NEGOTIATED CULTURAL INFLUENCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SECOND-YEAR CHINESE STUDENTS AT NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY IN 2007 WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO INTERNET USAGE

Yuanyuan Yu

Treatise submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

8 January 2008

Supervisor: Prof. Bert Olivier
DECLARATION

I, Yuanyuan Yu, declare that the work presented in this treatise is my own. Any work done by other persons has been duly acknowledged.

I further declare that this work has not previously in its entirety or part been submitted at any other university.

Signature ________________________       Date ________________________
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY AND KEY WORDS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background and Aims of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Research Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Hypotheses</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Research Design and Methodology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Definitions of Main Concepts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction to Chinese Culture and Western Culture</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Definitions of Cultural Values and Norms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 A Comparison between Chinese and Western Cultural Values and Norms</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.1 Individualist Western Culture Versus Collectivist Chinese Culture</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.2 Different Languages and Characteristics of Communication</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.3 Different Ideas about “La Guanxi”</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.4 Different Concepts on Ranks</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The Internet and Western Culture</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 The Invention of the Internet</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 The Internet as Technology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 The Development of the Internet in China</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 The Globalisation of Western Culture through the Internet</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Glocalization of Cultures and Identities</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT STUDY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Research Methodology</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Qualitative Research</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Sampling</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Ethical issues</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.1 Rules of Harmlessness</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.2 Acquisition of Voluntary and Informed Consent</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.3.3 Ensuring Legal and Cognitive Competency of Participants

3.1.3.4 Ensuring Privacy–Confidentiality and Anonymity

3.1.4 Method of Data Collection—Individual Semi-structured Interviews

3.1.4.1 Interviews

3.1.4.2 Individual Semi-structured Interviews

3.1.5 Language Issue

3.1.6 Recordings of Interviews

3.1.7 Transcriptions of Interviews

3.1.8 Method of the Analysis of Research Data

3.2 Validity and Reliability

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of the Analysis

4.1.1 Theme One

4.1.2 Theme Two

4.1.3 Theme Three

4.1.4 Findings on the Main Research Question

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Hybrid Culture and Identity

4.2.2 The Preferences of the Chinese Students with Reference to their Internet Usage

4.2.3 Whether the Negotiation Process is Conscious or Unconscious

4.2.4 Rejecting What is Useless in Western Culture and the Relevant Reasons

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Interviewees (Research Participants)

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Appendix C: Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews

Appendix D: the Preamble Letter of Research to Participants
TABLES
Table 1: Feature Film Production......................................................... 21
Table 2: The Hollywood Hegemony...................................................... 21
Table 3: The World’s Top Newspapers and Magazines in 1998.............. 22
Table 4: Preferences with Reference to Internet Usage.......................... 70
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will forever be indebted to my supervisor Prof. Bert Olivier. I appreciate his consistent enthusiasm, encouragement and guidance throughout this research.

To my parents, thank you for your continual love and support. I could not pluck up my courage to overcome all the difficulties without them.

To my friends Zhenxuan Zheng and Meihua Li, thank you for your patience, encouragement and enduring friendship. You really inspired confidence in me.

To the Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University who participated in this research, thank you very much for your cooperation.

To others who helped me at any stage during this study, too many to mention, thank you for your time and effort invested in this research. Without your assistance, this research would never have been possible.
SUMMARY

This study aims to investigate the possible influence of Western culture on second-year Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 by focusing on their Internet usage. Roland Robertson’s theory of glocalization is employed as the theoretical framework in this study. The research design is qualitative in nature. Individual semi-structured interviews are the method of collecting research data while a thematic analysis is the means of analysing and interpreting the research data. The sample comprises twelve second-year Chinese students who are studying at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 and have access to the Internet. This study has found that Western culture has exerted multi-faceted influences on the Chinese students through their Internet usage, and that they always negotiate such influences by selecting, adapting and appropriating what is useful in Western culture in an eclectic manner.

Key Words

Chinese students
Cultural hybridisation
Eclectic
Globalisation
Glocalization
Identity
Influence
Internet usage
Negotiate
Taste
ABBREVIATIONS

CCTV- China Central Television
CERN-Centre Européan pour la Recherche Nucléaire; European Laboratory for Particle Physics
HTML-Hypertext Mark-up Language
HTTP- Hypertext Transfer Protocol
MTV-Music Television
PC- Personal Computer
URL-Universal Resource Locator
WTO- World Trade Organisation
WWW- World Wide Web
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This chapter expounds the background and aims of the study as well as the theoretical framework. Hypotheses are developed based on research questions. The research design and methodology are briefly introduced while main concepts are clearly defined.

1.1 Background and Aims of the Study

The Internet has been an extremely popular international communication tool since its invention in 1983. The convergence of telecommunication technology, computing and the World Wide Web (WWW) digitalises all forms of data—words, text, pictures, audio and visual documents—as well as transmit the data via the Internet (Thussu 2000: 224). This allows Internet users to search for and read any information which they are interested in, to communicate with each other through e-mails, online forums and chat rooms as well as to entertain themselves by downloading and watching online movies, listening to online music and playing interactive online games.

Due to its distinct features including interactivity, instant and relatively cheap exchange of data and messages (Thussu 2000: 225), powerful informative and entertaining functions as well as erasure of “disparities of distance and geography” (Leslie 2002: 108), the Internet has become so popular that the number of Internet users has increased rapidly worldwide, especially in China. It took the Internet “just over three years to reach its first 50 million users” (Naughton 1999, cited in Thussu: 225). Nowadays China is “the fifth largest PC (Personal Computer) market” (Thussu 2000: 233) in the world. Chinese Internet households increased “from 1600 in 1994 to an estimated six million in 2000” (Thussu 2000: 233).

The Chinese government values the construction and development of Internet infrastructure because of the significant role which the Internet plays in global communication. Today Internet infrastructure in China is well developed. Chinese can
easily have access to the Internet at home, in public places such as Internet cafés, schools, libraries, airports, and so on. A large proportion of Chinese Internet users are students, especially university students. South Africa has the most developed Internet infrastructure and “the highest speed connections to the Internet” (Leslie 2002: 110) on the continent of Africa. Preliminary investigation (asking Chinese students at NMMU whether they have experiences of Internet usage in China and South Africa) reveals that many Chinese students who are studying at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University have experiences of using the Internet in China and South Africa.

Due to “historical Western domination in the world’s culture, economics, and politics” (Anokwa et al 2003: 173) as well as technologies, Western media products such as movies, novels and music as well as the English language have dominated the Internet (Thussu 2000: 252). These Western media products and the English language contain Western cultural elements such as cultural customs, morals, beliefs, art, and so forth. It is reasonable to assume that they exert influences on Chinese in some respects such as their world outlooks, values, habits, beliefs, and so on.

Against the above-mentioned background, the aim of this study is to investigate the possible influences of Western culture on second-year Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2007 by focusing on their Internet usage. Evidence of these influences will be analysed in order to probe to what extent and how the Chinese students are affected when faced with Western culture disseminated in various forms by the Internet. Moreover, with more than five thousand years history, Chinese civilisation is one of the oldest in the world. Chinese culture as a collectivist culture has a very different value system from individualist Western culture. This results in conflicts between Chinese and Western cultures in many ways. This study is also intended to scrutinise how the Chinese students deal with these cultural conflicts when they appropriate something useful in Western culture.

Furthermore, it is hoped that this study can achieve the following goals. Firstly, this study could help the Chinese students understand their constantly shifting cultural identities better in the process of being exposed to Western cultural influences.
Secondly, this study could potentially contribute to what appears to be a total lack of research that deals with influences of Western culture on Chinese culture through Internet interaction in South Africa. Thirdly, this study could contribute to further studies on the influences of Western culture on other cultures because people in other cultures may have been influenced by Western culture in a similar way and used similar strategies to cope with such influences in the age of globalisation.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Roland Robertson’s theory of “glocalization” (Steger 2003: 75; Barker 1999: 42). Glocalization is a portmanteau of globalisation and localisation (http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gci826478,00.html) (26 April 2007). According to Robertson (1992: 100), the interplay between local cultures and global culture can be conceptualised as “the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism, and the particularization of universalism”. In other words, on the one hand, due to the intercommunication between societies and cultures in the world through global media such as satellite TV, global culture tends to assimilate elements of every local culture. On the other hand, local cultures “always” actively and “dynamically” “negotiate” global culture in an ongoing process of appropriation (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_8/hongladarom/index.html) (10 April 2007). Local people find out what is useful in global culture, such as rock and roll music, and consider if it should be completely adopted or how much it should be adapted to the local taste—corresponding to local traditions, cultural values, norms and ideologies. As will become clear later, based on the interviews with the Chinese students, this process is sometimes quite conscious and deliberate, but on other occasions it seems to happen intuitively or unreflectively. In doing this local cultures are always scrutinised (in this case, by the Chinese students) and “altered to suit the changing times and circumstances” (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_8/hongladarom/index.html) (10 April 2007) while the character of local cultures and identities is retained. Such a continuous interpenetration and combination of local
cultures and global culture “characteri[s]ed by cultural borrowing” have brought about cultural and identity “hybridity” which “can not be reduced to clear-cut manifestations of ‘sameness’ or ‘difference’” (Steger 2003: 75).

1.3 Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following research questions.

Main Research Question

The main question in this study is: How do second-year Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2007 negotiate Western cultural influences through Internet interaction?

Secondary Questions

This study attempts to answer the following secondary research questions about Internet usage and the process of negotiation.

- Is the Internet a conduit to know about Western culture for the Chinese students? And how?
- What do the Chinese students appropriate from Western culture? And why?
- Do the Chinese students adapt these appropriations in the process of adoption? Why? And how?

1.4 Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions set out in Section 1.3, the researcher has developed the following hypotheses:

- For the Chinese students, the Internet is a conduit to know about Western culture.
- Western culture has exerted multi-faceted influences on the Chinese students.
through their Internet usage.

· The Chinese students neither completely insulate nor simply allow themselves to be homogenised when faced with Western culture disseminated by the Internet. Instead, they appropriate what is useful in Western culture. The Chinese students adapt these useful things when they are not to Chinese cultural taste. In doing this, the recognisable character of their Chinese cultural identities is retained in the process of appropriation.

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

The research design will be qualitative in nature. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The participants in this study will be twelve second-year Chinese students who are studying at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 and have access to the Internet. All the interviews will be audio-recorded on a computer by using computer software and transcribed as well as analysed by using a thematic analysis.

1.6 Definitions of Main Concepts

· Globalisation

Globalisation “refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 1992: 8). Harvey (1989) makes a detailed explanation by stating that globalisation is

the rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals world-wide. It is a process which involves a compression of time and space, shrinking distances through a dramatic reduction in the time taken—either physically or representationally—to cross them, so making the world seem smaller and in a certain sense bringing human beings
closer to one another. But it is also a process which stretches social relations, removing the relationships which govern our everyday lives from local contexts to global ones (cited in Tomlinson 1997: 170-171).

- **Localisation**

Localisation is defined as “the process of adapting” objects to a local market or cultural taste (http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gei212496,00.html) (5 September 2007). The objects can be either cultural and commercial products such as food and music or a set of cultural concepts such as cultural values, norms, ideologies, and so on.

- **Glocalization**


As stated earlier, glocalization is a portmanteau of globalisation and localisation (http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gei826478,00.html) (26 April 2007). It describes the interplay between local cultures and global culture (Robertson 1992). Such interplay can be conceptualised as “the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism, and the particularization of universalism” (Robertson 1992: 100).

- **Culture**

Sir Edward Taylor (1871) defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits
acquired by man as a member of society” (Guanipa 1998: 1). Culture as a complex set of practices is not a static thing, but a dynamic thing that manifests itself in cultural artifacts and products.

- **Identity**

Identity refers to “a set of qualities or characteristics” that make a person “definable and recogni[s]able” as well as distinguishable from persons “of a different type” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_%28philosophy%29) (10 September 2007). Gender, ethnic background, age, class, region, language and cultural values are some of the major sources of identity (Barker 1999: 2-6). Psychoanalytic theory has shown that one’s identity is shaped in a complex manner by identifying—that is, regarding as the same—with one’s mirror image, to begin with, before language, something that enables one to diversify this sense of identity in subsequent social or cultural situations (Lacan 1977: 1-7).

- **Cultural Hybridisation**

Cultural hybridisation is “a theory that cultural forms are spread on a global basis, with the result that they interact with local cultures to produce a hybrid form” (Price 1997: 107). It involves a mixture of cultures and “hybrid identities” (Barker 1999: 69)—the convergence of “national identities” (64) and foreign cultural identities.

- **The Internet**

The Internet refers to “a system of linked computer networks, international in scope, that facilitates data communication services such as remote login, file transfer, electronic mail and newsgroups” (Mann & Stewart 2000: 220).
The World Wide Web (WWW) was invented by a British computer specialist Tim Berners-Lee of CERN in 1989 in Geneva, Switzerland (Thussu 2000: 225). It is “[a] system of Internet servers that uses HTTP to transfer specially formatted documents” (http://www.ionet.co.za/glossary.asp) (2 September 2007). These documents are “formatted in a language called HTML (HyperText Mark-up Language) that supports links to other documents, as well as graphics, audio, and video files” (http://www.ionet.co.za/glossary.asp) (2 September 2007).

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) “is the protocol that tells the server what to send to the client, so the client can view Web pages, or other areas of the Net” (Mann & Stewart 2000: 220).
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter compares Chinese and Western cultural values and norms as well as examines the development of the Internet in China and the globalisation of Western culture through the Internet. It also reviews literature on Roland Robertson’s theory of glocalization.

2.1 Introduction to Chinese Culture and Western Culture

Chinese civilisation, which has more than five thousand years of cultural history, is one of the oldest in the world. Traditional schools of philosophical and religious thought, which date back to ancient time, have contributed to Chinese cultural values and norms (Latourette 1967: 520-564). Among the numerous traditional schools of philosophical thought, Confucianism was the most popular. It was founded about 500 BC and has been the main ideology of Chinese culture. Taoism, which is a Chinese religion founded about 500 BC, as well as Buddhism, which came from ancient India also around 500 BC and has become popular in China since the Han Dynasty, have been the main sub-cultures in China.

Besides the traditional schools of philosophical and religious thought, the current Chinese political system has also regulated Chinese cultural values and norms. The People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949. Socialism has been its national political policy, official ideology and the mainstream philosophy in China at present.

The West has extremely different schools of philosophical and religious thought and political systems. There are many Western schools of philosophical thought such as the schools of “pragmatism”, “phenomenology”, “existentialism” “idealism”, “skepticism”, “rationalism”, “empiricism” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy) (8 October 2007), and so on. Christianity has been the main religion in the West. The main political system in the West is capitalist democracy.

Due to the comparable disparity in the schools of philosophical and religious
thought and the current political systems between China and the West, Chinese cultural norms and values differ from Western ones to a great extent. This section will look at definitions of cultural norms and values as well as draw a contrast between Chinese culture and Western culture with reference to cultural values and norms.

2.1.1 Definitions of Cultural Values and Norms

Lustig states that

[v]alues are inside people, in their minds. They are a way of thinking about the world, of orienting oneself to it. Values, therefore, are mental programs that govern specific behaviour choices. Values are what people regard as good or bad, beautiful or ugly, clean or dirty, valuable or worthless, right or wrong, kind or cruel, just or unjust, and appropriate or inappropriate (1988: 56).

According to Williams,

[t]he norms are the standards by reference to which behavior is judged and approved or disapproved. A norm in this sense is not a statistical average of actual behaviour but rather a cultural (shared) definition of desirable behavior (1968: 204).

Based on this concept, cultural norms can be defined as a set of relatively stable rules that are acquired in a specific culture and guide people as to how to behave properly in their daily lives.

From these definitions, it is apparent that values and norms are closely related. One might say that cultural values contribute to the formation of cultural norms. Understanding cultural values can therefore promote a better understanding of cultural norms.
2.1.2  A Comparison between Chinese and Western Cultural Values and Norms

Chinese cultural values and norms differ greatly from Western ones in many ways. In order to understand the differences between them, this section looks at the following respects: individualist and collectivist cultures, language and communication, and ideas about “La Guanxi” and social ranks.

2.1.2.1  Individualist Western Culture Versus Collectivist Chinese Culture

Western culture is “an individualistic culture where a person sees herself or himself as a separate and unique individual, and whose self-definition does not include others” (Spring 2000: 169). This type of culture emphasises “individual goals” (Spring 2000: 169).

A collectivist culture is the antithesis of an individualistic one. China is a collectivist culture “where a person defines herself or himself in relation to others” (Spring 2000: 169).

Such a striking contrast between two cultural values can even be reflected in people’s names. Westerners put their first names first and family names last. They emphasise their first names and assert their egos. However, Chinese do the reverse. They value their surnames more than their first names and emphasise the relation to their own families (Bodde 1957: 65-66).

Westerners are supposed to take care of themselves first and emphasise independence, privacy and freedom. “I” consciousness is the ideal. Chinese regard families, political parties or certain social organizations as important groups. They subordinate themselves to the groups (Bodde 1957: 65-66). The reason is that they expect to depend on their in-groups. Consequently, they are completely loyal and believe in obligations to their groups. They value group cooperation and individual modesty. “We” consciousness and a sense of belongingness are highlighted.
2.1.2.2 Different Languages and Characteristics of Communication

Language is not only a “practical tool for communication and interaction”, but also an “essential symbo[l] of national belonging” (Stald 2002: 131) and cultural identities. It indicates one’s nationality as well as cultural values and norms. Thussu also states that a language is “the real repositories” of “thought, sensibility and culture” (2000: 181) of an ethnic group of people and that communication in the same language is essential for them to “acquire a collective understanding” and “cultural identity” (2000: 184).

The difference between Chinese and Western cultural values leads to two different patterns of communication: a “high-context” and “low-context” (Spring 2000: 169-170) pattern respectively.

A low-context communication “has most of its information in the explicit code of the message” while a high-context communication “has most of its information either in the physical context of the message or internali[s]ed in the transmitter and receiver” (Spring 2000: 169-170).


This style of communication is clearly reflected in common expressions. Take the English language as an example. Expressions such as “Get to the point!”, “Say what you mean!”, “Do not beat around the bush!” (Spring 2000: 170) are good illustrations.

In contrast, a high-context and collectivist culture emphasises “indirect”, “implicit”, “goal oriented”, “emotionally controlled”, “self-effacing” and “modest” communication (http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/problemschinese.html) (17 October 2007).
In this kind of culture, qualifiers such as “perhaps”, “probably” and “somewhat” (Spring 2000: 170) are often used in daily dialogues. Murray lists the following common Chinese expressions which often confuse Westerners and wear down their patience in face-to-face communication.

‘Maybe I will come with you’ usually means ‘I’m coming.’ ‘Perhaps it is too far for you to walk’ means ‘There’s no way I’ll let you walk.’ When something is ‘inconvenient’, it most likely is impossible. ··· ‘We’ll consider it.’ (kaolu) and ‘we’ll study it.’ (yanjiu) ··· seem the ultimate in hedging and avoiding potentially difficult issues. But they also reflect the pervasive need in China to consult with higher-level colleagues before making decisions (1988: 98).

In light of the above, it should come as no surprise that Westerners usually do not understand the meanings implied in the words which Chinese say. Consequently, they think that most Chinese are not frank. However, Chinese are not like what they describe. It is a way for them to show politeness or to maintain cultural harmony in their communication when they decline or make evasive comments on someone or something. They always think about how to make others maintain their dignity. In contrast to westerners, Chinese usually regard straightforwardness as rudeness and maliciousness as well as something that can harm the other’s honour and destroy the mutual relationship.

Modesty is a traditional Chinese virtue. The most obvious illustration is how to respond to others’ praise on something. For example, when a Chinese is praised for his or her talent in painting, he or she usually answers like this: “Guo Jiang.” in Chinese (“You overpraise me.” in English.). If he or she says “Xie Xie.” in Chinese (“Thank you.” in English), other Chinese will most probably think that he or she is too proud. In contrast, “Thank you.” is a correct answer to show appreciation of others’ praise in Western culture.
2.1.2.3 Different Ideas about “La Guanxi”

Jandt and Taberski (1998: 15) give a striking comparison to highlight the differences between American and Chinese moral values. A Chinese does not think it morally wrong to maintain social relationships by hiring his or her own relatives and giving gifts to business associates. In fact, it is a prevalent communicative practice called “La Guanxi” in Chinese, which “has to do with the link between people who have a mutually dependent relationship” (HTTP://WWW.CHINA.NAFSA.ORG/CULTURE/DIFFERENCES.HTM) (5 April 2007).

In contrast, these actions violate the laws in many Western countries such as America. They are regarded as “nepotism” and “bribery” respectively (Jandt & Taberski 1998: 15). Generally, Westerners do not give gifts to others except their “close friends”, “relatives” and “sometimes hostesses who have invited them to their home”. In Western culture, the concept “La Guanxi” does not exist. Westerners “generally avoid relationships of mutual dependence (except within some families), rather than seeing such relationships as essential to daily life” (HTTP://WWW.CHINA.NAFSA.ORG/CULTURE/DIFFERENCES.HTM) (5 April 2007).

Chinese who do not know about Western values and norms usually think that Westerners are indifferent and selfish. Westerners do not understand why Chinese rely on group or social relationships so much. Just like Americans often say, Chinese “expect too much of people they have gotten to know” (HTTP://WWW.CHINA.NAFSA.ORG/CULTURE/DIFFERENCES.HTM) (5 April 2007).

2.1.2.4 Different Concepts on Ranks

In China, authoritarianism is effective between ranks. Subordinates and the young do not speak freely and are not allowed to discuss things face-to-face with superiors and the old (Mann 1980, cited in Argyle 1988: 37). This is considered as modesty and
respect for superiors and old people in Chinese culture. However, the individualistic
democratic-persuasive type of communication has been found to be more effective in
Western countries (Argyle 1988: 37). Westerners value democratic freedom most at
work and in discussion.

2.2 The Internet and Western Culture

2.2.1 The Invention of the Internet

In order to prevent a Soviet nuclear attack, the US Department of Defense created
Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) in 1969, which was a
communication network linking top defence and civilian branches of the US
administration (Thussu 2000: 225). In 1983, ARPANET was split into “military” and
“civilian” sectors, with the latter bringing about the Internet (Thussu 2000: 225). For
the next ten years, the Internet functioned as “a network among US universities and
research foundations” (Hafner & Lyons 1996, cited in Thussu 2000: 225). The
invention of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989 has rapidly promoted the use of
the Internet in people’s everyday lives and the increase of the number of Internet users
worldwide. It enables one to establish his or her Web pages and websites by using a
set of “interface protocols” and “giving each page or website a unique address or URL
(universal resource locator)” as well as “using the hypertext transfer protocol (http)
which” supports the “transfer of text[,] [pictures,] audio and video files, while the
hypertext mark-up language (html) insert[s] links from one document to another

2.2.2 The Internet as Technology

The Internet has “revolutioni[s]ed international information exchange” (Thussu 2000:
224) since the late 20th century. It provides Internet users with a platform to upload
and download all kinds of data speedily at a cheap price (Thussu 2000: 224). *Business*
Week (1999: 40-113) calls this new information age the dawn of “the Internet age”. The advanced telecommunication and computer technologies have empowered the Internet to be a good tool for people to study, work, communicate with each other and entertain themselves.

Firstly, the Internet has a powerful informational function. Through the Internet search engines such as Baidu, which is the biggest Chinese search engine, and Google, people can find whatever information they are interested in.

Secondly, the Internet provides people with an interactive platform to communicate with each other. Through emails, forums and on-line chat rooms, people from different backgrounds, cultures or countries can exchange news, their own experiences, opinions, inner feelings and interests. In this way they make friends and exchange information on different cultures.

Thirdly, the Internet can entertain people. Today the developed telecommunication and computer technologies have brought about the “marriage of the old and the new media”—that is, the convergence of “film, radio, publishing”, “music”, “advertising” and games on the Internet (Thussu 2000: 234, 236). This convergence has resulted in “value-added” (Thussu 2000: 226) services including watching or downloading online movies, listening to online music and radio, reading electronic books, newspapers and magazines, reading or watching worldwide advertisements as well as playing interactive online games.

The invention of “the wireless Internet” is “a new telecommunications revolution” (Thussu 2000: 226). It is a product of the combination of “the Internet”, “mobile telephony” and advanced technology of “mobile satellite communication” (Thussu 2000: 226). Traditionally, people use connected computers to have access to the Internet. The wireless Internet allows people to use their mobile telephones to surf the Internet because many new types of mobile telephones supply wireless Internet services through mobile satellites (Thussu 2000: 226).

The most important advantage of mobile satellites is that they can cover a vast area and serve a large group of customers. In North America and Western Europe about 30 per cent of customers are distant from large population cities (Thussu 2000: 226).
226). This advantage has promoted the rapid development of mobile satellites worldwide. Before 2003, there were already “thousands of satellites in low, medium and geostationary orbits” (Thussu 2000: 226) which supply “Internet in the sky” (Wooldridge 1999: 44) services. Motorola, the world’s leading mobile telephone maker, has collaborated with Microsoft and Boeing to construct a network of 200 satellites before 2004 (Thussu 2000: 229).

The wireless Internet has become “a new industry” due to a “huge demand” (ITU 1999, cited in Thussu 2000: 227) in the world market. In order to advance the technology of the wireless Internet, many mobile telephone and computer companies have cooperated. In 1999, Ericsson entered into an alliance with Microsoft to “develop an Internet web browser and e-mail access from mobile phones and hand-held computers” (Thussu 2000: 228). British Telecom has cooperated with Microsoft to build “a wireless Internet service” by “using Microsoft’s Windows CE operating system” (Thussu 2000: 228).

One focus of wireless Internet technology is on the development of “wireless broadband” (Thussu 2000: 228). In 2002, Hughes Space and Communications Company developed Spaceway which is a wireless broadband service offering speedy Internet access (Matlack et al 1999: 25).

Since it is portable and cheap as well as able to offer high-speed Internet access, the wireless Internet has become popularised and has brought about the rapid growth of mobile telephone subscribers worldwide. The subscribers to cellular phone-services in the world increased from 11 million in 1990 to over 300 million by the late 1990s (Thussu 2000: 227). China Telecom had 6.5 million mobile telephone subscribers and was the ninth biggest mobile telephone operator in the world in 1998 (Thussu 2000: 227).

2.2.3 The Development of the Internet in China

The Internet is the fastest-growing tool of communication (Business Week 2000 55-63). It took almost 40 years for radio and 15 years for television to reach 50
million households while it took only 3 years for the Internet to reach the same number of households (Thussu 2000: 225). There were 150 million Internet users in 1999 while the number of Internet users reached 320 million in 2000 and over 700 million in 2001 respectively (Thussu 2000: 225). China has one of the highest “net penetration[s]” (Thussu 2000: 233) in the world. The number of Internet users increased from 1600 in 1994 (Thussu 2000: 233) to 79.5 million in 2003 (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200401/17/eng20040117_132851.shtml) (17 October 2007). The number of Chinese Internet users ranked second in the world and was only next to the USA in 2003 (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200405/14/eng20040514 143308.html) (17 October 2007).

There are two main reasons why the Internet has had such a remarkable growth in China. Firstly, the Chinese government has regarded the Internet as a necessary driving force of Chinese economic development. As Youjing Zheng, who is Director of the Centre for Information Infrastructure and Economic Development in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, emphasises,

> Informatisation is the foundation for China’s economic modernisation; information resources is one of the most basic and important inputs for modern economic development; information industry should become the fundamental sector of China’s economy (Tan 1999: 264).

In 1998, the Chinese government combined all the telecommunication and information related regulatory institutions and established the Ministry of Information Industry (Tan 1999: 261-276). This ministry mainly aims to support the construction and development of Internet infrastructure, to “regulat[e] the administration of” the “China Internet Domain Names System” and to foster the “development of the Internet in China” (http://www.marketavenue.cn/policy_3.asp?id=119) (17 October 2007).

In order to solicit foreign corporations for investment in the construction and development of Web sites, the Chinese government has relaxed restrictions. In 1998,
American companies cooperated with Chinese corporations to launch the website *Yahoo! China* while News Corporation sponsored the development of two Chinese websites *ChinaByte* and *CSeek* (Thussu 2000: 233). In 1999 a popular Chinese Website *Sohu* was backed by Intel and Dow Jones while *Sina* and *China.com* were supported by Goldman Sachs and AOL respectively (Einhorn & Roberts 1999: 28).

Secondly, Chinese want to communicate with the world and to be a member of global villagers (Hachten & Scotton 2007: 3). The Internet can help them achieve the goal.

On the one hand, Chinese are eager to know the world. Since the implementation of “reform and opening up” policy in 1978, Chinese have become interested in other countries in the world. One obvious illustration is the import of enormous numbers of foreign cultural products due to the increasing demand in the Chinese market. Nowadays it is not surprising to see foreign newspapers, magazines and books such as Britain’s *Guardian*, America’s *Fortune* and British author Agatha Christie’s novels flood newsstands and bookshops. Foreign movies, soap operas, MTV (Music Television) as well as TV and computer games such as *Tomb Raider*, *Days of Our Lives*, Madonna’s albums and *Silent Hill* can easily be found for sale or rent as commodities in shops. Streets of local cities, television and radio are inundated with international advertisements for promotion of goods such as Pepsi, Marlboro, and so on. Through these foreign cultural products, Chinese can obtain comprehensive information about foreign countries such as cultures, political systems, economy, and so on. Other evidence is that the focus of Chinese media has changed. Today the Chinese media pay more attention to coverage of international news than before. More time and space have been allocated to the international news in broadcast media and print media. 24-hour international news coverage and current-affairs programmes, with the purpose of commenting on current worldwide events, have gripped the attention of the Chinese audience. The Internet and Word Wide Web can meet Chinese people’s needs to know about the world. They convey all the forms of information and cultural products including news, magazines, novels, movies, soap operas, music, advertisements and games.
On the other hand, Chinese are eager to make the world know them. By 30 June 2004, there were 627,000 Chinese websites (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200408/11/eng20040811152529.html) (17 October 2007). They introduce China to the world in all fields such as its history, culture, art, religions, politics, economy, fashion, the latest news, and so forth. In order to be easily accessible for foreign Internet users, more and more Chinese Web sites have various languages as means of access.

The Internet and World Wide Web create a “new world” (McLuhan 1964, cited in Price 1997: 99) due to “the increased speed and reach of communications technology” (Price 1997: 98). McLuhan called this new world a “global village” where “electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of time and space” (McLuhan 1964, cited in Price 1997: 99) so that people from every culture can share their information such as ideas, experiences, cultural values and norms, and so on. Through sharing their information with people from other cultures on the Internet and World Wide Web, Chinese become members of the global village. This can promote cultural exchange and mutual friendship.

2.2.4 The Globalisation of Western Culture Through the Internet

It has been argued that there is mainly a one-way flow of cultural products such as films, soap operas, music, magazines and advertising from the West, led by the United States and main Western culture-exporting countries such as Britain, France and Germany, to other nations in the world (Branston & Stafford 2003: 407; Thussu 2000: 174).

Since a majority of international media and entertainment corporations which produce cultural products are US-based and Europe-based, Western cultural products have dominated the world market (Thussu 2000: 131-179). For example, the world’s top five entertainment corporations in 1998 were Walt Disney (USA), Time Warner (USA), News Corporation (Australia), Viacom (USA) and Seagram (Canada) (Fortune 1999: F1-F43). Three of the corporations are US-based while the other two have substantial US business and corporate connections.
The dominance of Western cultural products in the world market can be clearly shown by the figures indicated in Table 1 and Table 2. Table 1 compares the film output of Western countries with that of other countries. It is obvious that Western countries had a lead in feature film production in 1998 (Thussu 2000: 178).

### Table 1  Feature Film Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since they have low film output, many countries, especially developing countries, import Western films. Table 2 indicates “the Hollywood hegemony” (UNESCO 1998, cited in Thussu 2000: 178) in developing counties.

### Table 2  The Hollywood Hegemony

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Latest data year</th>
<th>Total film imports</th>
<th>US imports (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western countries dominate the world’s newspaper and magazine markets as
well (Thussu 2000: 145-147). It was estimated that the 5 leading exporters of newspapers and magazines in the world in 1995 were Germany, the United States, Britain, France and Italy (UNESCO 1998, cited in Thussu 2000: 148). As Table 3 shows, all the world’s top newspapers and magazines in 1998 originate from the USA and France (Thussu 2000: 146). Both Time and Newsweek, which are American news weeklies, have “shaped global journalism for half a century” (Thussu 2000: 146). Newsweek is sold in over 190 nations and has local editions in different local languages (for example, “Hankuk Pan in Korean and Nihon Ban in Japanese”) (Thussu 2000: 146).

Table 3  The World’s Top Newspapers and Magazines in 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Global Circulation (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader’s Digest</td>
<td>Reader’s Digest Association, USA</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Geographic</td>
<td>National Geographic Society, US</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Time Warner, USA</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elle</td>
<td>Hachette (French)</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>The Washington Post, USA</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC World</td>
<td>International Data Group, USA</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>Gannett Co., USA</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Herald</td>
<td>The New York Times/ Tribune</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main reasons why Western cultural products have dominated the world market are as follows. Firstly, good “quality and modern appeal” (Anokwa et al 2003: 173) contribute to the popularity of Western cultural products. For example, American films, characterised by artistic and aesthetic effects as well as the most advanced film-making techniques such as trick photography and digital animation technology, meet the global audience’s needs. Top-selling movies such as The Matrix, Harry Potter and the cartoon Ice Age are good illustrations.

Secondly, most international media conglomerates are US-based and Europe-based. The conglomerates such as Time Warner and PolyGram have
tremendous economic strength to produce a large quantity of first-class media products as well as to “build a global distribution and marketing network” (Anokwa et al 2003: 173). For instance, the production and marketing of the Hollywood film Titanic cost about “US $200 million” (Anokwa et al 2003: 174) in total. Paramount Pictures uses its “synergies” to promote its films in more than “60 territories in Europe, Asia and Africa” (Thussu 2000: 141). Media companies in many developing countries usually are not able to compete with the international media conglomerates due to relatively weak economic strength, undeveloped media technology as well as a limited distribution and marketing network. Moreover, the conglomerates often buy out successful local media companies in order to consolidate their hegemonic position in the media industry.

As stated earlier, advanced telecommunication and computer technology can combine the Internet and the old media such as film, publishing, and so on. Moreover, the Internet can reach the largest group of possible customers. The costs of computers and telephone networks are reduced (Thussu 2000: 224) as the Internet and computers become more and more popularised worldwide. For example, in 2005, Lenovo (a famous Chinese computer manufacturer) medium-grade laptops were sold at about US $1089 in the Chinese market. In 2006, its cost was reduced to approximately US $700. Internet fees fell from around US $12 in 2004 to about US $10 in 2007 monthly. These advantages have made the Internet a crucial conduit to distribute cultural products globally (Steger 2003: 70). Most magazines and newspapers such as National Geographic and USA Today offer electronic editions on their official websites. International media conglomerates such as Time Warner and PolyGram advertise and promote their media products such as films and music via their websites. Numerous websites provide Internet users with upload and download services to foster the dissemination of cultural products such as films, music, news, and so on.

A majority of media products distributed via the Internet are Western cultural products. There are the following two main reasons for this. Firstly, Western cultural products have dominated the world market because of the high output and good quality of the products. Secondly, most Internet users are from developed countries in
the world. There is a big “digital divide” (Leslie 2002: 109)—a gap between those who are able to have access to digital media such as the Internet and mobile telephones and those who are not—between developed and developing countries mainly because of limited capital as well as undeveloped computer and telecommunication technologies and infrastructure in developing countries (Thussu 2000: 248). In 1996, 88 per cent of Internet users were in developed countries such as the United States and Britain while 12 per cent of Internet users were in developing nations such as China and India (UNESCO 1998; UNDP 1999; cited in Thussu 2000: 248).

An obvious indication of the domination of Western cultural products on the Internet is the high percentage of English websites. English as the official language of the USA and Britain is the main language of the Internet and a majority of web pages (Thussu 2000: 255). More than 80 per cent of information published on the Internet is in English (Hachten & Scotton 2007: 91). The survey of the World Wide Web in 1999 showed that English web pages accounted for over 86 per cent of all the Web pages on the Internet (Thussu 2000: 252). According to the 1999 UN report, nearly 80 per cent of websites were in English (UNDP 1999, cited in Thussu 2000: 252).

Western cultural values, norms and traditions are embedded in Western cultural products. For example, through watching an American movie, one can learn about American family life, food culture and social etiquette. Psychoanalytic theory has shown that it is through the process of identification (with images invested with cultural values) that people acquire a sense of what is “valuable” (Olivier 2006: 31). In this sense, as Western cultural products disseminated widely on the Internet have been consumed globally, Western culture has been globalised.

### 2.3 Glocalization of Cultures and Identities

As mentioned in Chapter 1, British sociologist Roland Robertson puts forward the theory of “glocalization” (Steger 2003: 75; Barker 1999: 42) to indicate the complex and dynamic process of the interplay between local cultures and global culture. This
process can be conceptualised as “the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism, and the particularization of universalism” (Robertson 1992: 100).

The universalization of particularism involves the globalisation of local cultures. It can be clearly seen and easily understood from the formation of “world or global culture” (King 1990: 409). Global culture is mainly “the product” of the global “political economy of capitalism” as well as “the outcome of technological and communicative effects” (King 1990: 409). Advanced technologies have contributed to the manufacture of cultural products such as film and music. The global trend toward “privati[s]ation” and “deregulation” (Herman & McChesney 1997: 45)—which “protects commercial speech from government interference” (Teinowicz 1996, cited in Herman & McChesney 1997: 50)—has promoted “commerciali[s]ation” (Herman & McChesney 1997: 45) of local cultural products as well as their free flows between countries. Such transnational flows have brought about intercommunication between societies and cultures in the world. During the course of the intercommunication, world or global culture is created by assimilating elements of every local culture (Hannerz 1990: 249). In a word, global culture is the summation of local cultures (Hannerz 1990: 249). The elements of a local culture are the parts which comprise the whole culture, such as “language”, “clothing styles”, advertising techniques” (Appadurai 1990: 307), family values, and so on. These cultural elements can be “instruments” (Appadurai 1990: 307) by which the globalisation of the local culture is promoted.

The particularization of universalism involves the localisation of global culture. As elaborated in Chapter 1, local cultures “always” actively and “dynamically” “negotiate” global culture in an ongoing process of appropriation (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_8/hongladarom/index.html) (10 April 2007). Hannerz (1990: 240) states that this negotiation involves “a sense of mastery”, which “implies personal autonomy”. Local people actively select what is useful in global culture and adapt it to their own cultural taste. This sense of mastery is controlled by “the culture where [one] originated” and one’s “idiosyncratic collection of experiences” (Hannerz 1990: 240). In other words, one’s cultural values and moral
concepts acquired in one’s cultural surroundings as well as a “unique personal perspective” (Hannerz 1990: 240) acquired out of one’s experiences control the whole process of negotiation—that is, what can be selected from global culture and how it can be adapted to one’s taste in the course of appropriation. Through the continuous negotiation with global culture, local cultures have been evolving, developing or supplemented.

Global cultural flow “has contributed to a remarkable shift in people’s consciousness” (Steger 2003: 75). For example, before 1978 when the Chinese government carried out the closed-door policy—that is, closing communications at China’s borders, Chinese did not value English because they only considered it as an official language of the United States and the United Kingdom. Since 1978 when the policy of reform and opening up—that is, opening the country to international intercourse—has been implemented, Chinese have learned about the high standing of the English language in global culture—English has been a global language for decades. For Chinese “English represents progress and modernity” (Lull 2000: 143). Today English has been valued to a great extent in China. Its importance is obviously embodied from education. According to educational frameworks, students learn English as a core subject from primary school. English accounts for 20 percent of the total mark in the national entrance examination to university. To achieve an academic degree at a university, students must firstly meet minimum requirements of the English language, which are stipulated by a relevant national educational department or organisation. Furthermore, English has become one of the most important basic skills for Chinese—the other two skills are driving and computer literacy. Most companies in China demand that their employees and job seekers must meet the minimum English requirements stipulated by them.

Some theorists (Ritzer 1993; Barber 1996; Latouche 1996) argue that a global flow of Western-oriented cultural products has been resulting in “cultural homogenisation” (Barker 1999: 37; Steger 2003: 71) epitomised by “Americani[s]ation or Westerni[s]ation” (Negus & Román-Velázquez 2000: 338). Cultural homogenisation highlights “the global reach of capitalist consumerism” and
“a loss of cultural diversity” (Barker 1999: 37) as well as the growth of “sameness, repetition” and “standardisation” (Negus & Román-Velázquez 2000: 338). Cultural homogenisation has something to do with “cultural imperialism” which refers to “the imposition of one national culture upon another” (Barker 1999: 37). Its core concept is “the domination of one culture by another” (Barker 1999: 37). Furthermore, Negus and Román-Velázquez (2000: 338) warn against “the spectres of Americanisation or westernisation”. In other words, Western culture is in the process of dominating local cultures and of changing local people’s cultural identities by using Western cultural products as a conduit to present its fashions and contemporary cultural forms and to instill its cultural values into people’s minds. As evidence for their argument, these theorists point to “Amazonian Indians wearing Nike training shoes, denizens of the Southern Sahara purchasing Texaco baseball caps”, “Palestinian youths proudly displaying their Chicago Bulls sweatshirts in downtown Ramallah” (Steger 2003: 70-71), Chinese eating hamburgers with great relish at McDonald’s in China and Japanese adopting Western-style advertising and journalism.

The fact that “forces for convergence and homogenisation” (Thussu 2000: 200) epitomised by Americanisation or Westernisation have been exerting a great influence on local cultures and identities through a global flow of cultural products is undeniable. However, local cultures and identities are not simply and completely homogenised since local people and governments tend to protect their own national cultures and cultural identities. Instead, local people are flexible insofar as they “glocalize” (Robertson 1992: 173) their cultures and cultural identities through a constant and active process of negotiation between their cultures and global culture, represented by American and Western European cultures.

Robertson claims that “global cultural flows often reinvigorate local cultural niches” (Steger 2003: 75). In order to strengthen national consciousness and to protect local cultures from a complete cultural homogenisation, many countries have launched “a cultural revival” (Thussu 2000: 204). In China, three Chinese classic novels Romance of the Three Kingdoms, A Dream of the Red Mansions and Journey to the West have been adapted and broadcast on television (Chengxiang 1998, cited in
In 1999, China Central Television (CCTV) invested US $6 million in “the production of 100 made-for-TV movies” as a “supply for its dedicated film channel CCTV 6”, which was launched in 1995 and has been the second most popular channel among CCTV’s eight channels (Thussu 2000: 179). In 1998, approximately 400 million people watched CCTV 6 (Li 1999). Many national TV series and films in China have large viewership. For instance, the TV series *Outlaws of the Marsh* broadcast on CCTV had 900 million viewers (Thussu 2000: 205). Chinese traditional opera such as *Beijing Opera* and *Yue Opera* has also been broadcast on television and radio. The broadcast of these national TV series, films and traditional opera has brought about Chinese people’s “renewed interest” in Chinese “history and culture” (Thussu 2000: 205).

Every culture is different with regard to traditions, morals as well as cultural values and customs. Some cultural customs which are allowed in one culture are probably forbidden or unsuitable in another culture. Therefore, local people neither completely insulate nor simply allow themselves to be homogenised when faced with global culture. Instead, they select what is useful in global culture and adapt it to their cultural taste based on criteria such as their cultural values and eventually appropriate it without losing the recognisable character of their cultural identities. Thussu (2000: 197) argues that such a “global-local cultural interaction is leading to a hybrid [identity and] culture” which “blurs the boundaries between the modern and the traditional, the high and low culture and the national and the global culture”. “Indian rock songs”, “Hawaiian pidgin”, “Cuban-Chinese cuisine” (Steger 2003: 76) and “a vegetarian version of the Big Mac in Delhi” are the products of “cultural fusion” (Thussu 2000: 184, 197).

Abundant evidence shows that Chinese have been using this strategy to deal with the influences of Western culture, which constitutes a vital element of global culture.

To meet the needs of Chinese audiences, Western cultural products are localised in respect of language. Western audio-visual programmes such as movies, computer games and news coverage are dubbed into the Chinese language or/and have Chinese
subtitles. Western print materials such as novels and magazines are translated into Chinese.

Western products such as fast food, cars and cosmetics are also localised regarding content or production. McDonald’s in China adapts its food to Chinese taste. The portion of cheese is reduced. It also develops some new types of food such as corn custard with Chinese flavour. The American car manufacturer Ford produces special models to suit the Chinese market. Chinese musicians create a Chinese version of rock and roll. In a song named Zhong Gu Lou (Bell Tower), the famous musician Yong He mixes Chinese melodies with rock and roll by playing erhu fiddle, which is a traditional Chinese musical instrument.

The phenomenon of glocalization is also obvious in local advertisements of Western products such as Pepsi. The advertisements are usually designed in a way which corresponds to local cultural values or interests. Local languages are used while national celebrities are frequently invited to promote the products. For example, in 2007 famous singers Yilin Cai, Guanxi Chen and Tingfeng Xie appeared in a Pepsi advertisement for promotion.
CHAPTER THREE
CURRENT STUDY

This chapter presents research methodology and discusses the issues of validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Methodology

The term “research” means “a human activity based on intellectual investigation and aimed at discovering, interpreting, and revising human knowledge on different aspects of the world” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research) (3 October 2007). Research methodology refers to all the measuring instruments, techniques and procedures adopted in a research project in order to collect, analyse and interpret research data, thereby research findings can be deduced.

This section looks at the following issues: research design, sampling, ethical issues, the method of data collection, interview language, recordings and transcriptions as well as the method of analysis of research data.

3.1.1 Qualitative Research

The research design is qualitative in nature. The fundamental character of qualitative research is “people-oriented” (Patton 1999: 158). The aims and techniques of qualitative research decide its character. In respect of general aims qualitative research examines various social and cultural settings as well as individuals who dwell in these settings, thereby learning about their experiences, beliefs, “properties, values, needs or characteristics” as well as understanding in depth their “behaviours” (Du Plooy 2001: 83) and the reasons that govern their behaviours. Qualitative techniques such as interviews and observation revolve around individuals who are research subjects (Patton 1999: 186).
Qualitative research permits researchers to acquire “direct experience” of a “phenomenon” (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qual.php) (12 September 2007) they are concerned with. During fieldwork a researcher may spend time on staying with research participants in order to obtain a wealth of explorative, descriptive, detailed and in-depth information about them. For example, through face-to-face interviews as well as firsthand observation of their facial expressions, actions, tones, wording, pauses in conversations and “the nuances of the interviewer-interviewee interaction and relationship” (Patton 1999: 157) in various conversational settings, a qualitative researcher can know about their inner feelings, idiolect and habits by interpreting the available information. Such information can deepen the researcher and readers’ understanding of their minds and behaviours.

Qualitative research excels at “investigating complex and sensitive issues” such as “God and religion”, “the death penalty”, cultural values and norms, and so forth (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qual.php) (12 September 2007). This is because research participants can express their perspectives on a specific issue and narrate their relevant experiences through their own words. In this sense the qualitative approach makes it possible for a researcher to have access to and come to a genuine understanding of the social reality of the participants’ life world. In this study Chinese students are keepers of perspectives and knowledge that the researcher hopes to glean.

The above-mentioned character, aims, techniques and advantages make qualitative research design appropriate to this study. It can effectively reflect diverse experiences of Chinese students with reference to their Internet usage and probe their own perspectives on the influences of Western culture on their views and values as well as examine the complex process of their negotiation with Western culture—selection, adaptation and adoption.

3.1.2 Sampling

A sample is a subset of the population that is drawn to be representative of the whole
population in a research project because it reflects characteristics of the entire population (Du Plooy 2001: 100). Before taking a sample, a researcher must identify “the target population” according to research “objectives” (Du Plooy 2001: 101-102). The target population is “the actual population to which [a researcher] want[s] to generalise findings” (Du Plooy 2001: 101).

The objective of this study is to probe Western cultural influences on second-year Chinese students who are studying at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 with reference to their Internet usage. Therefore, the target population must meet the following criteria. Firstly, they must be Chinese students. Secondly, they must be second-year students at NMMU in 2007. Thirdly, they must have access to the Internet.

The researcher made an attempt to obtain the full names and phone numbers of second-year Chinese students at NMMU in 2007 through the Office for International Education so that she could make telephonic contact with them to seek voluntary participants. However, the attempt failed because staff in the office was not allowed to disclose any personal information about the Chinese students unless the necessary ethical documents from the university had been submitted to the office beforehand. Since the acquisition of the ethical documents and the subsequent evaluation by the office would be time-consuming, the researcher eventually gave up the application to the office for the personal information about the Chinese students.

The researcher utilised her access to computer laboratories at the university and consequently made attempts to seek voluntary participants who meet the criteria required by the study. The researcher inquired from some volunteers whether other Chinese students they know might meet the criteria and participate in the study. After acquiring their full names and telephone numbers, the researcher called those Chinese students to examine whether they met the research criteria and whether they were voluntarily available to be interviewed. Since the population of Chinese students at NMMU is pretty small, the task was a little difficult and complicated.

Twelve voluntary participants took part in the study. They were six men and six women between the ages of twenty-one and thirty. They met all the criteria.
In this study the following three types of sampling were employed: “purposive known-group” sampling, “volunteer” sampling and “snowball” sampling (Du Plooy 2001: 114-115).

Purposive known-group sampling means that a researcher chooses a sample by “using his or her judgement” (Du Plooy 2001: 114) which is based on purposes of research. This type of sampling is also named “judgement” sampling (Hsia 1988: 132) and “criterion sampling” (Wengraf 2001: 103). In this study the researcher worked out three criteria based on the objective of the study in order to use them to select the sample.

Volunteer sampling means that a researcher seeks voluntary participants (Du Plooy 2001: 115) through a range of measures such as e-mails, phone calls, mail, and so on. It involves “approval-seeking needs” (Du Plooy 2001: 115) insofar as potential volunteers are inclined to behave in a manner that elicits approval. In this study the researcher made attempts to seek voluntary participants through the Office for International Education and computer laboratories at the university.

Snowball sampling means that a researcher identifies potential research participants from earlier participants who know them (Du Plooy 2001: 115; Wengraf 2001: 102). This type of sampling is also called “chain sampling” (Wengraf 2001: 102). The following analogy can be used here to give a further description of the nature and procedure of snowball sampling: “A snow ball that rolls down a hill gathers snow on its way” (Du Plooy 2001: 115). In this study the researcher asked some volunteers for the personal information of other Chinese students who could be voluntary participants.

3.1.3 Ethical issues

Responsibilities of researchers are not only to glean objective truth and knowledge, but also to show special concern for subjects of their research when they are humans (Bulmer 1982: 1), animals and plants. The latter responsibility brings about a set of codes of research ethics including rules of harmlessness, acquisition of “voluntary”
and “informed consent”, ensuring participants’ “legal and cognitive competency” as well as ensuring “privacy”–“confidentiality and anonymity” (Du Plooy 2001: 90-91). The core of these ethical issues is how to protect the research participants’ “human and civil rights” (Du Plooy 2001: 90).

This study aims to probe the possible influences of Western culture on second-year Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 with specific reference to their Internet usage. Chinese students are the subjects of this research. It is necessary for the researcher to abide by the above-mentioned codes of research ethics. Now let us look at how these codes of research ethics were implemented throughout the research.

3.1.3.1 Rules of Harmlessness

Rules of harmlessness aim to prevent research participants from physical and mental harm resulting from research. Such harm includes “physical discomfort, emotional stress, humiliation and embarrassment” (Du Plooy 2001: 90).

The method of data collection in this study was individual semi-structured interviews. They did no harm to research participants physically. Possible harm could only be the mental one resulting from interview questions. In order to prevent such harm, the researcher structured interview questions in a neutral way—no personal opinions, thoughts and sentiments were required. The interview questions did not probe the participants’ private matters. They only intended to elicit the participants’ experiences with reference to Internet usage as well as their perspectives on Western culture, Chinese culture and cultural identity.

3.1.3.2 Acquisition of Voluntary and Informed Consent

In this study voluntary and informed consent was obtained and consent forms were signed by all the research participants. No remuneration was paid to the participants. They volunteered for the study for altruistic reasons.
Voluntary and Informed consent was crucial and compulsory because it was a formal agreement between the researcher and the participants whereby a bridge of trust was built. The agreement was a solemn and sincere promise indicating that the participants were voluntarily taking part in this study and that they would be honest and supply factual and detailed information that the researcher was interested in. As Mann and Stewart (2000: 49) point out, “written consent is associated with issues of authenticity”. Mutual trust was favourable for the interviews because it created a friendly and relaxed interview atmosphere so that participants could speak without any inhibitions.

The Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews (see Appendix C) used in this study mainly includes the following sections of information. Firstly, the form indicates the title of the research project, an outline of research aims, interview procedures, the use of the interview information and possible benefits from participating in the research. Such information is intended to provide participants with correct and complete information about the research project. The further detailed information about the research is supplied in the Preamble Letter of Research to Participants (see Appendix D). This letter accompanies the Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews. Secondly, the form covers issues of voluntary participation, refusal and withdrawal as well as participant risks. In this section the participants must indicate whether and what possible risks will result from their participation in the research, whether they will volunteer for the research and whether they understand their rights to refuse or withdraw from the research. Thirdly, the form includes the issues of participant anonymity and confidentiality. Fourthly, the form provides the participants with personal information about the researcher including her full name, postal and e-mail address, and telephone number as well as the department and university to which she belongs. Fifthly, the form includes a participant’s declaration ensuring that he or she has been given ample time to read the above-mentioned forms—the Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews and the Preamble Letter of Research to Participants—and to ask relevant questions as well as that he or she understands them fully. The declaration is validated by the
participant’s signature in the Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews.

3.1.3.3 Ensuring Legal and Cognitive Competency of Participants

The research participants in this study are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty. They are adults and lawful Chinese citizens. The Chinese Constitution and Bill of Rights entitle them appropriate legal rights. One of the legal rights is that they have freedom to participate in research. Moreover, their written declarations and consent accompanying their signatures have legal effects.

Knowledge and language contribute to cognitive competency. The research participants were Chinese students who are studying at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. They are well educated. They have their own sentiments, thoughts and opinions based on their diverse spectrum of knowledge, different experiences and perception of the world. They have a good command of Chinese and understand English. They can express themselves well either in Chinese or English.

3.1.3.4 Ensuring Privacy–Confidentiality and Anonymity

Mann and Stewart (2000: 74) claim that “privacy is a paramount concern” in research. Exposure of private information about participants can make them suffer losses such as emotional stress and humiliation to different degrees. Therefore, institutional Research Ethics Committees have issued strict stipulations to protect the privacy of research participants. They have authority to intervene in the evaluation of research and to forbid research being conducted (Mann & Stewart 2000: 74) if a researcher cannot protect participants’ privacy from exposure.

The best way to protect privacy of research participants is to keep all the “identifiable personal” (Mann & Stewart 2000: 57) information such as their names, voices and postal addresses confidential. In this study the researcher took the following measures. Firstly, a pseudonym was allocated to each participant so that he or she would remain anonymous (Mann & Stewart 2000: 44). Secondly, audio records
of the interviews saved on computer as well as the Information and Informed Consent Forms for Interviews which include the important private information about the participants would be “locked away” (Mann & Stewart 2000: 42) by the researcher in the course of the study. Once her treatise is completed and academic degree is achieved, the researcher will destroy the audio records as well as the Information and Informed Consent Forms for Interviews (Mann & Stewart 2000: 57).

3.1.4 Method of Data Collection—Individual Semi-structured Interviews

3.1.4.1 Interviews

Interviews as a main qualitative research method are “the most widely applied technique for conducting systematic social enquiry” (Mann & Stewart 2000: 65) on cultural phenomena, media and communication.

Paget (1999: 81) points out that interviews are “a science of subjective experience”. She states that science is “a systematic method of constructing knowledge and reporting the phenomenon studied” while subjective experience is “a subject’s lived experience” (81). Allison et al (1996: 117) claim that an interview is a good way to “gain insight into the meanings, interpretations, values and experiences of the interviewee and his or her ‘world’”. Gubrium and Holstein (1999: 109, 111) also declare that interviews are “dynamic” “conversations where meanings” are “cooperatively built up” by both interviewees and interviewers, “conveyed” by the interviewees as well as “received, interpreted and recorded” by the interviewers.

The strengths of interviews are as follows. Firstly, an interviewer can acquire in-depth and detailed information about interviewees. Such information includes verbal and non-verbal messages. Verbal messages are their answers to interview questions, wording and the significance of different tones. Non-verbal messages are their facial expressions, actions, body language and pauses in the conversations. Secondly, a great deal of firsthand information about participants collected in interviews makes it possible for an interviewer to put a relatively unbiased and
Both description and direct quotations are “raw data” (Patton 1999: 157) of qualitative research. Description focuses on the description of non-verbal messages in the course of interviews. It excludes “judgments” about whether such messages are “good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, or any other interpretive judgments” (Patton 1999: 157). In contrast, direct quotations focus on verbal messages in the course of interviews. They disclose participants’ “depth of emotion”, narrate their “experiences” and life world as well as probe their “thoughts”, opinions and “basic perceptions” (Patton 1999: 151) in their own words. In this sense description and direct quotations can deepen and justify a researcher’s appropriate understanding and interpretations of social reality in the participants’ world, thereby relatively impartial and convincing research results can be deduced.

3.1.4.2 Individual Semi-structured Interviews

Individual (one-to-one) “semi-structured interviews” (Flick 1998: 76) were conducted in this study. All the interviews were in-depth face-to-face interviews.

This type of interview was chosen due to its three distinct advantages: flexibility, interaction (Du Plooy 2001) and the creation of a comfortable interview atmosphere. A set of standardised questions or topics are designed and phrased beforehand, but an interviewer can freely ask follow-up questions on the basis of an interviewee’s answers, especially when his or her answers are not complete or clear (Du Plooy 2001). The individual (or one-to-one) semi-structured interview flows like a conversation in private. It can create a comfortable and open atmosphere so that the interviewee can speak his or her mind freely without responding to the presence of others.

The key to a successful interview lies in questions. Participants are repositories of experiences, opinions, thoughts, facts and emotions. Well-formulated questions can elicit the factual (at least insofar as they confirm, intersubjectively, what the case is)
and detailed information about the participants. Therefore, in this study the researcher structured interview questions in a direct, concise, simple and neutral way.

Neutrality is the most important element embedded in a well-formulated interview question. Neutral questions fuel “the push of inquiry” (Gubrium & Holstein 1999: 110). By contrast, biased or leading questions may irritate participants and prevent them from giving factual and detailed information or impose an interviewer’s opinions upon the participants and induce them to give favourable answers that the interviewer hopes to get (to confirm her prejudice).

Biased or leading questions mainly result from an individual’s subjective attitude or opinion on a specific issue. People observe, interpret and formulate their opinions on the same event or phenomenon differently because of their subjectivity—their own backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, feelings, beliefs and values. For instance, two people who saw the same road accident can give different accounts of the accident (Krüger 2004). Retief gives a detailed explanation by using the “Rashomon effect” (2002: 99). The term “Rashomon effect” is derived from a famous “1951 Japanese film of the same name” “explor[ing] the different views, reactions, and perceptions of four people who are all involved in the same moment of violence” (Retief 2000: 97). It is used to mean “a case where the viewpoints of the participants colour their interpretations of events to such an extent that sifting out a ‘fair’ representation is all but impossible” (Hausman 1992: 62).

In order to formulate neutral interview questions for this study, the researcher bracketed her own opinions, which “fuel[s] “the so-called ‘pull of conversation’” (Gubrium & Holstein 1999: 110), and suppressed personal opinions.

Besides well-formulated interview questions, selecting appropriate types of questions is also vital for a successful interview. The following types of questions were used during the interviews:

· “Open-ended questions”: An open-ended question does not contain a fixed number of answers from which respondents have to choose one. It aims to encourage the respondents to narrate their experiences, to articulate their
opinions and to make “suggestions” as well as to reveal their “underlying” “feelings” and “sentiments” (Du Plooy 2001: 143) in their own words. For example, Chinese students had to explain what they thought of Western cultural influences.

- “Role-playing questions”: A role-playing question proposes a hypothesis and a respondent is requested to “play a particular role” (Du Plooy 2001: 143-144). For example, Chinese students had to tell how they would decorate their rooms if they had their own houses.

- “Follow-up questions”: A follow-up question is asked “in response to an answer or statement made by” a respondent. It intends to “clarify the response given by the respondent, to obtain an explanation for the response, or to elicit examples and/or to double-check [the] response” (Du Plooy 2001: 144). For instance, in response to the above role-playing question a respondent may answer: I would decorate my rooms with Western furniture such as sofas and Chinese ornaments such as China, Chinese painting and calligraphy. A proper follow-up question could be: Why?

Two types of questions were used as follow-up questions: “probing” and “mirror” (Reinard 1994: 181; Du Plooy 2001: 144) questions. Probing questions include “When? Where? What? How? or Why?” (Du Plooy 2001: 144). A mirror question elicits more information about a respondent by simply “repeat[ing] the respondent’s response” (Du Plooy 2001: 144). For instance:

Question: What web sites do you visit most?
Answer: Yahoo.
Mirror question: Yahoo?

3.1.5 Language Issue

The selection of language “structure[s]” the “process” (Patton 1999: 122) of an interview. In other words, by choosing a language which the two parties have a good
command of, an interviewer and interviewee can understand each other optimally, thereby an interaction between them can be promoted well.

Based on this concept, in this study the researcher asked the Chinese participants to decide whether the interviews should be conducted in English or Chinese. All the participants chose Chinese as the interview language. They reasoned that they could not express themselves freely and accurately in English because English is their second language. On the contrary, Chinese, which is the mother tongue of the participants and the researcher, can promote mutual understanding well.

3.1.6 Recordings of Interviews

All the interviews were audio-recorded on the researcher’s laptop by using recording software. Compared with audio tape recording which is the usual method to record an interview, audio computer recording has the following advantages in this study.

Firstly, audio computer recording is economical. A set of recording equipment only includes a computer, recording software and microphone. In contrast, audio tape recording requires a lot of tapes and batteries as well as a good-quality tape recorder. Audio computer recording had no cost in this study because the researcher already had the necessary equipment, while buying equipment for audio tape recording could constitute a significant cost in the overall research budget.

Secondly, a computer can record an interview quite clearly. By contrast, an audio-tape has some noise.

3.1.7 Transcriptions of Interviews

As stated earlier, all the interviews in this study were conducted in Chinese. In order to make the subsequent analysis of data included in the interviews convenient, “effective and reliable” (Seidman 1991, Briggs 1986, cited in Mann & Stewart 2000: 22), the interviews were transcribed verbatim in Chinese. Seidman (1991: 87) puts an emphasis on verbatim transcriptions of interviews by stating that participants’ ideas
“become embodied in their words” and that “[t]o substitute the researcher’s paraphrasing or summaries of what the participants say for their actual words is to substitute the researcher’s consciousness for that of the participants”.

The analysis of data in this study was conducted originally in Chinese and was translated into English afterwards. Relevant parts of the Chinese interview transcriptions were translated into English and appended to Chapter 4 in this treatise so that readers could compare what the participants said (as translated by the researcher; readers are to trust these translations to be reasonably accurate) with the researcher’s analysis and interpretations. Keyton (2001: 73) suggests that using participants’ interpretations of their ideas in their own words can strengthen validity and reliability of research.

3.1.8 Method of the Analysis of Research Data

The contents of the interviews constituted the research data in this study. The data were analysed by using “a thematic analysis, which consists of a description [and discussion] of the main ideas in messages” (Du Plooy 2001: 197).

The three secondary research questions mentioned in Chapter One constituted three main themes of the research data in this study. The researcher listed sub-themes by summarising the participants’ main ideas in their answers to the interview questions (see Appendix B) relating to each main theme. Subsequently the researcher identified the data that were relevant to each sub-theme (http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/BackIssues/QR2-1/aronson.html) (12 September 2007). For example, the second research question was “What do the Chinese students appropriate from Western culture? And why?”. This question was listed as Theme 2 in this study. Based on the participants’ answers to the relevant interview questions, the researcher listed sub-themes such as “identifying with Western dressing style”. Afterwards the researcher identified and catalogued all the data—that is, what they actually said—that fitted under each sub-theme. For instance, the answer “I love Western dress because it makes me fashionable.” was catalogued under the sub-theme
“identifying with Western dressing style”. Finally, all the sub-themes were put together to summarise the participants’ “comprehensive views” (http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/BackIssues/QR2-1/aronson.html) (12 September 2007) of Theme 2 (see Chapter 4). As Leininger (1985: 60) suggests, the “coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together”.

3.2 Validity and Reliability

Validity means the accuracy and effectiveness of an instrument used to measure what has been intended to be measured while reliability means the stability, “consistency and dependability of a measuring instrument”—that is, an instrument “consistently produce[s] the same measurements (or answers) over a period of time” (Du Plooy 2001: 121, 345), “across similar groups and irrespective of who administers it” (http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#indexOfEntries) (3 October 2007).

The selected research methodology is appropriate and contributes to validity and reliability of this study (see Section 3.1 in Chapter 3). The analysis of the research data and summary of the research findings are appended to Chapter 4. Readers can find out what information relating to the study was elicited from the research participants and how the research findings were worked out by using the research methodology discussed above.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS OF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the interpretation of the research data by using a thematic analysis and the deduction of research findings. It also summarises important arguments raised in the research.

4.1 Results of the Analysis

This section uses a thematic analysis to analyse and interpret the research data. In this way research findings can be obtained. As stated in Chapter 3, the three secondary research questions listed in Chapter One constitute three main themes of the research. The researcher summarises the research participants’ comprehensive views on each main theme and afterwards put them together to deduce an answer to the main research question indicated in Chapter One.

Some research participants gave similar answers to a particular question, in which case the researcher chose some sampling answers in order to avoid repetition.

4.1.1 Theme One: Is the Internet a conduit to know about Western culture for the Chinese students? And how?

Sub-theme 1: Defining culture

Based on the participants’ answers, culture can be summarised as a complex synthesis which covers almost every aspect of people’s lives. It consists of diverse components such as ideologies, codes of conduct, beliefs, and so on.

Bob “I personally think that culture includes ideologies and a set of guidelines leading people how to act properly.”

“For example, the way in which people eat, express themselves, communicate and associate with others, and so on.”
Jennifer “In my opinion, culture includes many different elements. It covers almost every aspect of people’s lives.”

“The way in which people entertain and eat as well as their religious beliefs, thinking styles and traditional ideas vary from country to country. All of them are the embodiment of culture. In fact, culture includes everything.”

Sub-theme 2: The Internet as a Good or Effective Conduit to Know about Western Culture

All the research participants stated affirmatively that they used the Internet to know about Western culture and that the Internet was a good or effective tool.

Sarah “I can learn about Western culture through the Internet because it carries rich information about Western culture.”

Sub-theme 3: How to Learn about Western Culture through the Internet

Western culture is carried and transmitted by various kinds of media including films, soap operas, sitcoms, music, news, pictures, articles, novels, advertisements and games. Due to its convergence with these types of media, the Internet is a good or effective tool to get to know about Western culture. Different participants learn about Western culture through different kinds of media carried by the Internet. These conclusions can be supported by the following direct quotations from the participants.

Sarah “I watch Western movies and soap operas which are the most popular as well as listen to Western music. They are the things that I love to do on the Internet.”

Kate “I like to download and watch online sitcoms. They are a good way to know about Western culture.”

Alice “I learn about Western culture through online Western news, films, novels and music.”

“I think that advertisements are a channel to know about Western culture.”

Tony “I enjoy browsing through online pictures and articles relating to Western
culture.”

**Nick** “I am interested in games. When I am free, I play games online or download games on the Internet. Games are a good way to know about Western culture.”

**John** “Through Western films, soap operas, news, games and music, I can learn about Western life and thinking styles, morals, food culture, habits and religions.”

– **Movies**

All the participants claimed that they watched or downloaded online Western movies. Western films convey a wealth of messages about Western culture. They include the way in which Western parents communicate with their children, cultural customs and values, religion, food culture, family values, education models, as well as dressing, thinking and life styles.

**Sarah** “Components of Western culture such as cultural values and life style are presented in Western films. Therefore I can absolutely learn about Western culture through watching Western films. In the movie *Sleepless in Seattle*, I observe that the way in which parents communicate with their children in the West is totally different from the one in China. In this movie, the engineer settles down with his son in Seattle after his wife has died of certain disease. In Seattle, he talks openly with his son about his inner feelings. He tells his son that he has been missing his late mother, that is, his late wife, a lot. The most interesting part of this movie is that his son helps him seek a spouse by making a phone call to a broadcasting station so that his father can get over the missing of his late mother.”

**Jennifer** “I can learn about Western cultural customs and values through watching online Western films and soap operas.”

“Through the movie *Sister Act*, I have observed the differences between Catholicism, which is popular in Western countries, and Buddhism, which is popular in China. For example, the ways in which Catholics and Buddhists behave in their daily lives are different.”

Alice “Through Braveheart, I know about dressing styles of Europeans in the late 14th century.”

“In the late 14th century ladies’ clothes in the West exposed more than the ones in China. Western styles then exposed one’s neck and shoulders while Chinese styles covered one tightly from neck to foot.”

“Western soap operas indicate eating habits of Westerners. I have found that fried food and salad are the most common Western food.”

“Through watching Western movies, I learn about how Westerners fight catastrophes and overcome difficulties. The ways in which Westerners and Chinese deal with them vary because of their different thinking styles.”

“I can see the difference between Western and Chinese family values. For Westerners, the money of parents and children are separate. For example, children must use their own savings to pay for their wedding ceremonies and houses. In contrast, Chinese parents always support their children financially.”

Adam “Western movies can tell me the way in which Western parents educate their children. Western children are educated to do things themselves so that they can learn how to be independent. In contrast, Chinese parents always help their children do things or solve problems. In this sense, Western parents place more emphasis on the cultivation of their children’s independence than Chinese parents do.”

“The soap opera Lost presents Western food culture such as eating habits in the modern times.”

― Soap Opera and Sitcoms

Through soap operas and sitcoms, the participants know about Western education models, family values and thoughts.

Alice “I like to watch Western situation comedy. I observe that the way in which Westerners crack jokes is different from the one in which Chinese do. For example, I like My Family. It is a British sitcom.”

“Western parents speak to their children in a way of making suggestions, not
giving commands. Such a Western education model is different from the Chinese one.”

Tony “The situation comedy Growing Pains shows me how Western parents educate their children. Furthermore, I observe that Westerners value their families as much as Chinese do.”

Sam “Friends is a situation comedy. It reflects the trends of modern Western thoughts, for example, equality between males and females in society, liberty, and so on.”

– News, Articles and Pictures

Five participants pointed out that they liked to browse through pictures as well as to read online news and articles about Western culture. They can learn about the following aspects of Western culture: design styles of dressing, food culture, concepts of consumption, customs, ideologies, traditional festivals, as well as architecture, life and thinking styles.

Alice “I am interested in the news about fashionable dress. My focus is on the latest design styles of dressing and the trends of prevalence in European countries such as France.”

Bob “I like to read news about Western food. I can learn about eating habits and etiquette.”

“I also love to read news about Hollywood stars. I am interested in their dressing styles, cosmetics, locations of their vocations and concepts of consumption. Through these stars, I can know about life and thinking styles of Westerners.”

Tony “Online pictures and articles about Western culture can provide me with knowledge of Western cultural customs, ideologies, architecture styles and food culture.”

Sam “Every country has its own cultural traditions. For example, I am interested in online news about Western festivals such as the German Oktoberfest, Christmas, and so on. Some of Western festivals are really interesting. Through the
news about them, I know how Westerners celebrate their festivals.”

Adam “Through reading online news and articles about Western culture, I have found that Westerners know how to enjoy life better than Chinese do. They spend much on entertainment and material things. In contrast, Chinese regard frugality as a virtue and prefer to save most of what they earn.”

Advertising

Online advertisements mainly reflect Western thinking style through their messages and modes. Most Western advertisements are explicit to a greater or lesser extent.

Alice “Some Western advertisements really draw my attention because they show great originality. The conception of these advertisements gives me a sense of uniqueness and novelty. I like to observe the way in which Westerners advertise their commercial products in order to draw the audience’s attention and to provoke their desire to buy.”

“In a Volkswagen (VW) advertisement, a man is standing in an art gallery and looking at the pictures in which a Volkswagen car is drawn. In his mind he pieces all the pictures together to form one complete picture in which the car is running fast. This advertisement borrows the fundamentals of animation production.”

“Westerners present their unique thinking style to convey their purposes through advertisements.”

Nick “Western advertisements are mostly explicit while Chinese advertisements are usually implicit. Such different styles of advertisements result from their different thinking styles.”

“The advertising line which has impressed me deeply is “Your money never sleeps”. It reflects a Western idea in a direct way, that is, investment may bring about more treasure.”
Music

Western music embodies Western culture. Western musical instruments, lyrics and the styles of MTV show that Westerners express themselves in an explicit way. Western music presents thinking style, aesthetic perception, morals and religious concepts of Westerners.

Sarah “Among Western musical instruments, I like violin, piano and clarinet.”

“Piano can play leaping and sprightly tunes. Violin produces melodious notes while clarinet issues low and deep notes.”

“Chinese are reserved, thereby they usually express themselves through implicit lyrics. In contrast, Westerners are relatively open and express themselves through explicit lyrics.”

Jennifer “The styles of Western and Chinese MTV are different. Western MTV is forthright while Chinese MTV is connotative.”

“Heavy metal makes the tunes strong. In contrast, Chinese traditional music, which is played by Chinese classical musical instruments, is deep, soft and connotative.”

Tony “I am fond of Western classical music such as Beethoven’s symphonies, as well as rock and roll such as the song, God is DJ, sung by Pink, who is a young American singer. I also love Madonna’s songs. Western music presents aesthetic perception, morals and religious concepts of Westerners.”

Nick “I love some genres of Western music such as rock and roll and Jazz. I think that music is the product of culture. Diverse genres of Western music are invented in different Western cultural contexts.”

“Different musical instruments are created in different cultural contexts. For example, electric guitar is a common Western musical instrument while Chinese zither and flute are usual musical instruments for playing Chinese classical music. The differences between Western and Chinese musical instruments indicate the differences of their ideas guiding musical creation.”
Three participants claimed that they sometimes read Western novels. They usually get information about best-selling novels such as titles, synopses and prices on the Internet. Afterwards they search them by titles online to see if there are electronic editions.

**Sarah** “I usually search for the electronic edition of a specific Western novel if I am interested in it.”

“With regard to Western novels, I think that it is hard to find their electronic editions on the Internet because their copyrights are protected very well. Therefore, normally I note down the title of a novel after I have found it interesting by checking some relevant information about it through the Internet. Afterwards I check its price to consider if I want to purchase it.”

“I read a Western novel, *The Lord of the Rings*, recently. I like this novel. It depicts Western mythology. In my opinion, Western mythology contributes to primitive culture in the West. China also has primitive culture which originated from Chinese mythology. Chinese mythology often depicts dragons and kylns (Chinese unicorns) while Western mythology often presents stories concerning humans and beasts as well as stories on communication between humans and deities.”

**Jennifer** “I like to read famous Western literary works. I have read a lot of them.”

“*Wuthering Heights* and *Gone with the Wind* exhibit Western cultural customs during their specific periods.”

**Alice** “I read best-selling Western novels such as *Harry Potter*. These novels can make me learn some parts of Western culture. For instance, in the novel *The Millionaire*, the inner feelings and personalities of the characters are portrayed by the explicit dialogues. In contrast, the dialogues of Chinese novels are implicit. Such differences between the styles of Western and Chinese novels indicate the differences between Western and Chinese thinking styles and cultural values.”
Online Western games mainly reflect Western religions, dressing and architecture styles. Many Western games are based on Western mythologies. Games are a good way for Chinese youngsters to know Western mythologies.

**Bob** “A lot of games adopt Western mythologies, thereby the characters in these Western mythologies have been known very well by Chinese youngsters. There are some popular games such as *World of Warcraft*, *Heroes of Might & Magic*.”

**Nick** “Through Western games such as *Sniper* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, I can learn about dressing and architecture styles in the West during a specific period.”

“Many Western games which are based on Western mythologies have a religious flavour. For example, in the game *Caesar IV*, you need to build some churches in order to get blessings and protection from God.”

“Through games, I can see the differences between Chinese and Western religions. The deities and demons in their religions are different”.

**Sub-theme 4: The Websites Visited Most and the Reasons**

The interviews have showed that the following Websites are popular among the participants: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com), [www.sina.com](http://www.sina.com), [www.sohu.com](http://www.sohu.com), [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), [www.baidu.com](http://www.baidu.com), [6park.com](http://6park.com), [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com), [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and [www.xunlei.com](http://www.xunlei.com).

Different participants have different preferences for Websites. They visit these Websites for diverse purposes. Based on their responses in the interviews, their purposes can be summarised as follows. They read news and articles at Yahoo, sina, sohu, bbc and 6 Park. Google and Baidu function as search engines to provide them with pictures and information about the specific topics which they are interested in. MSN offers online news and chat services. Xunlei, which is a famous Chinese Website, supplies rich resources for watching and downloading online media products such as films, music, and so forth.

**Sarah** “I often visit the Website Yahoo. The information I read most often at
Yahoo is about Western films and novels. I check the latest ranking lists of Hollywood films and Western novels. Afterwards I search for resources or links to download the movies and novels which I am interested in.”

Helen “I usually visit the Websites sina, Yahoo and sohu. My focus is on the information about Western songs and films which are currently popular as well as about fashion such as fashionable Western clothes.”

Alice “For me the Websites Yahoo and Google function as search engines. I use them to search for the information such as fashion shows in the West and Western recipes, which I am concerned about.”

Bob “6 Park is a synthetic Chinese Website covering every aspect of Chinese people’s lives in America. Through reading the information about food, clothing, housing and travel as well as stories about their experiences in America, I can observe how Chinese people’s cultural values have been changing and how they have absorbed Western culture.”

Tony “The search engines which I use most are Google and Baidu. Through them I look for some information about Western culture and pictures about Western architecture styles. With reference to Western movies, soap operas and music, I usually use the Website xunlei to seek links to download or watch and listen to them online.”

Nick “I like to chat with Westerners through the Website MSN. In doing this I can make friends globally. Through chatting with them, I know about their cultural values.”

John “I read news and articles about Western culture on the Website MSN.”

Sam “I love to play golf. Therefore, I am interested in news about it. The Golf Channel (golf.sports.sohu.com) at sohu is a big platform which provides the latest news about it.”

Findings on Theme One:

The participants’ comprehensive views of the four sub-themes can be summarised as
follows. Culture is a complicated inclusive or encompassing thing which covers almost everything such as values, beliefs, thinking styles, and so on. It is a repository of all types of cultural products such as films, soap operas, music, and so forth. The Internet has supplied a big platform to converge these types of products. Western cultural products have been disseminated widely on Websites such as Yahoo. Through reading, watching and listening to these cultural products, the participants can learn about Western culture.

The findings on Theme One can be deduced as follows from the participants’ comprehensive views of the four sub-themes. Western cultural products, which have been widely disseminated on the Websites which they often visit, can contribute to the participants’ knowledge about Western culture. Therefore, the Internet is a conduit for these Chinese students to know about Western culture.

4.1.2 Theme Two: What do the Chinese students take from Western culture? And why?

Sub-theme 1: The Exertion of Western Cultural Influences on the Chinese Students

All the participants claimed that Western culture had exerted influences on them in diverse ways. Four of them declared that the extent of its influences was great while another four stated that the extent was small. Two pointed out that they were affected by Western culture to a moderate extent. Another two claimed that they could not tell the extent of its influences.

Sarah “I have been greatly affected by Western culture.”

Jennifer “Western culture influences me to a moderate extent.”

Sharon “To a small extent Western culture has exerted influences on me.”

Helen “Western culture definitely has influences on me. However, it is hard to measure the extent of its influences.”
Sub-theme 2: The Things that the Chinese Students Appropriate from Western Culture and the Relevant Reasons

All the participants claimed that they appropriated what is good and useful in Western culture. Different participants appropriate different things from Western culture for different personal reasons. However, the common reason is that they want to improve their personal attributes. As Adam explained:

I appropriate what is good and useful in Western culture.
In doing this I can continuously improve myself to keep abreast of the times. I have my own criteria such as my aesthetic standards, interests, habits, and so on.

Based on the interviews, what the participants appropriate from Western culture can be summed up as follows: knowledge of Western food, drinks, dressing style, concepts of housing, festivals, entertainment, cultural values and norms, and the English language.

- Identifying with Western Food and Drinks

All the participants identify with the following Western food and drinks: bread, milk, hamburgers, pasta, salad, steak, cola, soda and wine. They like these types of Western food and drinks because they are fast, convenient, delicious and in some cases nutritious. In addition to these, every participant likes other kinds of Western food and drinks, depending on his or her own taste.

Helen “I have bread and milk for my breakfast. I like them because they are healthy fast food.”

“The rhythm of our lives is quick. Fast food restaurants such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and McDonald’s in China can help us save time. Fast food is convenient.”

Alice “I prefer wine because it is mild with reference to the alcohol content and
it can nourish my skin. In contrast, the alcohol content of Chinese alcohol is high.”

**Bob** “I like Western food so much that I even learn how to cook it. Western food is delicious and nutritious.”

“I like wine. There are a lot of interesting particulars to it. For example, the selection of different types of wine has something to do with different types of food. I drink white wine when I eat fish and chicken. I drink red wine when I have steak. Furthermore, I drink champagne when I want to celebrate something. I usually have whiskey with ice when I talk to my friends or attend parties.”

– **Identifying with Western Dressing Style**

All the participants pointed out that Western clothes were fashionable and had become popularised in China, as well as that traditional Chinese clothes as a symbol of Chinese culture were only worn on special occasions when Chinese culture needed to be highlighted.

**John** “I love Western dress because it makes me fashionable.”

**Helen** “I like to wear Western-style skirts. They make me look beautiful. I also like T-Shirts and jackets. Today Chinese seldom wear cheongsams and mandarin jackets which are traditional Chinese clothes.”

**Sarah** “In modern China traditional Chinese clothes such as cheongsams are only worn on special occasions such as evening parties, big companies’ banquets, and so on. On these occasions they function as the embodiment of Chinese culture.”

“If you go to work in a cheongsam every day, other Chinese will think that there is something wrong with you or that your action is absurd.”

**Sharon** “I wear leather shoes and jeans as other Chinese girls do. In China, Western dressing style has been regarded as such a popular dressing style that we often forget the differences between Western and Chinese dressing styles.”
Western Concepts of Housing

Western concepts of housing are different from traditional Chinese ones. Westerners prefer to live in a suburban district because of its quiet living environment and the fresh air, while Chinese traditionally prefer to live in an urban district because the developed public traffic networks as well as concentrated shopping centers, post offices and banks can ensure convenience in their lives.

Ten out of the twelve participants declared that they identified with Western concepts of housing.

Jennifer “It is cool to have a big house with a garden and swimming pool. It would be perfect if it is a house with a sea view. I do not like to live in an urban district in China because the noise is big and the air is dirty. I prefer to live in a suburban district because I can have a quiet living environment, breathe the fresh air and get in touch with nature.”

“The housing concept of Chinese—that is, buying an apartment in an urban district—has become outdated.”

Celebrating Western Festivals

The interviews show that all the participants celebrate Western festivals. They select different festivals to celebrate based on their beliefs, values and perceptions of Western festivals.

Helen “I celebrate Valentine’s Day. I exchange presents with my lover. I also celebrate Christmas. For Chinese, celebrating it has nothing to do with their beliefs. Chinese merchants regard it as a great business opportunity while Chinese customers can have a good chance to do shopping. Many shops are open 48 hours from 24 to 25 December. Furthermore, restaurants are fully reserved. Many Chinese think of it as a wonderful opportunity to meet their friends. Therefore, Chinese cities seethe with excitement during Christmas.”

“I am a Christian. When I am in South Africa, I celebrate Easter in the same
Jennifer “I celebrate Father’s Day and Mother’s Day when I am in China. I usually give presents such as flowers and ties to my parents. In doing this I express my thankfulness to my parents. These festivals are really good traditions.”

“I celebrate Christmas with local whites when I am in South Africa. We send presents to each other and have a party to celebrate it.”

Sarah “On April Fool’s Day, I usually make jokes with my friends on the phone.”

Alice “I go to church to celebrate Christmas and Easter. I pray and attend activities for the celebration in the church.”

Tony “Celebrating Western festivals such as Valentine’s Day and Christmas has become a fashion among Chinese, especially among young people. This tempts me to celebrate them.”

– Enjoying Western Entertainment and Sport

The interviews indicate that all the participants enjoy Western entertainment and sport. All of them love to surf the Internet. In addition, the participants choose other forms of Western entertainment and some kinds of Western sports activities depending on their own interests and tastes.

Helen “With regard to music, we Chinese played Chinese traditional musical instruments such as Chinese zither, bamboo flute and erhu fiddle. Today the number of Chinese who know how to play piano and violin exceeds the number of Chinese who know how to play Chinese zither, bamboo flute and erhu fiddle. Chinese conservatoires of music place an emphasis on studying Western music such as works produced by Beethoven and Mozart. Chinese popular songs appropriate many elements of Western music.”

Jennifer “I like playing golf and bowling. I would like to try mountaineering and parachute jumping someday because I have never experienced them. It is great to have diverse experiences by trying new things.”

58
Sarah “I like mountaineering, squash and tennis.”

“Sometimes my friends and I drive to a place with picturesque scenery and have a barbecue.”

“I go to pubs with some particular friends of mine to chat to each other.”

“I like to play computer games.”

– Identifying with Some Western Cultural Values and Norms

All the participants identify with some Western cultural values and norms. They make different choices based on their own experiences, perceptions, values and morals.

John “I am in favour of the equality of the sexes, liberty and democracy. They are very positive Western concepts.”

Helen “I like the Western education model. Western parents act like their children’s friends.”

“Chinese parents order their children to do what parents say if they think that they are right about something. I do not favour the Chinese education model although parents’ judgements are right in most cases.”

Sam “The pattern of Western education is enlightening. It can stimulate one’s potentialities. I have realised it deeply from my current study in South Africa. The Western education pattern is more scientific and places an emphasis on the needs of students.”

“In the past, men were superior to women in China due to a common concept—that is, men had better working abilities than women because men have more physical strength than women. In modern China, the thought ‘equality between the sexes’, which originated from the West, has been popularised. This thought has been helping Chinese women to win higher social status and more respect. Therefore, I am in favour of this thought.”

Tony “I prefer to pay for my food when I dine out with my friends because it can avoid a dispute involving money and subsequent negative influences on everyone. In China, among friends, they usually take turns to stand others to a treat. I do not like
it because it may bring about unexpected conflicts involving money.”

“That with reference to eating customs, Westerners use a shared spoon or fork to put food on their own plates. In contrast, Chinese put the dishes on the table. Everyone shares them by using their own chopsticks. I prefer Western eating customs because Westerners place an emphasis on sanitation of food.”

“Some Western food is raw or parboiled. Such food contains more nutritious elements than cooked food.”

“Westerners rely on their own working abilities and educational backgrounds when they seek jobs. In contrast, Chinese rely more on human relations in society when they look for jobs. I prefer Western concepts because it is fair to every job-seeker.”

“Westerners have freedom to choose their spouses. Their marriages are based on love. The old Chinese concept is that elder members of a family choose spouses and arrange marriages for younger family members. They cultivate love after their marriages. The Western marriage concept is more humanistic than the Chinese one. Furthermore, compared with polygamy that prevailed in old China, monogamy advocated by Westerners is more positive because they value equal rights for both sexes.”

Adam “Western culture has influences on my cultural values and outlook on life.”

“Westerners are individualist and do no consider obtaining the permissions from parents or friends if they want to divorce. For them, divorce is their private matter. In contrast, in the past, Chinese would suffer a lot of social and family pressure if they wanted to divorce. There would be many bad public opinions on their divorce. It would also disgrace their parents and other family members. In modern China, the Western marriage concept has gradually been replacing the old Chinese one. I prefer the Western marriage concept because it can give people much freedom to make their own decisions, while the old Chinese marriage concept gives people many fetters.”
– **Identifying with the English Language**

All the participants stated that it was necessary to study English because it was a global language which could help them communicate with foreigners and find good jobs. They also claimed that they could observe Western cultural values, etiquette, religions and customs through learning the English language.

**Jennifer** “The official language of many countries in the world is English. Most of them are developed countries. If they want to learn advanced technologies in these developed countries, people from non-English speaking countries must study English first.”

“It is necessary for me to learn English. Through learning English, I can learn about the way in which Westerners express themselves, Western cultural values, etiquette, religions and customs.”

**Alice** “English is the global language. It empowers me to understand people from other countries when we communicate. This helps me make friends globally and promotes cultural exchange. Understanding English can also help me acquire the information I want on the Internet because a large portion of Websites and Web pages are in English. Moreover, understanding English is a big advantage when I seek jobs.”

**Adam** “Young Chinese study English as a second language. English is an important subject in the national entrance examinations to high schools and to universities. Chinese have regarded English as a vital working skill because China has been doing business with foreign countries since it joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It is necessary for me to learn English.”

“English expressions are explicit while Chinese expressions are implicit.”

– **Findings on Theme Two**

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the participants’ responses to Sub-theme 1 and 2, the findings on Theme Two can be deduced and summarised as follows. Western culture has exerted influences on the participants to different degrees.
Everyone has his or her own criteria to judge what is good or useful in Western culture and subsequently appropriate them. In doing this, they can continuously improve themselves to suit the changing times and circumstances. What they have appropriated from Western culture covers the following fields: life-style (food, drinks and clothes), concepts of housing, festivals, entertainment and sport, cultural values and norms, and the English language.

4.1.3 Theme Three: Do the Chinese students adapt the appropriations in the process of adoption? Why? And how?

Sub-theme 1: Whether the Chinese Students Adapt the Appropriations in the Process of Adoption

The interviews indicate that all the participants have adapted the appropriations to their taste in the process of adoption, as Kate stated:

I adopt what is useful in Western culture. Some Western cultural values are really good, but they conflict with mine. In this case, I usually adapt them to my taste and subsequently appropriate them.

Based on their responses, the participants’ “taste” refers to their Chinese cultural values, norms, traditions, morals, ideologies, personal habits, interests and aesthetic standards, as Tony claimed:

My criteria used for the selection and adaptation in the process of adoption include my Chinese cultural values, eating habits and interests.”
Sub-theme 2: How to Adapt the Appropriations in the Process of Adoption and the Relevant Reasons

Based on the interviews, the Chinese students’ adaptation of the appropriations can be clearly indicated by the following aspects of cultural practices: Chinese wedding ceremonies, eating, interior designing style, entertainment, etiquette, celebrating festivals, concepts of consumption and compromising filial obedience.

– Partly Westernised Chinese Wedding Ceremonies

All the participants pointed out that the westernisation of Chinese wedding ceremonies was indicated by the selection of Western wedding dresses and cars as a way to go to wedding venues, while the traditional part of the ceremonies was still retained.

Helen “Modern Chinese wedding ceremonies have been westernised to some extent. Chinese brides like Western wedding dresses a lot because they are beautiful. Chinese wedding ceremonies are usually held in restaurants, but not in churches. During ancient times the Chinese brides went to wedding venues by Chinese sedan chairs while nowadays they go by wedding cars like western brides. Cars save time. Masters of ceremonies instead of priests preside over the wedding ceremonies. Setting off firecrackers and holding Chinese-style feasts are necessary in the ceremonies because they are Chinese Wedding traditions.”

– Eating

The interviews show that all the participants combine Chinese eating habits and Western ones in order to meet their taste.

Helen “I use Chinese method to pickle the meat and subsequently cut it into big pieces for barbecue in Western way. Chinese like to cut the meat into small pieces and then skewer them for barbecue.”

63
Tony “I like spaghetti. When I cook it, I do not prefer Western cuisine because it does not make spaghetti tasty enough for me. I prefer to use Chinese recipe to cook it—that is, mix spaghetti with Chinese fried dishes, soy sauce and vinegar. I usually use chopsticks to eat it because I am more used to chopsticks than to forks.”

“When I use Chinese recipe to cook chicken, I put Western stuff like tomato ketchup and cola as a condiment in it.”

“In order to save time, sometimes I have bread with Chinese fried dishes. In this case, bread is the substitution for Chinese steamed buns.”

– Interior Designing Style

All the participants prefer Western interior designing style because it looks fashionable. However, they want to use traditional Chinese ornaments to decorate their houses in order to retain Chinese character.

Sam “I prefer to combine Western and Chinese interior designing styles. I decorate my house with Western-style furniture such as sofas and Chinese ornaments like Chinese calligraphy, paintings, carvings, jade ware, and so on. In doing this, my rooms look fashionable and retain Chinese character at the same time.”

Sarah “I like China and traditional Chinese ornaments. Therefore, I will put them in my house with Western interior designing style if I have a house.”

– Etiquette

Two participants stated that their etiquette had been partly westernised.

· Entertaining Guests

Nick “Chinese tea is a traditional necessity when entertaining guests in China. Besides it, I also use coffee and Western drinks to entertain guests because they are very popular among Chinese.”
· Accepting Praise

**Adam** “When South Africans praise me, I say ‘Thank you!’ to show politeness and appreciation. However, when Chinese praise me, I say ‘You overpraise me!’ to show modesty.

· Receiving Gifts

**Adam** “I usually open presents in front of my friends after they have given them to me at my birthday party. I do not need to mind Chinese etiquette because my friends are at similar ages to myself and they do not care about etiquette a lot. I also open presents in front of South African friends after they have given them to me because it is a local custom. However, I do not open presents in front of the elder members of my family and my relatives after they have given them to me. In Chinese culture, it is not a polite way to open presents in front of people who give presents.

– Celebrating Festivals

Based on the interviews, the participants’ celebration of Chinese and Western festivals indicates a combination of Chinese and Western practices.

**Jennifer** “My friends and I prepare both Western and Chinese food for the Christmas party. The Western food for the party is usually cakes while Chinese food is fried noodles, Chinese dishes and dumplings.”

**Tony** “I celebrate Christmas with my friends in China. We usually have Chinese food and alcohol. Sometimes we also have red wine. We do not decorate our rooms with Christmas trees. For us, celebrating Christmas is a fashionable thing. However, we are still not used to a Turkey meal and Christmas tree.”

**Sharon** “The way of celebrating Chinese Spring Festival has been partly westernised. Having dumplings with my family, setting off firecrackers and fireworks and watching Spring Festival’s evening party on TV are the traditional part of the
celebration. The westernised part is that I pay New Year calls to my elder family members, relatives and friends by telephone, mobile phone and the Internet. I usually make phone calls to my elder family members and relatives to show respect while I send messages, e-mails and e-cards to my friends because we do not mind Chinese etiquette much, and it is also a popular way to celebrate the festival among young Chinese. The traditional way is that one personally goes to the other’s home with presents to pay a New Year call. The main reason why the Western way of celebrating the festival has become popularised is that it is prompt and convenient due to the erasure of distance and time.”

Kate “The traditional present for Chinese Mid-autumn Festival is moon cakes. I usually give my friends moon cakes with certain Western stuff such as chocolate and champagne. It has been a popular way to celebrate the festival in China.”

 Concepts of Consumption

The modern Chinese concepts of consumption are characterised by the combination of Chinese and Western concepts. Chinese people usually purchase small commercial products such as a TV set by lump-sum payment. They prefer payment by instalments only when they buy big products such as houses, cars, and so on.

Kate “Traditionally Chinese prefer to purchase commercial products by lump-sum payment. I prefer to pay by instalments when I buy big stuff such as a house, car, and so on. It can lighten the financial burden on me. When I purchase small stuff such as a mobile phone and clothes, I prefer lump-sum payment. In short, I prefer to pay by instalments only in some situations.”

“Westerners prefer to pay by instalments even when they buy small stuff such as a TV set, washing machine, second-hand furniture, and so forth. I feel comfortable when I buy such stuff by lump-sum payment. If I pay such stuff by instalments, I will feel that I am heavily in debt. This will make me very uncomfortable. Moreover, Chinese usually think that certain stuff completely belongs to them only after they have bought it by lump-sum payment.”

66
Compromising Filial Obedience

All the participants claimed that filial obedience to elders was a Chinese tradition and that they compromised it because they wanted freedom to make their own decisions like Westerners without offending the elders.

Alice “Westerners are independent and individualist. They do what they think. Their elder family members usually cannot master their thinking a lot. In contrast, Chinese usually respect and value advice of their elder family members a lot. The Chinese tradition is that accepting elders’ advice is a way to show filial obedience. I do not like it because juniors have no freedom to make their own decisions. However, I do not completely adopt the Western way because disobedience to elders is an offence to the elders. This is against Chinese cultural values and morals. Therefore, I combine Western and Chinese cultural values.”

“When I disagree with them on certain issues, I usually tell my parents my opinion and try to persuade them in a tactful and polite way. If impossible, I negotiate a compromise. In doing this, I can have some freedom to make my own decisions and show filial obedience at the same time.”

Sub-theme 3: Whether the Chinese Students Can Avoid Western Cultural Influences

All the participants affirmatively declared that they could not avoid Western cultural influences on them. Western culture has been widely disseminated in China through the Internet and other contemporary media. It has become popularised among Chinese because it represents modern civilisation and is the origin of global fashion. The participants also pointed out that they did not want to avoid Western cultural influences because Western culture could improve them so that they can suit the changing times.

Helen “Western culture is so powerful that it has been greatly influencing local cultures in non-Western countries including China. Since I was a teenager, I have
realised its existence in my daily life. Some small stuff such as Western-style clothes is the embodiment of Western culture. I do not think that I can avoid Western cultural influences. Moreover, I do not want to avoid it because I can appropriate what is useful in Western culture.”

Sam “I do not think that I can avoid Western cultural influences. The Internet and other contemporary media such as satellite TV bring me into contact with Western culture every day. Moreover, I do not want to avoid Western cultural influences. Western culture is the representation of modern civilisation and the origin of global fashion. Learning from Western culture can definitely update me so that I can fit in with the changing times.”

Findings on Theme Three:

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the above three sub-themes, the findings on Theme Three can be easily deduced and briefly summarised as follows. The Chinese students only select what is useful in Western culture for adoption. If these things conflict with their taste, they adapt certain things they select to their taste as determined by their own criteria such as Chinese cultural values.

4.1.4 Findings on the Main Research Question

The answer to the main research question indicated in Chapter 1 can be acquired by piecing the findings on the three main themes together. The Chinese students always actively negotiate Western cultural influences. They appropriate what is useful in Western culture. When something is not to their taste as determined by their own criteria such as Chinese cultural values, they adapt this appropriation. In doing this, they continuously improve and adapt themselves in order to suit the changing times and circumstances, while the character of their Chinese cultural identities is retained. In summary, their approach is broadly eclectic, that is, selecting, adapting and adopting various practices from different Western cultural sources based on their own
4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Hybrid Culture and Identity

The interviews indicate that the Chinese students have hybrid cultural identities—that is, a combination of Chinese and Western cultural identities. They identify with some parts of Western culture. However, they only appropriate them on condition that the character of their Chinese cultural identities can be retained. The examples they used to illustrate this in Section 4.1 are the best evidence for this.

Based on the Chinese students’ narrations in their own words (See Section 4.1) the researcher has found that Western culture has not completely homogenised Chinese culture although it has become popularised in China. Western culture has coexisted for some time with Chinese culture in Chinese society after it has been adapted. This has brought about hybrid culture—that is, the mixture of Chinese and Western cultures. It appears that an eclectic way of appropriating different cultural values has been fundamental to this cultural change or development. One could further use Robertson’s term “glocalization” to claim the evidence indicating that these Chinese students, by their eclectic approach, contribute to the glocalization of Western and Chinese cultures as well as of Western and Chinese cultural identities.

4.2.2 The Preferences of the Chinese Students with Reference to their Internet Usage

Based on the interviews, the preferences of the Chinese students with reference to their Internet usage can be easily shown, as indicated in Table 4. They do the following common things on the Internet: downloading and watching Western films, soap operas and sitcoms as well as listening to Western music. Other things they do are ranked as follows in order of decreasing popularity among them: browsing news,
articles and pictures about the West, reading Western novels, playing games and watching advertisements. There is also evidence of nuances of preferences on the part of the two sexes. The male students like to browse news, articles and pictures more than the female ones do. The female students like to read novels while no male students like to do it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things Students Like to Do</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Opera and Sitcoms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News, Articles and Pictures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher has found that the nuances of preferences with reference to Internet usage have nothing to do with the Chinese students’ birthplaces. In this sense, although this study has focused on only twelve participants’ responses, its findings may be regarded as valuable and representative of Chinese university students’ attitude to Western cultural influences to a high degree. This is because the participants come from different parts of China, and their responses indicate that their own behaviour is not abnormal, but similar to that of their peers.

4.2.3 Whether the Negotiation Process is Conscious or Unconscious

Eleven participants claimed that the process of negotiating Western cultural influences was quite conscious and deliberate. The words of Bob and Sam are good indications of this.

Bob “Western culture has very strong influences on local cultures in non-Western countries. In my opinion, such influences may result in a cultural invasion, thereby certain local culture may die out eventually. Therefore, we Chinese
must have a proper attitude towards Western culture so that Chinese culture can remain powerful.”

**Sam** “Chinese culture has more than five thousand years history. It has many fine traditions, morals, cultural values and customs as well as a unique food culture. Therefore, we Chinese must retain them as symbols of Chinese culture. We can adapt and appropriate what is useful in Western culture as a supplement, on condition that the character of our Chinese culture must be retained.”

The interviews indicate that one female participant intuitively or unreflectively negotiates Western cultural influences.

**Sharon** “Western cultural products are everywhere in China. They have become a part of our Chinese lives for many years. For example, hamburgers and Western-style clothes are very common stuff that we eat and wear almost every day. I usually do not consider which stuff is Western and which stuff is Chinese. I quite often cannot even recognise if certain stuff is from the West or other countries. I know what stuff I need at the first sight of it. It involves a kind of intuition.”

### 4.2.4 Rejecting What is Useless in Western Culture and the Relevant Reasons

The interviews show that different participants have their own criteria to judge what is useless in Western culture. For example, their criteria can be their personalities, intuitive perceptions, cultural values and habits, as indicated by the words of the following participants.

**Jennifer** “Westerners usually go to pubs to drink, dance and talk. I do not like it because the pub is too noisy.”

**Helen** “I do not think that fast food such as McDonald’s is good for my health.”

**Adam** “Chinese often go visiting their neighbours because it is a way to promote mutual communication and to show their amiability. Westerners usually do not go visiting their neighbours because they may regard it as a disturbance for their neighbours. I prefer the Chinese way because I like to communicate with my neighbours.”
“Westerns usually do not live with their parents after they have grown up. This is because Westerners are very independent, based on their parents’ education. They visit their parents when festivals or holidays come. Chinese usually live with their parents before they get married. Even many married Chinese still live with their parents. Many Chinese families are big families including three generations—parents, their child and grandchild. This makes the family members stay close to one another. I prefer the Chinese family pattern because it is suitable to me.”

As interpreted in Section 4.1.2 Theme Two, ten participants pointed out that they preferred to live in a suburban district. Compared with them, two declared that they would like to live in an urban district.

Nick “I prefer to live in town because there is every convenience in town.”

Sharon “I like to live in an urban district because it is convenient for me to go to work by bus.”
This chapter draws a conclusion from the research conducted and makes recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the possible influences of Western culture on second-year Chinese students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2007 by focusing on their Internet usage. In order to answer the research questions set out in Chapter One, the researcher has developed the following hypotheses: For the Chinese students the Internet is a conduit to know about Western culture. Western culture has exerted multi-faceted influences on the Chinese students through their Internet usage. The Chinese students adapt what is useful in Western culture to Chinese cultural taste and appropriate it without losing the recognisable character of their Chinese cultural identities. The theoretical framework of this study is Roland Robertson’s theory of glocalization.

As indicated earlier, this study adopts a qualitative approach. The individual semi-structured interviews have been conducted to collect the research data while a thematic analysis has been employed to analyse the research data.

Based on the interviews, the research findings have been deduced and can be summarised as follows. Western cultural products or artifacts such as films and music have been disseminated widely on the Internet. The interviews show that the Chinese students have access to the Internet. Through their Internet usage, they have come into contact with these products or artifacts which transmit Western culture. All the Chinese students claimed that they could know about Western culture through these products or artifacts. Consequently, for the Chinese students, the Internet has become a conduit to learn about Western culture. All the Chinese students pointed out that Western culture had exerted influences on them. When faced with such influences,
they neither completely insulate nor simply allow themselves to be homogenised. They always actively negotiate Western cultural influences in an eclectic way. They appropriate what is useful in Western culture. When they are not to Chinese cultural taste, the Chinese students adapt these useful things. In doing this, they can improve their personal attributes in order to suit the changing times and circumstances without losing the character of their Chinese cultural identities. Such a combination of Chinese and Western cultures eventually brings about the hybridity of their cultural identities—that is, the mixture of their Chinese and Western cultural identities, which is an instance of glocalization. They have their own criteria, such as Chinese cultural values, for the selection, adaptation and adoption involved in the continuous process of negotiation of Western cultural influences. This study has found that eleven participants consciously and deliberately negotiate Western cultural influences while only one participant intuitively or unreflectively negotiates these influences.

The research findings have confirmed the hypotheses and answered the research questions. On a more critical note, it should be observed that some responses on the part of these Chinese students indicate that they regard Western culture as being normative and dominant in the contemporary world—for example, under Sub-theme 3 where Sam says that “Western culture is the representation of modern civilisation”. This indicates a tension between such awareness and the students’ insistence that they still wish to retain the character of their Chinese cultural identities.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

As stated in Chapter One, before embarking on this study preliminary investigation reveals that in South Africa there is very little research that deals with the influences of Western culture on Chinese culture through Internet interaction. In my opinion, justice cannot be done to the subject by a single study like this one. Moreover, the ages of the participants in this study are between twenty-one and thirty. They are university students. Chinese people of different age groups and with different educational backgrounds may not use the same strategy to deal with Western cultural
influences through Internet interaction.

Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest that further studies are necessary on the influences of Western culture on Chinese culture through Internet interaction. For further studies, researchers could choose Chinese people who are in different age groups or have different educational backgrounds as research participants. Readers could compare the present research with the further studies to examine whether different groups of research participants use the same strategy to deal with Western cultural influences on Chinese culture through Internet interaction.
REFERENCES


*Business Week*. 1999. The Internet age, special section. 4 October: 40-113.


Fortune. 1999. The fortune global 5 hundred: the world’s largest corporations. 2 August: F1-F43.


http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#indexOfEntries
[Accessed 3 October 2007].

http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gci826478,00.html
[Accessed 26 April 2007].


http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gci212496,00.html
[Accessed 5 September 2007].


APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Interviewees (Research Participants)

The Chinese students who took part in this study remain anonymous.
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interviews are designed according to the following research questions.

**Question 1: Is the Internet a conduit to know about Western culture for the Chinese students? And how?**
1) Do you know about Western culture through the Internet?
2) In what way? (That is, for example, through the use of websites, watching films on the Internet, playing interactive online games, and so on)
3) What web sites do you visit most?
4) Why?

**Question 2: What do the Chinese students appropriate from Western culture? And why?**
1) Does Western culture have an influence on you?
2) To what extent?
3) In what way?
4) What do you think of this influence?

**Question 3: Do the Chinese students adapt these appropriations in the process of adoption? Why? And how?**
1) How do you cope with the influence of Western culture?
2) Why?
3) Do you think you can avoid it?
Appendix C: Information and Informed Consent Form for Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the research project</th>
<th>Negotiated Cultural Influence: a Qualitative Study of Second-year Chinese Students at Nelson Mandela University in 2007 with Specific Reference to Internet Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference number (for official use)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal investigator</td>
<td>Yuanyuan Yu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Address | 2 Bognor Street  
Summerstrand  
Port Elizabeth, South Africa  
6001 |
| Postal Code |                                                                 |
| Contact telephone number | 0828687674 |
| E-mail Address | yusandy09@tom.com |

A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT  
(Person legally competent to give consent on behalf of the participant)

I, the participant and the undersigned I.D. number (full names)

Address (of participant)

A.1 I HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

1. I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by  
of the Department of  
in the Faculty of  
of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

2. The following aspects have been explained to me, the participant:

2.1 Aim: The investigator is studying: how second-year Chinese students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2007 negotiate Western Cultural Influences through Internet interaction.

                      YES     NO

The information will be used to/for: an analysis of the process of the negotiation between Western culture and Chinese culture in the investigator’s treatise.

                      YES     NO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>I was given Section C by the investigator.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>I was given ample time to read REC-H Preamble Letter by the investigator and to ask the investigator any questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td><strong>Procedures:</strong> I understand that I will be interviewed by the investigator. The interview will be audio-recorded on a computer by using computer software. I will be asked if I will be interviewed in English or Chinese.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td><strong>Risks:</strong> Are there risks?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If YES, please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td><strong>Possible benefits:</strong> As a result of my participation in this study, I may understand my constantly shifting cultural identities better in the dynamic and active process of the negotiation between Chinese culture and Western culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td><strong>Confidentiality:</strong> My identity will not be revealed in any discussion and description of the treatise or publications by the investigator.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td><strong>Access to research findings:</strong> I can have access to research findings by reading a hardcopy or/and an electronic copy of the investigator’s treatise on the Internet or/and in libraries at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td><strong>Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation:</strong> My participation is voluntary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care/employment/lifestyle. If FALSE, please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The information above was explained to me/the participant by (name of relevant person) in Afrikaans, English, Xhosa or Chinese. And I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If FALSE, please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature or right thumb print of participant</th>
<th>Signature of witness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full name of witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, … Yuanyuan Yu ……………………………………………………………………………………………… declare that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I have explained the information given in this document to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(name of participant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or his/her representative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(name of representative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- he/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- this conversation was conducted in Afrikaans English Xhosa Chinese [ ] and no translator was used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I have detached Section C and handed it to the participant [ ] YES [ ] NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed/confirmed at [ ] on [ ] 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of interviewer</th>
<th>Signature of witness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full name of witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT/REPRESENTATIVE OF PARTICIPANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear participant/representative of the participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Thank you for your/the participant’s participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:

- an emergency arises as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study, or
- the following occur

(Indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindly contact</th>
<th>Yuanyuan Yu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at telephone number</td>
<td>0828687674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or e-mail address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yusandy09@tom.com">yusandy09@tom.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Faculty of Arts
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)
Tel: +27 (0)41 504-2187 Fax: +27 (0)41 504-9187
E-mail Faculty Chairperson: thoko.mayekiso@nmmu.ac.za

Preamble Letter of Research to Participants

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The researcher will provide you with the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected of you (participant). These guidelines would include the risks, benefits, and your rights as a study subject (Look at Informed Consent Form for Interviews). Please feel free to ask the researcher to clarify anything that is not clear to you.

To participate, it will be required of you to provide a written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions.

You have the right to query concerns regarding the study at any time. Immediately report any new problems during the study, to the researcher. Telephone number and e-mail address of the researcher are provided. Please feel free to contact the researcher.

Furthermore, it is important that you are aware of the fact that the study has to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee-Human of the university. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that has the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of participants in research are protected and that studies are
conducted in an ethical manner. Studies cannot be conducted without REC-H’s approval. Queries with regard to your rights as a research subject can be directed to the Research Ethics Committee (Human). You can call the Director: Research Management at (041) 504-4536.

If no one could assist you, you may write to: The Chairperson of the Research, Technology and Innovation Committee, PO Box 77000, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 6031.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in this research. If you choose not to participate in this research, you will not incur penalty and/or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time during the study without penalty or loss of benefits. However, if you do withdraw from the study, you should return for a final discussion or examination in order to terminate the research in an orderly manner.

You will be interviewed by the researcher. The interview will be audio-recorded on a computer by using computer software. A pseudonym will be allocated to you so that your identity will remain confidential in the treatise or publications by the researcher.

Yours sincerely

Researcher: Yuanyuan Yu