (1993) study on the nature of leisure activities among the Chinese-American elderly; Luh's (2004) study of how leisure contributes to the good life for Chinese Canadian older adults residing in long-term care facilities; and Lai's (2006) study on predictors for elderly Chinese immigrants and senior centres. Each of these studies is discussed further in the literature review section. However, to my knowledge, the role of cultural centres and the experience of leisure at the *First Chinese Senior Association on Vaughan* for Chinese immigrants has yet to be explored. This is the focus of my study.

This topic holds a particular interest to me because my grandfather was a very active man. He would do his daily exercises and take walks around the neighbourhood. These were all small efforts at being active that I believe contributed to a healthy life. He lived a long and happy life until he was 93 years old. My grandfather was, and continues to be, my inspiration for living a healthy lifestyle. I hope that by studying how Chinese immigrants experience leisure, I will discover how to make leisure more appealing for other Chinese immigrants. That way, people will be more inclined to participate in leisure and in turn, prolong their

health. Also, as I am a first-generation Chinese-Canadian, I am able to use this study to explore my Chinese heritage and to connect more with my culture.

1.1 Problem Statement/Rationale

Since immigration is increasing at a growing rate, and there is a lack of research on the specific topic of Chinese immigrants in cultural centres, there are still many areas to explore. It is important to understand how leisure changes, its role in adaptation when one comes to Canada, and the issues faced when maintaining valued activities. Therefore, by examining these areas in relation to leisure activities offered at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, we will be able to provide better recreation and leisure programs that take into consideration cultural sensitivity specifically for Chinese immigrants.

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of leisure and of involvement in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese adults. Specifically, I am interested in the experiences of Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have been living in Canada for at least five years. The *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* is an ideal club for this particular study as it offers a variety of different activity classes. More details about the club are outlined in the methodology portion of the thesis.

1.3 Study Objectives

The objectives for the study are:

- a) To explore the meanings and experiences of leisure in the lives of Chinese immigrants aged 50 to 65 years, who have been living in Canada for more than five years
- b) To expand the understanding of Chinese immigrants' experiences at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*
- c) To build awareness that may lead to the improvement of cultural sensitivity when programming for this specific group
- d) To gain knowledge that may enhance their lived experience through leisure for this group and possibly others

1.4 Research Questions

The main research questions guiding the study are:

- a) What meanings do Chinese immigrants attach to leisure?
- b) How do Chinese immigrants experience leisure?
- c) What role does leisure play in the lives of Chinese immigrants and in adjusting to life in Canada?
- d) How do Chinese immigrants describe their experiences in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*?
- e) What role does the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* play in the lives of Chinese immigrants?

1.5 Implications

Findings of studies involving culturally-specific leisure activities are of value to recreation practitioners and researchers. According to Stodolska and Walker (2007), “provision of recreation services to immigrants who often do not speak the English language, are difficult to access, and who have different needs and styles of participation than the ‘traditional’ customers is proving to be a serious challenge to mainstream recreation providers.” (p. 19). Therefore, research allows for better ways to understand how we can optimize leisure in a person’s life to help with the processes of becoming a full citizen in Canada. We can also plan and implement activities that would be more enjoyable and appropriate for people of a specific culture rather than assume the North American practice of leisure. Results from my study may have implications for this specific group by allowing for greater cultural sensitivity in developing and enhancing programs. It will also build an understanding of the meanings of leisure for Chinese adults. This knowledge and understanding may then be transferred to senior centres and long term care homes. According to Lai (2006), “changes are needed in the traditional senior centre services to ensure that senior centres can continue to be attractive to or suitable for these potential new users who may represent a very different cohort of the aging population.” (p.117). As there is a focus on the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, we are able to examine the role of cultural centres for new immigrants. Overall, this study will play a role in raising awareness and in recognizing diversity in the field of leisure studies.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

In this first chapter, I have provided a brief introduction to some important issues for leisure and culture as well as gaps in our understanding. I also introduced the problem statement/rationale, research objectives/purpose, study objectives, research questions, and implications. Chapter Two consists of the literature review, which provides an overview of key definitions, theoretical frameworks. I also discuss leisure in various cultures, ethnicity and Chinese culture, leisure within Chinese culture, the role of leisure for immigrants during the processes of adapting to a new country, ethnic communities, research on Chinese senior centres, health, and leisure constraints and negotiations. In Chapter Three, I describe the methodology, the study setting, selecting the participants and recruiting procedure, and data collection and analysis procedures. In Chapter Four, the findings are presented as five main essences. Lastly, in Chapter Five, I discuss important issues for our field in light of the findings and conclude by discussing limitations and implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to understand the many ways researchers have contemplated leisure as it has been practiced in various cultures. This chapter includes a review of all relevant research in relation to this study. First, I provide definitions for key terms, including ethnicity, race, ethnic group, ethnic identity, ethnic community, multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, adaptation, assimilation, and acculturation or cultural assimilation. Next I present relevant theoretical frameworks. Third, I provide a discussion of research addressing the leisure of various cultures. Then, I look specifically at ethnicity and Chinese culture, and the research on leisure and Chinese culture. Next, I look at studies investigating the role of leisure for immigrants during the processes of adapting to a new country, which is followed by a section describing the purpose and importance of ethnic communities. Next, I look more specifically at research on leisure and Chinese senior centres. I then present a general overview of research examining both the relationship between leisure and health, as well as leisure constraints and negotiations. Lastly, I briefly summarize the chapter.

As previously mentioned, there is yet to be research specifically on the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants living in the Greater Toronto Area. However, a study by Iwasaki and Bartlett (2006) examined how leisure is viewed differently by different cultures and conveys different meanings for individuals. As Gramann and Allison (1999) state, “similar activities may hold very different meanings for different populations.” (p. 292). Leisure research in this area is starting to grow; however, changes and improvements must still be made. Therefore, part of my goal for this study is to add to the understanding of leisure and ethnicity.

2.1 Key Terms

It is important to establish some concrete definitions of the terms that are essential to this study. Statistics Canada (2008b) defines ethnicity as being somewhat multidimensional as it includes all aspects such as race, origin or ancestry, identity, language, and religion.

Freysinger and Harris (2006) state that ethnicity is a social construction, which means that it is defined by societal views.

Statistics Canada (2008b) defines race as being “based primarily upon genetically imparted physiognomical features among which skin colour is a dominant, but not the sole, attribute.” (paragraph 1). According to Chavez (2000): “the words *race* and *ethnicity* are sociological, that is, these are all constructs and labels used out of convenience.” (p. 180).

Freysinger and Harris (2006) believe that race matters as it defines social relations and vice versa; it determines power and privilege. For the purpose of my study, I consider both race and ethnicity to be socially constructed. These terms are defined by social beliefs and therefore can be subjective.

McLemore and Romo define an ethnic group as “a group or category of people whose inclusion in the group or category is based primarily on similarities of nationality, religion, language, or other aspects of a person’s social and cultural behaviour.” (1998; as cited in Freysinger & Harris, 2006, p. 254). Ethnic identity “refers to the extent to which one identifies with one’s ethnic group.” (Cokley, 2005, p. 517). Ethnic communities may be defined as areas in which people of a specific ethnicity associate.

According to the Library of Parliament (2006), multiculturalism in Canada refers to the “presence and persistence of diverse racial and ethnic minorities who define themselves as different and who wish to remain so.” Cultural pluralism occurs when immigrant groups

participate fully in the dominant society, yet are able to maintain their cultural differences (Hing, 1993).

Adaptation is the process by which an immigrant gets used to their new environment and becomes more comfortable (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004). Assimilation is defined as “a process by which members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups become absorbed into the dominant culture.” (Kendall, Murray, & Linden, 2004, p. 323). Also, Kendall and colleagues define acculturation as a form of cultural assimilation. Cultural assimilation occurs when members of an ethnic group adopt dominant group traits, such as language, dress, values, religion, and food preferences.

Each of these terms provides a foundation for topics discussed in my study and so it is important to establish the definitions first to ensure a consistent understanding throughout the study. It is important to understand the concepts of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism as this thesis studies an ethnic group living in Canada.

2.2 *Theoretical Frameworks*

Several researchers have developed theoretical frameworks to help understand and explain the differences in recreation patterns among various ethnic groups. According to Washburne (1978), there are two contrasting theses: the marginality (or opportunity) thesis and the ethnicity (or subcultural) thesis (as cited in Gramann & Allison, 1999, p. 290). The marginality thesis states that under-participation in recreation may be due to reasons of poverty and/or the discrimination against people of ethnic backgrounds. The differences in socioeconomic status may play a large role as it reduces opportunities and resources. Chavez (2000) describes disadvantages such as lack of access to transportation, underdeveloped

program availability, and lack of program sensitivity to meet the particular needs and interests of ethnic groups.

The ethnicity thesis focuses on ethnic and racial differences in participation that are due to culturally-based differences in value systems, norms, and leisure-socialization patterns (Washburne, 1978; as cited in Gramann & Allison, 1999, p. 290). Ethnic groups are able to preserve a distinct subculture identity while also maintaining contact within the dominant mainstream society. Other explanations discussed by Gramann and Allison that further our understanding of ethnic and racial differences in leisure patterns include the influence of real and perceived discrimination on recreation participation and recreational pursuits as expressive models of culture. People may change their recreation activities and patterns to avoid situations of discrimination. Other times, people of various ethnicities may participate in more Westernized activities; however, the meaning behind the activity may be transformed into a distinct expression of one's culture.

Washburne's (1978) marginality-ethnicity theoretical framework has been the most influential theory within leisure and ethnicity research (as cited in Stodolska & Walker, 2007, p. 9). Many studies such as those conducted by Allison and Geiger (1993), Freysinger and Harris (2006), and Waye (2005) describe either the ethnicity thesis and/or marginality in their work. The theoretical frameworks will be analyzed further in the discussion chapter.

2.3 Research on Leisure within Various Cultures

Many authors explore the role leisure plays in the lives of people of different ethnicities and how it varies from the standard, North American view of leisure (Stodolska & Yi, 2003; Tirone & Shaw, 1997; Walker & Wang, 2008). Iwasaki and Bartlett (2006) explored how

culturally meaningful leisure can be used as a means of coping with stress among Aboriginal Canadians with diabetes. According to their study, leisure for Aboriginal people is closely linked to their world views, which include elements of: the sacredness of life; a reciprocal and interdependent relationship with all creations; sense of place or connection to environment; and the cyclical pattern of life through cultural rituals and traditions. The authors showed how culturally-based leisure activities were especially useful in coping with culturally-bound stressors such as racism. As a coping mechanism, leisure has important cultural meanings for Aboriginal people as it allows for a collective strength, cultural identity, spiritual renewal, and physical and/or behavioural benefits. Some of these culturally-specific leisure activities described by Iwasaki and Bartlett include Aboriginal dancing, music, spiritual readings and going to reserves. According to these authors, different types of activities are able to speak to different groups of people in a certain manner.

Recreation and leisure, and therapeutic recreation, retain varying levels of importance and significance in different countries. Aho's (2007) study of the role of crafts in Finland illustrates how they play a key role within leisure. In this study, pedagogic crafts provide meaningful activities and development of self and personal inclinations in leisure. Therapeutic crafts aim to assist clients experiencing illness or disability, and to help them develop and use their leisure time to promote health, independence and well-being. Aho's study suggests crafts carry a special meaning for Finns as they are both expressive and creative. Finnish people, according to Aho, like to embrace their culture through crafts as well as to share in other cultural recreation experiences.

Nishino, Chino, Yoshioka, and Gabriella (2007) conducted a study on the use of culturally appropriate recreation activities within long-term care facilities in Japan. The

authors discuss how the perception of recreation in the Japanese society is very different and argue it is essential to incorporate these Japanese cultural traditions and concepts into leisure programming. As the authors made clear, seasonal activities are meaningful in Japan and help Japanese people experience the four seasons and regional culture. Some examples of activities that incorporate the seasons as cited in the study include Ohanami, Momijigari, the Bon Festival, and Setsubun. Other traditional games include Otedama, Igo and Shogi, and Karuta. This study showed that Japanese older adults living in a long-term care facility are more comfortable and familiar with recreation activities of their own culture. It highlights how the Japanese perception of “recreation” and activities found most meaningful are different for Japanese adults compared to what might be meaningful in North America. Therefore, there should be a culturally-specific means of recreation available. The authors urged practitioners to develop and implement a system that is more relevant to Japanese older adults.

Within the literature, many studies have examined how women from different ethnic and cultural groups experience leisure. More specifically, Wray (2007) highlights how women of different ethnicities may differ significantly in their views on mid-life. Tirone and Shaw (1997) assessed how important or central leisure was in the lives of women immigrants from India living in Canada. This study is unique in that the authors allowed for participants to develop their own understanding of leisure as opposed to using a pre-defined conception. This further emphasizes how leisure may convey different meanings for various cultures. Family appeared to play a very central part in the lives of the women from India. Extended family was seen as providing friendship as well as a support network. According to the authors, Indian women seemed to have a complicated relationship with leisure as they were accustomed to putting the needs of their family ahead of their own. Also, these women were

used to everything being shared and open and so they found the North American concept of private time to be negative and self-centered. For these women, the time spent with family and at home was central to their leisure satisfaction. These aspects may be applicable to women of all cultures; however, it is significant because it is an emphasized expectation and upbringing within the Indian culture (Tirone & Shaw). Tirone and Pedlar (2005) found that for second generation Canadian youth of Indian background, leisure was experienced in both their Canadian and ethnic communities using forms of dance and music, as well as sharing in the diverse cultural leisure of friends.

Stodolska and Alexandris (2004) studied recreational sport participation for Korean immigrants. Golf is often seen as an elite sport with high social status that also acts as a means of networking. According to these authors, it appears social class has a great influence on Korean immigrants' choice of sport, as well as Asian sports role models. Similarly to Chinese, the word "leisure" does not exist in the Korean language and so is often described as free time activities or things to do for fun or pleasure. Further, Stodolska and Alexandris argue that often many of the Korean immigrants have little time for leisure since so much of their energy is focused on getting their lives together in their new country. Thus, leisure is low on the priority list during their initial stages of post-immigration. In a study by Stodolska and Yi (2003), traditional sports and ethnic communities allowed for bonds to form and strengthen between Korean immigrants living in the United States. Also, many immigrants noticed an increase in leisure activities and interactions with family after their immigration. It is also important to understand as Chung (2008) has shown, that church may act as a very important site for leisure, providing a space for Koreans to be social.

Stodolska and Yi (2003) extended their study to adolescent immigrants from Mexico. According to these authors, for Mexican-Americans, leisure is motivated by strong family values and relations, warmth in their interpersonal contacts, and spontaneity in their leisure engagements. Thus, leisure appears to be very social and extended families play a big role for Mexicans. Mexican children are raised with more freedom in choosing where and with whom to spend their leisure time. Also, their study illustrated how community and sharing of responsibilities is an important part of their leisure.

Stodolska has conducted many studies with different ethnic groups; however, much of her research focuses on those who share her own Polish descent. Soccer is the most played sport among Polish immigrants as it is very popular in Poland. Similar to the Korean and Chinese language, the Polish language also lacks a word for “leisure” and so it is understood as free time activities and things one does for fun or pleasure. Polish people tended to gain a sense of community and bond with other Polish immigrants through membership in ethnic sports clubs (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004). Similar to the Korean immigrants, sports were seen as a way for Polish immigrants to display their wealth and social status within these ethnic communities.

Stodolska and Yi (2003) conducted a study of adolescent immigrants from Poland and showed that Polish adolescents appeared more shy and restrained in their interpersonal relations compared to adolescents of other cultures. Polish adolescents in this study had a negative view of immigration. The adolescents felt they had less free time with their parents, who were struggling with work-related problems, than prior to immigration. At the same time, Polish adolescents seemed to have the same openness and freedom as young Mexican adolescents.

Stodolska and Jackson (1998) conducted research exploring how Polish immigrants in Canada were also susceptible to the experience of discrimination in both leisure and work due to their status as white, ethnic minorities. Often, these experiences of discrimination affected their choices of leisure activities as they searched for ways to avoid, escape, and recuperate from discrimination.

For individuals with a lower socio-economic status, leisure in North America can be seen as a commodity. Therefore, some immigrant minority groups may face constraints in leisure participation due to money issues. In Stodolska and Yi's (2003) study, immigrants from Mexico and Poland were able to take part in more materialistic forms of leisure while Korean immigrants had fewer opportunities. There also appeared to be a decrease in leisure time for adolescent immigrants as they were trying to balance both school and work.

According to Stodolska and Yi, there has been a mixture of feelings regarding family time. Koreans felt that the immigration process brought the family closer together, where Polish adolescents felt they had less time with their parents who were overwhelmed with work. The process of immigration has a powerful influence on adolescents' psychological and emotional development, which may force them to grow up more quickly (Stodolska & Yi).

Barnett (2006) explored the leisure preferences of African-, Asian-, European- and Hispanic-American university students. The findings for Asian-Americans are particularly relevant to my study. Barnett's results show that Asian-Americans played and watched sports less often than members of other ethnic groups. However, Asian-Americans had a greater affinity for the performing arts. It is significant that Asian-Americans appeared to show a lack of preference for most categories of leisure including health and fitness activities, outdoor activities, and water activities. Barnett's work illustrates how gender, race, and ethnicity, with

a combination of personality, affective style, and motivational orientation are all factors that account for an individual's leisure preference.

2.4 *Ethnicity and Chinese Culture*

To gain a fuller understanding of how Chinese immigrants experience leisure, it is helpful to provide an overview of some of the most important aspects of the Chinese culture. Chinese people are greatly influenced by Chinese virtues and traditions. Chinese people are known to value the relationship between human beings and nature. For example, "Nature and man are one" is a popular Chinese sentiment (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2006, p. 3). However, it is also important to understand the core teachings from the three co-existing Chinese ideologies of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, was a great thinker and educator who compiled and preserved many literary works. *The Analects of Confucius* were compiled to share the teachings and behaviors as guided by Confucius (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2006). Confucius valued education highly and believed that teachers should encourage students to think independently and that students should form their own opinions when acquiring knowledge from textbooks. Confucius developed a moral and ethical system called *ren* (which means benevolence), in which he emphasized that people should "do as you would like to be done by others." (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, p. 7).

Laozi, the founder of Taoism, believed that *Tao* (the way or path) is the beginning of all creation and the force that flows through all life (Wang & Stringer, 2000). *Tao* is equated to having a perfect balance between all things; therefore, everything exterior can be equated with

self, and life and death are equal (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2006). Taoists beliefs comprise of the four Principles of Nature (oneness, dynamic balance, cyclical growth, harmonious action) and the six Ethical Suggestions (selflessness, moderation, embracing the mystery, non-contrivance, detachment, humility) (Wang & Stringer).

Buddhism, which originated in India, had a profound influence in China, both as a religion and a philosophy. Buddhism strongly influences notions of how to conduct oneself and how people perceive the world (Luh, 2004). Serenity, harmony, compassion and consideration are important values within Buddhism. Buddhists believe in the importance of maintaining clear and calm thoughts to prevent the mind from distractions or negative thoughts; this is attained through meditation (Luh).

The Office of Chinese Language Council International (2006) outlined five key traditional virtues in China that are still practiced today. The first is the filial virtue where Chinese people show devotion to their parents in order to gain honesty, faithfulness, and gratitude to others. The second virtue is to respect the aged and to love the young; this is considered a social responsibility and behavioural norm that can be punished by law in China if ignored. The third virtue is *three friends in cold weather*, which refers to pine, bamboo, and plum, and their ability to withstand the winter. More specifically, pine represents strong will, bamboo represents inflexibility and modesty, and plum represents purity which encourages people to improve themselves (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2006). Chinese people aim to pursue the noble and esteemed characteristics from each type of tree. The fourth virtue is integrity and credit, where people keep true to their word, thereby enforcing righteousness. The last virtue is to respect teachers and to value education. Education is very highly respected in China and with knowledge, comes a rise in social status.

Lastly, another significant aspect is Chinese traditions. Chinese people enjoy reading Chinese literature, which includes series of famous songs and poems. There are also many traditional Chinese arts, which include folk music, opera, calligraphy, seal cutting, and paper cuts among, many others. Chinese people also follow many folk customs such as lion dance, 12 symbolic animals, Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn festival and many other festivities. Also, Chinese people have their own traditional culture in relation to clothing, cuisine, and medicine (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2006). Overall, the Chinese culture is very rich in tradition and expression. This background information on ethnicity and Chinese culture may not apply to every Chinese individual; however, it provides a general background about the basis of the Chinese culture.

2.5 Research on Leisure and Chinese Culture

This section of the literature review is especially helpful for my study as it discusses leisure research related to Chinese people. It is also important to note that leisure is not conceptually defined in the Chinese language, though its meaning is widely understood as activities during free time (Luh, 2004). Ho and Card (2002) used words like “recreation”, “enjoyment”, and “satisfaction” as synonyms to describe “leisure”.

Walker, Jackson, and Deng (2007, 2008) have produced a series of research articles that compare leisure motivations and leisure constraints among Canadian and Mainland Chinese university students. These articles provided much insight as I designed my study. Although their studies focused on Chinese university students, the basic values and traditions, within the Chinese culture were identified by the authors. It has been noted that Chinese people’s ambivalent attitudes toward leisure can be contrasted with their more positive attitudes toward

higher education and achievement (Walker et al., 2007). Further, the authors also showed that Chinese students are more interpersonally and intrapersonally constrained than Canadian students. Interpersonal constraints vary across cultures but may include the lack of other people with whom to recreate (Walker et al.). Intrapersonal constraints include individual psychological states. More specifically, the ten intrapersonal constraints tested in this study were: affective attitude, instrumental attitude, injunctive norm, social support, self-efficacy, controllability, need/personal choice, need/mutual choice, need/relatedness, and role fulfillment (Walker et al.). Results showed that Chinese students were more intrapersonally constrained in all areas except for their need for belonging (need/relatedness). Some examples of leisure constraints for Chinese students include the lack of free time or companionship.

Fancott (2001) studied the role of exercise for middle-aged Chinese women and found that Chinese women value health as a cultural object, and understand that physical activity leads to good health. Therefore, Chinese women were likely to participate in exercises and other moderate activities as a means of preventative health care. As noted above, Chinese people value longevity and family; hence the longer one lives, the more they can value these aspects of their life. Popular leisure activities for the women in Fancott's study included walking, general home exercise programs, aerobics, *tai chi* or *kung fu* or martial arts, racquet sports (tennis, squash), dancing, and swimming.

Ho and Card (2002) studied the leisure experiences of older Chinese women immigrants before and after emigration to the United States. In China, these women were raised in a culture where a woman's status was confined by gender roles. A woman's fate is first determined by her father and later passed on to her husband. While in China, most of their leisure time revolved around family, taking care of grandchildren and daily chores

(although, not viewed as work), and religious activities to help others. After immigrating to the United States, women's leisure experiences included watching TV, walking, shopping, exercising, attending church, and gardening (Ho & Card). However some barriers included language, transportation, and cultural differences. For the most part, traditional Chinese values played a large part in their lives. Also, religious activities were important as they provided a social link. Overall, leisure was not a main priority for the participants in this study and they were satisfied with their lives and had positive attitudes about the future.

Chou, Chow, and Chi (2004) studied leisure participation among older adults living in Hong Kong. The study showed leisure activities such as watching television and listening to the radio to be most frequent, where-as playing cards or *mah-jong* ranked lowest. Other results in this study showed that Chinese older men participated more in physical, social, and solitary activities, and attended cultural or sport events more than Chinese older women. Lastly, older adults who were working were less likely than those not working to engage in leisure activities other than reading newspapers, books, or magazines (Chou et al.).

A popular activity among Chinese people is *tai chi*. Another common activity is *qi gong*. As discussed more in chapter 4, these activities were also popular among the participants in my study. Therefore it is important to provide an overview of both these activities. *Tai chi* is a traditional Chinese relaxation exercise that uses both mind and body. It consists of 108 intricate exercises performed in a slow, relaxed manner over the span of 30 minutes (Hong, 2008). In a study by Lan, Lai, Chen, and Wong (1998), the researchers studied *tai chi* training in the elderly over a 12-month period and its effects of health fitness. Results from this study show that *tai chi* is effective in improving cardiorespiratory function, muscle strength, and flexibility in the elderly (Lan et al.). *Tai chi* is also known for its stress-

reduction effects. It may also help to alleviate tension, depression, anxiety, and mood disturbances. In another study conducted by Frye, Scheinthal, Kemarskaya, and Pruchno (2007), both *tai chi* and low impact exercise were examined for their effects on the physical functioning and psychological well-being of older people over a 12-week period. Results showed that both *tai chi* and low impact exercise helped improve upper body strength, balance, cardiovascular endurance, lower body strength, and reduced sleep disturbances and anxiety (Frye et al.). However, some additional, notable findings emerged. Participants of low impact exercise reported better functional ability while participants of *tai chi* reported better subjective health (Frye et al.).

Another ancient Chinese exercise similar to *tai chi*, is *qi gong*. *Qi gong* is an exercise that combines movement, meditation, and regulation of breathing to enhance the flow of *qi*, which means vital energy (Fancott, 2001). A study by Tsai, Chen, Lin, and Yeh (2008), examined how *qi gong* can improve the physical health status in middle-aged women. Results from this study show that the practice of *qi gong* has health-preserving effects such as improvement in muscular endurance and body composition.

Luh (2004) suggests that Chinese people like to preserve their culture, which is why their leisure is strongly influenced by the Chinese culture. Research has shown that leisure serves as a way for Chinese people to maintain their ethnic identity. A study by Allison and Geiger (1993) on elderly Chinese-Americans initially discovered that many of the activities (e.g., sewing, walking, gardening, reading, television watching) were no different than the activities of elderly Anglo people. However, upon closer examination, many of these activities were bound up with Chinese-oriented content and meaning. Recreation activity was used as a means to express their Chinese heritage, for example, gardening to grow Chinese vegetables,

and sewing to make festive traditional clothes. Allison and Geiger summarized: “thus despite that fact that many of the Chinese had lived in the United States for 20 years or more, they still utilized much of their recreation activity to express their Chinese heritage.” (as cited in Gramann & Allison, 1999, p. 292).

Luh (2004) found that Chinese people enjoy more passive and quiet activities, as well as activities that take place within the home. Home and family play an important role in the lives of Chinese adults. Spiers and Walker (2009) found that for Chinese Canadians, a low arousal positive emotion such as peacefulness allows for happiness. Peacefulness was also an indicator for leisure satisfaction and an increase in quality of life.

From a more critical perspective, Deng, Walker, and Swinnerton (2005) described how leisure had a derogatory connotation within traditional Chinese culture. The authors suggested that Chinese people’s low value of leisure may be associated with their high value of working hard and to attain higher education. These attitudes may also be carried over to Chinese immigrants in North America. According to Hall and Ryhne (1989), “Chinese Canadians displayed what has been called ‘leisure lack’, which means that they participated in fewer activities, expressed less satisfaction with their leisure, and even placed less value on their leisure.” (as cited in Deng et al., p. 243).

While this research on leisure and ethnicity is a good start, it only captures a small selection of the various cultures that exist throughout the world. Every culture and every society may have its own ways of portraying and experiencing leisure. As highlighted above, different viewpoints, traditions, and values prevail. Canada welcomes diversity and so it is important to understand how leisure is experienced for different ethnic groups. It is also important to explore the role of leisure for immigrants in terms of their adjustment to a new

country. The next section outlines recent leisure research exploring the role of leisure in these processes.

2.6 Research on the Role of Leisure for Immigrants During the Process of Adapting To A New Country

When immigrants journey to a new country such as the United States or Canada, the experience is life-changing. It is important to note the very different approaches in adjusting to a new country. Many of the studies based in the United States showed that immigrants process this change as acculturation and/or assimilation. However, in Canada, immigrants may be able to experience adaptation while maintaining their ethnic identity and cultures. Definitions for adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation were provided earlier. This section will highlight research that has uncovered how some immigrants from various ethnicities use leisure during the process of adjusting to a new country. It is important to remember that each of these processes may be experienced in its own unique way for various groups of immigrants and in relation to their particular cultural background.

In a general overview, Wilcox (1992) asserted that English-speaking immigrants have a much easier time with assimilation into North America, more specifically in the United States. Wilcox also explained how sport may be used as a way for immigrants to maintain traditional activities and to preserve their ethnic identity. There are many factors that may affect the adaptation process. According to Breton's (1961) study conducted in Montreal, immigrants who did not speak English or French were more likely to isolate themselves. Breton also identified educational background as a predictor of one's ability to adapt to change. The size

of an ethnic group within the new country was also an indicator for the effects of segregation from the host country. Further, Breton considered how immigrants with friends from other ethnic groups were much more open to assimilation patterns. However, the author also described how it is common for immigrants to associate with people of their own ethnicity group first before adjusting to their new, adopted culture. In focusing on the importance of leisure, we can see how it may be used as a means of cultural expression. Therefore, it is much more than a mechanism for cultural assimilation as the meaning of the activity is transformed to fit an immigrant's native culture (Allison & Geiger, 1993).

Often, immigrants who come to Canada still identify themselves according to their original culture as opposed to being Canadian. This is exemplified by the study conducted by Tirone and Shaw (1997). For this group of Indian women living in Canada, leisure was an opportunity to spend time with their husbands, children and extended family, which was a central part of their lives. When these women lived in India, leisure opportunities were complicated, as there was a specific expectation from within their culture and this created a type of constraint. In Canada one might assume there was a lot more freedom for new Indian Canadians. However, these women seemed to have difficulty relating to the Westernized culture and cultural traditions from India were valued much more highly.

Immigrants and members of ethnic minority groups may be affected by changes as they deal in their own way with being in a different country such as Canada. Tirone and Pedlar (2005) studied the experiences of second generation Canadian youth with a background from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Leisure in Canada offered opportunities to experiment with their new roles out in the public rather than just in their homes. For second generation Canadians, this is an independent experience that their parents may not be familiar with. At

the same time, Tirone and Pedlar showed how this generation may also feel a sense of being caught in the middle. They may have been raised with the values and traditions of their parents' original country but were still surrounded by new Canadian customs. In the study, Tirone and Pedlar discovered how these young adolescents were able to find balance between their traditional cultural practices and embrace new, diverse traditions. Many of these participants described feeling a strong connection to their ethnic community. However, it is with the support of friends from other minority ethnic groups that they were able to enjoy and share in both new and old leisure experiences.

In the journey of moving to Canada, many immigrants experience various levels of assimilation and types of leisure constraints. In a study by Stodolska (1998), both static and dynamic constraints, as well as ways to overcome these constraints were examined for a group of immigrants from Poland. Static constraints occur when "immigrants may experience a number of barriers related to both their new minority status and to problems with adaptation to the new cultural and economic environment." (Stodolska, 1998, p. 523). Dynamic constraints occur when new immigrants' initial stress transitions into the same constraints experienced by the mainstream North American society. Stodolska's research showed that the perceived importance of all constraints (other than personal characteristics and abilities such as lack of physical skills and lack of skills) will decrease as assimilation levels increase.

Stodolska (1998) argued that intrapersonal constraints concerning an individual's personal characteristics are consistent in any assimilation level. Her findings also showed that immigrants experience certain constraints which are not found in the general population. Constraints particular to immigrants include post-arrival stress, depression, anxiety, alienation, sense of loss, and also more general constraints in relation to age, occupation, gender, or

family status group. Examples of these constraints include language difficulties, customs of a new country, finding a job, or being home sick. Stodolska concluded that the standard dimensions of leisure constraints seem to be different for minority groups as they are at a higher risk for discrimination. These constraints inhibit many new immigrants from having leisure play a bigger role in their new life.

Li and Stodolska (2007) examined the leisure constraints and negotiation strategies among Chinese international graduate students. The main constraints experienced by this group included lack of time, language barriers and cultural differences, lack of friends, and feelings of lack of entitlement to leisure. Interestingly, negotiation strategies for this group involved the modification of leisure, rather than the negotiation of non-leisure (conditions not considered to be leisure). This was attributed to their strong work ethic, as work was the centre of their lives. These leisure constraints were negotiated at both behavioural and cognitive levels (Li & Stodolska). Some examples of negotiating at the behavioural level included “stealing” short moments between classes and after exams, engaging in readily available activities such as watching television, and transforming everyday activities (i.e., laundry) to become more pleasurable. Some examples of negotiating at the cognitive level included devaluing the importance of leisure, and focusing on the future.

According to Stodolska and Yi (2003), the ethnic identity of immigrant adolescents is shaped by three distinct processes: a result of self-discovery of their own cultural differences, a comparison of one’s identity with others within one’s ethnic group, and outside labeling, also known as discrimination. Adolescents who have emigrated from another country may not be used to the North American attitude of openness and individualism. Stodolska and Yi’s work showed how adolescents were used to the general upbringing and attitudes of their home

country. Unfortunately, these differences often resulted in discrimination from American students at school.

Stodolska and Alexandris (2004) studied the role of recreational sport in the adaptation of first generation immigrants from Poland and Korea in the United States. The study showed that the lowest level of recreational sport occurred during the post-settlement period of immigration; that is the initial point after an immigrant has settled into their new country. Recreational sport exposed the participants to the new culture and promoted the integration of immigrant parents and the development of social contacts. The authors identified how sports may also be used as a focus of interest for immigrants to connect through an ethnic sub-culture. For example, tennis and golf were not popular in Korea, but now played a very important role for first-generation middle class immigrants residing in the United States. Sports also allowed immigrants to connect with others in their ethnic community, thus strengthening that bond. Stodolska and Alexandris note that factors such as ethnic group, gender and social class play a role in shaping one's leisure experience.

In a study by Chung (2008), the role of church as a site of leisure for Korean immigrants was explored. Chung highlighted how acculturation can be seen as burdensome, and so positive leisure experiences may help to alleviate this burden as well as to facilitate the process of assimilation. Participating in traditional activities allowed for immigrants to feel a sense of connection to the past, and provided a means of escape from new problems in this new environment. Chung argues there is a link between Korean immigrants, religion and leisure, which is why all three must be studied to optimize this experience for this cultural group.

Fong (1974) studied the assimilation of Chinese in the United States. He discussed a concept known as internalization, which he defined as "the process whereby the psychosocial

traits of the host culture become ingrained into the psychological structure of minority groups.” (p.1). This is similar to the idea of assimilation. Fong argued that there are a few factors that affect internalization for Chinese immigrants, which include: where one’s parents are from; how close one lives to Chinatown; the background of one’s friends; and the ability to read Chinese newspapers. Overall, if one’s parents are from America, one does not live near Chinatown, one has friends of different backgrounds, and one does not read Chinese newspapers, there is an increase in the likelihood of assimilation. Fong also hypothesized that immigrants from Hong Kong would have an easier time assimilating due to the many Westernized urban centres now developed in Hong Kong.

Another study by Yu and Berryman (1996) examined the relationship among self-esteem, acculturation, and recreation participation of Chinese immigrant adolescents who have recently arrived to New York City. Interestingly, the findings from the study showed that Chinese adolescents had a low level of acculturation, yet a moderately higher level of self-esteem. These findings were explained by Chinese adolescents’ participation in activities at home/indoors, absorption with mass media (i.e., music) in the Chinese language and in time spent with family, Chinese friends, or alone. Therefore, there were not many opportunities to acculturate into American society; however, these adolescents were frequently participating in leisure thereby maintaining positive self-esteem. Also, Chinese adolescents experienced leisure constraints in terms of opportunities to engage and interact in non-Chinese activities as they felt a lack of English proficiency, lack of opportunity, lack of partner and money, and lack of knowledge about sites or information on activities (Yu & Berryman). This explained the negative relationship between non-Chinese recreation participation and acculturation. Overall, there was no relationship between self-esteem and acculturation.

Finally, in a rather dated study, Kwan's study (1958) confirmed her hypothesis that a relationship exists between assimilation and communication. Through mass media, formal education, and primary or secondary interactions with people in the American society, immigrants were more likely to become assimilated. Kwan also stated that three conditions must first be met in order for assimilation to occur: 1) detachment from the country of origin, 2) alienation from the minority group, and 3) identification with the host society.

To summarize, this section examines the unique ways in which immigrants experience leisure during the processes of adapting to a new country. There was also a discussion of leisure constraints and particular constraints experienced by immigrants. For some ethnic groups, leisure enabled coping, while for others, it provided an opportunity to meet people from the same ethnic group. This is specifically important for my study as I am examining the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants living in the Greater Toronto Area.

2.7 The Role of Ethnic Communities

According to the Government of Canada (2009), Canadian policy seeks to value and respect the uniqueness of all cultures. Therefore, through the formation of ethnic communities (areas in which people of a specific ethnicity associate) it is possible to live for years without ever having to truly adapt to the Canadian culture. Many cultures seem to embrace this concept, but it may be specifically important to the people of ethnic minorities. Ethnic communities may act as a mode of adaptation. However it is also possible that people within an ethnic community could learn very little English or French, which could make it difficult to function in the new country (Martin & Bouvier, 1992).

Ethnic communities provide opportunities for participation and leadership, as well as acceptance and recognition (Kwan, 1958). Being connected with people from the same homeland allows for a sense of belonging and sharing of activities and experiences, which may otherwise be unavailable or difficult to access (Tirone & Pedlar, 2005).

Lam (1976) hypothesized that Chinese immigrants desired to live in an environment most familiar to them when they migrated to a new country. Lam argued that ethnic communities such as Chinatown in downtown Toronto allowed for immigrants to feel satisfied with their new life and also to create an identity with the host society. Earlier, Kwan (1958) conducted interviews with Chinese people living in Chinatown in San Francisco and showed that the Chinese had no intention of leaving the Chinese community. In the Canadian context, Lam argued that Chinese immigrants living in Canada developed a type of dual identity in which they could relate to their homeland as well as the new host country. This idea of dual identity may not continue for new generations of people born in Canada as:

[a]ll in all, a main source of conflict is seen as existing between generations in the Chinese community. While the Canadian-born younger generations wish to integrate into the larger society, the older immigrants still want to cling to their old world values. (Lam, p. 80)

Luh (2004) argued however, that overall, “the preservation of Chinese culture can help foster a person’s ongoing sense of cultural identity and help them maintain a way of life that is grounded in Chinese histories and traditions” (p. 185). For this study, understanding the development and role of ethnic communities for Chinese immigrants living in Canada can help us to understand leisure and the role it plays for new immigrants.

2.8 *Research on Leisure and Chinese Seniors' Centres*

Leisure provides an important avenue for maintaining cultural identity and ethnic seniors' centres provide an important space where this can happen. Lai (2006) argues it is important to break down all cultural barriers to promote activity in these centres for different ethnicities. Some of the many benefits of leisure for Chinese adults in senior centres include: helping to decrease stress, providing a sense of self-efficacy, increasing social interaction and community involvement, and also increasing one's quality of life (Luh, 2004). According to Lai, Chinese seniors are more likely to use senior facilities if: cultural values are attained, Chinese speaking staff are present, the celebration of Chinese events occur, and an overall Chinese community is created. The author further examined demographic characteristics of those most likely to be involved in senior centres. Being older in age, having a western religion, being unmarried, living alone, having stronger identification with Chinese cultural values, having stronger Chinese ethnic identity, and a higher level of social support were all predictors of senior centre participation. Socialization (a continual process where a person acquires personal identity and learns norms, values, and social skills) is a key factor influencing why Chinese seniors attend a seniors' centre, as they are more likely to meet other elderly Chinese immigrants in these settings (Lai). However, there remains a gap in exploring the relationship between seniors' centres and different ethnic groups.

2.9 *Research on Leisure and Health*

McDonald and Kennedy (2004) examined the differences in the health of people born in Canada and immigrants coming to Canada. The authors found that recent immigrants are healthier than immigrants who have been living in Canada for more than 10 years. Therefore,

they showed that over time, the health of immigrants is worsening. Some factors that may contribute to this decrease in health are: barriers to the use of health services due to language or cultural differences, lack of information, and experience in a new health care system (McDonald & Kennedy). Preventative health screening appears to be underused. This leads to under-diagnosis and treatment of health problems.

Health is defined culturally therefore different cultures may take different approaches in dealing with their healthcare. According to Sue (2000), “cultural beliefs, values, interpretations of physical conditions, and conflicts within the larger society may influence treatment patterns and prevent timely visits to health services.” (p. 92). Hyman (2004) recognizes that in Canada, there are ethnic differences in disease-specific mortality and morbidity rates. For example, the author notes that Chinese immigrants have a significantly lower rate of heart disease compared to South Asian immigrants and Canadian-born people.

The definition of leisure can convey different meanings across cultures and so its interpretation may vary. None-the-less, leisure is not always seen positively, but may also be viewed by some as a negative experience or an unproductive use of time. Another view is the ‘keeping idle hands busy’ theory which describes engagement in leisure as a way to keep people busy and to avoid risky behaviour (as described by Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). However, there are forms of negative leisure also called “purple leisure”, “deviant leisure”, “taboo leisure” “marginal leisure” among others (Kelly & Freysinger (2000); Curtis (1988); and Russell (2002), as cited in Shinew & Parry, 2005, p. 366). These include activities such as excessive drinking, illegal drugs, and other forms of socially unacceptable behaviours (Shinew & Parry).

Much of the literature, however, demonstrates the strong positive relationship between leisure and health. Leisure entails many benefits in terms of one's physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological, sociological, and spiritual health and well-being. Engaging in recreation activities regularly leads to many physical benefits such as an increase in muscle strength, decrease in fat body mass, increase in lean body mass, improvement of connective tissues, as well as prevention of chronic diseases (Paffenbarger, Hyde, & Dow, 1991). Dupuis and Alzheimer (2008) highlight that less physically strenuous activities such as leisurely walking, volunteering, attending classes, and social interactions also have an impact on physical well-being. Engagement in cognitive activities such as social, intellectual, and productive leisure activities reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia (Dupuis & Alzheimer). Some psychological benefits of leisure include self-actualization, self-identity, personal growth, increase in self-esteem, and the reduction of cognitive disorders (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991; Haggard & Williams, 1991). Dupuis and Alzheimer state that "older adults who participate in leisure activities are happier and more content, report higher positive affect and mood states, are more satisfied with their lives, and have lower levels of psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and negative affect" (p. 95). Sociological benefits include family bonding, increase in social interactions, and familiarity with the community (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). According to Keyes (1998), in order to attain social wellness, five dimensions to social well-being must be included: social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence (as cited in Dupuis & Alzheimer, p. 98 – 99). Lastly, leisure is important for spiritual well-being because leisure provides time and space for spiritual well-being which also affects one's attitude and feelings (Heintzman, 1999). Overall, it is important to emphasize these benefits of leisure in

regards to health and well-being for everyone, including immigrants. Moreover, we must make leisure more adaptable and more easily pursued by all.

2.10 Research on Leisure Constraints and Negotiations

Leisure constraints help to account for why people may not be engaging in leisure. It is important to understand the reasons possibly preventing Chinese immigrants from participating in leisure. This way, recreation practitioners and/or researchers can work to eliminate those factors that may constrain individuals from participating. Leisure constraints are defined as barriers that prevent or inhibit people from fully participating in or benefiting from leisure (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). All persons are susceptible to the many constraints to leisure. Constraints may be due to physical limitations, environmental limitations, or even social limitations. The kinds of barriers to leisure are endless; they are individual and different for each person. Crawford and Godbey (1987; as cited in Mannell and Kleiber, 1997) have identified three types of constraints: intrapersonal constraints, interpersonal constraints, and structural constraints. Intrapersonal constraints are psychological conditions that are internal to the individual. For example, if an individual feels very negatively towards sports, they would refrain from attending sporting events with friends. Interpersonal constraints are developed from interactions with others, for example, when an individual is unable to compete in a doubles tennis competition because he/she cannot find a partner. Structural constraints are factors that result from external conditions in the environment. For example, inaccessible buildings constrain persons with disabilities. However, it is important to note that leisure constraints do not necessarily lead to non-participation, but that it is one of many outcomes.

Therefore, it is equally important to discuss the negotiation of leisure constraints as another type of outcome.

According to Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey (1993), instead of acting passively to leisure constraints, people must negotiate through them in order to succeed in initiating or continuing leisure participation. Negotiating constraints may be done in a variety of ways depending on the problem encountered, strategies, skills, and other modifications to other aspects of life. Therefore, a person's leisure experiences after negotiations are different from their experiences where leisure constraints are absent (Jackson et al.). An example of negotiating through a constraint would be if an individual was unable to find a partner for dance lessons, they would pair up with a stranger during the class. This is a general overview of constraints and negotiations, which play a significant role in the field of leisure studies. Overall, leisure constraints may also vary for persons of various cultures.

2.11 Summary of Literature Review

In summary, this review provided definitions of key terms and theoretical frameworks. It discussed research on leisure and health, leisure constraints and negotiations, and leisure within various cultures. More specifically, I presented research on ethnicity and Chinese culture, leisure and Chinese culture, and leisure and Chinese senior centres. This review also included literature on the role of leisure for immigrants during the process of adapting to a new country, as well as the role of ethnic communities.

There is growing research examining how leisure varies across cultures. These studies demonstrate the important role leisure plays in adapting to a new country while still

maintaining cultural roots. Research to date shows how many new immigrants remain in an ethnic community, which may play a key role in their new life in Canada.

My study's main focus is to understand the experience of leisure and involvement in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have been in Canada for at least five years. I wanted to understand how Chinese immigrants incorporate their leisure experiences in their everyday lives. I was also interested to see whether Chinese immigrants identified certain activities with a more “traditionally Chinese” perspective, or a more “Westernized” perspective (e.g., is the activity viewed as being associated more with the Chinese or Western culture?). As is discussed in more detail below, a phenomenological approach is the most appropriate way to explore these meanings and experiences. My study is important as it explores the leisure experiences of Chinese immigrants in the community centre setting, which may lead to greater leisure benefits and opportunities for this specific group.

Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter, methods, I describe the exact procedures I followed throughout the study. Here, I discuss the methodology for this study including my world view and approach. Next, I provide a background on the study setting and identify the participant selection criteria and characteristics. Then, I describe the data collection process, and lastly, I provided details as to my data analysis process.

3.1 Methodology

The epistemological stance or worldview that this study follows is interpretivist. According to Daly (2007), “interpretive processes are deeply embedded in, and shaped by, the shared meanings that we have about activity, language, and cultural symbols.” (p. 32). Following Daly, an interpretive perspective allows for multiple realities to exist. The focus is on meaning-making and the co-construction of the meaning between the researched and the researcher. The methodological approach chosen for this study is phenomenology because it provides a framework for understanding how individuals assign meaning to their lived experiences. As Daly argues, “[t]he purpose of phenomenology is to investigate the lived experience of one or more individuals in relation to a phenomenon of interest.” (p.219). The goal of phenomenology is to understand and describe the participants’ experience of their everyday world as they see it. In this study, the phenomenon of interest is the leisure experience and the experience of involvement in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* in the lives of Chinese immigrants (aged 50 to 65 years) in Canada. Researchers working from a phenomenological perspective ask questions that probe at the meanings of experiences and focus on key elements of how people feel and think about their experiences.

Many of the newer studies by researchers such as Fancott (2001), Luh (2004), and Chung (2008) all follow qualitative approaches. More specifically, studies by Tirone and Pedlar (2005), Tirone and Shaw (1997), and Iwasaki and Bartlett (2006) follow phenomenological approaches. These phenomenological researchers use in-depth interviews and focus groups to gather their data. I believe that there is a greater need for phenomenological studies in particular as they explore the meanings behind the experience. I have chosen to conduct a phenomenological study to allow for a deeper understanding of leisure from the Chinese cultural perspectives. In the following sections, I outline my approach to the research.

3.2 *Study Setting*

Initially, I had planned to conduct this study at the *Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto*. I had originally spoken with the director who agreed this study would be a good fit. However, the director went out of town and so I waited for her return to begin the data collection process. When she returned, she forwarded my study to the event manager who allowed me to put up a poster in the centre and speak with one of the activity instructors. After another few weeks of waiting, the instructor informed me that she did not believe the participants of her program would be a good fit. Therefore, I had to search for another club and had a personal connection to the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

The study was conducted at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan (FCSAV)* located in Vaughan, Ontario, which is part of the Greater Toronto Area. This club was ideal for this particular study as its mission is described as follows:

FCSAV is dedicated to providing Chinese seniors with diverse recreational and healthy activities to improve their physical and intellectual well-being. In addition, the association aims to improve inter-generational harmony in the members' families. (First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan, 2008).

This club invites all Chinese and Chinese-Canadian people to join in different events and classes. There is a variety of recreation and leisure activities offered including *tai chi*, *kung fu* fan, better body dynamics, dancing, table tennis, and Chinese calligraphy. It is useful to note that there is a large variety of activities which may be considered “traditionally Chinese” as well as more “Westernized” activities.

The club was established as the first Chinese senior association in the city of Vaughan in the spring of 2008. The club is registered as a non-profit community services organization with the City of Vaughan (First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan, 2008). Therefore, the *FCSAV* is governed by a board of directors but it is run and operated by volunteer members. It is important to note that the *FCSAV* is a club that meets at *Dufferin Clark Community Centre*. As it is held in a community centre, this may limit the types and numbers of activities the *FCSAV* is able to offer.

In order to begin my study at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, I had to set up a meeting with the director of the club and his wife. At this meeting, I introduced my study by providing a summary sheet outlining the benefits of the project for the club and the general population, what the role of the club would be in the study, the criteria and role of participants, and my contact information. This summary is provided in Appendix A. I also provided an organization introductory letter, as well as the organization consent form (see Appendix B and Appendix C). At the end of the meeting, the director agreed that this study would be a good fit with the club and we discussed the next steps.

3.3 *Participant Selection Criteria*

For the purpose of this study, participants had to be immigrants from either Hong Kong or Mainland China and had to have been living in Canada for at least five years. The criterion of at least five years was chosen to ensure that the participant had been living in Canada for a significant number of years. Other criteria included being a Chinese adult between the ages of 50 to 65 years. Members of this age group seemed most appropriate as they are part of the baby boomer generation and are probably working full time and, therefore, having to take an active role in Canadian society. Both males and females were encouraged to participate. The participants also had to be a member of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. Lastly, a very important criteria essential for this study is that participants had to be enrolled in at least one activity at the club. The participants' engagements in either one or several of these activities played a valuable part in determining the role leisure played in their lives. These activities also contributed to participants' experiences of leisure and the meanings leisure held for them.

3.4 *Recruiting Procedure*

This study followed a purposive sampling method as it aimed to purposely recruit Chinese older adults who were participating at *FCSAV*. After getting permission from the club, my initial way to advertise the study was to put up posters around the community centre. These posters were printed both in Chinese and English to maximize the exposure (see Appendix D). The poster clarified the types of participant needed and encouraged people to participate. Next, with the club's permission, I went around to the different activity classrooms to present background information on the study and answer any questions

participants might have. A copy of this classroom script is located in Appendix E. During this process, the director was also present to address any communication or language barriers. I was also able to find a translator competent in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English from within the club. The role of the translator will be further discussed in the data collection section.

‘Willingness to Participate’ forms were left at the central office of the club for those interested. Attached to this form was a brief cover letter outlining the purpose of the study and the purpose of the form. This form also helped gather participants’ demographic information, their interest in the study, as well as contact information. A copy of the cover letter is provided in Appendix F and the form is in Appendix G.

Once a sufficient number of forms were gathered from the classes, I verified those participants who met the study criteria. I was surprised to see that I had more participants interested than I anticipated. Overall, I was able to establish a list of 13 participants who fit the study criteria. The next step was to contact the people and schedule an interview session to be conducted at the community centre. The director of the club took a role in helping me set up appropriate times to conduct interviews. The interviews were scheduled to be conducted after different activity classes in order to ensure convenience for the participants.

Of the 13 participants, eight were female and five were male. All the participants were Cantonese-speaking with the exception of one person who spoke Mandarin. The participants had lived in Canada between 17 to 45 years (the mean number of years is 30.54 and the median is 30 years) and many had attained Canadian citizenship. For the purpose of this study, pseudonyms were given to protect the privacy of the participants. The following pseudonyms are used to represent the participants who were interviewed: Susanna, Mei,

Anita, Fandy, Wan-Yan, Beverly, Siu-Kwan, Rosanna, Raymond, Bernard, Joseph, Chun-Fai, and Tak. A table describing the participants is provided in Appendix H.

3.5 *Data Collection*

To begin, it is important to introduce the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* as it is the main context of the research. Data for this study were collected by means of in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Interviews were estimated to last for approximately one hour. However, in my interview sessions, I found that they varied from as little as 10 minutes to 25 minutes. At first, I was concerned at the short length of the interviews; however, I later realized that it was the content of the interview that matters most. As long as the participants were able to share their leisure experiences, the time frame was not as important. I originally planned to allot a month for participants to be interviewed. Although in the end, I was able to do two to five interviews in a day. Therefore, I was able to complete my data collection in four sessions within the span of two weeks during the month of July in 2010.

The participants were given a choice as to which language they would like the interview to be conducted. I led the discussion in English in all but four interviews. The translator was only present during those interviews in which the participant felt more comfortable speaking in Cantonese and/or Mandarin. The role of the translator was to translate the questions into Cantonese and/or Mandarin and also to translate participants' answers back into English for me to probe and so forth. The translator's role was limited to the interview sessions. Many of the participants were competent in English, although some confusion did occur. I describe these discrepancies later in this chapter. Sometimes, the translation seemed to make all the

difference in terms of how participants interpreted the questions and the way they formed their responses.

Before the interview could begin, participants were given an introductory letter for the study, which is shown in Appendix I. They were also asked to complete a consent form (see Appendix J), which outlines their right to end participation at any point, and their consent for the interview to be audio-taped and the use of quotations in research reports. Feedback letters were also provided at the end of the interview to thank participants for their help and to let them know where they could get a copy of the results (see Appendix K).

Where necessary, the interviews were translated to English during the time of the interview by the translator in order to allow for probing. However, being raised in a Cantonese-speaking household, I was able to understand much of the conversation. I needed certain clarifications on specific words but was able to understand the context. However, my Cantonese-speaking skills are not adequate to conduct an interview. Transcribing occurred following each interview in order to make necessary changes for later interviews. I found this to be a very useful way to adapt questions when I noticed participants struggled or were confused. For example, participants had a challenge answering questions about the meanings or role of leisure when asked directly. Therefore, I had to further break down the question in more every day terms and in some cases provide examples while being aware of minimizing influence. Once an initial analysis was completed, participants were asked to review and initial a form to ensure that the essences of their experiences had been captured. In November 2010, I went in to the centre to show each participant the essences I developed during analysis. At this time I answered questions, and obtained their initials to confirm they agreed with the essences. Participants were able to request an e-mail or hard copy of the findings as well. The

data were kept in a locked drawer in my office during the analysis stage. All data is to be destroyed after two years.

The main purpose of this study was to examine how Chinese immigrants experience leisure and their involvement in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. It was essential that the questions asked during the interviews related to and probed this area. An underlying interest was to see whether immigrants viewed their activities to be more traditionally Chinese or more Westernized. I anticipated this would help explain how Chinese immigrants expressed culture in their leisure.

The interview was organized into three different sections. The first section asked context questions about the participant's immigration experience to gain some background on their lives both before and after the move to Canada. The second section was designed to gain insight into the participant's leisure experiences both in their home country and Canada. The third section asked questions in relation to the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. The interview guide, located in Appendix L, shows the questions that were asked and their associated probes. I ensured that the participants came up with answers on their own without any influences. However, in certain cases, participants asked for specific examples in order to fully comprehend the question asked. I had to be very careful with probes to ensure that they were not leading participants. It was useful to probe asking 'why' or 'how'? I also thought it would also be interesting to ask people why they joined the club and what they considered to be its benefits. The connection a person feels to their community and culture is also important as leisure may play a strong role in social networking and providing a sense of belonging.

During some of the interviews, possibly due to language barriers or the context of the questions, some participants were confused and needed further clarification. Some of the

questions may have been a bit difficult, for example “What role does leisure play in your life as a Chinese immigrant?”. As a leisure researcher, these questions seem straight forward; however, I had to remember to put myself in the mindsets of these participants. It is not common, on an everyday basis, for a person to think about what the “meaning of leisure” is to them. Often-times, participants stated that they did not understand the question. After every interview, I was able to become more familiar with which questions the participants had the most trouble. From there, I was able to adapt the questions by giving examples to make the question clearer while still being careful about influencing the response. Another issue I had during my interviews was that some participants seemed to be in a rush. Although the interviews were scheduled for a full hour, they were held after classes for convenience, and participants were in a rush to go home or out for lunch afterward. In most cases, as mentioned, the interviews did not take more than 25 minutes. Even so, some participants rushed through them and did not care to give much thought to the individual questions. Often, I received one word answers in which case I would try to probe more.

It is also important to note that I kept a research journal in order to capture my reflections after each interview session. This journal captured my thoughts and feelings throughout the data collection process. With this journal, I was able to record and reflect on the problem areas within the interview. Overall, in the beginning of my interview phase, I was feeling overwhelmed and unsure. However, by the end of the data collection process, I felt very confident and also excited and motivated to begin my analysis. It was truly a great experience, talking with participants and listening to each individual experience. I felt very connected to my participants and also excited to be learning more about the Chinese culture in relation to leisure.

3.6 Procedure for Data Analysis

Throughout the data analysis process, it was essential to reflect on the study objectives, which were:

- a) To explore the meanings and experiences of leisure in the lives of Chinese immigrants, aged 50 to 65 years, who have been living in Canada for more than five years
- b) To expand the understanding of Chinese immigrants' experiences at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*
- c) To build awareness that may lead to the improvement of cultural sensitivity when programming for this specific group
- d) To gain knowledge that may enhance their lived experience through leisure for this group and possibly others

Once the data were gathered, I began the transcription process, which entailed the recording of both verbal and non-verbal cues for each interview. After transcribing the interviews, I read and re-read the transcribed dialogue to get a sense of the lived experience as a whole (Halldorsdottir & Hamrin, 1997). During this time, I also made a memo of initial thoughts after the first reading of the transcribed data. I proceeded to delineate units of general meaning, which involved going over every word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and noting significant non-verbal cues in order to capture participants' meanings in an open manner to develop meaning units (Hycner, 1985). Overall, 174 meaning units were developed using *QSR Nvivo 7*. These 174 meaning units were further condensed into 30 clusters of meaning through the process of clustering units of relevant meaning. The process of clustering units of relevant meaning involves determining a common theme that unites several different meaning units to form a new cluster of meaning (Hycner). To help visualize this procedure, I used MS

EXCEL to colour coordinate each meaning unit in association with a newly developed cluster of meaning. The next stage involved examining all the clusters of meanings to determine if any central themes expressed the essence of these clusters (Hycner). Using a flow chart, I was able to further link clusters of meanings to common themes. Therefore, from those 30 clusters of meaning, five essences were established based on the participants' response. According to Dahlberg (2006), an essence is the structure that makes the phenomenon to be that very phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, I developed essences that I believed captured the true essence of participants' everyday lived experiences. The meaning units may be reviewed in Appendix M, the clusters of meaning list in Appendix N, and the main essences list in Appendix O. As this project takes an interpretivist stance, these meaning units, clusters of meaning and essences are created according to what I believe to be of significance when identifying the meanings and experiences of leisure for Chinese immigrants at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

In all research, credibility plays an essential role as it is imperative that we are aiming to fully represent participants and how they feel. According to Daly (2007), credibility is important in two regards: procedure and outcome. When considering the procedure of my study, credibility is shown throughout my practice of reflexivity. As noted earlier, I kept a reflexive journal throughout the data collection process. Also, during the open reading of my analysis, I made memos. Before reading the transcripts, I reviewed my thoughts and feelings as written in my journal to reflect on my state of mind during and after the interviews. I kept these feelings in mind while conducting my open reading of the interviews, which may be reflected in the memos. The reflexive journal and memos were reviewed again when developing the meaning units, clusters of meaning and main essences. Therefore, both the

memos and reflexive journal were compared with the data throughout the analysis process. To ensure credibility of my outcome, as previously mentioned, the final essences developed were translated and shared with the participants to see if they captured what was related to me. In November 2010, I returned to the Centre to look for participants after the morning exercise class. I knew this was an appropriate time of day to see participants as this was the time I conducted interviews previously. I printed a list of the main essences developed after initial data analysis, and created a table with columns that stated 'participants' name', 'yes', 'no', and 'feedback'. Participants were asked to read over the essences and sign their initials under 'yes' or 'no', and were also invited to provide any feedback. I had approached participants individually to review the identified essences at that time and to ensure that I captured their personal experiences. All participants in the study had read the essences and initialed 'yes', however, no further discussion or feedback was provided. This lack of feedback or discussion may be explained by the format or approach in which I chose to confirm their participation and the main essences. Perhaps if I had contacted the participants ahead of time to inform them of my visit, they would have been more prepared. Also, I could have provided them with the list of main essences prior to my visit to allow more time for thought. Another approach could have been to confirm and receive feedback via e-mail, although this would not have worked for everyone as not all my participants have e-mail addresses. However, it is important to note that participants were provided with my contact from the beginning of the study and were encouraged to ask any questions or provide feedback at any point throughout the study.

Overall, this chapter introduced the worldview and approach used to guide the study and described the club setting. It further described the procedures used to recruit participants, collect data, and analyze data. In the next chapter, the analyzed data are condensed,

categorized, and presented as findings. These findings reflect five main essences of the leisure experience at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese immigrants.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to address the research questions and objectives by presenting the main essences that were developed. In this chapter, I highlight the overarching theme of *leisure as an essential component to life* as well as the five main essences that were developed from my analysis of the interview data. For phenomenologists, it is important to understand the term 'essence'. According to Dahlberg (2006):

...essences are their phenomena; the phenomena *are* their essences. Phenomenology shows that everything is experienced as something, i.e. everything has its own style. An essence is, simply, a phenomenon's style, its way of being, and thus the essence cannot be separated from the phenomenon that it is the essence of. (p. 18)

The five essences are further sub-divided to break down the underlying meanings. Quotations from the participants are provided to support my interpretations of meanings and experiences of leisure and at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. These findings are further analyzed in light of the leisure literature in the next chapter.

4.1 Participant Overview

It is important to provide a clear description of each participant, and so below I provide a brief profile outlining the participants' pseudonym, years in Canada, current life stage (if acknowledged) and some examples of favourite leisure activities. It is important to note that the years living in Canada is relative to the time of the interview and that many of the participants' favourite activities reflect those offered at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan (FCSAV)*. Susanna had lived in Canada for about 20 to 25 years and some of her favourite leisure activities included morning exercise, *tai chi*, and *qi gong*. Mei had lived in Canada for 30 years, however is more comfortable speaking Cantonese; her favourite activities

were morning exercise and dance. Anita had lived in Canada for 22 years and is quite heavily involved in the club. Her favourite leisure activities included swimming and overall she enjoyed all the activities offered at the club. Fandy had lived in Canada for 26 years and enjoyed morning exercise, line dance, and swimming. Raymond had lived in Canada for 26 years and his favourite hobby was building and collecting steam train models. Wan-Yan had lived in Canada for 35 years and she described herself as a housewife. Her favourite activities included morning exercise and watching television. Siu-Kwan, who was also a housewife, had lived in Canada for 20 years, enjoyed swimming, watching TV and morning exercise. Bernard had lived in Canada for 40 years and was also heavily involved in the club. His favourite leisure activity was relaxing and sitting in the backyard. Joseph had lived in Canada for 43 years and was enjoying his retirement by travelling. Rosanna, who was also retired, had lived in Canada for 45 years. Her favourite leisure included exercise and dance. Beverly had moved from China to the United States and then to Canada about 32 years ago. In her retirement, she enjoyed hiking and taking walks in the park. Chun-Fai had lived in Canada for 17 years, and in his retirement his greatest pleasure was taking care of his grandchild. Lastly, Tak had lived in Canada for 26 years, and in his retirement he enjoyed watching TV, sports, and morning exercise.

As noted, the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* is located in Vaughan, Ontario which is part of an affluent community. Therefore, it can be assumed that many of the participants are of a higher economic status and were therefore able to retire at a fairly young age (i.e., 55 years old).

At the beginning of the interviews, participants reflected on the reasons why they chose to immigrate to Canada. Several participants discussed Canada's environmental appeal. They

believed there was a lot of space, fresh air, and many green areas. Some felt that Canada's environment was much more comfortable than their home country's. Others described feeling a sense of freedom and friendliness within Canada. Many of their thoughts about Canada developed after immigration. Some of the reasons these Chinese immigrants moved to Canada include: better opportunities for jobs, moving for family members or friends, for education, and also for the benefit of future generations. All in all, participants claimed to be better off and much happier living in Canada. Many of the participants also discussed changes in their leisure patterns after moving to Canada and this is discussed in detail below.

A detailed description of each essence is presented after I introduce the overarching theme of *leisure as an essential component to life*.

4.2 *Leisure as an Essential Component to Life*

Throughout the findings, an overarching theme of *leisure being an essential component to life* was continually expressed and so before each individual essence is outlined, this overarching theme must be described. To spark discussion, I asked participants how they would feel if they were no longer able to participate in leisure. Participants' responses varied from having many different types of negative feelings, to finding alternatives to leisure, to believing that there was no reason for not having leisure. Some of the negative feelings expressed by participants included being bored, unhealthy, unhappy, and feeling like something was missing. Susanna claimed:

Well...I might feel very bored, not healthy, not happy, yea, you know, I won't feel too good.

Bernard said:

Ohh...make me very sad then, yea, of course.

Several other participants similarly came to the conclusion that having no leisure would make them feel very sad or bad. For instance, Beverly just could not imagine a life without leisure:

No, I think people, when you no leisure time, unless it really...I cannot imagine if you don't have leisure time...the life will be miserable I think. [laughs]

Fandy, went so far as to claim that she might become depressed if she had no leisure in her life. Others, like Rosanna, said that it would be terrible. Some believed the lack of leisure leads to unhealthy feelings and bodily states. Several participants discussed their feelings on the days they were unable to attend the activities at the club. Wan-Yan said:

I will feel like something is missing...I'm used to the routine of coming every day, so something will be missing...it would be better if there were 5 days...

Siu-Kwan said:

Usually, if I don't come, I feel like something is missing, I've missed something...

Other participants, when asked what they would do, simply listed other things to occupy their time. Anita said:

Just go back to before I came to Canada, just go back, working, working...

Tak discussed his worries with feeling the pressure of having to go back to work if there was no leisure. Tak also claimed that he would just stay at home. Lastly Chun-Fai said it would be boring so he would go back to Hong Kong instead. Some participants believed that there would be no reason of having no leisure. Anita said:

How do I feel? I'll go somewhere else...Of course it's no good, unless I am sick sitting in a hospital, otherwise I would be there.

Thus, participants valued leisure in such a way that it would have a negative impact on their lives if they were no longer able to participate. The participants were so dedicated to attending activities at the *FCSAV*, that leisure had been incorporated into their weekly routine.

Ultimately, there was a feeling of experiencing a gap in their life if leisure was not a part of their day to day lives. The important meaning of leisure was exemplified by those participants who believed that something would be missing in their lives if there was no leisure.

Therefore, leisure was viewed as an essential component on one's life. In particular, five essences were developed from data analysis and these reflect the experiences of Chinese immigrants with respect to their leisure and involvement at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. These essences are:

- A. Changing Leisure with Changing Cultures
- B. Achieving and Maintaining Health
- C. Experiencing Freedom and Choice
- D. Cultural Expression and Learning
- E. Feeling a Sense of Community

The overarching theme of *leisure as an essential component to life* is reflected in the other essences as leisure is experienced in a new way while changing cultures and also provided opportunities to achieve and maintain health, experience freedom and choice, express culture and learning, and feel a sense of belonging. Overall, participants expressed these components to be very important aspects in their lives.

4.1.A Changing Leisure with Changing Cultures

As discussed in the literature review, leisure can hold different meanings for members of different cultures. It may also change according to one's country of residence. Participants were able to identify differences between their leisure while living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong, and their leisure in Canada. They also discussed the many feelings and challenges they faced after moving to Canada. This essence has the following sub-dimensions: i) focusing on work ethic in home country; ii) adjusting to a new culture; iii) changes in diversity of opportunity; and iv) leisure meanings. Each of these components can be used to describe how leisure may change according to culture and country of residence.

4.1.A.i Focusing on Work Ethic in Home Country

To gain a better understanding of participants' leisure throughout their life, I asked them to describe what their leisure was like back in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong. In many cases, participants said they had no leisure time in their home country. As Mei explained:

There's no leisure time. At that time in China, no leisure time is allowed.

It is also very important to note that many of these participants were students or workers back in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong, and were thus at a different life stage. According to participants, the mind-set in Mainland China and Hong Kong was much more focused on the work ethic through school and work, and thus left very little time for leisure. This was emphasized by Bernard's statement:

Never have leisure before I came...Because if you were a student, working all the time...if you're not studying, you're working.

Rosanna described her experiences growing up in Hong Kong:

No, they just say you have to go to school, work hard, and had to work, like help out...we never had any leisure time, or a doll. I don't even have a doll, I don't go to the park, I think I only went once. You're not supposed to have fun at leisure time, just hard work.

Susanna described how it was very common to work two jobs, therefore, limiting her time for other activities:

Before there, not much, because in Hong Kong we all work two jobs, and uh it was, you know, they don't have a lot of leisure time, and they don't have that much facilities as well.

Many participants stressed that their mind-set while working was so focused on their work that it left no time for leisure. Chun-Fai explained:

For business man...I was a business man...Almost none.

In some cases, participants were able to describe their leisure in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong; but still claimed it was quite limited. Siu-Kwan described her leisure as every day activities:

Watch movies, going out for dinner, nothing too special, cook dinner, grocery, laundry...

Overall, and as previously noted, people's leisure experiences varied by individual and yet it is clear that participants noted a great change in their access to and experience of leisure upon moving to Canada. Back home there was a dominant work-related mindset present in the Chinese culture. Within such a culture, leisure was not valued in the same way as more productive activity. Free time was mostly used to further studies or work. This might explain most participants' limited or lack of leisure experiences while living in Mainland China or Hong Kong.

4.1.A.ii Adjusting to a New Culture

Although most of the participants described their lives as good now, they did not feel this way early on. After immigrants have moved to Canada, there is a transition period in which they must become adjusted to their new country of residence. Often, there are initial feelings and/or challenges that may follow during this major change. Participants described how they felt when they first came to Canada. Bernard discussed how strange it felt being in an entirely different country:

It's a long time ago, what was it like? Strange place, Strange feeling...

Joseph discussed some of the different changes that occurred:

At the beginning when I came, I guess the country was you know like, in a lot of ways, it wasn't that many people here, but it was kind of um...I guess I felt homesick and it took a little while to get adjusted to you know, the food and stuff like that was a little bit different. Kind of bland to be honest with you, it was tough you know, trying to get adjusted.

Social networks changed and there was a commonly expressed idea of feeling homesick, missing family and friends back home. Other challenges briefly mentioned by participants include having a change in family. Many participants met their spouse and started a family here in Canada. Anita stated that she had a challenge with having no babysitter. Not having family to rely on meant some did not have support in childcare or babysitters. Raymond described how he left his friends behind:

All my good old friends are back at Hong Kong.

Bernard discussed how he was lonely when he first came because at first he didn't have any friends in Canada:

Loneliness...I don't have friends here...No, not when I first came here...30 uh 40 years ago...

Rosanna came when she was still a child so she was not too happy about the move:

Uhh...I wasn't happy because I was a child, I was a teenager. I did not want to come, but my parents already here, so I feel like I have no choice.

Participants described the number of challenges they faced when they first moved to Canada. Many participants mentioned challenges with learning English and facing many language barriers while living in Canada. Siu-Kwan described her experiences with a language barrier:

To learn English...my sons tell me my English isn't too great, no confidence in me so I can't learn...I have the most difficulty in communicating to people...it is my biggest challenge. You have to learn to talk to people when you are shopping, to argue for refunds.

Tak described his experiences with language:

Challenges...umm communicate all English...Yea yea, back in Hong Kong...I know English, but at that phase I speak Chinese the most. But here I have to speak English for everything.

Raymond described language as an initial challenge but then after time became used to it:

Yes, at first, yea at first, quite a bit [trouble speaking English]. And then get used to it later.

Also, multiculturalism was discussed, and Canada was viewed as being very unique and different. Rosanna said:

The challenge. I think it's like integrating with the Caucasian...like different kind of people. Like the Filipinos, the black people... yea, multicultural, yea, it's very different...

It may be a challenge for Chinese immigrants to become familiar with so many people of different cultures and ethnicities. This is one of the major differences in a country such as Canada compared to China.

A main challenge for immigrants when moving to another country is that they have to start all over. Joseph described his experiences in starting from scratch:

Well basically, well first I wasn't living in the home, had to do everything on your own. And have to try to sort of do your investigation on your own and trying to find a career path and getting adjusted to the Canadian way of life. As well as having to take into consideration that my parents and family were still in Asia and that I had to somehow I

had to support myself to the extent that I would be able to go back if emergency rules, and if then later if they wanted to come, I would be able to help them out.

Many participants also discussed the challenges of finding a job. Bernard spoke of his own personal experience:

What challenge? It's difficult to convince the employer to hire you...It's difficult, they first ask for Canadian experience, you say you have some Canadian experience; they ask do you have Ontario experience; you have Ontario experience, they ask do you have Toronto experience? If they hire you, they will hire you, but if they don't hire you, they will throw you all kinds of challenging questions.

Beverly, who had experienced living in the United States, said:

Challenge I think for me when I moved here, harder than I thought to find a job, compared I was in New York.

Tak mentioned the difference in work in Canada compared to Hong Kong or China:

A little bit different, on the work, the kind of work is little bit different.

Lastly, another challenge was dealing with differences in food. Susanna said:

The most thing is the food, 'cause umm at that time 20, 25 years ago they don't have that much Chinese food. So it's kind of you know, uh, a new experience for me. That's the main thing.

Overall, one of the main challenges in adjusting to life in Canada was to learn the English language and to support oneself and one's family. Therefore, these factors may have affected participants' earlier experiences of leisure.

On the contrary, other participants discussed how moving to Canada was an easy transition and how they had experienced no challenges. Some participants, when asked if moving to Canada was a hard transition, bluntly said no, or that it was good. Wan-Yan claimed that it is about the same. Siu-Kwan who was a housewife stated:

None—housewife, there are no challenges

Joseph believed his life was better in Canada:

Well I basically came here for economic reasons, so after five years I was managed to be able to get into a field that I liked and from there, things took off, to be much better.

Others shared their positive feelings about living in Canada. Fandy explained how she felt:

I feel oh, wonderful, this is best country for living

Overall, most participants described experiencing many changes since immigrating to Canada, and their leisure was no exception. Immigrants' feelings may vary depending on their support networks, life stage, reasons for moving, and other factors. The biggest challenges in adjusting to a new culture were speaking the English language and finding a job. However, in some instances, some immigrants found the move to be an easy transition and were very happy with their life in Canada now. Participants may experience positive feelings or overcome their challenges by engaging in leisure experiences. These challenges and changes within leisure are a natural and expected experience when changing cultures.

4.1.A.iii Changes in Diversity of Opportunities

While describing their leisure back in their home country, many participants would automatically compare it to Canada. As Beverly said:

Oh because before moving, because busy at home, busy as students, I don't think I have leisure. Maybe just go to singing in the choir, more indoor. Doesn't have a ton of outdoor. Here, lots of outdoor activities and air is pretty good too, so I like it here.

Another participant, Fandy, when asked to describe her leisure back in her home country, simply said:

Not really much as here.

Some participants discussed how there were not as many resources back in Mainland China and Hong Kong as there are in Canada. According to Susanna:

And uhh, I don't remember that many community centres at all.

Wan-Yan felt that there was not much difference between her leisure activities back in her home country and Canada. However, Raymond felt that he had many more leisure experiences back in his home country than in Canada:

Before? Before is more variety in Hong Kong. I have friends, I always go out with them, like uhh motorcycle, play radio controlled boats, and those things.

As many participants had little or no leisure when they were living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong, understanding how their leisure repertoire has changed since moving to Canada is very valuable. Some participants accounted for changes in their leisure by comparing Canada to their home country. Fandy said:

Yea, it changed. We have more time, spare time, 'cause Canada has more like holiday, vacations, so it's more time and more...uhh how do you say that...more support...government support.

Siu-Kwan accounted for her personal leisure change:

It's changed, I'm able to have more time to watch soccer and enjoy things with my husband. Oh also, something I learned here is the difference in models for cars...I didn't know this in Hong Kong.

Joseph compared his leisure from when he was younger to now:

Well I was a student, so basically it was all sports. Played a lot of cricket, soccer, stuff like that, badminton, table tennis... Yea, I'm not involved so much in sports, I guess because for sports you got to be much younger, and I'm not that young anymore, so travelling more. [laughs]

Overall, participants describe the changes in the diversity of opportunities that occurred in their leisure when living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong to now living in Canada.

4.1.A.iv Leisure Meanings

It is important to understand how leisure meanings change when one encounters a new culture. When participants were asked what leisure meant, they offered a variety of different perspectives. Leisure was defined as a hobby, an activity, as entertainment, as free time, as relaxation, as nature, and as travel. One participant, Raymond associated leisure with a hobby by stating:

My hobby, my favourite hobby is working on steam train models.

Other participants associated leisure with activities such as sleeping, dancing, swimming and watching television. For instance, Rosanna stated:

Leisure means I will do whatever I like...exercising, or maybe watch TV, or chips, stuff like that...

Susanna defined leisure in terms of entertainment:

I would say leisure is what do I do when I have my spare time and to entertain myself, make myself happy.

According to the participants, leisure is self-fulfilling and involves the pursuit of happiness.

The previous quotation introduces this idea of spare time; leisure was also defined in terms of free time. As Bernard simply stated:

Leisure means I can do what I want in my free time...

Bernard also believed leisure to be in relation to relaxation:

You feel more relaxed, enjoyable.

Another interesting aspect of these meanings of leisure is the connection to nature. When asked what leisure meant to her, Beverly spoke about nature:

I think in this country, lots of parks, and lots of space for me to walk around, nature and beauty.

In this aspect, leisure was associated with spending time and doing activities outdoors. Lastly, another linkage to leisure meanings was its association with travelling. Joseph passionately described what leisure meant to him:

Well I've travelled a lot of places. I've travelled to China about 5 or 6 times, been to India twice, been to Europe half a dozen times, travelled the breadth of US and Canada, you know, driving, and I just love to travel, see places, and experience the culture and

the food of different countries., Try to expose myself to all these cultures so I can learn and have a better understanding of the world.

The previous quotation indicates how leisure is associated with an activity that is really valued and enjoyed. Leisure experiences such as travel allow for an exposure to a variety of cultures. Leisure is unique as people are able to take away many experiences and learning opportunities.

As shown above, meanings of leisure varied on an individual level. The meaning of leisure seemed to be associated with the participants' personal experiences from their past and current activities. Understanding participants' leisure meanings is important for enhancing our understanding of the role of leisure in the lives of Chinese immigrants. Overall, this sub-dimension focuses specifically on leisure meanings as they are related to participants' experiences with changing cultures.

4.1.B Achieving and Maintaining Health

Health and well-being encompass all aspects of physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological, social, and spiritual needs (Dupuis & Alzheimer, 2008). Therefore, maintaining one's health means finding balance in some or all of these areas. According to participants, leisure allowed for the incorporation of each of these aspects. There were also other health-related benefits and positive feelings associated with leisure. This essence was developed to capture these ideas as well as the way participants described how the Chinese culture places great value on health and longevity and the role they saw leisure playing in helping to meet those goals. This will be discussed in the following sub-dimensions: i) believing in leisure for health; and ii) growing and developing through leisure.

4.1.B.i *Believing in Leisure for Health*

Throughout the interviews and as an essential component to life, participants made a recurring connection between leisure and health. Participants discussed how leisure allowed them to keep healthy physically, cognitively, emotionally and psychologically, and socially. Also, they expressed a link between health and happiness. As Beverly said:

You feel happy right? You enjoy what you like to do; you enjoy what really most interesting to you. I think this is good for your personality or your health too. I think this is good for health especially, when you're getting old, retired, you like to be a healthy and happy life. I think that leisure, the type of activity is important.

Many participants spoke of the connection between physical health and leisure: in particular, exercise. Rosanna discussed how she believed keeping active slows down the aging process and increases the potential for her to continue to function well:

Let's see, I try to be active, and uhh so...it's because I don't want to get old and frail. Like I cannot do anything...that's why I go to the fitness club, I lift weights, and do all kind of stuff to keep myself strong.

Susanna clearly stated:

Coming to this centre to do exercise is my favourite. And uh, I really like it, keep me healthy, and meet people. I like it very much...And yeah, keep you healthy, you know...I feel, I feel great! A lot healthier, and uh yeah, I feel good!...Like I say the exercise is good for my health.

Siu-Kwan discussed how exercise is a helpful way for her to deal with diabetes and high blood pressure:

I feel much healthier, I sweat which is good...It's different from before now with exercise, before I have diabetes, high blood pressure, so I need more exercise...Yes, to keep fit, and also with diabetes, with exercise blood sugars go lower...

Susanna also shared her personal experience of how exercise helps her with her health:

... 'cause I was sick for a...for a year, and the organizer, she's very nice, she told me that it would help improve my health, which is true. I'm a lot better than a year ago.

On a more emotional level, Fandy believed that participating in leisure prevents the possibility of or the alleviation of depression. According to Fandy:

First they help people who are depressed. Most old people stay home, out of family, out of children, they very lonely, upset. So they help us.

Several other participants also said how actively participating in leisure helped to improve mental health. Joseph, for example, discussed the connection between leisure, social activity and cognitive health:

I don't know. Well, we all value like you know...I don't know...It's part of well-being and healthy...socially you're more active...you keep active. As far as your mental thing is concerned, socially, you're meeting new people, you're learning.

In fact, a number of participants made the connection between social aspects or leisure and mental health. Susanna expanded her thoughts:

...And yeah, keep you healthy, you know. It's not just free time, for your mind as well, and you know, you have a lot of leisure time, or you spend your leisure time with good friends, and you improve your mental health as well.

Central to mental health was using leisure to find balance in life. Beverly brought up an interesting way to view leisure as she discussed how busy life can become:

Of course, when you are young you don't feel that way, you have to concentrate, do your work, your career. But when you getting my age, you need to do that, to have leisure time...Yeah. No matter what you do, you need the time to switch from busy life to downgrade your time. You can...just like charge your battery. After leisure, you can do even more...re-energize, yes that's the right word.

Many of the participants thought very highly of leisure. They were able to see the importance of leisure in their lives. Many participants said they felt much better after participating in a leisure activity. Susanna said:

I feel, I feel great! A lot healthier, and uh yeah, I feel good!

Mei, through the translator, said:

After participating in the activities, she communicates more with other people, and healthier, and feels a lot better.

Fandy, when asked how participating in a valued leisure activity makes her feel said:

Yea, I feel wonderful, I feel really good.

When asked the same question, Wan-Yan, said very excitedly:

Oh I feel so happy, and I can't live without it. [laughs]

Anita discussed the concept of an independent aspect of leisure by stating:

I feel good by myself.

In describing the social aspects, many of the participants enjoyed coming to the Centre and doing exercise or other leisure activities because they were with a group of people with whom they were comfortable. Beverly said:

First when I attend, I just try a little exercise here, I feel really good. Actually I've been to a lot of senior clubs, lots of place. I think this one is best for all the place I go. Because you can find all the people here almost the same background, and same age. Also teacher very nice, and all the members here very nice. You have lots of things to learn, and lots of things to communicate and feel comfortable here.

According to the participants, having similarities with others provided comfort to many people. Rosanna explained:

It's good, it's like a group in the Chinese community. Like, you feel like you belong here, and you know, it's kinda nice.

Siu-Kwan said:

More friends to chat with, doing activities, and more people in my similar age group.

Overall, when participants discussed the connection between leisure and health, they were able to identify its physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological, and social components. Participants displayed strong beliefs in the importance of health in their lives, thereby shaping their meanings of leisure.

4.1.B.ii Growing and Developing Through Leisure

Many participants saw leisure as a means to continue to grow and develop. Leisure provided opportunities for new learning. Joseph said:

...you're learning. As learning goes, it never stops. It doesn't matter, at what age, learning, there's always enough in the world for people to learn, especially in the present age, there's so much exposure to information that I don't think any people can learn everything in their lifetime.

Leisure allowed for exploration. Tak shared his desire to learn winter sports now that he was in Canada:

But before I retire, I don't have any sports at all. So now, maybe now, aged people...thinking about sports now...Because I don't know how to skating, how to skate, how to ski, I don't know...Those sports I would like to learn.

Raymond explained how he was able to learn life skills from his leisure experiences:

Its good experience, because I learn quite a bit on how to be handy man, something like that. Fixing everything myself, it helps.

Participants highlighted the freedom they had to learn new things in Canada. For example, Rosanna described her experiences of leisure in Canada:

Uh, it's because I want to keep my brain working. Because I don't know how to play mah-jong at home, in Hong Kong...In Canada, it's because back home, they don't allow us to learn, because they think it's gambling...No. My grandmother would push

me away, saying don't look at it, don't learn it. That is why I want to learn, you know...

Overall, participants were able to experience many benefits of leisure including helping them to develop and maintain health in all its forms. For the most part, participants were able to achieve positive feelings and happiness through their engagement with leisure. The participants described the many ways they enjoyed leisure whether in a social environment, independently, actively, or passively. Participants were also able to learn from these experiences and to try new things. Continually practicing and recognizing a healthy lifestyle appeared to be a very important value to these Chinese immigrants.

4.1.C Experiencing Freedom and Choice

In general, participants expressed having a sense of freedom while in Canada as compared to living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong. Many participants reflected on experiencing greater freedom and choice within their leisure while living in Canada. This sense of freedom can be further understood by looking at their leisure pursuits. Also, as many of the participants had reached their retirement stage, their sense of free time was activated. This essence is expressed further through the following sub-dimensions: i) experiencing ideal leisure; ii) freedom in a new culture; iii) freedom that comes with retirement; and iv) freedom despite a few constraints.

4.1.C.i Experiencing Ideal Leisure

Participants were also asked what their ideal leisure experience would look like. Accordingly, participants took the time to reflect on their ideal leisure experiences. They had

varying responses to this question and spoke about ideal leisure in relation to sports, activities, music, or travelling. Many participants were very satisfied with their current leisure repertoire. When asked about the ideal leisure experience, Tak stated that sports were important. Mei said that attending the activities and dancing was ideal because it makes her feel good. Chun-Fai said anything involving music was ideal since he really enjoyed it. Another participant Joseph, elaborately described why travelling was an ideal activity:

Travelling, as I told you, you come to get a better understanding of the world. I mean you can read a lot about these countries, watch on television, and all that stuff, some of those are actually canned in such a way that's how people who pass that information want you to look at from their point of view. But travelling personally, and being you know part of, meeting the people, gives you a better understanding. And then you get to relax and you begin to realize that a lot of the things you see on TV or on the news, is not as true as if you go there yourself. Things are not as bad as they are, or things are not as good as they are. There is as I understand, at least to my knowledge, there's a lot of propaganda involved, and you know, whatever you read about, whether its press, or whether its media interviews and stuff like that, so you know...

Participating in leisure gives one a first-hand experience and understanding of an activity that is valued or interesting. From these personal leisure experiences, a person is able to form his/her own opinions on what might be an ideal leisure experience. Importantly, most of the participants stated that their current leisure activities and lifestyle was ideal. For instance, as Susanna stated:

Umm, right now...right now is ideal, I'm very happy with the current ones.

Similarly, Anita said:

I think I'm good enough.

Siu-Kwan referred to the amount of leisure when speaking of ideal leisure:

It's about right, 3 times a week. Tuesday and Thursday I usually spend doing other things, bank...

Mei stated optimistically:

Every day is best, every day is good experience.

Beverly referred to both the community and club while describing her ideal leisure:

I think this community here; I think it's pretty good for all the people who attend because all the age is the same, lots of people volunteer here. Volunteer their time, their energy, and teaching lots of people here. I think here is very good, this seniors club, everybody enjoy, they do together, they come.

Since many participants were already experiencing their ideal leisure, this may suggest that they had already been active in seeking out the type of leisure they enjoy the most. For many, their ideal leisure was already present in the activities within the club. However, this could also be explained by the fact that the ideal activities present in the club were also the only ones the participants had experienced recently and felt quite satisfied with their leisure at this time. Another reason participants mainly listed activities at the club as ideal leisure could be due to the influence of the environment (as interviews were conducted at the club) as well as the context of interview questions.

Overall, participants' reflections on ideal leisure varied and were sometimes similar to their meanings of leisure. This could possibly be because both these ideas are based on their personal experiences. For example, one participant described travelling as both the meaning of leisure for him and his ideal leisure, which indicates its value in his life. For the most part, it seemed like many of the participants were already actively pursuing their ideal leisure experiences at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. Being able to engage in ideal leisure reinforces the overarching essence of freedom and choice in leisure.

4.1.C.ii Freedom in a New Culture

It is important to understand why participants felt this sense of freedom and choice. Several participants discussed ideas of freedom and opportunities that were unique in Canada compared to Mainland China and/or Hong Kong. Beverly said:

I think that we got all the freedom we want, right? So we can do whatever we like wherever we like to enjoy or participate, on your free time. Lots of opportunity too.

In another interview, the translator relays for Mei that:

They have freedom of speech, and harmony in the community, and that makes her feel good.

Participants seemed to consider freedom an important Canadian value. They believed that by having freedom to participate in their leisure, it also expressed their Canadian culture. Wan-Yan summarized these differences in culture by saying:

It's completely different—Chinese is more traditional and Canadians are more free.

Chun-Fai compared Canada to Hong Kong by stating:

There's much more freedom here compared to Hong Kong, and I'm much more relaxed.

When asking participants which activities they were engaged in at the club, many were able to list a few. Some of the activities offered at this club included: *mah-jong*, *tai chi*, table tennis, morning exercise, arts and crafts, line dance, karaoke, drawing classes, and Mandarin lessons. Anita, when asked which activity she participated in said:

Everything...Tai chi, morning exercise, um arts and crafts, mah-jong...

It appeared that people enjoyed trying a little bit of everything. One of the most common activities was engaging in morning exercise. Susanna described her experience:

Umm, especially this centre in the morning exercise, they teach some of those moves or exercise that even as a Chinese I never learn before.

Susanna also added:

Right now, I'm doing the morning exercise 3 times a week.

Beverly said:

Yea, they teach lots of exercise, the teacher is really good here too.

Many participants chose activities that they had always wanted to learn, for example, *tai chi*. Another activity that reflected Chinese culture was *mah-jong*, a Chinese strategy game using tiles often associated with recreational gambling. Rosanna described her leisure activities:

This centre. Exercise in the morning. I used to do line dance, and mah-jong, and I did some crafts before...But right now exercise is the main one then...Mah-jong.

When talking about *mah-jong*, Susanna joked:

Sometimes I would stay behind to play mah-jong with them, but just for a short time, because their level is too low. [laughs]

As many Mandarin speakers are now living in Canada and attending the club, many people expressed a desire to learn how to speak Mandarin. Therefore, the club had offered Mandarin courses as one of their activities. Susanna, with a list of activities added:

And sometimes I stay to learn my mandarin sometimes.

After participants listed the many activities they were engaged in at the centre, I was interested in knowing what made them choose these activities. Most of the participants gave very general answers in relation to why they chose their activities. For the most part, it was based on interest, happiness, and fun. Fandy simply stated:

I like it, make me happy.

Chun-Fai exclaimed:

It's a lot of fun.

On the other hand, Anita said she chose activities only:

Because it is provided. [laughs]

It is also interesting to note that the director of the club, when asked the same question, said that he provided activities based on what he believed people would enjoy.

Overall, participants seemed to be involved in many activities at the *FCSAV*. Many of these activities were chosen simply out of fun and pleasure. People enjoyed learning new things and applying new skills such as learning Mandarin. There is a strong sense of freedom

and choice present in participants' reasons for choosing leisure activities. This is related to their experiences of freedom gained from being in a new culture while living in Canada. Participants were able to choose activities that reflected both traditional Chinese and western activities. However, their activity choices reflected a need to maintain their own culture but also to participate in new activities. Perhaps if more activities were offered, people would continue to try more types of leisure.

4.1.C.iii Freedom that comes with Retirement

Another interesting finding was that some participants seemed to want more leisure or opportunities to try new leisure now that they were in the retirement phase of their lives. For instance, Chun-Fai believed that:

If there was more [leisure], it would be even better.

Tak discussed his yearning to learn new activities in his retirement:

But before I retire, I don't have any sports at all. So now, maybe now, aged people...thinking about sports now...Because I don't know how to skating, how to skate, how to ski, I don't know...Those sports I would like to learn.

Also, as many participants were reaching a new stage in their life, retirement allowed them to experience much more leisure. Therefore, they were replacing time they once spent on work with time on leisure. Joseph described the sense of freedom he had gained after being retired:

I just enjoyed being retired. I wish I had retired earlier. You're able to do anything you want, at any time you want, you don't have to stick to any specific routines, stuff like that...Well I have the freedom, in terms of the fact that I have time at my disposal,

that I'm not restricted by other things in life. And then I have managed to work and save up enough money, that is also not a restriction as far as I'm concerned so I am able to do what I want. Plus I have a good family and friends who support me in those endeavours.

Tak said:

Free time? Now, I have more free time because now I'm retired. Before, I retired, I have to work, and then home. Not much leisure time.

Beverly explained her thoughts on time:

Time? Okay, everybody has to manage their time, of course when I'm working, always have a time problem, because you're busy all the time. But right now, when I'm retired then, all the time is managed by yourself...Of course, when working, busy like crazy, no time for that.

Rosanna was able to recognize the change in leisure prior to retirement:

Uhh, I think it would change when I was retired. Like I don't have leisure time when I was going to school, after I work, then I had my children, I had to work, and plus housework, children...Exactly, yes, now I have more free time to think about leisure. But before no, even when you go to work, they expect you to learn different things. They expect you to take some courses, lunch and learn, stuff like that, I learn about computers, it's no leisure time, no down time [laugh]

Overall, there were some participants who desired more leisure activities in their lives.

They continued to partake in the activities they were already involved with and now had a

desire to try new activities. Many participants were now retired and seemed to enjoy filling their retirement with leisure activities. Many looked forward to engaging and trying many more activities in the future. There was a lot of happiness expressed by participants as they described the freedom that retirement offered.

4.1.C.iv Freedom Despite a Few Constraints

Although participants were experiencing freedom and choice, there were still instances where some leisure constraints existed. When participants were asked what issues they faced in maintaining or accessing leisure, many responded that there was nothing stopping them from enjoying their leisure. Most of the participants seemed satisfied with the way leisure was currently in their life, and saw no barriers. Bernard simply stated:

I don't think anything prevents. Just if you want it, you can do it.

Susanna also said:

Umm, right now I don't have any issues. So you know, I don't have any issues right now.

Joseph described that he has never had more time in his life:

Not really. I've had no problem, whatever I wanted to do, I was able to do...Yea I have more time, time is the main thing. I have more time.

Chun-Fai explained how he personally had no constraints but could see that the Centre had issues that might affect individual experiences:

Very satisfied, but I can do more...But I can see here, the space is not enough, the money is not enough, and the organizer is very busy.

However, for those participants who did have issues, several different factors were mentioned. One of the main issues that affected participants' leisure was lack of time. Several participants described how there was not enough time to partake in leisure, or to add more leisure to what they were already engaged in. Also, it is important to note that some participants were more heavily involved in the organization and running of the club which may explain their reference to time constraints. Raymond talked about how there were enough activities at the club; however he lacked time to join them all:

No, I think we have everything here...even more, I do not have so much time to participate every one of them here.

Mei, through the translator's interpretation, said:

She likes other activities in the centre but she doesn't have much time to join.

Bernard stated:

Time constraints? Time is the biggest one.

Chun-Fai explained more specifically, referring to activity classes at the centre:

No, the times aren't right...

Some other issues participants discussed included barriers in terms of costs. Rosanna explained:

Leisure. Sometimes it's very hard to identify...but I find like you have to pay to get what you want. Like when I go to the fitness club, I have to pay.

Another issue that Rosanna faced was having a physical constraint:

I guess I'm finding, sometimes, I got like sore back, or muscle pain and you know...

Lastly, another issue discussed was weather constraints. Siu-Kwan listed some factors that prevented her from participating in leisure activities:

Transportation and weather conditions are very important factors.

Overall, many participants pointed out very positively that they were able to do whatever they liked. Several participants shared the feeling that time constraints prevented them from participating in all or many leisure activities. Other factors included costs, physical conditions, and weather and transportation. It is important to understand both positive and negative aspects in order to truly understand an experience.

This essence of experiencing freedom and choice was evident throughout participants' descriptions of ideal leisure, freedom in a new culture, freedom that comes with retirement, and freedom despite a few constraints. Participants were able to freely choose the types of activities they wanted to participate in. They were also able to form their own thoughts on what they would consider an ideal leisure experience. Participants freely chose to participate in leisure which was attributed to factors of being in a new culture and at a new stage of retirement. In discussing leisure constraints, for the most part, participants felt that there were not many things that prevented them from participating in leisure. Altogether, having the sense of freedom and choice had contributed to participants' happiness and satisfaction with their leisure experiences.

4.1.D Cultural Expression and Learning

Cultural values can be practiced and expressed in several areas throughout a person's life. Cultural values can also change or vary according to where one lives. For example, an immigrant may retain his/her native culture but also engage the new culture (e.g. a Chinese person practicing both traditional Chinese culture and Western culture). This essence captures the idea of leisure meanings and experiences reflecting cultural expression and learning for participants, and is divided into two sub-dimensions: i) cultural identity; and ii) using leisure to express culture and cultural learning.

4.1.D.i Cultural Identity

One key component of interest in my study was to see what culture(s) Chinese immigrants identified with most. During the interviews when I asked participants: "With which culture would you most identify? (Chinese/Canadian)", I found a mixture of results. Three participants identified with being Chinese; three participants identified with being Canadian; and seven participants identified with being Chinese-Canadian. Chun-Fai who identified with being Chinese said:

I would say I'm Chinese, from China.

While Raymond, stated:

Umm I think a little more on the Chinese side.

Susanna initially said Chinese but then added:

Umm I would say Chinese, but uhh, gradually, maybe gradually I would say I'm Canadian. It takes time.

Joseph described how being physically Chinese affected his identity:

Basically, I'm living here...I consider myself basically Chinese, just like the reason for that being is it's not something escapable for me or by other people. If I'm on the street and somebody identifies me, they're not going to identify me and say he's a Canadian, they're probably going to say he's a Chinese. So that's why I identify myself as a Chinese.

For those participants who identified more with being Canadian, Tak said:

Canadian...Because now I own a Canadian passport.

Many participants identified with both the Chinese and Canadian cultures. Joseph described this by saying:

Umm, both, I'm comfortable with both cultures, like I've lived here for so long that I'm quite comfortable, you know.

Similarly, Rosanna said:

I would say both, because I grew up and go to school and work with the Canadian more...so I adapted the Canadian more like, custom and everything...you know, like...

Bernard explained:

That's difficult, I'd say 50/50. Well I still preserve my Chinese culture, but I also get used to the Canadian culture as well.

Other participants, like Anita, were much more liberal with their cultural identity:

That means that if I want to be Chinese I'm Chinese, if I want to be Canadian, then I can be Canadian.

Overall, most participants expressed comfort with being in Canadian society. As mentioned, participants had been living in Canada between 17 and 45 years. Each individual developed a personal meaning in terms of being 'Chinese', 'Canadian', or identified with both Chinese and Canadian culture. For the most part, it appeared many of the participants liked to tie in both cultures to their advantage to get the best of both. Participants described how their cultural identity was displayed in their leisure. The next sub-dimension discusses how participants were able to use leisure to express culture.

4.1.D.ii Using Leisure to Express Culture and Cultural Learning

It is interesting to examine the processes an immigrant undergoes in order to adjust to and become comfortable in Canadian society. Participants described some of the ways leisure had allowed them to express their culture. Culture, in this instance, seemed to be defined according to whether the individual identified with being Canadian or with being Chinese. As noted earlier, the participants had been in Canada between 17 and 45 years and most participants suggested they were quite comfortable in Canadian society. Many expressed how Canada gave them the freedom and choice to participate in any leisure they desired. As discussed previously, Canada is called a 'cultural mosaic', which allows Chinese immigrants to become Canadians while maintaining their native culture. According to participants, leisure activities allowed them to practice and learn about Chinese traditions. Susanna described how through leisure activities, she was able to learn more about the Chinese culture:

Umm, especially this centre in the morning exercise, they teach some of those moves or exercise that even as a Chinese I never learn before. Like the tai chi and umm other um cultural exercise which I really like now I know a lot more about the Chinese culture especially the tai chi and qi gong, you know, those I never had a chance to learn.

As noted above, many Cantonese-speaking participants wanted to learn Mandarin. As Tak said:

Because I don't know Mandarin. So I want to learn. Because here also have many Mandarin people. Because Cantonese is not common here...I think there's more people who speak Mandarin...just now, I think there's more immigrants from...from Mainland China, so more people speak Mandarin now.

Joseph explained his reasons for wanting to learn mandarin:

I guess I'm interested in learning more mandarin because the fact that mandarin is the main language of China. And personally being Haika, I don't speak mandarin or didn't have the opportunity when I was growing up. So this is an opportunity that I've got so I'm just trying to learn that so I can speak and communicate to people, you know.

Many agreed that participating in a Chinese cultural centre allowed them to identify more with their Chinese culture as they were surrounded by Chinese traditions and with people of similar background. Some of the activities offered at the Centre included *mah-jong*, *tai chi*, Chinese calligraphy, and learning Mandarin. Rosanna explained how she has always wanted to learn *mah-jong*:

Because I don't know how to play mah-jong at home, in Hong Kong...My grandmother would push me away, saying don't look at it, don't learn it. That is why I want to learn, you know...

Beverly was encouraged to learn how to play mah-jong:

Because sometimes they want me to play mah-jong, I did learn a little bit.

These are all traditional Chinese activities that help reinforce or teach Chinese traditions.

Also, people briefly mentioned how they were able to indulge in Chinese festivities such as Chinese New year, Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, and so forth. Susanna was able to sum up the role of leisure as:

umm, well I think that leisure played a big role, not only as Chinese immigrants, I think it's for everybody else, right?

This is interesting as it reminds us that the role of leisure in general is important for all people of all cultures. However, there may be culturally-specific differences for that role.

To further experience the Canadian culture, Beverly had explained how she enjoyed her leisure within Canada:

I think in this country, lots of parks, and lots of space for me to walk around, nature and beauty...Yea, and enjoy the nature and beauty here...Hiking. Or take a walk in the park.

Another participant, Tak, had associated skiing and skating as important sports to learn while living in Canada. Therefore, leisure allowed participants to also reflect on their expression of culture and to learn more about the Canadian culture.

Overall, participants took the opportunity and initiative to learn traditional Chinese activities that they had always wanted to enjoy. This provides an important insight as they can express their Chinese culture when participating in leisure while living in Canada. However, this choice in activity may also be greatly influenced by the fact that many traditional Chinese activities were offered at the *FCSAV*. Many participants felt a great sense of Chinese cultural identity while being a part of a Chinese culture centre, experiencing traditional Chinese activities, and being with other Chinese members of the community. Some participants also used leisure to express and learn more about the Canadian culture. Next, we will examine the sense of community as it has developed within the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

4.1.E Feeling a Sense of Community

It is important to understand the role community centres play in terms of leisure, community, and holistic health and well-being. In particular, I wanted to examine the role of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* according to its members, my participants. Participants expressed an overall feeling of a sense of community. This essence will be further described through: i) creating a safe and supportive environment; and ii) adjusting to the diverse needs and growth of the club.

4.1.E.i Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

To gain a fuller understanding on the role of the *FCSAV* in the lives of participants, it was helpful to probe why members decided to join. The *FCSAV* is a volunteer-run club and was started in 2008 by the president/director and his wife. The main sources of advertising for

the club were newspapers or referrals from other members. Of the 13 participants I interviewed, five had seen an advertisement for the club in the newspapers, six had been referred to the club by a friend or family member, and two were involved in the starting of the club. The *FCSAV* has gained many new, satisfied members who have recommended their friends and family members to the club. It also appears that their means of advertising was quite successful since many people who have no ties to the club were able to read about it in the newspapers.

Participants had several different reasons for joining this club. To begin, Rosanna highlighted how the *FCSAV* is the first Chinese association in the area, which makes it appealing because it offered new opportunities:

Umm, it's because I have lots of time since I retired so I was looking everywhere to join. You know where do I belong? First I joined the senior club in the library, and we don't have too many Chinese people living in here. They all have to go to like Richmond Hill, or Markham, and Scarborough, to participate. So when I found out they have one here, so I just like have to join.

Bernard described his experience:

So I got kicked out by the other club...Because there's no...regional wise, there's no Chinese association in Vaughan. So I was in the other part of the city, but since I don't live there, I got disqualified.

Another reason people joined the club was to maintain good health and exercise. Beverly shared:

First when I attend, I just try a little exercise here, I feel really good. Actually I've been to a lot of senior clubs, lots of place. I think this one is best for all the place I go. Because you can find all the people here almost the same background, and same age. Also teacher very nice, and all the members here very nice. You have lots of things to learn, and lots of things to communicate and feel comfortable here.

Susanna shared her personal experience:

Umm, the organizer, 'cause I was sick for a...for a year, and the organizer, she's very nice, she told me that it would help improve my health, which is true. I'm a lot better than a year ago.

Altogether, many participants joined because of the types of activities offered such as exercise. It is important to understand the reasons participants joined the club in order to promote ways for other people to be more involved in their community. For the most part, many participants said they felt good about attending the *FCSAV* and that it made them happy. Rosanna described how she felt:

Well I found the people are very friendly. And the president and the wife, is like, I think they are doing the best, try to arrange and everything. And well, I appreciate what they are doing.

Susanna described her experiences at the club:

Oh I would say it's a good experience, very good.

There is a lot of participation in the club by its members. Joseph described how he enjoyed this atmosphere:

There seems to be a lot of participation, a lot of people are participating, all ages, okay? And I see a lot of people coming in regularly, which means its good, and they do have a lot of activities. And I guess the fee is nominal, which is okay. And then also, they are able to help people in terms of transportation and stuff like that so I think it's good.

Having active participation was viewed positively and was seen to encourage others to continue to be a part of the club. The club was very practical in terms of costs, transportation, and variety of activities. Tak described how the staff was very encouraging:

Best experience? Uhh, when I learn the dancing, I don't know the dancing at all, but they teach me how, from beginning, everything from beginning. Just like the morning exercise, I have to follow the staff, but I don't know, but they encourage me.

Tak also described feeling very comfortable in the club:

I feel comfortable because nice people and the chair and his wife is good, good to me too.

Beverly described how members of this club were part of a family:

I think very good experience. The people feel very kind, and also willing to help. And how to say in English... You feel like a family. Like a family. Everybody doing here. Sometimes I think here you can stay a whole day, in the morning exercise, some people they bring their lunch, and they still play mah-jong in the afternoon, and then they go home.

Another interesting aspect, which Fandy felt strongly about, was how the FCSAV values equality:

This centre has uniform, make people are equal. You don't compete by, how beauty, how dress nice, like that. And uh, best leader, very friendly, very helpful people.

Many participants described how they enjoyed being with similar people. Rosanna said:

For Chinese, I feel like they are...we have the same custom and same language. And it kinda feel like you are going home, like kind of like...more closeness...Yes, similar...yes similarity...

It is evident that sharing the same culture with someone is comforting. Rosanna also discussed having a sense of belonging:

It's good, it's like a group in the Chinese community. Like, you feel like you belong here, and you know, it's kinda nice.

It was also a comfortable environment for these Chinese-Canadians to express their culture.

Beverly said:

Yes, I think sometimes even I attend some activity maybe lots of people, same background, they have half Canadian, half Chinese right? So we can communicate where some parts from Chinese, some parts from Canadian, I enjoy that very much.

Siu-Kwan explained how she enjoyed being with people in a similar age group:

More friends to chat with, doing activities, and more people in my similar age group.

Many stressed the importance of meeting people who can speak a similar language as them.

Joseph said:

Well, if you speak the same language as anybody else, people tend to understand you better... That connection, always there, people understand you. In any language, or in any country, if you are able to speak the language, you're able to communicate better with the people and get a better understanding. And people tend to trust you more, or at least they accept you more than if you speak a different language to them.

It seemed as though many participants valued meeting new people and spending their leisure time with friends. Bernard described his experience with meeting new people:

The best experience is that I've been meeting a lot of different people from different backgrounds. From government officials to the regular...

The importance of community is mentioned, as Mei stated, through the translator:

The whole community can be closer, she knows more friends and knows more about the community.

Participants noted the importance of community support and facilities. As Susanna pointed out:

Yea, cause now we have a lot more places to spend my leisure time and uhh the community support is really good too.

Participants also seemed to be very pleased with the role of government support. For instance, Beverly described her thoughts:

I think I most like Canada is that the government do a lot for older communities. Because I noticed that lots of projects, like building a house. Government have assigned them to part of your property or have to be park and community centre or

provide for the children to have future activity. That is the most I'm impressed with. Not only the children can use it, but grow up, we can use it too. All the community. Actually, that's much different from US as I feel. Because in Chinese, in China, they don't have so many...all crowded, so many people. Of course when I move to States, it's good too, right? But when I come here it's much better even than the United States, because they don't have so many parks provided by the Government. Provincial parks, or community, or local parks too. All the beauty you build, you must have some space for the people to leisure. That's the most impressed I have.

Beverly also brought up the aspect of volunteering in the community:

I think this community here; I think it's pretty good for all the people who attend because all the age is the same, lots of people volunteer here. Volunteer their time, their energy, and teaching lots of people here. I think here is very good, this seniors club, everybody enjoy, they do together, they come.

Overall, participants described having many positive feelings regarding the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. Because of the levels of comfort, support, and familiarity, people suggested they were more likely to engage in leisure activities more regularly. Participants were able to form close relationships with other members and felt like part of a family. They also mentioned that they appreciated the work that the director and his wife have done for the club. Through interactions between the director, his wife, and other members, it is evident that there were aspects of friendliness, community and respect at this club.

4.1.E.ii *Adjusting to the Diverse Needs and Growth of the Club*

Although most participants claimed that they were satisfied with their current leisure and had positive feelings for the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, there is always room for improvement. For the most part, participants were not able to list negative feelings they had about the club as easily as they listed positive feelings. When asked what negative feelings they had for the club, many said they had none. As Susanna said:

And so far, I don't have any complaints, and I don't have any negative things to say about it.

Several other participants implied there were no negative feelings, as Tak said:

So far nothing.

Joseph stated:

I have had no negative, personally, no negative experiences.

One concern expressed by participants was with regard to keeping it bi-lingual (i.e., with both Chinese and English translation). However, thinking more on the topic, Joseph, who cannot read Chinese, said:

I think what they...they need to be more informative about the various activities, since they have an email facility. They should e-mail people in English and Chinese, because I don't know Chinese but I know English. They should e-mail all the information to people, about all the activities that are taking place.

Participants expressed a desire for the *FCSAV* to be more informative in posting their activities and events. A few participants suggested that an accessible way to do this would be through the *FCSAV* website and through e-mails. Chun-Fai said:

So far this club have an email address, dot com, right, so people can go to the internet...yes, website...communicate with each other...the good news.

Another suggestion made by a participant was for the club to list membership conditions ahead of time to avoid confusion for members and non-members. Joseph described a specific incident:

At the same time, if there are certain conditions associated with certain specific programs they should spell it out. And not, at the last minute say sorry you know, we print...this information, but this is not the condition, this is the condition, that itself...oh yea, about bad experiences. There was an instance where they wanted people...there was an outing, and they said people could join...but then later on they turned around and said well we got too many, so people who had joined earlier and they were not members, you know, they had to take a back seat. But that's not correct, you have to let them know upfront, and say sorry...Yea members first, or non-members are not allowed, they should have spelled that out in front. Because that itself is very embarrassing to people who recommend, who referred to other people to, and then they find that they cannot go. And that's not a good PR work. If you are trying to get new members in, you can't do that to those people. They may just be trying out to find out to see if those programs that are available are suitable for them. So you cannot just turn around and say sorry you can't participate, or you cannot come around or

look at these things because you are not a member. Because you can't force them to become members first and then join the programs. Because I think people have the right you know, to look at the programs, see the program, see if they like it or not, and then join the program. So you can't just turn them away and say sorry you can't watch these people dancing because you are not a member. You can't watch, this is a public place, so that's what they should allow...which I found, that's what I found one of the things I found was a problem, because there have been a lot of comments among that...you know...

As this is a relatively new club, there were still many experiences that need to play out over time in order for the appropriate adjustments to be made. Anita discussed her experiences in trying to organize activities and events at the club:

Just some...some, how can I say, not that co-operative people, members...otherwise, overall it's good, just a little disturbed, just a little bit...Most of the time.

Another participant shared the view that it was sometimes difficult to have full co-operation when there are so many members in a club. Bernard described how:

Because we have so many members, not everybody agrees to what you conduct, and you cannot make everybody happy...It's not easy, everybody's unique.

When asked to describe his experience at the club, Bernard also noted:

Its great experience, you learn a lot, a busy place, so many members, just like running a big company. I'm actually busier than working.

Since participants felt so comfortable within the *FCSAV*, they enjoyed having the opportunity to contribute their ideas about the building of community. I asked participants what types of activities they would like in the future, which were not currently being offered at the club. Of course, as participants were very diverse, many wonderful activities were listed. For one participant Rosanna, she said:

What I would like to see is...they have a swimming pool in here. They should have some kind of aerobic, like water aerobic...Exactly. Like for people who doesn't know how to swim, but still, some kind of like aerobic, or some kind of exercise...Yea, for senior. I mean they will help for their arthritis thing, but they don't offer in this centre.

Some other activities that participants would like to see included: Chinese painting, sketching, Chinese chess, and traditional chess. Siu-Kwan also brought up her desire to learn a very important skill in today's society:

I'd like to learn computer skills and going on the internet.

Several participants really enjoyed the idea of having a picnic, or outing, or travelling as a group.

Participants not only shared what types of activities they would like to see in the future, but they also shared some recommendations for the *FCSAV*. To begin, several participants suggested having more days of activities. Susanna explained:

Yea, the centre. Yea the centre, it's good, it would be nice if they have like 5 days a week instead of just 3 days for the morning exercise. So, we don't have to be confined going, just coming in for 3 days, I can choose my days. Because you know as seniors, we have doctor's appointments or other things to do right? That's the only thing.

Other participants also suggested having more days of activity classes, having different time so that it was more flexible, and also more locations. A common suggestion was that the club needed more space. As the *FCSAV* runs within a larger community centre, it is shared with other clubs. Beverly said:

Uhh...I don't...so far, of course, the space is very important. Especially since, I think they grow out very fast. Like, I think the people, the member grow fast... I think it's maybe easy to get double or something. So of course you need space, right? I think I just mentioned, the space...or maybe provide some equipment or something, that would be nice.

Similarly, Fandy stated:

Only say centre don't give us space. Really bad for us. You know, like other groups, Filipino, they have big room, but only few people, they don't use lots. We use all the time, more people, and we don't have enough room. It's not fair, really unfair.

Bernard stated:

Bigger space. Space wise it's difficult, timing okay, just the space.

Currently, the *FCSAV*'s main office and central meeting space for members was located in the kitchen of the community centre. One participant requested an office.

As noted above, this idea of needing more space was also linked with needing more resources and money. Fandy boldly stated:

Money, we need the money and space. [laughs]

Anita explained how in order to develop further, they needed help from the government:

More money, more money, the government gives us more money.

Issues of money were noted as a barrier to new activities. Chun-Fai said:

Can't think of any right now...the ones that I want, there's not enough money.

Rosanna spoke more specifically about needing more resources for certain activities:

Like the ping pong, table tennis. They said they want to get more members, like before we have less than 100, I mean for beginners, now it's close to 300. But we are still, have the same space, like two ping pong table, which is not enough. They may say for 15 people for one table, and like, if you think about 10 minutes per person, you have to wait 2 hours to get your turn. So it's not really practical.

It appeared that money was linked not only to issues of space, but also resources and activities.

One participant believed that the lack of money and space lead to the lack of variety in activities.

Beverly discussed how important it is for the club to portray a positive outlook on life:

Healthy yea, how to keep healthy, how to keep very happy to even live by yourself. I think that's very important, especially just our age. Maybe most people, if living with family, it's fine. Or for me, right now, I live by myself, its fine too. I enjoy the freedom, I can do whatever I want right? You know whole life you're busy with kids and with husband, and eventually can do what you like. Really enjoy that type of life, I hope everybody when they're old it will be their golden time, right? Not like...some people they feel miserable, some people can not see their independence important. They

always think oh I want my kids...Positive, yes, do whatever you can do, oh right now you do it, okay.

Beverly also suggested that it is important to provide resources to help those who need assistance in later life:

Actually, I think some people, when you get old, gradually, you become by yourself, eventually. Of course, first is a couple, but eventually by yourself. I think the centre of whatever, they provide, how to be...just right now the activity pretty good, you enjoy together. Also, have some speech or something that everybody can...sometimes like me, I read a lot, so I can get lots of information when I read the book how to be helped by myself. But I don't know some other people, right?

Rosanna discussed her experience with activity classes:

Negative, it's just...I find the exercise in the morning, like they are not changing it at all...It's almost two years, its boring to me...Too routine. I was stopping for four months, I didn't want to come because I feel bored...Exactly. But then they...like even the tai chi, they teach you at the beginning, somebody learn it, but the new people keep coming in...No, they did not teach it at all...They just teach it once...Kept going, and the people who come in, they complain to me, I don't know how to do it. Like for me too, I don't know exactly. It just, I wish they would like renew, like doing something different and change up, and teach something again for the new people...Yea exactly. Keep it more interesting.

Rosanna also discussed how there should be different levels of activities available for different age groups:

I would say like more active things for the young, the younger. Because some are in their 50's, some are in their 80's, and you know think they don't want to change. They say the exercise is fine for them, the mah-jong is fine for them, they don't want to learn new stuff. But for us, the young people, the people who want to be more active, you know, if they can give them more things to do...to learn more different things...Yea. Everything, the old people, they cannot do the exercises, in the morning too. It's just like 'one size fits all', but it doesn't really...

Another suggestion from Rosanna was to provide separate classes for Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking people. Importantly, this may suggest some differences within the group itself:

Umm, I just have one suggestion, is that, I don't know, like we are getting lots of Mandarin people. Like it's not really mixing...Because they don't know English, you cannot communicate with them. They don't want to learn the Cantonese. And they have different kind of, they like the singing, the folk song, folk dance. And we don't like those kind of, we like more Canadian style. It's just that...I don't know...is it a better idea to separate the two? One centre for them; one centre for us?...Whatever. Like but then, some people will say, oh like if we don't want them, they say you are prejudice, you don't want us to join. But I find lots of centre, they have different, they have different, mandarin specific for them, Cantonese specific. I don't really know, I would say they would enjoy more...They are very, what do you call that, when we have those talks, about the health talks. When they are talking about use the Cantonese, and they

don't like it, because they sit there, they can't understand, you know like, you know, but now I think they start to put the Cantonese first, and then Mandarin.

Overall, participants were very helpful in providing recommendations to the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* in a variety of areas. Some of these recommendations are easily doable where others are much more grandiose and are only possible with larger grants. With the help of participant input, the club will be better able to enhance members' experiences. Participants seemed eager to provide feedback, which I will aim to share with the club in the near future. This provides participants a chance to be involved in the change and building of their club. Importantly, having such an influence in the club allows participants to feel a sense of community.

To summarize this essence, it appeared that people felt very comfortable at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* and described feeling an overall sense of community. Through this association, they were able to further establish a sense of belonging as they met people of similar age, culture, and language, which helped to meet their need for a safe and supportive environment. Members were excited to meet new people, and looked forward to spending their leisure with others. Participants offered a variety of recommendations, which demonstrate their comfort in providing feedback and desire to contribute to the improvement of this community. These recommendations will help the *FCSAV* to adjust to the diverse needs of members and support the continued growth of the club. Participants' comfort and sense of belonging may be further attributed to their involvement and high level of volunteerism present within the *FCSAV*. Overall, it allowed members to build on social connections and to really value community support.

4.2 *Summary of Main Essences*

In closing, the five main essences described in this chapter include: changing leisure with changing culture; achieving and maintaining health; experiencing freedom and choice; cultural expression and cultural learning; and feeling a sense of community. Through each of these essences, leisure is shown as an essential component to life. As the findings illustrate, participants were able to see the differences in leisure from their home country compared to their leisure in Canada. It is evident that Chinese participants place great value on health and understand the health-related benefits of leisure. Many thought the duration and variety of leisure experiences had expanded since living in Canada. This may be due to participants' experience of freedom and choice in their leisure. Participants felt that they had the choice and opportunity to engage in ideal leisure. Interestingly, participants believed that leisure could be used to express their culture. Participants discussed their cultural identity and how leisure provided a way to learn and practice more about their culture but also to learn aspects of the new culture. Participants were also very pleased to be a part of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* and felt an overall sense of community. Participants felt comfortable enough to provide their suggestions and be involved in the building of the club. Participants discussed a sense of belonging that came from being with people of a similar age and ethnicity. Overall, participants described a safe and supportive environment at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

Each of these essences helps us understand meanings these Chinese immigrants attached to their leisure and their experiences of leisure since moving to Canada. This is important as meanings and experiences are key aspects of a phenomenological study. By looking at the data from a phenomenological perspective, we are able to gather participants' feelings from

their perspective. Overall, the information found through the research provides a better understanding of the importance of leisure at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese immigrants. This information will be useful for leisure practitioners as it will help them to conduct programs that may provide a deeper meaning and greater experiences for this specific community.

In the next chapter, I discuss these implications in more depth. Throughout the chapter, there will also be links to current research and theories as well as discussions regarding how this study can help fill gaps in the literature. Lastly, the chapter will conclude with limitations and future implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The five prominent essences, as outlined in the findings, are: changing leisure with changing culture; achieving and maintaining health; experiencing freedom and choice; cultural expression and learning; and feeling a sense of community. As this is a phenomenological study, meanings and experiences are key components to understanding the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. More specifically, these essences captured how Chinese immigrants experienced leisure, and highlighted some of the meanings participants attached to leisure and to attending this particular Chinese cultural club. As discussed in the findings, there is an overarching theme of *leisure as an essential component to life*, which incorporates each of these essences. In this last chapter, I examine each of these essences in relation to relevant literature and theoretical frameworks. This chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations and implications for the future.

5.1.A *Changing Leisure with Changing Cultures*

A very prominent discovery that emerged from the data analysis was that most participants had engaged in little or no leisure while living in Hong Kong or Mainland China. There is some literature, however dated, to support this finding. For instance, Wong (1971), examined the leisure activities of youth labourers in Hong Kong and found they were dependent on individual, familial, and social factors. Nearly half of the respondents had no particular opinion about recreational activities; their main activities consisted of studying and passive activities such as watching television. The lack of activity was constrained by time and money. Youth labourers who did engage in activities spent no more than three hours and less than five dollars on an activity. Wong also discussed how study participants enjoyed

everyday activities such as watching TV, playing ball games, going to the movies, reading books and newspapers, and studying. More recently, Wang and Stringer (2000) explained how the practice of leisure in China differed from North America. According to these authors, Chinese people preferred: quiet and passive activities (rather than active and strenuous physical activity); being spectators (rather than participants in sports); indoor activities such as reading; being with friends (rather than outdoor activities); being more work-oriented, and being individualistic, and therefore less team-oriented (Wang and Stringer). Overall, Wang and Stringer expressed that leisure is much less organized in China. Therefore, people living in a traditional Chinese society may be unable to identify with leisure in the same way as Westerners.

The literature discussed above can help to explain why Chinese immigrants experienced little or no leisure in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong. The list of activities described by Wong (1971) coincided with many of the activities that participants engaged in while living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong. As noted, studying was included as an activity as participants who were students back in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong claimed they had no time for leisure because they were studying all the time. This reinforces the characteristic of traditional Chinese people as being very hard-working. Traditional Chinese people in China tend to have a stronger work ethic and, therefore, are less likely to view leisure as an important component of life compared to Euro-North Americans (Deng, Walker, & Swinnerton, 2005). The authors suggest further that Chinese people's negative attitude towards leisure could be a result of their positive attitudes towards achievement and higher education. All in all, the type of leisure experienced in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong is based on a very different concept of leisure than the way we talk about our experiences in

Western society. Not surprisingly, most participants had experienced an increase in leisure activities and had spent much more time on leisure since moving to Canada.

Li (2005) examined the fluctuating number of Chinese immigrants from Mainland China and Hong Kong to Canada from 1980 to 2000. According to Li, in the years 1968 to 1994, over half a million immigrants moved from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to Canada. These numbers continue to increase and have substantially contributed to the Chinese-Canadian population. This increasing population emphasizes the importance of understanding the leisure trends and what specific criteria are needed to meet holistic health needs for this particular group. However, there remains a gap in the literature in terms of examining the leisure of Chinese immigrants as it changes from living in China and/or Hong Kong to living in Canada. Although participants in this study showed significant leisure changes, there are no further, specific comparisons of immigrants' leisure experiences in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong with their leisure experiences in Canada. It would be beneficial to speak with Chinese immigrants during the transition over time as this may provide additional insights into the experience of leisure and how it changes after a move to Canada. This research would be valuable to recreation and leisure studies as it provides a better understanding of Chinese immigrants' prior experience with leisure. This will be helpful to understand the transition processes for Chinese immigrants and help us to be more sensitive to their specific needs.

According to Godbey (2003), leisure can have many shades of meanings, some of which are completely distinct from one another. No activity can always serve as leisure for a participant. Therefore, Godbey defined leisure as an activity that is undertaken in accordance

with one's free will. In another way, Godbey also notes that free time is thought of as leisure itself, or as a necessary but insufficient condition required for leisure to occur. According to Godbey, leisure is defined as a state of mind when a participant feels perceived freedom (i.e., individual believes he/she is free) or an internal locus of control (individual believes he/she is controlling events). Similarly, Mannell and Kleiber (1997) agree that leisure may be characterized as specific types of activity, time free from obligations, meaningful and satisfying experiences, or even as some type of combination of activity, time, and experience. Participants in this study associated leisure meanings with hobbies, activities, entertainment, free time, relaxation, and traveling. The variance with regard to participants' responses in terms of their leisure meanings is similar (but not limited) to the idea of leisure being seen as an activity, free time, a state of mind, or meaningful and satisfying experiences. When asked what leisure meant to them, many participants listed activities or sports. It is important to note that the focus on leisure as activities was likely influenced, at least in part, by the fact that one of the main objectives of this study was to understand the role of the *FCSAV* itself. However, in many cases, participants clearly stated that leisure meant free time or what they did in their free time. Also, participants who enjoyed leisure as relaxation were able to focus on their own selves and their state of mind.

5.1.B Achieving and Maintaining Health

The Chinese participants in this study described a strong relationship between leisure and health. The participants expressed the value of leisure and its role in improving health in a holistic, traditional sense. Chinese cultural health beliefs stem from philosophies of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism and so it is useful to describe these philosophies briefly

(Fancott, 2001). Taoism emphasizes the importance of balance, peace, and harmony. Health is viewed as a perfect balance of yin and yang; two opposing yet interdependent forces (Lai & Surood, 2009). Yin is conservative, female, cold, and can store and re-store vital energy (in excess, it can result in infections, gastrointestinal problems, and anxiety) (Fancott). Yang is positive, male, hot, protective and activates stress response (in excess can result in dehydration, fever, and irritability) (Fancott). Taoism also gives emphasis to traditional Chinese medicine, such as herbs, in the belief that herbal medicine helps one to regain strength (Lai & Surood). Physical exercises such as *tai chi* help to achieve the balance of *qi*.

Buddhism follows a cause-and-effect relationship. For example, Buddhists believe people who are morally good will have good health, where-as the health of people who perform negative acts will suffer (Lai & Surood, 2009; Fancott, 2001).

Lastly, Confucianism is associated with the specific roles one has in society and family. The five key, familial concepts are: benevolence, kindheartedness, humaneness, magnanimity, and sympathy (Lai & Surood, 2009). In this philosophy, major decision-making involves the whole family system, in particular elders, men, or teachers, as they hold power and authority. Therefore, it is believed that in order to attain good health, one must respect their elders (Lai & Surood). Understanding these three philosophies helps to provide a basis for appreciating why Chinese participants consider health so valuable. Indeed, as the findings made clear, one of the more popular activities at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* was *tai chi*.

Participants acknowledged the importance of leisure and its benefits for their social, physical, and psychological health. This finding is supported by leisure researchers in a

number of important ways. According to Driver, Brown, and Peterson (1991; as cited in Mannell & Kleiber, 1997), a leisure benefit is the result of “a change that is viewed to be advantageous-an improvement in condition, or gain to an individual, group, society, or to another entity” (p. 276). Social health is defined according to one's relationships, supports, and feelings of connectedness to others (Shank & Coyle, 2002). Some examples of sociological benefits include family bonding, increase in social interactions, and familiarity with the community (Orthner, & Mancini, 1991). Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) point out that the main motives in reflecting the social nature of leisure include: establishing new friends, developing closer friendships, enjoying companionship, being with friends, and meeting new partners. The authors further conclude that “companionships and friendships developed and fostered through leisure participation and perceived availability of social support generated by leisure engagement help people cope with excessive life stresses and thereby help to maintain or improve health.” (p. 116). Participants described how they enjoyed meeting new people and making friends. Through leisure, they were able to participate in activities as a group and build their community. One participant even claimed that she felt like a family with fellow members of the club. This is an interesting idea since only a few participants had mentioned spending time with family in their leisure.

Physical health is related to one's body functioning and body systems (Shank & Coyle, 2002). According to Dupuis and Alzheimer (2008), the activities of older adults show different patterns of physiological change as well as effective treatment of diabetes, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, and hypertension when compared to non-active, older adults. Of course, the type of activity one is engaged in determines the type of outcome or benefit for their physical health. Many participants were able to describe how participating in morning

exercise was a good way to keep active and healthy. Other participants described how participating in leisure helped them overcome and maintain health throughout sickness and to address conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Psychological health relates to one's capacity for problem solving, learning, and reasoning (Shank & Coyle, 2002). Some psychological benefits of leisure, as stressed in the literature, include self-actualization, self-identity, personal growth, increase in self-esteem, and reduction of cognitive disorders (Csikszentmihalyi, & Kleiber, 1991; Haggard, & Williams, 1991). Some participants liked to participate in strategy games such as *mah-jong*; they believed it helped keep their minds stimulated. Also, through leisure, participants can continually acquire new skills, such as learning how to speak Mandarin. According to Dupuis and Alzheimer (2008), there is a link between leisure and psychological well-being, which incorporates concepts such as life satisfaction, emotional and mental health, and happiness. This was evident as several participants discussed improvements to mental health, happiness, and satisfaction when participating in leisure.

Overall, it is very important to remember that leisure provides benefits on a whole array of levels; it is a multidimensional concept. Now with society's expanding knowledge regarding the importance of healthy living, people are becoming more aware and have more options for taking preventative measures. However, it is also important to acknowledge the gap in research exploring the relationship between leisure and health in specific to Chinese immigrants. My study recognizes the value Chinese immigrants place on health, and how health-related benefits act as intrinsic motivation to participate in leisure. With this

knowledge, recreation and leisure practitioners can encourage and promote more Chinese immigrants to actively engage in leisure activities and to realize these benefits.

5.1.C Experiencing Freedom and Choice

As previously discussed, Godbey (2003) stated that leisure can be viewed in terms of activity, free time or state of mind. However, it is important to note that a person's freedom of choice and/or intrinsic motivation is the driving force that helps them to engage in leisure (in whichever terms it is viewed). According to Neulinger (1981), the primary defining criterion of leisure is perceived freedom, which is defined as “a state in which the person feels that what she or he is doing is done by choice and because one wants to do it” (as cited in Mannell, & Kleiber, 1997, p. 126). According to Lefcourt (1973), perceived freedom and sense of control are fundamental needs and are essential to health and well-being as, “the sense of control, the illusion that one can exercise personal choice, has a definite and positive role in sustaining life” (as cited in Mannell, & Kleiber, p. 131). Neulinger defined intrinsic motivation as being able to gain rewards through participation or engagement of an activity (as cited in Mannell, & Kleiber, p. 127). Therefore, leisure is often associated with a sense of freedom.

Canada is also known for its rights and freedoms. According to the Constitution Act (1982), in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the fundamental freedoms include: a) freedom of conscience and religion; b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication; c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and d) freedom of association. Many of the participants in the study acknowledge the sense of freedom they have gained from living in Canada. Often, many participants used the word ‘freedom’ while describing their experiences and thoughts about living in Canada.

Participants were between the age of 50 to 65 years old, falling in the category of late middle age. Many of the participants were retired. Participants acknowledged a change in leisure patterns from when they were students or workers to their current stage of retirement. Rhona and Robert Rapoport (1975) observed that as preoccupations change over a life cycle, leisure activities are added, dropped, or continued with altered meanings (as cited in Roadburg, 1985). Roadburg (1985) interestingly notes that in the past, retirement was seen to be equal to leisure or that retirement was leisure earned through a lifetime of work. This may be applicable to some of the participants' thoughts as they enter or enjoy this stage in life. However, now with greater understanding, we are able to see that leisure can be viewed as a period of time, activity or state of mind in relation to one's life satisfaction (Godbey, 2003). The meanings of leisure may differ between working and retired people. According to Kaplan (1979), the leisure role of leisure in the lives of retired people is defined as:

...one that consists of relatively self-determined activity--experience that falls into one's economically free time roles, that is seen as leisure by participants, that is psychologically pleasant in anticipation and recollection, that potentially covers the whole range of commitment and intensity, that contains characteristic norms and constraints, and that provides opportunities for recreation, personal growth, and service to others. (as cited in Roadburg, p 68).

Roadburg also argues that the top three attributes retired people attach to leisure are enjoyment/pleasure, relaxation, and freedom. Interestingly, in a study by Gibson, Ashton-Shaeffer, Green, & Corbin (2002), the role of leisure and retirement for older women can be grouped into three main responses: a) leisure as freedom; b) leisure as relaxation and pleasure; and c) leisure as meaningful activity (p. 265). This coincides with participants' responses as many of them also brought up these feelings when discussing what leisure meant to them.

Therefore, there did not appear to be any differences in terms of gender. Many participants said that they had greater freedom to pursue leisure now that they were retired.

According to Deng, Walker, and Swinnerton (2005), first generation Chinese immigrants must successfully negotiate leisure constraints (i.e., income), before participating in more leisure activities. In a study by Taylor (2002), immigrant women enjoyed opportunities where culture was shared with others and instances where a better understanding was fostered. The most important factor for these women was having the freedom to engage in these activities, without facing any constraints. This was evident in my study as participants have been living in Canada for over 15 years and are in a different stage of life from when they first arrived. Participants were not able to list many leisure constraints, which likely explained at least some of their feeling free to enjoy leisure.

Activities listed by participants were considered leisure as they occurred during their free time (i.e., non work hours), were voluntary, and produced pleasure. This finding echoes the work of Godbey (2003). Lastly, it is evident that all of the participants were highly satisfied with their current leisure experiences, many of which were described as ideal. Participants expressed that the biggest change from their home country to Canada is that they now experienced freedom and choice in their leisure. They believed they could participate in whichever activities interested them, and that there were not many barriers facing them. In this study, perceived freedom was associated with free choice, a common theme among participants. Participants enjoyed being able to do what they wanted, whenever they wanted, and in their leisure time. This study also highlighted the experience of intrinsic motivation when participants chose activities based on their personal level of enjoyment and happiness.

Overall, participants expressed feelings of freedom in a new culture and freedom that comes with retirement.

5.1.D Cultural Expression and Learning

Data analysis revealed that of the 13 participants, three identified themselves as Chinese, three identified with being Canadian, and seven identified with being Chinese-Canadian. According to Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993), leisure is a social context for developing intimate relationships and for expression of social identities. Freysinger and Harris (2006) believed that racial identity is central to developing one's sense of self and sense of community. When asked what being Chinese-Canadian meant to them, participants described how they were able to incorporate traits from each culture when necessary. For example, practicing Canadian customs in the workplace or when in the company of other Canadians; but also practicing Chinese customs when in the company of other Chinese people. This supports Lam's work (1976), who found that Chinese immigrants living in Canada presented a dual loyalty (one to their own ethnicity-culture and language, and the other to the receiving society where they planned to make their home). This concept of dual identity is similar to the idea of cultural pluralism when immigrant groups participate fully in the dominant society, yet are able to maintain their cultural differences (Hing, 1993). Canada's Chinese communities are said to be the strongest and most vibrant they have ever been in terms of serving members from different parts of the world (Chui, Tran, & Flander, 2005). The majority of my participants proudly called themselves Chinese-Canadian, thereby incorporating both their cultures. Some participants described how they felt more comfortable with others who shared the same culture of being Chinese-Canadian than those who did not. One interesting comment

made by a participant addressed some within-group tensions between the Mandarin-speakers and Cantonese-speakers. Although there is a general enjoyment in terms of pursuing activities related to the Chinese culture, different perceptions may be created depending on the language in which they are undertaken. However, for the most part, instructions for activities are conducted in all appropriate languages to accommodate all who are present.

According to Hing (1993), it is beneficial for mainstream society to become bi-cultural or multicultural in order to encourage more interactions between mainstream and ethnic communities. However, in a study by Isajiw (1990), the first, second, and third-generation of immigrants showed a decline in the preservation of mother tongue or language of origin. In my study, many of the participants felt they were a part of two cultures, hence they described a kind of dual identity. Since they were raised according to the Chinese culture and society, this is what they were taught and remembered. However, since many of the participants raised families while living in Canada, their children grew up according to the Canadian culture and society. Stodolska and Yi (2003) found that acculturated immigrants had higher self-esteem and experienced lower level of acculturated stress such as alienation and raising children in the new environment. Therefore, in my study, it was most beneficial for Chinese immigrants to embrace a dual identity in order to practice their Chinese culture and customs, but also to learn more about Canadian culture in which their children were being raised.

An emerging and prominent theme in this study was cultural expression. Leisure and the expression of culture were described by Gramann and Allison (1999) as instances where ethnicity may affect the cultural meanings attached to participation in recreation activities. Morden and Hopp (2007) state that, “leisure may be considered a significant independent variable from which ethnicity is derived and leisure participation may be a dominant means

through which ethnicity is expressed and maintained.” (p. 62). Further, Allison and Geiger (1993) conclude that it is not the activities themselves that reflect patterns of culture, but more importantly the content of the activities that determines their cultural nature and relevance. This is exemplified in participants' engagements of morning exercise, arts and crafts, and calligraphy. Although each of these activities is fairly common in Western society, participants viewed morning exercise with strong connection to Chinese health-related beliefs. In addition, arts and crafts, and calligraphy were pursued in connection with Chinese traditions, for example, making cultural crafts, and practicing Chinese writing. As Taylor (2002) argues, in a study on immigrant women's leisure, “the sustenance of cultural traditions contributed to the woman's sense of cultural identity and enriched leisure opportunities.” (p. 545).

In another view, Freysinger and Harris (2006), support how “the same leisure pursuit may be experienced in very different ways for different racial/ethnic individuals and be not only a source of pleasure but also pain and oppression.” In some cases, a display of cultural expression within leisure may lead to assumptions and stereotypes. Scholars such as Allison (1982), Carr and Chavez (1993), Hutchinson (1987), and Tirone and Shaw (1997) believed that leisure is a site for the expression of culture (as cited in Freysinger & Harris, p. 261). According to Freysinger and Harris, by recognizing the power that defines race and race relations, leisure can act as a potential site of resistance. That is to say, there can be both positive and negative outcomes from cultural expression. As previously mentioned, some within-group tensions and differences existed between Chinese immigrants from Mainland China and those from Hong Kong. Overall, these activities provided ways for participants to express Chinese culture within their leisure. However, it is important to note that none of the

participants described any negative feelings in regards to their cultural expression through leisure. Also, it is very important to not only understand why they chose to participate in activities, but to really understand their underlying meanings. For example, Cantonese-speaking participants discussed their interest in learning how to speak Mandarin as there was an increasing population of people from Mainland China. Many participants discussed their comfort in being with people of a similar culture who liked to engage in traditional Chinese culture, but also to explore Canadian society. Next, I discuss the idea of similarity and its contribution to participants' experience in building community at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

5.1.E Feeling a Sense of Community

The *First Senior Chinese Association of Vaughan (FCSAV)* is a club created by and for Chinese seniors living in the greater Toronto area (Vaughan). According to Lai (2006), “senior centres are a way for the elderly to become involved in their community and to create networks for social interaction.” (p. 97). Baker and Palmer (2006) believed that recreation participation and community involvement are inter-related and enhance a person's quality of life. Shank and Coyle (2002), describe quality of life as a matter of the individual in interaction with his or her environment. Many participants discussed how being a member at the *FCSAV* allowed them to meet new people and to participate in leisure with friends. Each of these experiences enhances or allows for a better quality of life and building of a sense of community.

An important role played by the *FCSAV* is in providing Chinese seniors with a location to meet with others of a similar ethnicity. Therefore, the *FCSAV* can be identified as an ethnic

community (defined earlier as areas in which people of a specific ethnicity associate). Participants also noted the importance of being with people of a similar age, background, and who can speak the same language. According to Breton (1961), language is an important factor for the formation of an interpersonal network within an ethnic group. Breton found that immigrants who did not speak English form an interpersonal network, which may also include those who speak both English and Chinese (Cantonese and/or Mandarin). For this reason, those who do not speak English were able to form their own ethnic community, which is a separate social system. Fennema (2004) reinforces Breton by stating how “members of ethnic groups are often less well connected to the world outside their ethnic community.” (p. 438). According to Fennema, ethnic groups can be organized and overlapped internally through several ethnic associations, but rarely outside of their specific ethnic community. However, in this study, many participants were able to speak English; for instance only some required a translator for this study. Regardless of the fact that people could speak English, Cantonese and/or Mandarin were still the primary languages spoken by participants.

Taylor (2002) explores the cultural diversity and leisure experiences of women in Australia while reflecting the similarities between Australia and Canada. The author’s findings showed a pattern of ‘centrality of family and friends in the small community’. Taylor found that the women in her study highlighted the importance of family, friends, ethnic and church groups, as well as the value attached to participating in activities in a familiar and supportive environment.

Participating in an ethnic community allows members to feel a strong sense of belonging and/or a sense of community. A sense of belonging can be defined as the

experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel they are an integral part of that system or environment (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). According to Walker and Avant (1988), sense of belonging has two defining attributes, where: a) the person experiences being valued, needed, or important with respect to other people, groups, objects, organizations, environments, or spiritual dimensions; and b) the person experiences a fit or congruence with other people, groups, objects, organizations, environments, or spiritual dimensions through shared or complementary characteristics (as cited in Hagerty et al., 1992). In another study by Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2008), sense of community was broken down into four dimensions: needs fulfillment, group membership, influence, and emotional connection.

In my study, participants described how leisure at the *FCSAV* fulfilled many of their needs and they were able to elaborate on the multitude of benefits. Some participants described their experiences at the *FCSAV* as comfortable, enjoyable, and like a family, which implied a type of emotional connection. Several participants discussed how they shared many similarities with other members and felt like equals, therefore having equal influence.

According to Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, and Collier (1992) feeling a sense of belonging is healthy and having a higher sense of belonging is correlated with better mental health. They listed the following outcomes from a sense of belonging: a) psychological, social, physical, or spiritual involvement; b) attribution of meaningfulness to that involvement; and c) laying down a fundamental foundation for emotional and behavioural response. Overall, community centres and cultural clubs have an important role in providing people this beneficial sense of belonging. Therefore, being enrolled as members further

emphasizes a greater meaning. The findings from my study indicated how Chinese immigrants felt most comfortable while engaging in leisure with people of similar age and ethnicity.

As evident in my study, when people are comfortable, they are more likely to provide suggestions and recommendations to help make improvements. People would also be more willing to volunteer their time when they feel they are making a valuable contribution and experiencing overall enjoyment. Henderson (1984) makes a connection between leisure and volunteering as both are freely chosen, make meaningful experiences, and provide many benefits such as meeting people, having fun, and learning new things. Henderson states that: “The more satisfied a person is with the leisure aspects of volunteering, the more likely that individual will be to volunteer initially and to continue to volunteer.” (p.55). Volunteering is a very important part of community as it brings people together to help one another. It can also be a great way for people to give back to their community. Also, as noted, the *FCSAV* is a volunteer-run club therefore volunteering is a critical skill to develop. Volunteering is an example of just some of the ways that members can take part in building their community. It is important to explore ways of motivating people to take initiative and to become active in their community as this can add to the benefits they gain from belonging and can help build a long-lasting club.

5.2 *Conclusion: Leisure as an Essential Component to Life*

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of leisure in the lives of Chinese immigrants at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. Through my interpretation of the interviews with the 13 participants, five main essences emerged from the data analysis.

These essences highlighted the significant changes in participant's leisure from when they were living in Mainland China and/or Hong Kong to their current life in Canada. It was also evident that Chinese immigrants highly valued achieving and maintaining health in their lives. Participants experienced a wide range of freedom and choice in their leisure. Leisure was also a means of cultural expression, corresponding to their associated cultural identity. Lastly, participants experienced a strong sense of community and sense of belonging while being a member of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

Each of the essences and discussion above demonstrate that *leisure is an essential component to life*. This is an important, overarching theme, aspects of which were prominent throughout each of the essences. Participants expressed that without leisure they would feel as if something is missing. They also expressed a desire for even more leisure. Overall, participants in this study conveyed a very positive leisure attitude. However, there is a gap in literature describing Chinese immigrants' need for leisure in their lives. In the next section, relevant theoretical frameworks are considered.

5.3 *Theoretical Frameworks*

Theoretical frameworks are important as they provide a grounded explanation that can help us to understand what the findings mean. As noted in the literature review, Graaman and Allison (1999) provided four theoretical frameworks to explain why differences in leisure occur between different ethnic groups. Of the four theories, *the ethnicity thesis* and *“recreational pursuits as expressive models of culture”* are the most applicable to the findings of this study. Each is discussed in depth below.

The ethnicity thesis focuses on ethnic and racial differences in participation that are due to culturally-based differences in value systems, norms, and leisure-socialization patterns (Washburne, 1978; as cited in Gramann & Allison, 1999). Ethnic groups are able to preserve a distinct subcultural identity while also maintaining contact with the dominant mainstream society. This theory is further supported by the findings in my study as participants joined the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* where they were able to share in leisure experiences and socialize with other Chinese immigrants. Chinese participants were comfortable with interactions and contact in the Canadian society but preserved their Chinese identity, values, and norms.

Although *the ethnicity thesis* provides an appropriate explanation of the findings within my study, it also has some negative implications. According to Wayne (2005), “people of all races are socialized into activities and cultures over generations”. (p. 137). This may imply that Chinese immigrants, when they first arrive, may not yet have had a chance to experience any activities from other cultures. Thus, they may continue with the activities that they were most familiar with, and would perhaps engage in new activities if other Chinese people did or as they are introduced to new activities. However, if participants are so focused on being with people of similar background, and are unwilling to leave their comfort zone to explore, they may never have the opportunity to experience new activities within different cultures.

The framework, “*recreational pursuits as expressive models of culture*” seeks to explain how cultural meanings are attached to participation in recreation activities (Gramann, & Allison, 1999) and so is very useful as a way to think about the findings from my study.

This model provides a theoretical understanding for the essence 'cultural expression and learning' in particular. Participants incorporated many cultural aspects into their leisure activities, for example, Chinese calligraphy, *tai chi*, and learning to speak Mandarin. Participants described how they were motivated to engage in physical activities to maintain and achieve their health. As previously discussed, Chinese immigrants place great value on health. Another interesting finding was that participants chose or were interested in activities that they believed to be more connected to the “Canadian” culture such as going to parks, skating, and skiing. Therefore, most participants appeared to be quite comfortable moving in and out of this duality of Chinese and Canadian culture.

It is also important to note that these two theories alone are too simplistic to grasp the complex multicultural frameworks involving participants who identified with being ‘Chinese-Canadian’. Petersen (2006) examined how different intersections (i.e., gender, race, disability) have differing effects on individuals’ experiences. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind that there may be other factors that shape each participant’s experiences rather than ethnicity alone. In particular, age is an important factor in participants’ leisure experiences as they ranged from ages 50 to 65. Depending on their age, they may be in different life stages as some participants were still working while others were retired. Thus, my participants’ experiences seemed to be explained by interactions of a number of key factors, only one being ethnicity. This needs more exploration in future studies.

5.4 *Limitations and Future Implications*

As with all studies, there are of course limitations. First, I am only looking at one club in one community centre, so it is not a full representation of all Chinese immigrants

within any given area. Participants from the *FCSAV* may be unique as they were likely relatively affluent, able to retire at a younger age, and were exposed to a strong volunteer role present within the club. Secondly, in regards to my specific study, some participants had trouble understanding the meaning of some interview questions. This could be due to language barriers; although participants could speak English, they were not fluent. Therefore, participants' answers could have been more thorough if the questions were clear from the beginning. Third, it is important to note that all of my participants had lived in Canada for more than 17 years, therefore, they are not recent immigrants. Perhaps if I interviewed more recent immigrants, their leisure experiences may have been less positive as they may be still experiencing a post-settlement period. Fourth, as this is a Master's thesis, there was a time constraint on the study, and it had a small scope. However, if given more time, many other factors (i.e., age, gender, race, disability) could have been explored, which would further examine intersectionality theory. Fifth, there is a lack of research on this particular area and much of the literature found in relation to this study was quite outdated. Lastly, another limitation exists as current studies focus on examining the leisure of specific individual cultures as opposed to examining the development of an underlying theoretical concept.

According to Stodolska (2000):

Rather than aim at integrating research on minorities into the broader field of leisure studies and building a coherent theoretical framework that could be consistently applied to study the leisure experience of both minorities and the mainstream, we focus on narrowly defined problems whose applicability is limited to specific groups and specific situations. (p.158)

Studies and theories of leisure and diversity must be created in a much broader way in order to be able to include both minority groups and mainstream groups. Having individual studies for each particular ethnicity leads to a series of “mini-theories”. (Stodolska, 2000). I

believe my study helps contribute to this broader understanding through the main essences developed to describe participants' experiences. However, the limitation still exists as these experiences may pertain to a very specific group of Chinese immigrants. There would be a much stronger link between leisure and ethnicity by developing more theoretical frameworks to highlight the significance of this topic. This is where future studies are needed for understanding the relationship and meanings between leisure and culture in many different settings and to help us build a broader theoretical understanding of these issues.

This study examined the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants, ages 50 to 65 years living in the Greater Toronto Area who attend the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. It would be interesting to see how these same participants experience leisure when they are 65 years or older. Therefore, future implications of this study could be to develop a longitudinal study, where participants are examined at different ages. This includes examining participants who are younger and still working to determine the role of leisure during work and retirement. To further minimize limitations, it would be useful to conduct a study with several different Chinese senior centres and to have a broader range of participants. Future studies should also take into consideration other factors such as Chinese immigrants from different parts of China, number of family members already living in Canada, education, occupation, and socioeconomic status and income. To further examine the patterns of these results, it may also be beneficial to examine the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants all over Canada. Also, as briefly shown in my study, more research is needed to explore the tensions and differences that exist within Chinese cultural groups. Lastly, and on a much broader level, Floyd (2007) discusses the importance of translating research into applications. Therefore, in closing, I believe that this research must be taken directly to recreation practitioners to ensure practical

application. To initiate this process, the findings from this study will be presented to the director of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* to provide information and feedback that will hopefully improve the club. From there, the findings can also be presented to other community centres in the surrounding areas to emphasize the need and types of leisure appropriate for Chinese immigrants living in the Canada.

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Appendix

The Role of Leisure for Chinese Immigrants Living in the Greater Toronto Area

A Summary Sheet by Yvonne Ng, MA Candidate

My name is Yvonne Ng and I am a Masters Candidate in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I would like your help to recruit participants from the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* to be involved in my study on, "The Role of Leisure for Chinese Immigrants Living in the Greater Toronto Area".

Why conduct this study?

- Studies have shown that leisure is experienced differently by various cultures. Therefore, I would like to understand the experience of leisure specifically for Chinese immigrants.
- It would be interesting to examine the role Chinese Cultural Centres play in the way Chinese immigrants experience leisure.

What are the benefits of this study?

With results from this study, we will be able:

1. To build awareness in cultural sensitivity in programming for Chinese immigrants.
2. To gain knowledge that may allow for optimal quality of life through leisure.
3. To understand the role Cultural Centres or Clubs play for Chinese immigrants and their leisure experiences.

How does this study benefit the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*?

- f) Participants will be asked questions on their immigration experience, their leisure experiences, and their experience at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.
- g) Participants will also be asked to describe both positive and negative experiences at this Club as well as to provide any recommendations they may have.
- h) This study will provide the Club with information such as why people participate in their programs and how it makes them feel.

How can the Club assist with this study?

- Allow posters to be hung around the Community Centre that outline this study and the need for participants to volunteer
- Allow for researcher to speak at the beginning of activity classes or at a Club event to introduce this study to members of the *FCSAV*
- To provide a room at the *FCSAV* location to conduct interview sessions with participants

What are the criteria to participate in this study?

- Must be immigrants from either Mainland China or Hong Kong
- Must be living in the Canada for at least five years
- Must be a Chinese adult between the ages of 50 to 65 years
- Must be a member of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*
- Must attend at least one activity class offered by the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*

→ I am looking for approximately **ten** participants who are able to meet the above criteria.

What will be required of Participants in this study?

Participants will be asked to sign a consent form before participation in this study and will also be reminded that they are able to withdraw from this study at any point before the interview begins.

Participants will be asked to participate in an interview discussion that will last for about one hour in length.

The interview may be discussed in the language best suited to their needs (Mandarin, Cantonese, English).

Once the interviews are transcribed, they will be sent back to the participants to review and ensure that their responses are interpreted correctly.

Participants will be asked if they would like to receive results from this study.

Who should you contact for more information on this study?

- Please contact myself, **Yvonne Ng** should you have any questions or concerns in regards of this study.
 - E-mail: ywng@uwaterloo.ca
 - Cell phone: 519-577-3237
- Other contacts include:
 1. **Dr. Heather Mair** (my supervisor)
 - E-mail: hmair@healthy.uwaterloo.ca
 - Telephone: (519) 888-4567, ext. 35917
 2. **Dr. Sherry Dupuis**
 - E-mail: sldupuis@healthy.uwaterloo.ca
 - Telephone: (519) 888-4567, ext. 36188
- This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo. If you have any comments or concerns with this study, please feel free to contact **Dr. Susan Sykes**, Director, Office of Research Ethics at (519)888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email ssykes@uwaterloo.ca

Thank you for your interest and consideration in my study! ☺



University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3G1

Date

Dear Director:

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, under the supervision of Dr. Heather Mair. The title of my research project is "The Role of Leisure for Chinese Immigrants Living in the Greater Toronto Area". I would like to provide you with more information about this project that explores the need for Canada to embrace its multiculturalism and to allow for individuals to experience leisure in their own way.

First, I would like to thank you for your interest and for considering involvement in this study. The purpose of this study is to understand the leisure experiences of Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have immigrated to Canada and have been living in the Greater Toronto Area for at least five years. In addition, I would like to better understand the role of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* in the lives of its members. Knowledge and information generated from this study may help other recreation practitioners, researchers, and other cultural centres in better meeting the needs of Chinese immigrants.

It is my hope to connect with Chinese adults who are engaged in the activity programs of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* in order to invite them to participate in this research project. I would like to recruit participants using a number of different recruitment strategies. First, I would like to provide you with posters outlining the purpose of my study and indicating that I am searching for volunteers interested in speaking with me. These posters could be posted in different locations in the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. My contact information will be contained on the posters. If anyone is interested in participating they will be invited to contact me, Yvonne Ng, to discuss participation in this study in further detail.

Second, I would also like to have an opportunity to speak to potential participants at the beginning of activity classes or at another event you think would be suitable. If I am able to speak at the beginning of each class or at a Club event, I will ask potential study participants to fill out a very short "Willingness to Participate Form". This form is designed to provide very basic information about participants and to provide contact information to schedule follow-up interviews for those indicating a willingness to participate.

I believe that the participants of your program have unique understandings and stories relating to leisure experiences and culture. I will be conducting individual interviews with interested participants in order to gather their stories of leisure experiences. I believe that conducting these interviews at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* might be easiest and more convenient for potential participants. Therefore, if possible I would like to request access to a room to conduct these

individual interviews. At the end of this study the publication of this thesis will share the knowledge with those within and who are interested in leisure as a field of study.

Participation of any participant at any stage of this research is completely voluntary. Each participant will make their own independent decision as to whether or not they would like to be involved. All participants will be informed and reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw before any interview begins. Participants will receive an information letter including detailed information about this study and will be asked to sign an informed consent form before their interview is conducted.

Each participant may decide to withdraw from this study at anytime without any penalty by advising me. To support the findings of this study, quotations and excerpts from the interviews will be used labelled with pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Names of participants will not appear in the thesis or reports resulting from this study. Participants will not be identifiable.

If the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* wishes the identity of the organization to remain confidential, a pseudonym will be given to the organization. All paper field notes collected will be retained locked in my office and in a secure cabinet in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. All paper notes will be confidentially destroyed after two years. Further, all electronic data will be stored indefinitely on a CD with no personal identifiers and will be destroyed after two years. Finally, only myself and my advisor, Dr. Heather Mair in the Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo will have access to these materials. There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation belongs to the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, and the participants. If you have any comments or concerns with this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Director, Office of Research Ethics at (519)888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email ssykes@uwaterloo.ca

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ywng@uwaterloo.ca . You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Heather Mair at 519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or by email hmair@healthy.uwaterloo.ca

I hope that the results of my study will be beneficial to the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*, to Chinese immigrants living in Canada, as well as the broader research community. Insights from this study will hopefully provide guidance on how the leisure needs of Chinese immigrants can be better supported. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Ng
Master's Candidate
Department of Recreation
and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

Dr. Heather Mair
Associate Professor
Department of Recreation
and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

Organization Permission Form

We have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Yvonne Ng of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, under the supervision of Dr. Heather Mair at the University of Waterloo. We have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to our questions, and any additional details we wanted.

We are also aware that excerpts from the interviews conducted with participants may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the participants in the study will be identified using pseudonyms only. We are aware that the name of our organization will only be used in the thesis or any publications that comes from the research with our permission.

We were informed that participants and this organization may withdraw consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

We have been informed this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo and that questions we have about the study may be directed to Yvonne Ng by email ywng@uwaterloo.ca and Dr. Heather Mair at (519) 888-4567, ext. 35917 or by email hmair@healthy.uwaterloo.ca.

We were informed that if we have any comments or concerns concerning this study, we may also contact the Dr. Susan Sykes, Director, Office of Research Ethics at (519) 888-4567 ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

Yvonne Ng
Master's Candidate
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

Dr. Heather Mair
Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

We agree to help the researchers recruit participants for this study from among the families who are users of the program and services of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*.

YES NO

We agree to the use of the name of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

If NO, a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of the organization.

Director Name: _____ (Please print)

Director Signature: _____

Board of Directors Representative Name: _____ (Please print)

Board of Directors Representative Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

WHAT DOES LEISURE MEAN TO YOU???

Looking for Participants (aged 50 to 65 years and immigrated to Canada for at least five years)
to share their experiences with leisure and with

The First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan



If interested, please fill out a **Willingness to Participate Form** to provide basic information & contact

Interviews to be scheduled during the month of July 2010

Times made by Appointment according to Availability

Located at: The First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan

Hosted by: The Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies (University of Waterloo)

Individual Interview Session (60 minutes)

Cantonese/Mandarin/English

For more information on this study, please contact:

Yvonne Ng

ywng@uwaterloo.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo.

休閒活動對你的定義是甚麼???

歡迎過去多於五年從香港或中國大陸來加拿大而年齡介乎50至65歲的移民來分享你們對旺市第一華人長者中心休閒活動的經驗。



如有興趣者，請提供基本資料和聯絡方法，並於稍後填寫簡短的訪前問卷。

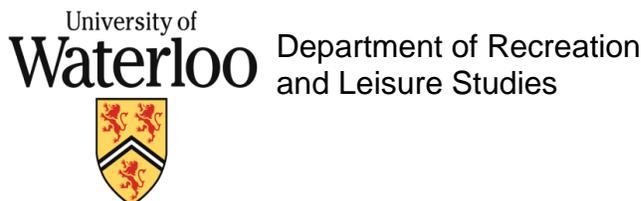
約六十分鐘的（廣東話 / 國語 / 英語）訪問將會排期於2010年七月內在旺市第一華人長者中心進行。

如果你需要更多關於這研究的資料，請聯絡伍穎欣
（Yvonne Ng）ywng@uwaterloo.ca

由滑鐵盧大學 - 康樂休閒研究系主持。

Script for Classroom Setting

Hi, my name is Yvonne Ng and I am a second year Master's student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I am a first-generation Chinese-Canadian who wants to learn more about my heritage. I am interested in studying the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants. Specifically, I would like to understand how Chinese immigrants experience leisure and how they experience the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. I am looking for people to participate in my study which will consist of a one hour interview conducted at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*. You will be asked questions in regards to your leisure experiences and your experiences with this club. A translator will be present to conduct the interview in the language of your choice (English, Mandarin, Cantonese). For this study, I am interested in volunteers who are between the ages of 50 and 65, and have immigrated to Canada for at least five years. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point with no consequences. With your help, I'd like to see how Chinese immigrants experience leisure and as well as your experiences with this specific centre. Your contributions will help guide recreation practitioners in creating leisure programs more appealing for Chinese immigrants. I would appreciate your help and am very interested in how you feel about leisure. If you are interested in participating in this study, please fill out a willingness to participate form. This will provide me with basic background information to ensure that you meet the specific criteria of this study, as well as a way to contact you. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to come speak with me. Thank you for your time.



University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3G1

Date

Dear Potential Participant:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Professor Heather Mair. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

As Canada is a very multicultural country, I believe it is important to study individual cultures and their experiences. In specific, I would like to focus on the role of leisure for Chinese immigrants. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to understand the experience of leisure and of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have lived in Canada for at least five years.

In participating in this study, I would like for you to complete a Willingness to participate form which will only take a few minutes of your time. This form will provide me with some basic information and allow for me to contact you for the next phase. This form also ensures that you do meet the necessary criteria to participate in the study. If however not all the criteria are met, you will unfortunately not be able to take place in the study. The second phase includes a one-hour interview session which will be conducted in the language of your choice (Mandarin, Cantonese, English). This information will be referred to using pseudonyms within the contents of my Master's thesis.

Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point during this study by advising me.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ywng@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Heather Mair at 519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or email hmair@healthy.uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 519-888-4567 Ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to cultural organizations and Chinese adults who have immigrated to Toronto.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely, Yvonne Ng

Willingness to Participate Form 訪前問卷調查

Please check and answer the following questions: 請參加者回答下列問題：

Male 男性 _____ Female 女性 _____

Are you an immigrant to Toronto from Mainland China or Hong Kong?

你是否從中國大陸或香港移民來多倫多？

Yes 是 _____ No 否 _____

How many years have you been living in Toronto? 你居住在多倫多有多久? _____

Are you between the ages of 50 to 65? 你的年齡是否介乎於五十至六十五歲?

Yes 是 _____ No 否 _____

Are you a member/visitor of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*?

你是否旺市第一華人長者中心的會員/訪客？

Yes 是 _____ No 否 _____

Which leisure activity classes are you currently enrolled in? Please list all.

請列出你所有現在參加的休閒活動:

Would you be interested in participating in a 60 minute interview?

你是否有興趣參與這研究?

Yes 是 _____ No 否 _____

If yes, please include your contact Information: 聯絡資料：

Name: 姓名: _____

Address: 地址: _____

Phone Number: 電話號碼: _____

E-mail: 電郵地址: _____

Thank you for participating in my study ☺ 謝謝你完成這問卷調查！

Participant Table

<u>Participant Name</u>	<u>Number of years in Canada</u>	<u>Examples of Favourite Leisure</u>
Susanna	20-25	Morning Exercise, Tai Chi, Qi Gong
Mei	30	Morning Exercise, Dance
Anita	22	Swimming, Tai Chi, Morning Exercise, Arts and Crafts, Mah-Jong
Fandy	26	Morning Exercise, Line Dance, Swimming
Raymond	36	Hobby=steam train models
Wan-Yan	35	Morning Exercise, Watch TV
Siu-Kwan	20	Swimming, Watching TV, Morning Exercise
Bernard	40	Relaxing/sitting in backyard
Joseph	43	Travelling
Rosanna	45	Exercise, Dance
Beverly	32	Hiking, Walking in the Park
Chun-Fai	17	Taking care of grand child
Tak	26	Watching TV, Sports, Morning Exercise



Department of Recreation
and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3G1

Date

Dear Potential Participant:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Professor Heather Mair. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Canada is known for being a very multicultural country. There is an increasing growth in immigration rates and in particular a large number of immigrants from Asia. Leisure allows for a healthy balance in lifestyle and quality of life. Leisure also conveys different meanings for different cultures. Therefore, it is important to study the experience of leisure for various cultures. This knowledge will benefit recreation practitioners and researchers in implementing leisure program ideas. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to understand the experience of leisure and of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have been living in the Greater Toronto Area for at least five years.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately one hour in length to take place at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* or at a location of your convenience. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, if you like, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for two years in a locked office. Only my supervisor and I will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ywng@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Heather Mair at 519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or email hmair@healthy.uwaterloo.ca. I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 519-888-4567, ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to cultural organizations and Chinese adults who have immigrated to Toronto. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely, Yvonne Ng

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Yvonne Ng of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____



Department of Recreation
and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3G1

Date

Dear Participant,

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to understand the experience of leisure and of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* for Chinese adults aged 50 to 65 years who have immigrated to the Greater Toronto Area for at least five years.

The data collected during interviews will contribute to a better understanding towards the experience of leisure to Chinese immigrants living in Canada. This data will be of benefit for recreation practitioners as they work to implement leisure programs for different cultures.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information as part of my Master's thesis. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the email address listed at the bottom of the page. If you would like a summary of the results, please let me know now by providing me with your email address or let me know if you would like a hard copy. When the study is completed, I will send of the study to you. The study is expected to be completed by summer 2011.

As with all University of Waterloo projects involving human participants, this project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes in the Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567, Ext., 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca. Yvonne Ng

University of Waterloo
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

ywng@uwaterloo.ca

Interview Guide

Context Questions-- immigration experience

1. When did you immigrate to Canada?
 - How did you come to live in The Greater Toronto Area?
2. What was it like for you to move to Canada?
 - How did you feel?
3. What changed for you when you moved to Canada?
 - What has your experience been like since moving to Canada?
4. What challenges did you experience after moving to Canada?
 - Do you experience any of these challenges now? Please explain.
5. Currently, with which culture would you most identify (Canadian/Chinese)?
 - Please explain and define what the Canadian/Chinese culture means to you.

Leisure Questions

1. What does leisure mean to you?/ What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
 - Describe your favourite leisure experience.
2. What was your leisure like before you immigrated to Canada?
 - Can you describe to me a typical leisure experience when you were living in China?
 - What did you enjoy about these activities?
 - What do these experiences mean to you?
3. Has the meaning of leisure changed for you since you immigrated to Canada?
If so, how?
 - How has your experience in leisure changed since you came to Canada?
4. What role does leisure play in your life as a Chinese immigrant?
 - How does being a part of these activities help you to feel better connected to your community (centre, city)?
 - How do these activities allow you to identify with your culture (Canadian/Chinese)?
 - How does participating in leisure allow for you to feel more comfortable in the Canadian society?

5. What issues have you faced in trying to maintain valued leisure activities?
6. How do you feel now when you are participating in a valued leisure activity?
 - What would the ideal leisure experience look like for you now?
 - How would you feel if you were no longer able to participate in leisure?

Cultural Centre Questions—all questions in reference to the Club

1. What made you decide to become a member of the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*?
 - How did you hear about the Club?
2. What activities are you currently enrolled in at the Club?
 - Why did you choose these activities?
 - Are there other activities not offered that interest you?
3. Can you describe your experience at the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan*?
 - Describe one of the best experiences you have had at the Club?
 - Have you had a negative experience at the Club? Please describe.
4. How can the *First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan* enhance your experience at the Club?
 - How can the Club better support your needs?
 - What recommendations do you have for the Club?
5. Would you like to receive the results from this study? (E-mail/Hard Copy?)
6. Do you have any questions for me?

Initial Codes for Data Analysis

Adjusting to multicultural society	Feeling comfortable with other members of FCSAV	Having community support
Allowing leisure for Canadian values	Feeling FCSAV has changed meaning of leisure	Having costs for leisure
Being a housewife	Feeling good about FCSAV	Having difficult co-operation
Being better off in Canada	Feeling happy about leisure	Having easy transition to Canada
Being busier with club than work	Feeling like a family at FCSAV	Having family or friend support
Being seen physically as Chinese	Feeling like something is missing if no leisure	Having freedom
Being with similar people	Feeling positive	Having fresh air in Canada
Believing club helps alleviate depression	Feeling pressure to work if no leisure	Having inclusive FCSAV emailing list
Belonging to a group	Feeling strange after immigration	Having independent leisure
Changing from student to retired	Feeling unhappy about move to Canada	Having interest in Chinese Calligraphy
Choosing activities because its provided	Feelings of being unhealthy if no leisure	Having limited leisure in home land
Choosing activities based on interests	Feelings of boredom if no leisure	Having more community knowledge
Choosing fun activities	Feelings of freedom for Canada	Having more leisure time
Coming to Canada for better opportunities	Feelings of loneliness after immigration	Having more locations for FCSAV
Coming to Canada for job	Feelings of unhappiness if no leisure	Having more variety of leisure in Home Country
Engaging in arts and crafts	Finding Jobs	Having much improvement
Engaging in ballroom dancing	Finding staff at FCSAV very encouraging	Having no best experience at FCSAV
Engaging in dance	Fixing things as leisure	Having no negative feelings on FCSAV
Engaging in drawing classes	Following Chinese traditions	Having no reason for no leisure
Engaging in Karaoke	Having a closer community	Having no recommendations for FCSAV
Engaging in leisure with friends	Having a wide range of interests	Having opportunities in Canada
Engaging in line dance	Having accessibility and participation at FCSAV	Having physical constraints
Engaging in mah-jong	Having activities as ideal leisure	Having time constraints
Engaging in Mandarin lessons	Having big changes	Having variety of facilities
Engaging in morning exercise	Having challenges finding job	Identifies with being Canadian
Engaging in music class	Having changes in family in Canada	Offering more days of activities
Engaging in table tennis	Having changes in food	Outlining conditions for FCSAV
Engaging in Tai Chi	Identifies with being Chinese	Playing sports in prior leisure

Enjoying Canadian culture	Identifies with being Chinese-Canadian	Playing squash
Enjoying leisure activities	Identifying to culture through activities	Positive feelings for Canada
Enjoying retirement	Improving mental health	Receiving Grant money
Experiencing big leisure changes	Joining because the first Chinese Seniors club in Vaughan	Recognizing importance of leisure
Experiencing friendliness in Canada	Joining club for activities	Re-energizing through Leisure
Experiencing ideal leisure	Joining club for health	Referred by person to FCSAV
Experiencing language barriers	Joining club to meet friends	Referred to club by newspaper
Experiencing no challenges	Keeping actively involved	Requesting better maintenance
Expressing one's culture in Canada	Keeping healthy	Requesting chess for FCSAV
Feeling Canada is big	Lacking resources in Home country	Requesting computers classes
Feeling comfortable in Canadian society	Lacking time to join other classes	Requesting more activities at FCSAV
Learning Canadian customs	Mandarin as key language	Requesting more resources
Learning from leisure experience	Meeting new people	Requesting more space
Leisure as a hobby	Missing old friends	Requesting outings by FCSAV
Leisure as an activity	Misunderstanding Question	Requesting picnics for FCSAV
Leisure as entertainment	Moving for family	Requesting positive outlooks
Leisure as free time	Moving to Canada for education	Re-structuring the lessons
Leisure as nature	Moving to Canada for friend	Rushing interview
Leisure as relaxation	Moving to Canada for future generations	Sitting around as leisure
Leisure as travel	Music is ideal leisure	Somewhat recent immigrant
Living in Canada by trend	No babysitting	Speaking same language
Living in States first	No current barriers	Spending leisure with others
Long-time immigrant	NO leisure time in Hong Kong and China	Spending time with family
No new ideas	No major changes	Sports as ideal leisure
Starting from Scratch	Staying at home if no leisure	Suggesting better use of website
Suggesting Chinese painting	Suggesting different levels of programs	Suggesting separate classes for Cantonese and Mandarin
Suggesting sketching	Suggesting water exercises	Understanding new generation
Valuing equality in club	Viewing difference in culture	Volunteering
Wanting more leisure	Wanting to return to home country if no leisure	Wanting to try new leisure
Watching TV in leisure	Weather as constraint	Would work if no leisure

Categories for Data Analysis

Experiences with challenges in Canada
Leisure constraints
Thoughts on Canada
Reasons for Moving to Canada
Reasons for participating in activities
Activities engaged in at FCSAV
Immigrant years
Feelings after immigration
Cultural Identity
Meanings of Leisure
Leisure in home country
Types of leisure
Leisure to express culture
Sense of Community
Positive effects of leisure
If no leisure...
Ideal Leisure
Referral to FCSAV
Activities on request
Recommendations for FCSAV
Big Leisure changes
Reasons to join FCSAV
Positive feelings for FCSAV
Negative feelings for FCSAV
Changes while in Canada
Leisure for health
Life stages
More leisure
Coming trends
Interview problems

Main Essences for Thesis

