A Study on Ph.D. Chinese Students' Academic Adaptation at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

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DEDICATION

To my son Mo Chen and husband, Yuantao Chen, for their unending love
And
To my parents, for their unending support

ABSTRACT

An increasing number of students from China participate in the global educational market nowadays. However, due to the large cultural disparity between Western and Asian countries, their adaptation is particularly challenging. As there is a lack of research exploring Confucian-heritage students' academic adaptation, especially Chinese Ph.D. students in Europe.

Focusing on Chinese Ph.D. students' adaptation to new academic challenging experience, this study reflects the experience of a number of them in a particular new environment: at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), in Spain. It attempts to investigate the significant challenges in their interpersonal relations and coping strategies for a better academic and social adaptation during their stay. Additionally, this study also aims to explore what adaptation strategies have been applied to the new academic environment by the Chinese students.

Twenty Chinese Ph.D. students were voluntarily involved in this study. Based on the critical incidents methodology, qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. The data were collected through Questionnaires and interviews, regarding specific critical incidents, with brief descriptions of vivid events and selected coping strategies that students remember as being meaningful in their academic, psychological and social experience.

The questionnaires designed were based on bibliography about factors and strategies related to critical incidents. The interview thereafter developed focused on the most relevant aspects of questionnaire, encouraging participants to reflect on their unique experience and efforts to adjust their behavior to the academic and social demands of the UAB, during their stay.

For the data analyses, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19.0 and ATLAS.Ti Qualitative Data Analysis Software 6.2 were used. Data analysis has

indicated many factors that have influenced their immersion and individual, personal experience in the UAB. The most important ones covered the critical incidents from the academic, sociocultural and psychological dimension. These factors intertwined and influenced Chinese Ph.D. student's participation into the Catalan life.

Results highlight that the biggest challenges for Chinese Ph. D. students are in the academic dimension and related to language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship and adaptation / getting used to the new education system at the UAB. In addition, for this group, the teacher and teaching relationship became extremely important situation during adaptation to the new academic environment. It may influence Chinese Ph. D. students' abilities for coping due to teacher and teaching relationship in academic dimension. Moreover, the analysis also highlights that the interaction with host nationals was found the root of problems influencing Chinese students in the sociocultural and psychological dimension. It may also influence their abilities for coping due to interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence in Catalan culture.

Based on these findings, the study suggests some meaningful implications for both educators and students.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

We are living in a multicultural society within a global village. People are faced with cultural differences and cultural challenges everywhere. The changes taking place include multiple aspects such as: living environments, socio-political and economic structures that are part of our everyday live, and thus those travelling abroad are challenged in all these areas and how they respond depends on their abilities to adapt to new cultures. These challenges are particularly evident, in the field of education, for students going abroad to study. These students often face complete immersion in a foreign language, the need to build new relationships, culture shock, unfamiliar academic experiences in a new educational system as well as challenges presented by daily life (Mori, 2000). In addition to be familiar with the host country's aspects of communication, they need to be aware of the entirely new cultural environment. Researchers have been concerned with the question of how people understand each other when they do not share a common cultural, linguistic and socio-political background and many studies have focused on international student's adjustment to a new culture. Heikinheimo and Shute's (1986) study suggests that coping with anxiety, stress and ambiguity are key adaptation issues for international students. Cho (1988) and Collins's study (1984) study indicate that English language proficiency and interaction with American students and other international students have been identified as key factors in the international students' adaptation to the United States. Collins' study (1984), also probe into the role of other factors specific to international students' adaptation, interacting with American students on a regular basis (Cho,1988) and period of stay in the United States has been linked with adaptation and in practice may contribute to reduced uncertainty about American culture(Surner,2009). Holmes's (2005) research on Chinese students studying in New Zealand shows that developing and training students' intercultural awareness helps them to better understand and more easily adapt to the new culture.

How to manage culture stress or cultural shock and improve intercultural communication skills are crucial issues in intercultural competencies. Consequently, to

study how to develop students' intercultural communication competence has become an interesting and challenging task in education.

Specifically, in this study, researcher works as a counselor in the Kunming University Counseling Centre, in Kunming, China. Normally, this researcher conducted courses to familiarize non-Chinese students and teachers with Chinese culture and to help them adjust to their new environment in Kunming. In the meantime, however, the researcher also provided training for Chinese teachers and students who were going to the West for academic research or study. The purpose of the latter training was to help them to understand the background, religions and education culture of the countries they were going to. Throughout this position, the researcher had more opportunities to work with individuals who were studying or living in other cultures, and gained insight into the significant challenges such as students faced when they study in abroad. These groups sought counseling for a variety of reasons. They often talked of their experience and difficulties, which included problems such as isolation, anxiety, depression and struggles with their academic studies, language acquisition, and daily life.

446 Chinese students annually have traveled from their home to live and study in the UAB (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and their numbers continues to increase (statistical data from International Welcome Point). There are 89 Chinese students studying Bachelor degrees, 110 Chinese students studying Master degrees, 90 Chinese students studying Doctoral degrees, 41 exchange Chinese students, and 116 Chinese students taking other postgraduate studies. There were 37 newly enrolled Chinese Ph.D. students at this university in 2013 among the total of 90 Ph.D. Chinese students at the UAB (www.uab.cat/web/study-abroad/). Chinese students come to learn, to expand their view of the world, to create a better future, to experience a new culture and for an adventure, leaving behind all familiarity and venturing into the unknown. They often face complete challenges with foreign language, building new relationships, cultural shock, cultural norms, academic expectations of a new educational system, the same as a person living between cultures and the challenges of having one foot in their culture of origin and the other in the culture of their new home. Especially, the distance of the culture,

culture of learning influences the process of teaching and learning, hence the process of the cultural adjustment. Studies identified that given that most difficulties and misunderstandings encountered by international students were traced to cultural distance, Chinese students experience great difficulties in view of the very different features between Western culture and Chinese culture, (Hall & Wang, 1996; Latourette, 1964; Samovar Porter, & Stefani, 2000; Wu & Rubin, 2000). However, the same as in Singapore, Korea, Japan and even Hong Kong, which are considered to Confucian cultures along with China (Chen & Chung, 1994), Chinese students in these places also experienced higher stress from being in a foreign country despite the cultural similarity, and it is also proved that receiving social support improves their adaptation (Jou & Fukada, 1996).

Chinese international students differed significantly in their perceptions of adjustment to the university where they studied. Investigating Chinese international students more specifically, as well as taking into account other variables, is also important for a more complete knowledge and understanding of them. Consequently, the experience of new academic adaptation is of interest to the researcher, who attempts to uncover factors that lead to Chinese international student adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness.

In previous contacts with the participants, they encountered big challenges as they adapted to the new university. The major difficulty they experienced was that they cannot speak Spanish and Catalan. Among Chinese students there is only one group without any Spanish or Catalan knowledge before they come. A situation causing them to be depressed, lethargic, hide away in their' apartment, homesick and to eat or sleep more than normal is present, especially, among students who experience new academic challenges, such as increasingly independent research activities, along with language difficulties resulting from more academically based classroom discussions (Kim 2007).

For these reasons, the proposed aim of this study is to: focus on new Ph.D. Chinese students, to investigate which critical incidents they have to cope with at UAB; to investigate how different factors influence them; and to analyze and understand what

strategies Chinese students have used to cope with critical incidents in this university.

Background and relevance of the study

In an increasingly globalized world, students are seeking to study abroad to gain intercultural understand, while contributing to a more culturally diverse society by proving different cultural values and perspectives. An additional motivation to study abroad is the high financial rewards this has reported to a variety of related industries. As a result, international students have become an important demographic in higher education around the world, with many countries making efforts to recruit international students, while an increasingly large proportion of international students are from a variety of countries (Ihm 2006).

Since the beginning of the economic reform in 1979, the higher education system in China has expanded dramatically. With rapid economic growth, China has made efforts to recruit international students from other countries, and in the meantime, to achieve Chinese individual academic goal, the government of China and Chinese families have more financial resources and encourage students to study abroad.

A large number of Chinese students and visiting scholars went abroad to study or do research work. Based on Li's study (2010), a total of 134.000 new Chinese students went to various countries to further their studies in 2006, and the average annual growth rate of Chinese students studying abroad was 25.7% from 1996 to 2006. According to the Institute of International Education (Choudaha, 2012), China has been the overall largest supplier of international students to countries around the world over the past decade.

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia in Spain and the second largest city in the Spain, with a population of over 7516,254 million (http://www.idescat.cat/en/. There are currently more than one hundred Chinese students who were attracted to study in the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). According to statistical data from the international Welcome Point Office, in 2013, among 5.098 international students studying in UAB, 446 students were from China (statistical data form International Welcome Point in UAB, Figure 1).
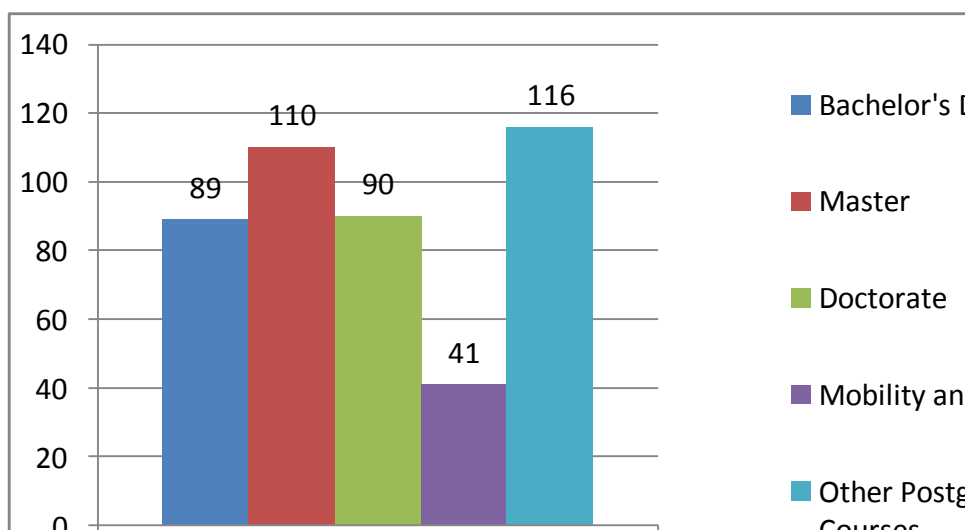
Figure 1 Chinese international students at UAB

    The recent Spanish wave has influenced Chinese youth to take an interest in Spain, A recent study conducted by Siu (2014) mentions the major reasons for Chinese students to study in Spain. Firstly, there are more career opportunities for Chinese Spanish speakers who return to China. Spanish is the world's second largest language globally with around 400 million speakers worldwide. It is the official language of over twenty countries in North, Central and South America along with Spain, as well as in the state of California in the United States. It is also one of the official languages of the United Nations.

    Given the strong growth of international trade, the demand for foreign language talent has been continually increasing, so there is a need for more Spanish-speaking talent in the Chinese market. Another factor promoting studying abroad for Chinese students is the Chinese Graduate Students' Joint Training Program(GSJTP), which is one of most important training programs that the Chinese governments has made to encourage Chinese students to study aboard. The government introduced the GSJTP in 2007, with funding from the China Scholarship Council (CSC). This program sponsors first-year graduate and doctoral students, who are currently studying in universities in China, to do courses work and dissertation research in developed countries for six to forty-eight months. The program is based on the Chinese Education Reform plan from 2010 to 2020. In 2013, 2500 visiting scholars, 6000 doctoral students, 300 postgraduate students, and 2000 exchange students received scholarship from the CSC. China

supported 2800 visiting scholars, 7000 doctoral students, 350 postgraduate students, and 3000 exchange students to study abroad and conduct research work in 2014 (GSJTP, CSC 2013). According to the policy for candidates (requirements of GSJTP, CSC 2013) applying to study in Spain is much easier than applying to the United State, Canada and other English speaking countries.

The unique qualities of Spain's educational system have also attractive to Chinese students. These qualities are based on long history of higher education. Like many other European Union (EU) countries, Spain's higher education began as early as the Middle Ages, with many universities dating back several hundred years. Currently there are over 100 universities and over 300 professional schools and research centers providing professional education at a variety of levels (www.spainvisa-china.com/usefullink.html).

UAB is one of best public university in Spain. It was founded in 1968, is a dynamic and modern public university, and is one of the best teaching centers in Spain and EU. UAB has become a university of international excellence as demonstrated through the quality of its teaching and worldwide recognition given to its research. Situated in natural surroundings and with a genuine academic atmosphere, in recent years, the UAB has received recognition for its efforts to promote quality in teaching, in attracting international talent, and in obtaining a growing impact in research, in conjunction with a progressive improvement in its ranking as one of the most prestigious and influential international universities. Thus, the UAB is leader among Spanish universities in the QS World University Rankings, and occupies an outstanding position in world rankings such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities. It also ranks as one of the best young universities according to specific rankings made for universities less than half a century old by QS and Times Higher Education. Additionally, UAB has become a major player in knowledge and innovation transfer in the Mediterranean area. So though less than 50 years old, the UAB has already consolidated itself amongst the 200 best universities in the world within the main university rankings and is located within the top 10 new universities with greatest

international projection and prestige.[1].

UAB has also sought to attract Chinese students through different channels. The international office of UAB has held educational exhibition yearly since 2008 in Shanghai, China, and there is also a recruitment office in Shanghai. This offers good opportunities for Chinese family and students to get to know UAB earlier than other universities, and also enables Chinese parents and students to have their questions, regarding studies at UAB, to be answered more easily.

Furthermore, Spain employs a relaxed government policy. The Spanish government welcomes international students and maintains tuition at reasonable levels. Last, but not last, Barcelona with numerous historical monuments, recreational areas, beaches, and a mild and warm climate, has become internationally renowned as a tourist destination. There are some of the reasons why there are more than one hundred Chinese students who have been attracted to study at UAB, Barcelona.

Even though all these advantages, however Chinese students often face big challenges and have to adapt to a new academic environment, especially because of the distance between the cultures of China and Spain.

Previous studies on cross- cultural adaptation refer to how a sojourner chooses to cope with cultural changes (Adler, 1987; Bennett, 1986; Hofstede, 1986; Major, 2005; Oberg, 1960; Quan, et al., 2016; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009; Ward, 1996). Studies concerning what factors influence the adaptation process have been done on different group of international students. A range of predictor variables have been identified as influencing the duration and intensity of the adaptation process: communication skills (language skills, nonverbal communication skills, interaction with host members); personality factors (patience, empathy and flexibility); demographic factors (gender, age, age at the time of resettlement, socioeconomic status); culture factors (cultural similarity/ distance, host environment receptivity); reason motivation for transition; the degree of pre-departure preparation; and the social support network (Berry, 2006; Dee &

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[1]News retrieved July 16, 2013, from
http://www.uab.cat/web/newsroom/news-detail/the-uab-ranks-third-in-spain-according-to-the-cwur--13456 68003610.html?noticiaid=1345674106544

Henkin,1999; Furham & Bocher, 1982; Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1998; Kim,2001; Lonner, 1986; Smith &Khawaja, 2011; Tsang, 2001; Ward et al., 2001).

For this study, the literature review is focused on Chinese students' adaptation experience in other countries. In this line, Feng (1991) identified four areas of concern of Chinese students in the U.S.: financial difficulty, cultural differences, academic concerns, and language ability. Huang (1991) indicated that the Chinese students at American university had stress or pressure due to their low English language ability. Several studies identified that given that, given that most difficulties and misunderstandings encountered by international students are traced to cultural distance, Chinese students experience great difficulties in view of the very different features between western culture and Chinese culture, (Gale & Parker, 2014; Hall & Wang, 1996; Samovar, Porter& Stefani, 2000; Wu & Rubin, 2000; Wang & Byram, 2011; Wu & Hammond, 2011; Wang, 2012). Similarly, Chinese international students in Catalonia region also experienced different features from other country in western culture, especially, since Catalan has often been considered as language of "culture" which has traditionally transmitted the local cultural idiosyncrasies of the Catalonia region (Moreno, Arriba & Serrano 1997).

Identified Chinese international students differed significantly in their perceptions of adjustment to the university where they studied. Investigating Chinese international students more specifically, taking into account other variables is also important for a more complete knowledge and understanding of them.

The purpose of this study is to: examine how Chinese students adapt to academic study at UAB, present an overview of the findings from Chinese students describing their study experience, and to investigate the outstanding challenges and coping strategies of them study in UAB. The assessment and measurement were made from academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions, using a critical incidents methodology, and the study tracked both the common and unique experiences of Chinese international students. Specific critical incidents will collected from them regarding their challenging experiences, their selected coping strategies, their use of social support, and their shifting views of self.

As a result of this piece of research we have found that Chinese students' adaptation experience covers three major dimensions: academic, sociocultural, and psychological dimensions.

The critical incidents in the academic dimension include: Chinese students' language abilities; and the teacher and teaching relationship; students' motivation; and the new educational system. Critical incidents for language abilities relate to four situations, especially: for situations in which a language impact occurs on: "language impact writing assignments"; "understanding lectures"; "abilities to ask questions in class"; and as a general "lack of language proficiency". These four situations of language abilities as challenges they face in their academic studies; Critical incidents for teachers and teaching relationship relate to three situations: situation of "differences on how to interact"; "differences in expectations between students and teachers"; and "negotiation of meaning, tasks". These three situations of teacher and teaching relationship were also challenges students faced in their academic studies. Critical incidents presented by New education systems relate to five situations, especially: in the situations of "norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task"; "lack of academic research and independent research"; "embarrassment at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought"; "unique nature of culture" ; and "conflicts the nature of communication".

Inquired about the strategies student implemented to address these challenges and to cope with the academic dimension revealed that students: "developing language skills"; "developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship"; and "developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system". These strategies used to cope with academic dimension when they study in;

The strategies of developing language skills are related to three situations in academic dimension: in the situations of "language improvement"; "interactions with host nations" and in "adapt to the academic life". These three situations of developing language skills strategies used to cope with academic dimension;

Strategy of developing mutual understanding through various channels between

teacher and teaching relationship, it showed that this strategy relate to two situations, in the situation of "understand became engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations"; and "different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona"; these two situations of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents used to cope with critical incidents.

The strategy of developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, this strategy relate to "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help", and "new learning and loss of old habits or push and pull, in losing, and gaining self-renewal"; these two situations used to cope with critical incidents when they stay in.

Sociocultural dimension:

The critical incidents in the sociocultural dimension include: situations in which Chinese students were influenced by "interaction with host nationals including conversations or activities of involvement in extracurricular activities"; and in situations of "transition between cultures which entailed greater life changes and engender more distress due to cultural distance"

Inquired about the strategies implemented to address these challenges and to cope with the sociocultural dimension revealed that students: "developing culture knowledge of host cultural" and "developing in their involvement in extracurricular activities".

Psychological dimension:

The critical incidents in the psychological dimension include: situations in which "depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment of life change", and situations of the "international students office needing to provide a receptive climate".

Inquired about the strategies implemented to address these challenges and to cope with the psychological dimension revealed that students: "developed the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process", and developed social network. "Increased internationalization in the economic, political and social

arenas has led to greater interpersonal cross-cultural transition" (Black & Mendenhall, 1990:113-136).

There are countless opportunities for individuals to study and live in a culture different from their native culture. It is not a dream that people live in this country for one year and move to another country next year. Students are seeking to study or be trained abroad to gain intercultural understanding, to achieve individual academic goals, or to obtain personal independence and this can be accomplished by working, living and studying in the global village without any national boundaries. A crucial issue for Chinese is how they adapt to new academic situations which are different from their own. Being able to find value in both academic system can increase their motivation and desire to learn better, while selecting appropriate coping and adjustment strategies, as well as being able to use their new knowledge, allows them to communicate appropriately across two or more cultures.

Sojourner must be able to adapt in a new education systems in order to survive the effect of globalization and understanding how to adapt can increase the chances of success. Although, prior researchers have focused on standard-entry Chinese undergraduate students and postgraduate students in Europe country (Major, 2005; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009; Quan, 2016), Chinese Ph.D. students in Catalonia region differ significantly in their adaptation to their new academic environment.

Porter and Samovar (1994:19) state that "intercultural communication occurs whenever a message that must be understood is produced by a member of one culture for consumption by a member of another culture". This definition is particularly relevant to international students whose academic success depends to a great extent on their ability to interact with native students. Kim (1994) points out that 'adaptation' occurs through the communication interface between the sojourner and the host milieu, just as the natives acquire their capacity to function in their society through communicative interactions throughout their lives. Intercultural competence should be independent of success, centered within individuals as a measure of their capabilities.

Intercultural communication in adaptive contexts such as universities can provide

some meaningful implications for both educators and students. This phenomenon led the researcher to conduct the investigation which aims to study Chinese students' academic adaptation experience and, by doing so, aims to capture the essence of the influences on their academic adaptation during their everyday university experiences, and to explore which influences may have a greater impact on students' ability to achieve their academic goals, in order to identify areas of importance that would help them to adapt to UAB better. In addition, the researcher's examination of individuals' academic experiences and the conclusions drawn from these, can help others, including the teachers from Spain, to understand Chinese students' character, behaviors and thinking, as well as providing help for instructors as the design courses and teaching methods for Chinese students.

Finally, it also offer information which can illustrate how other some international students have managed their transition. This is information which university counsellors could use to help facilitate international student's transition to new academic environment. As such, this research has great significance.

Overview of the thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. This introduction introduces the thesis and explains the reasons and aims for doing this research. Chapter One summarizes the theoretical framework for the research based on the previous researches and related literature. Chapter Two describes the research design and methods used in this study. Chapter Three reports the results of the investigation based on the questionnaires and interviews. Chapter Four follows with related discussions and provides a conclusion by summarizing, Chapter Five summarizes the main ideas and the most significant findings achieved in this investigation. As well as outlines the limitations, strengths and weakness of the study and provides suggestion for further research

A reference list with all of the references that has been used to fulfill the theoretical framework is included, as well as an appendix which contains: questionnaires and interviews (Appendix C); code and quotation list; quotation count report; and definition and operationalization of the dimensions of the study.

CHAPTER 1　　LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER1 Literature Review

This section will provide a review of the literature relating to intercultural communication competence (ICC), cross cultural adaptation, cross cultural adaptation in communication situations, and review the current description of the factors influencing international students' adaptation to new academic environments, covering factors influencing international students adaptations in university as well as strategies used to cope with critical incidents.

1.1 An Overview of intercultural communication competence (ICC)

The issues of ICC have been discussed in academic publications among researchers of various fields for the last 50 years. The 1993 International and Intercultural Communication Annual focused on ICC and concentrated on the theoretical and research perspective of ICC (Koester& Wiseman, 1993). ICC has been approached from various perspectives. Collier (1989) identified four major approaches in ICC research: ethnographical aspect of speaking, cross-cultural attitudes (Hofstede, 1980), behavioral skills (Ruben, 1989) and cultural identity (Ting-Toomey, 1993). ICC related constructs, such as effectiveness, success and adaptation has been the focus of a number of studies (Gardner, 1962; Hoselitz, 1954). Since then ICC has been investigated in studies with such diverse conceptual focus as sojourner adjustment, immigrant acculturation, intergroup contact, culture shock, cross-cultural training, social change, international management and foreign student advising (Benson, 1978; Brislin, 1981; Bennett,1986; Hanmer & Wiseman, 2003; Rogers& Ward, 1993; Stening, 1979;). Many studies have also been made on the environmental and psychological demands of overseas sojourners, and acculturation stress and psychological responses to an unfamiliar culture (Kim, 2001).

There are two main theoretical approaches to ICC: one which aims at identifying the skills, and the other which attempts to identify the macrostructure (Spitzberg, 1989). These approaches are also called cultural general etic which is cultural generalization

(macro) and emic which is focused on understanding context (micro) and tries to identify some skills that are come across in the material. According to Witteborn (2003), ICC is often approached from a cultural general perspective, which stresses the areas cognitive, affective and skills perspective. However a context- focused approach in ICC studies may better reveal new patterns and function of speaking in specific situations (Witteborn, 2003).

Samovar and Porter (1994:19-20) state that "intercultural communication occurs whenever a message that must be understood is produced by a member of one culture for consumption by a member of another culture". This definition is particularly relevant to international students whose academic success depends to a great extent on their ability to interact with native students. Intercultural communication is inherently problematic in that "culture is largely responsible for the construction of our individual social realities and for our individual repertoires of communicative behaviors and meanings". Kim (1991:264) points out the position that intercultural competence should be independent of success, and centered within individuals as a measure of their capabilities. She also points out that intercultural communication competence should "remain constant across all intercultural situations regardless of the specific cultures involved". Keeping communication competence free from the effective achievement of objectives and from culture bound evaluation of content, intercultural communication competence is able to focus on an individuals' abilities to interact in a variety of intercultural communication events.

1.2 Cross- cultural adaptation

Adaptation has also been described as part of the communication competence in many foundational models of ICC. It was divided into two groups: short-term and long term settler. A long term settler often refers to immigrants and refugees (Kim, 2004). For long term settlers, cross-cultural adaptation studies are made either about individuals or immigrants and refugees who live in a foreign culture on a more permanent basis. Short-term adaptation focuses on issues with temporary sojourners (Kim, 2001). In spite

of the differing lengths of the sojourn, there are certain experiences that are shared by everyone entering a foreign culture (Kim 2001).

In adaptation studies for long-term settlers, cross-cultural adaptation studies are mostly made on immigrants and refugees who live in foreign cultures on a more permanent basis. Short-term adaptation issues are applied to temporary sojourners such as international students (Brown and Holloway, 2008; Kim, 2001 ;). Temporary sojourners (international students) often orientate to achieve short-term academic goals (Wu and Hammond, 2011, Quan and He, 2016). Adaptation issues, in most studies, seem to be psychologically oriented as in Chen's (1998) model of psychological adaptation which includes frustration, stress alienation and ambiguity. On the other hand, in Vulpes' (2000) profile of an intercultural effective person, adaptation skills are mentioned as part of ICC. It is important for a person on a short term sojourn to be open, positive, a risk taker and willing to live in challenging circumstances. These characteristics indicate a measure of an individual's capabilities, and may determine their adaption success.

The living systems act instinctively to meet the challenges or threats and to restore balance and harmony (Ruben, 1983). Every new experience, particularly the drastic and disorienting ones that sojourners encounter in a new environment, leads to new learning and growth. The unique character of the human mind has the capacity to face challenges and acquire new knowledge and insights. Cross-cultural adaptation refers to how a sojourner chooses to cope with cultural changes (Adler, 1987; Hofstede, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Ward, 1996). Situations of cross-cultural adaptation bring profound and encircling challenges to sojourners as they soon realize that many of their previously taken-for-granted assumptions and life tools, (Kim, 2001). Thus, adaptation is fundamental to the human existence. In Ruben' study, living systems act instinctively to meet the challenges or threats and to restore balance and harmony (Ruben, 1983). Every new experience, particularly the drastic and disorienting ones that sojourners encounter in a new environment, leads to new learning and growth. The unique character of the human mind is the capacity to face challenges and acquire new knowledge and insights.

1.3 Cross-cultural adaptation in communication situation

Adaptation is a process where individuals in cross-cultural communication situations change their communicative behavior in order to diminish misunderstandings with the culturally different other (Cai & Rodriguez, 1996). The nature of change is also described by Bennett (1986:185), who defines adaptation as empathy, where a person temporarily changes his or her world view to process reality. In Berry's (1997) study, adaptation is seen as the result of an individuals' acculturation process. People adapt and change, as they want to reach the balance between themselves and their new surroundings (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Kim (2001) points out cross cultural adaptation has been studied seriously since the beginning of the 20th century. The cross-cultural adaptation literature describes modes of cross adaptation (Adler, 1987; Hofstede, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Ward, 1996). Cross-cultural adaptation refers to how a sojourner chooses to cope with cultural changes.

Kim (2001) presents a model of ICC grounded on the general system's notion of adaptability or capability of an individual's internal psychic system to alter its existing attributes and structures to accommodate the demands of the environment. Kim uses the term intercultural adaptation broadly to serve as a concept that represents various other terms such as assimilation, acculturation, integration and adjustment. She states that adaptability means the individual's capacity to suspend or modify some of the old cultural ways, in order to learn and accommodate some of the new ones, and to creatively find ways to manage the dynamics of cultural differences or unfamiliarity, inter-group posture and the accompanying stress. This ability to adapt to a new culture is the heart of intercultural communication competence.

There are three dimensions that relate to the concept of adaptability. The first is the cognitive dimension which refers to individuals' interpretive mechanisms or structures employed in assigning meaning to verbal and nonverbal messages (Wiseman, 1989). The second is the affective dimension which is concerned with the individuals' motivations and attitudes relevant to intercultural communication. Intercultural encounters, the

affective dimension of competence, means a readiness to accommodate intercultural challenges (Kim, 1991), and a tolerance for ambiguity and anxiety while being faced with intercultural situations that are aspects of the affective dimension. The third is the operational or behavioral dimension, which is concerned with how individuals interact in intercultural communication contexts. Kim states that the behavioral dimension is the individual's ability to be flexible and resourceful in actually carrying out what they are capable of in the cognitive and affective dimensions (Kim, 2001).

1.4 Models of cross- cultural adaptation

The cross cultural adaptation literature describes mode of cross cultural adaptation (Adler, 1987; Hofstede, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Ward, 1996). The mode of cross cultural adaptation focuses on host communication competence, which in Kim's model, is defined as: "the capacity to receive and process information (decoding) and to design and enact plans to initiate messages or respond to others (encoding) appropriately and effectively in accordance with the host communication system" (Kim, 2004:342).

Kim states that important host communication competence elements are cognitive (knowledge of host communication system, cultural understanding, cognitive complexity), affective (adaptation motivation, aesthetic co-orientation) and operational (technical skills, synchrony, resourcefulness) (Kim, 2001). The adaptive personality has the following characteristics: openness (flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity), personality strength (risk taking, hardness, persistency, and self- control), positiveness (Kim, 2001).

In the model of cross-cultural adaptation, the practice of interpersonal communication and mass communication between sojourners and the target culture is seen to affect host communication competence. The awareness of the host cultural practices in wide-ranging areas of everyday life, both directly and indirectly, was seen as important (Kim, 2001).

The three external inter-effecting influences to host communication competence are: predisposition, environment and intercultural transformation. Firstly, predisposition is

innate and it covers personal characteristics. It can also be considered as a blueprint, as each individual has different background sources. It includes preparedness, how great the similarity or difference is among locals, the degree of adaptive personality, openness, tolerance for ambiguity, and strength of personality (Kim, 2001). The perspective of the environmental aspect stresses the receptivity of a host culture and how much, as an ethnic group, they are open to strangers. Intercultural transformation is seen as an unconscious development after various learning interactions in the host culture (Kim, 2001).

Ward and colleagues research individuals who travel voluntarily to a new culture, and they have attempted to provide a theoretical framework for synthesis of theory and research on cross-cultural transition and adaptation (Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Two fundamental types of sojourner adjustment have been identified. The first, associated with a stress and coping framework refers to psychological well-being or emotional satisfaction in new cultural context. The Second, referred to as sociocultural adaptation, is related to the ability to "fit in" or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture. In attempts to construct predictive models of cross-cultural adaptation through multiple regression analyses, Ward and colleagues have found that psychological adjustment, operationalized in terms of mood disturbance, is strongly influenced by personality, life changes, and support variables (Ward, 1996, Ward & Searle, 1991; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). They have previously argued that psychological adjustment is best understood within a stress and coping framework while sociocultural adaptation is more appropriately situated within the culture learning tradition.

1.5 The factors influencing international students to adapt in university

The majority of research on the cultural adaptation of international students has focused on difficulties associated with the adjustment process (Ward, 2001; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). As is commonly recognized in the literature, cross- cultural adaptation of international students in a multidimensional filed often encompasses three major domains: academic adjustment; personal psychological adjustment; and sociocultural

adjustment (Brisset, 2010; Ramsay, 1999; Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Zhang & Goodson, 2011).

Academic adjustment referred to how students cope with the various demands in education context, including students' motivation and academic achievement (Rienties, 2012). Students who succeed in academic adjustment tend to show better study results (Rienties, 2012). In Ramsay' (1999) studies, the finding show the positive and negative experience impacting on the academic adjustment of international students. Negative experience were often related to lectures or lecturers. Ramsay illustrated difficulties in understanding the lecture, which may be a result of students' language skills or lecturers' poor communication skills.

Psychological adjustment. The varied results from the research on what influences international student adjustment is associated with different predictors. For example, Psychological adjustment originated from the stress and coping framework and emphasizes emotional well-being and satisfaction with sojourning experience. Ward and colleagues has demonstrated that psychological adjustment, defined in terms of depression or more mood disturbance, is affected by personality factors, life changes, and social support from host nationals. Both locus of control and extraversion have been linked to psychological well-being in sojourners, however internal locus of control has been consistently associated with psychological adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 2010). Social connectedness with host nations and social interaction with host national, explained both psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment (Zhang, 2011).

Sociocultural adjustment is conceptualized by Word and Searle (1990:450) as the "ability to fit in and to negotiate interactive aspects of new culture". Many researchers investigated the factors that facilitate sociocultural adjustment of international students. In Church (1982) reports finding that friendships with hast nationals tend to increase life satisfaction and decrease feelings of homesickness among international students. Through contact with local communication, international students gain new knowledge and values of the host society (Hendrickson & Aune, 2011). Researchers have also focus on how close contact with host nationals, social support, involvement in extracurricular

activities, and good language skills can facilitate sociocultural adjustment. (Forbush & Welles, 2016; Swami, 2009; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Zhang & Goodson, 2011).

The majority of research on the cultural adaptation of international students has focused on difficulties associated with the adjustment process (Arthur, 2004; Ward, 2001). In addition to the academic demands and adult responsibilities shared with their peers, the challenges of a new culture can be make exhausting for these sojourners (Yang & Yea, 2003). Foreign student's adaptation experience almost always present more problems than other students (Andrade, 2006; Dillard & Chisholm, 1983; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Zimmermann, 1995) and students have fewer resources to support them (Pedersen, 1991; Zhou et al., 2008).

Challenges which develop as international students encounter a new culture, which if not quickly mastered, can lead to identity confusion (Pedersen, 1991). In a literature review of sojourner adjustment research, Church (1982: 544) points out "the most important problems appear to be language difficulties, finances, adjusting to new educational system, homesickness, adjusting to social customs and norms and for some students racial discrimination". In a recent study, researchers have examined variable such as gender (Hashim & Zhi liang, 2003; Mallinkrodt & Leong, 1992) and expectations of students as they embark on studies aboard (Chiu, 1995, Cemalcilar, & Falbo, 2008, Sumer, 2009).

Black and Mendenhall's (1990) conceptualization of the cross-cultural adaptation process based on social learning theory describes self-efficacy as an important variable influencing the person's motivation to retain and reproduce a learned behavior (Black, 1992; Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Theoretically, one of the most powerful individual variables that determine persistence in effort is the individual's belief in control or self-efficacy. A sojourner with high self – efficacy will give up less and be less likely to be discourage when he or she encounters adaptation problems. Martin, Bradford and Rohrlich (1995) investigated the pre-departure expectations and post-return appraisals of 248 international students (The sample included 47 males and 201 females, ranging in

44

age from 18 to 30 years of age) in Syracuse University, United States. They found evidence that the students' experience were better than they expected. This study also found a positive, though weak, relationship between how much the expectations were exceeded and how positively students evaluated the overseas experience.

In Kim (1998) points out toward the high end of the continuum are countries like China, Korea and Japan and at the low end of the continuum are Switzerland and Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden. Toward the middle are France, Spain, and African countries. (Kim, Pan & Park 1998). Koeske and Sales (2004) pointed out acculturative stress is highly predictive of mental health issues. Furukawa (1998) study of Japanese international students reported that 80% reported experience more than three psychiatric symptoms of emotional distress six months into their sojourn. Parr and Bingi (1992) state that the emotional profile of international students shows them to be determined, thankful, happy, confident, cheerful and cautious individuals. The researchers found that international students seemed to cope well and manage their needs, reporting that students described experiencing more positive than negative feelings and saw themselves as coping successfully. Improved cross-cultural skills and enhanced global understanding, open-mindedness, independence, flexibility, and higher levels of emotional resilience were indicated as significant positive gains for international students (Duffy, Fomer & Ravert, 2005). Fredrickson (2003) indicate that the positive emotions and experience may play an important role in enhancing resilience.

From the above review of research on cross-cultural adaptation of international students and the difficulties associated with their adjustment process across three domains, it can be seen that a description of current factors influencing international students is an appropriate objective for this research. Given that some factors were identified as more important than others and these factors seem to be appropriate for this group of international students, this research will specifically investigate the outstanding challenges of Chinese students studying at UAB. From the studies concerned with what factors influence the adaptation process on different group of international students, a wide range of predicator variables have been identified as influencing international

students' adaptation process (Hongmei, 2008):

a. Communication skill, covered language skills, nonverbal communication skills and interaction with host member.

b. Demographic skills, reached personality factors (patience, empathy and flexibility).

c. Demographic factor, included gender, age, age at the time of resettlement, socioeconomic status, length of residence and marital status.

d. Cultural factors, coved cultural similarity/ distance, host environment, receptivity and motivation for transition.

e. The degree of pre-departure preparation.

f. Social support network.

Research has been conducted on the factors influencing international students in their adaptation in university, but little research has identified how these factors influence the duration and intensity of the adaptation process. Critical incidents are an important strategy that can be used to highlight differences and potential misunderstandings, which arise out of culture (Salo- Lee & Winter-Tarvainen, 1995). Critical incidents are a set of procedures used for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles. The purpose of the specific critical incident technique is to develop one's ability to see interaction and situations from perspectives of different cultures (Salo-Lee & Winter-Tarvainen 1995).

In a literature review critical incident of international student's adjustment research, a range of predicator variables have been identified as influencing the duration and intensity of the adaptation process: communication skills (language skills, nonverbal communication skills, interaction with host members); personality factors (patience, empathy and flexibility); demographic factors (gender, age, age at the time of resettlement, socioeconomic status); culture factors (cultural similarity/ distance, host environment receptivity); motivation for transition; the degree of predeparture preparation; and the social support network (Berry, 2006; Dee & Henkin,1999; Furham & Bocher, 1982; Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1998; Kim,2001; Lonner, 1986; Smith

&Khawaja, 2011; Tsang, 2001; Ward et al., 2001)

In a way, all communication can be seen as intercultural, because people all have their own history and background, which people carry with them whenever they communicate (Solo-Lee, 1995). A critical situation promotes cross-cultural awareness and accelerates teaching and learning. Salo-Lee (1995) points out critical incidents are occasions that stay in the mind. The term critical incident refers to a communicative situation which the participants consider as problematic and confusing, or even amusing (Salo-Lee & Winter-Tarvainen, 1995). Typical critical incidents consist of examples of cultural clash events, or situations where unexpected behavior occurs, with suggestions on how to solve these situations. In that way, critical incidents are an important strategy that can be used to highlight differences and potential misunderstandings, which arise out of culture (Salo-Lee & Winter-Tarvainen, 1995).

As has been mentioned before, several factors influence international students' adaptation in university, and Chinese students should also adapt to their new environments which differ from their own. Because communication is central to the process of adaptation, some background on the historical roots and communication patterns of Spain and China from literature helped this researcher to acquire some knowledge of the host communication system. This knowledge may allow for more accurate interpretation of the hidden/unspoken assumptions operating in each culture's communication and to see how and why the Spanish people communicate in these ways.

1.5.1 Spanish and Chinese culture communication

Communication is largely a matter of identity, as behavior in communication is based on personal identity or social identity (Nishida & Gudykunst, 1994). In intercultural communication, behavioral communication is divided into two kinds i.e. verbal and non-verbal. Every country and culture has its heritage, which has implications on work and life in that country.

Kim has shown that the degree of context and amount of information in a culture effectively differentiates between communication in Eastern cultures as opposed to

Western cultures (Kim, 1998). Hall (1976) proposed the concept high-context cultures (which involves a communication style in which most of the information is already shared by people in the society, leaving very little information in the explicitly transmitted part of the message) and low-context cultures (which utilizes a communication style in which most of the information is explicitly incorporated into the message and detailed background information is needed in the interaction with others). In high-context cultures, messages are indirect and are delivered in an abstract implicit manner because the message is actually highly dependent on the context. In contrast, in low-context cultures, communication is direct and explicit. Accordingly, in low-context cultures, a large amount of in-depth background information is needed, because people express messages directly with little need for context (Hall , 1976; Kim, 1998). Ziegahn (2001) points out that such differing cultural views and behaviours can lead to misunderstanding and tension: Individualism (values the self-reliance, equality, and autonomy of the individual) versus collectivism (values group effort and harmony) is one such example.

This study focuses on Chinese international students studying in Barcelona. Although some common communication culture characteristics can be found between Chinese and Spanish, these two communication cultures are relatively different. Therefore, when looking for factors which influence international students' adaptation in communicative situations, it is important to mention some of the characteristics and communication styles of these two cultures.

Firstly, there are some outstanding historical features of Barcelona. Barcelona was conquered by the Arabs in the early 8th century, and was again conquered in 801 by Charlemagne's son Louis, who made Barcelona the seat of the Carolingian. The Counts of Barcelona became increasingly independent and expanded their territory to include all of Catalonia. In 1137, Aragon and the County of Barcelona were merged in dynastic union by the marriage of Ramon Berenguer IV and Petronilla of Aragon. Their titles were finally borne by only one person when their son Alfonso II of

Aragon ascended to the throne in 1162. Several categories and Identities have been grouped in Barcelona, which Catalan identity and Spanish identity after Frnaco died 1975 (Moreno, Arriba & Serrano,1997). The Catalonia region with two Official languages (Catalan and Castilian Spanish).

Chinese Ph.D. students cannot speak Spanish and Catalan, so they often face challenges in a foreign language when they study in UAB, Catalan in particular, presents significant challenges with higher degrees of formal education when it is used in class. The language has a significant influence on students' academic studies. In Moreno, Arriba and Serrano, (1997) studies, Catalan is considered to be the language of "culture" which has traditionally conveyed the idiosyncrasies of local culture. Those Catalans with higher degrees of formal education also shows a greater disposition towards Catalan identity. In Bernaus (2007) study, Catalan, the indigenous language of the region, is the official language of school system. Catalan as the main language for teaching and communication for all subjects in public schools. With the exception for Spanish literature and foreign languages, classes are all taught in Catalan.

Secondly, some of the main features of Chinese culture and the historical and philosophical roots of these features will be introduced so as to provide some explanations for the culture-related issues. Many of the special features in Chinese behavior nowadays can be explained by the long history and traditions of China. Chinese culture is over 5000 years old and it is still a prevailing culture. The three philosophies systems — Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism — have existed in China for over 2000 years. These three philosophies are considered to be the basis for the development of the modern Chinese value system. Chinese base their ideas about societal structures and interaction models on these three philosophies, and these philosophies consist of key features which could be described as core aspects of Chinese culture. These historical roots are reflected in the characteristics of modern Chinese values: self-respect, respect for hierarchy, respect for age, high respect towards teachers and his or her teaching, harmony, the importance of interpersonal relationships, the importance of saving face,

and implicit communication, which means that the receiver will correctly interpret the speaker's intent without direct reference to what he or she means (Yum, 1998).

Chinese students travel annually from their home to live and study at UAB. Chinese students come to learn, to expand their view of the world, to create a better future, to experience a new culture and to have an adventure, leaving behind all that is familiar and venturing into the unknown. The sojourner often faces severe challenges with acquiring a foreign language, building new relationships, experiencing cultural shock, engaging new cultural norms, not to mention the new academic expectations of a different educational system, and the challenges presented by daily life (Mori, 2000), Significant tensions are experienced within each student as individuals attempting to live between cultures which one foot in their culture of origin and the other in the culture of their new home. In addition to the challenges which Chinese students have as they adapt to the new education systems at UAB, Catalan has often been considered as a language of "culture" which has traditionally conveyed the idiosyncrasies of the local culture (Arriba,1997), so Chinese students often face challenges with the Catalan culture when they study. Language difficulties affect students' participation in classroom or group discussions, teaching activities with Spanish teachers, and independent use of universities resource. This lack of language proficiency results in an inabilities to freely interact with other students, further lack of cultural knowledge and the lack of abilities to live independently. In conjunction with language difficulties, Chinese students' cultural values, such as self-respect, respect for hierarchy, respect for age, harmony, importance of interpersonal relationships, the importance of saving face, and implicit interactional activities, all are factors which influenced their adaption to new academic areas at UAB from these academic incidents.

1.5.2 Linguistic competence

In the academic domain, language can impact writing assignments, understanding of lectures, oral and written examinations and the abilities to ask questions in class (Chen, 1998). Language competency has a significant influence on students' academic

adaptation and is closely linked to sojourner cross-cultural adaptation (Cheng 2006, Huang, 2008; Sumer, et al., 2008; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), thus, academic adjustment is one of the most important adjustment domains (Spencer & Xiong, 2006).

Effective communication in the language of the host country has implications for academic achievement. Mori (2000, 137) argues that "the language barrier is probably the most significant, prevalent problem for most international students". Numerous studies have linked language skills, as well as students' perception of these skills, with adjustment (Poyrazli, 2002; Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). The host language ability is very important facilitating factor for successful international adaptation. Ying's study reported that the greater the knowledge of the host country's language, the easier and more stable the adjustment process became (Ying& Liese 1991).

1.5.3 Cultural distance

Cultural distance attributes adjustment difficulties among international students to the extent of similarity between home and host cultures. Arthur drew attention to academic concerns, communication issue, social support, family matters, gender roles and financial support (2001).

While model of culture shock (Lysgard, 1955; Oberg, 1960), hold heuristic value for exploring transitions, they fail to incorporate the varying levels of adjustment with which the sojourner enters the host culture and or to differential between the nature of experience which unfold over time(Arthur,2001). Related work on acculturation stress indicates substantial variation between individuals and groups in their cross-cultural experience (Berryet, 1997, Word & Kennedy, 1993).

In the cross-cultural adaptation literature, cultural novelty has played an important role (Kim and Gudykunst, 1988; Black and Gregersen, 1990; Schuetz, 1944; Triandis, 1980). The most obvious aspect of novelty in cross-cultural adaptation is the distance between the home and the host culture. Over the years, a number of conceptualizations of culture and cultural distance have been introduced, and a widely used conceptualization of culture distance stems from Geert Hofstede, who studies employees in over 50

different countries in the 1960s and 1970s (Hofstede,1980). He originally distinguished four dimensions of national culture: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance (the strength of social hierarchy) and masculinity-femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation). Independent research in Hong Kong led Hofstede to add a fifth dimension: long-term orientation.

Because of cultural distance, westerner students laugh when they talk jokes. Chinese students, however, generally do not laughing; Eastern culture more strongly emphasizes collectivism, whereas western culture emphasizes individualism. The cultural distance influences how international students adapt, with international students in cultures with high cultural distance tend to experience more difficult understanding and adapting, whereas students in cultures with low cultural distance tend to more easily (Furnham & Bochner, 1982).

Most difficulties and misunderstanding encountered by international students can be traced to cultural difference, so Chinese students' experience significant adaptation difficulties in view of the very different features of Western and Chinese culture (Gale & Parker, 2014; Hall & Wang, 1996; Samovar Porter& Stefani, 2000; Wu & Rubin, 2000; Wang & Byram, 2011; Wu & Hammond, 2011; Wang, 2012). Chen points out, however, that in Singapore and Japan, which are considered to be Confucian heritage cultures along with China, Chinese students also experienced higher stress by being in a foreign country despite the cultural similarity (Chen & Chung, 1994).

1.5.4 New educational system

Furthermore, Asian international students may encounter barriers when trying to make sense of new knowledge or trying to acquire skills, which may bring them a sense of "study shock", such barriers include: knowledge about western education systems, western culture and beliefs, and academic language, etc. (Hung & Hyun, 2010). When giving reasons for these barriers, many Chinese academics have pointed to the unique and homogeneous nature of Chinese culture and society. There are three main philosophies in China which are all aimed at attaining harmony: harmony with nature in

Taoism; harmony with oneself in Buddhism; and harmony with others in Confucianism. These historical roots are reflected in the modern Chinese values such as: self-respect, respect for hierarchy, respect for age, harmony, importance of interpersonal relationships (Yum, 2000). Based on this phenomenon, Chinese education tradition does not value self- expression.

One of the most important differences in the Ph.D. programs in UAB is that the new EHEA Ph.D. programs are completely focused on writing and defending the dissertation. In other words, traditional Ph.D. programs have been adapted so that the teaching takes place during the official Master program, while the new EHEA Ph.D., focuses exclusively on writing the dissertation. Consequently, doctoral students at UAB are in one-on one modes, especially in thematic doctoral research from social science, they study by themselves at room (www.uab.cat). However, for Ph.D. program in China, traditional model included both coursework and a research component focused on producing a dissertation, A Ph.D. degree normally takes three years complete. An extension may be available upon request by the relevant candidate, and the maximum period of study is six years from the date of admission. The programs divided into two parts. In the first part of the Ph.D., the candidate must obtain credits and the program has been organized within the curricula including required and selective courses in the first academic year or in three semesters. In the second part, a Ph.D. candidate participates in research activities and submits a dissertation (www.ustc.edu.cn/phd). As can be seen from the above, identifying the differences in the academic cultures of different Ph.D. programs and academic research requirements will help this researcher to find the factors which influenced Chinese student's adaptation to the host education system.

Wang (2013) investigated Chinese students studying at Belgium and noted that the participants experienced their academic adjustment as more challenging because there was a lack of research exploring Asian international students' adjustment processes in Europe. The authors argued that their student subjects experienced challenges in four domains: academic activities, academic resources, language, and time management.

Keith (2009) investigated critical incidents in the experience of five Japanese

university students' returnees. Keith noted that many Japanese academics have pointed to the unique and homogeneous nature of Japanese culture and society, and how the Japanese society emphasize the values of conformity and harmony. Returnees often found themselves in an ambiguous position in the context of Japanese education system. The authors argued that these related to conflicts concerning the kind of interaction, the nature of communication and the levels of participation in classroom.

1.5.5 Social network

Beyond the barriers presented to students by a new education system, changes to the social network also comprise another factors influencing international student's adaptation to new academic areas. As the acculturative stressors are experienced with the academic dimension, international students have to establish a new social network after leaving their friends and family members. Social networks play an especially important role during adaptation, however, because cultural norms, language barriers, and the nature of friendships in the host country may impede international students from establish friendship. Indeed, international students often struggle to make friends from host country(Ward, 2001; Sawir et al., 2008).

Asian international students in particular may experience difficulty when interacting and making friends with locals in Western cultural contexts which emphasizes individualism, assertiveness, and self-sufficiency over interdependence and relatedness (Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003, Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Zhang and Brunton (2007) found that 55% of their Chinese international students sample in New Zealand were unhappy with their friendship levels with locals, and 71% reported that they would like to have more local friends. Oberg's (1960) conceptualization of cultural shock included the sense of losing one's friends back home who do not share in one's new experience. Forming a new support system, however, can be a long and difficult process (Yoon & Portman, 2004), and yet this replacement of social networks is important part of cross-cultural adaptation; international students who are able to develop healthy

relationships with local nationals will be more adapted to the host culture and context than those who do not.

In recent years, social networking sites have become one type of social media which may offer a number of benefits for international students, including the creation of larger social networks, and increased connections with host nationals. These sites and applications enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and by sending messages to each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some examples of such social media networks include Facebook, WeChat, and WhatsApp.

A final factor influencing international students' adaptation includes what may be termed campus culture. If a university has an open, inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity international students' adaptation may be positively facilitated. (Berry, 1997). University services such as academic programs, the international student's office, counseling centers, and health services may need to help provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness for international students (Jacob & Greggo, 2001).

1.6 Strategies used to cope critical incidents in new academic environment

Despite the challenge facing them in the host culture, international students living cross-culturally need to develop the capacity to adapt their professional skills to fit local conditions and constraints, as well as the capacity to adjust personally so that they are content and generally at ease in the host culture (Vulpe, 2000). Effective communication in the language of the host country has implications for their academic achievement. Mori argues that "the language barrier is probably the most significant, prevalent problem for most international students" (2000; 137). Numerous studies have linked language skills, as well as students' perception of these skills, with adjustment (Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002).

Students who adapt successfully develop an understanding of the concept of cultural difference and have a knowledge of the host country and culture. In Wang's study, he

noted that Asian international students created chances to observe the local society and develop deeper understanding of the cultural difference between western countries and their home countries (Wang & Hannes, 2014).

Moreover, several studies have linked new education systems. For example, Cross (1995) noted, it may be easy to change an eating habit or to learn a new language. However, it may be very difficult to change a deeply held belief and cultural values, such as the collectivistic worldview shared by most Asian students, to a more individualist value which emphasizes independence and personal space, as is held by many European students. Students who adapt well also developed organizational skills, and new ways of learning which was accompanied by a loss of old habits. Kim noted the principle of the simultaneous interplay of new learning methods and the loss of old habits, making it plain that, as strangers, people cannot realistically choose between keeping their original identity intact and adapting to a new environment successfully (Kim 2001).

Finally, students living in other cultures need to develop the capacity to adapt their professional skills to fit local conditions and constraints, and develop the capacity to adjust personally so that they are content and generally at ease in the host culture (Vulpe, 2000). Vulpe describes nine adaption skills:

a. To have the ability to cope personally, professionally, and in their family context with the conditions and challenges of living and working in another culture.

b. To have an attitude of modesty and respect.

c. To have an understanding of the concept of cultural difference.

d. To have a knowledge of the host country and culture.

e. To have skill in relationship building.

f. To have realistic self-knowledge.

g. To have effective intercultural communication skills.

h. To have well developed organizational skills.

i. To have personal and professional commitment.

Growth Cross-cultural Adaptation

Kim (2001) stress-adaptation growth model points out different stages in the

adaptation process. The stress-stage points individuals towards adjustment and moves them forward to destruct their living conditions into inner balance. Strangers respond to each stressful experience by "drawing back", which in turn activates adaptive energy to help them reorganize themselves and "leap forward". Learning experiences are larger when challenges in inter-ethnic communication are greater (Kim, 2006). Experiences of acculturation and enculturation cause stress because the person wants to hold on to know customs and identity. On the other hand, strangers also feel a tendency to change their behavior (Kim, 2004).

Kim's Stress-Adaptation-Growth model (2001) gives impulse towards adaptation which gradually leads to internal growth. Growth occurs when the stranger gains new knowledge, behavioral elements, and attitudes beyond their original cultural identity. In this process, personal identity is slightly transformed and the person has reached a higher stage of integration. The dynamics are shown as movements of forward-upwards and downwards. Stressful experiences are illustrated as movement downwards, but at the same time, they also as activate adaptation motivation upwards. In other words, stress-adaptation-growth is a constant dialectical process of push and pull in engagement and disengagement in one's identity (Kim, 2006). In Kim's studies, this internal growth is defined as intercultural transformation, which is also known as the "W-curve" or longitudinal adaptation approach. Gullahorn (1963) proposed a six-stage W-shaped model: honeymoon, culture shock (hostility), adjustment, honeymoon at home, reentry culture shock, and adjustment stages. The model applies especially to international students' experience abroad. In the honeymoon stage, individuals are excited about the new cultural environment; they perceive people and events through pleasant lenses. However, the sojourners can experience severe identity confusion and disorientation in the honeymoon stage. Nothing can be worked out at this stage as individuals experience a major loss of confidence and self-esteem which leads to a hostility stage. Then, sojourners learn to laugh and start to realize that there are positives and negatives in each culture and sojourners experience a mixture of stress-adaptation-growth emotions (Kim, 1998) such as small frustrations as these experienced are worked through. Sojourners feel

at home and experience identity security especially after the adjustment stage, because the boundaries between outsiders and insiders become fuzzier and the sojourners experience social acceptance and support. In the reentry culture shock stage, the sojourner's friends or family members have no interest in hearing all of their intercultural stories. The greater distance in cultural values and communication dimension between the two cultures, the more intense the reentry shock becomes after an "at home" period. However, the sojourners can recycle some of the strategies they used abroad to pull themselves through to the next stage — the adjustment stage. When the sojourners accept an overseas assignment, they integrate their new learning experience abroad with what is positive in their own culture and apply multidimensional thinking, using enriched emotional intelligence and diverse strategies to solve problems or instigate change for a truly inclusive learning organization, and as a result they feel more alive abroad than at home.

Arthur (2001) investigated Canadian post-secondary students studying in Vietnam, exploring the variations in specific stressors and coping strategies of the students during a 7-week cross-cultural program. This research reported considerations for understanding the process of cross cultural adjustment as the students becoming more aware of their strengths and shortcomings. As their cross- cultural skills improved, the students become more aware of how culture influenced them. Arthur pointed out that "Canadian students who were willing to try new experiences and maintain an open mind to cultural difference found good ways to define resource in both themselves and the foreign culture" (2001: 50).

By identifying the core competencies of adaptation skills, and the strategies used to cope with culture difference, language barrier critical incidents, the ongoing challenges of study in a new academic environment, and growth in cross-cultural adaptation, this researcher was able to investigate and find strategies used by Chinese students to cope with critical incidents during their studies at UAB.

1.7 Previous research on adaptation to a new educational systems

Many studies have focused on international student's adjustment to new academic education situation. Heikinheimo and Shute's (1986) study suggests that coping with anxiety, stress and ambiguity are key adaptation issues for international students. Cho (1988) and Collins's (1984) study indicate that English language proficiency and interaction with American students and other international students have been identified as key factors in the international students' adaptation to the United States. Collins' study (1984), also probe into the role of other factors specific to international students' adaptation, interacting with American students on a regular basis (Cho,1988) and period of stay in the United States have been linked with adaptation and in practice may contribute to reducing uncertainty about American culture. Holmes's (2005) research on Chinese students studying in New Zealand, shows that developing and training students' intercultural awareness helps them better understand and more easily adapt to the new culture.

The identified international students differed significantly in their perceptions of adjustment to the university where they studied. The present study aims at answering the question: How do Chinese students adapt to the academic dimension at UAB, Spain? This question covers three major aspects: Which critical incidents do they have to cope with? How do the factors involved in these critical incidents influence them? And what strategies have the Chinese students use to cope with critical incidents at UAB?

The main of objective of this study is to attempt to uncover factors that lead to Chinese international student adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness. This review has examined the current description of challenges for International students, covering factors influencing and strategies to cope with critical incidents for international students in new academic situation (See critical incidents in general in the Figure 2). Specifically, the study investigate the outstanding challenges and coping strategies of Chinese students studying at UAB, in Spain.
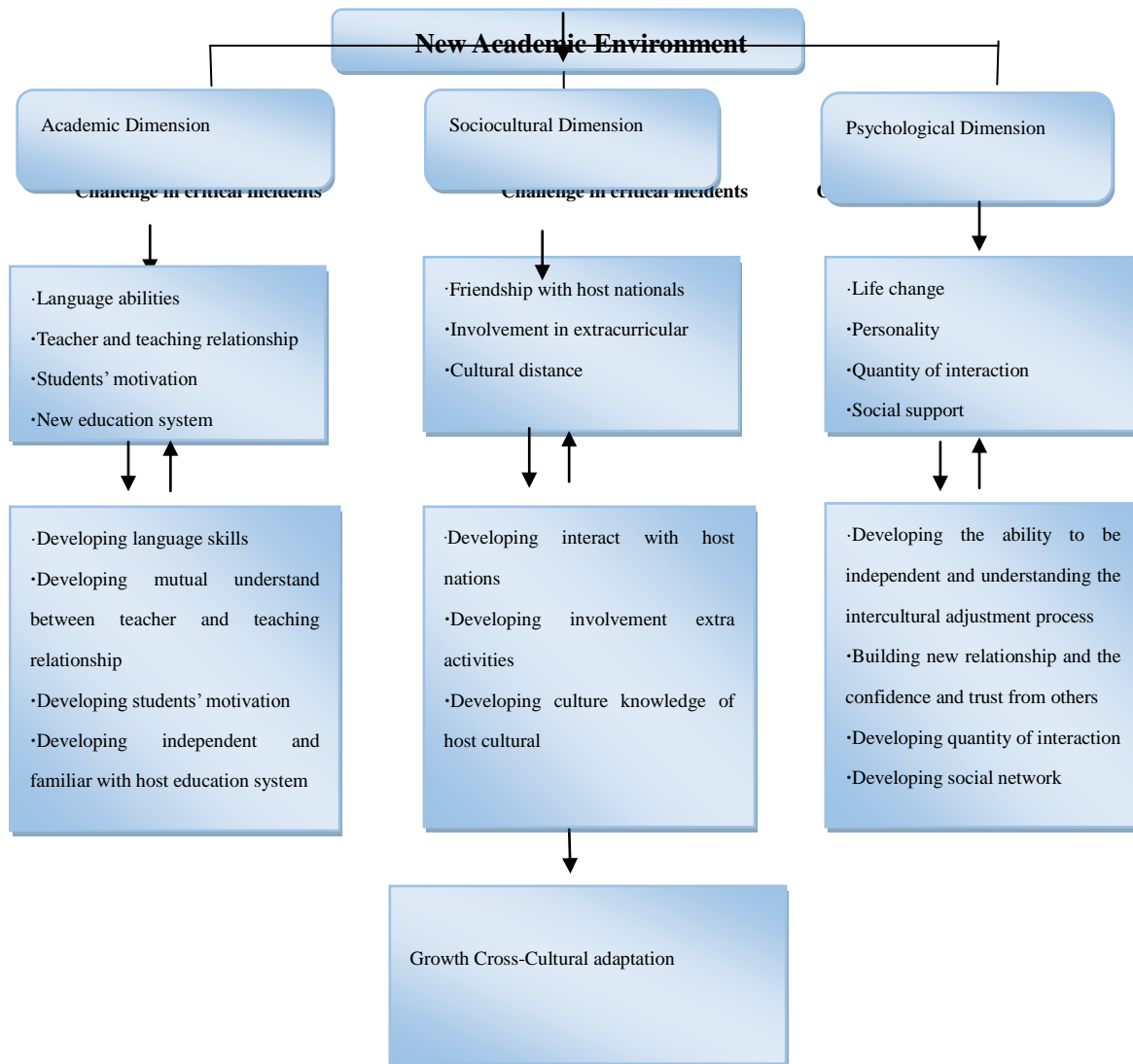
Figure 2 New academic environment

CHAPTER 2   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 2   Research Methodology

This study is designed to examine the reality of individual experience, allowing the researcher to examine individuals' lives and experience in UAB. The research design is presented in this Chapter, which states the phases that have been undertaken in order to fulfill the investigation outlined in the theoretical framework. First of all, there will be a presentation of the research questions and objectives which are the foundation of this investigation, which is followed by the research approach, a description of the context and participants, data collection instruments and data analysis procedure. The validity of the procedure is also described.

2.1 Research Questions and Objectives

This research aims at answering the following:
How do Chinese students adapt to academic environment at UAB, Spain? In addition, this question covers three major aspects:

1. Which critical incidents do they have to cope with at UAB?

2. What are the factors involved in these critical incidents influencing them?

3. What strategies have the Chinese students use to cope with critical incidents at UAB?

4.

Main Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to find out how Chinese students adapt to UAB in Spain, especially to know their academic adaptation experience. This investigation propose main objectives which are: the process of academic adaptation, which is of interest to the researcher who is attempt to uncover factors that lead to successful adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness for Chinese international student. Specifically, the study attempts to investigate the major challenges and coping strategies of Chinese students study at UAB.

Specific objectives

An addition aim is to identify critical incidents that Chinese students have to cope with at UAB. To gather this information, some variable were included to reflect which critical incidents they have to cope with. The factors involved in these critical incidents are also described. Finally, the last objective is to explore the strategies that Chinese students use to cope with critical incidents at UAB

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Research Approach: Qualitative and Quantitative studies

In this study qualitative and quantitative data may be combined,

Das (1983) states that:

… qualitative and quantitative methodologies are not antithetic or divergent, rather they focus on the different dimensions of the same phenomenon. Sometimes, these dimensions may appear to be confluent: but even in these instances, where they apparently diverge, the underlying unity may become visible on deeper penetration … The situational contingencies and objectives of the researcher would seem to play a decisive role in the design and execution of the study.

Quantitative research methods developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena, an example of quantitative methods accepted in social sciences includes survey methods and laboratory experiments (Myers's1997). This study used a qualitative means of gathering information regarding participants' experience in a cross-cultural environment situation. A Qualitative method is used for a better description of real life. The purpose of this is to make a comprehensive study on the research subject as well as making it possible to find relative answers for the research questions. It allows the researcher to view the study phenomenon from different perspectives, and therefore be able to use one or various methods in order to address specific questions. In particular, qualitative research is more compatible with the need to understand process issues in

multicultural exchanges (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996). Thus the flexibility of the qualitative approach is an aspect of importance when an attempt is made to analyze and understand the uniqueness of each student's experience.

2.2.2 Research Methodology: Critical incidents methodology

The purpose of this study is to find out how Chinese students adapt to UAB in Spain, The process of academic adaptation is of interest to the researcher who attempting to uncover factors that lead to successful adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness for Chinese international students.

By using a critical incidents methodology, the study was able to tracked both common and unique experiences. Specific critical incidents were collected from Chinese international students regarding experiences that were challenges, required the selecting of coping strategies, involved the use of social support, or led to shifting views of self. Moreover, the study's research methods also included observations which were conducted to collect data which might help researcher to understand the Chinese students' circumstance or instances where are the researcher felt that she might be able to see the major problem that arose from the challenges the students encountered as they adapted to their new university.

It should be noted that critical incidents are brief descriptions of vivid events that people remember as being meaningful in their experience (Brookfield, 1995). The roots of the critical incident technique can be traced back to the late 19th century, but the theory itself was not introduced to the field of cross-cultural studies until the early 1960's (Frankrijker, 1998,). In United Stated, it is used in the cross cultural training of special group such as nurse, teachers, and students, in order to help those who adapt to living aboard. Salo (1995) points out that to think carefully and analytically about a critical situation promotes cross-cultural awareness and accelerates teaching and learning. In that way, critical incidents are an important strategy that can be used to highlight differences and potential misunderstandings, which arise out of culture (Salo- Lee & Winter-Tarvainen 1995).

The Critical Incident Technique was pioneered by Flanagan (1954). The critical incident relates to collecting observer accounts of significant incidents contributing to a particular outcome. It is a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles. The purpose of the critical incident technique is to develop one's ability to see interaction situations from perspectives of different cultures (Salo-Lee & Winter-Tarvainen 1995). Woolse (1986) points out that Critical Incident Technique was chosen as a good fit for the proposed investigation because it: offers considerable flexibility, is appropriate for investigation personal experience and areas with have received little research attention; and has been recognized " consistent with the skill, experiences and values of counselling psychology practitioners". Butterfield (2005) points out that critical incident could be used to investigate helpful and hindering factors, characteristics essential to an outcome, as well as personal qualities and turning point.

The rational for using critical incidents as a research methodology is directly linked to the need for further understanding regarding the process of cross-cultural transition. Critical incidents methodology provides a "running experiential commentary" of meaningful events and reactions to those events (Brookfield, 1995). The researchers in the field of stress and coping suggested, a methodology which permits a focus on specific, experiences and reactions in the process of coping with situational demands is needed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The methodology measures what is significant and meaningful to participants, maintaining their experience. The study using a critical incidents methodology track both the common and unique experiences of Chinese international students, In general, critical Incidents covers three major dimensions: academic, sociocultural and psychological activities critical incidents. For the current study, critical incidents covers challenges for Chinese international students, covering factors influencing and strategies for adaptation that they used in their new academic situation.

2.3 Research Design

2.3.1 Context and Participants

The study is undertaken within the context at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). According to statistical data from the International Welcome Point office, there were over 446 Chinese students' study in UAB this year. The figure of statistical data in 2013 from the International Welcome Point Office show that among 7141 international students study in UAB, 243 students were from China in 2010; among 7152 international students, 300 students were from China in 2011; among 6455 international students, 355 students from China in 2012; among 5.098 international students studying in UAB, 446 students were from China in 2013, among these 446 Chinese students 37 were newly enrolled Ph.D. students (statistical data from the postgraduate office). The data will illustrate, the number of international Chinese students is increasing every year despite the fact that the number of international students overall decreased from 2012 to 2013. (See Tables 1)

Table 1. International students in UAB

Type of study	Number of students			
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Bachelor's Degree	1,193	1,341	1,335	1,426
Master	679	623	585	553
Doctorate	1,229	1,347	1,372	841
Mobility and Exchange	1,361	1,274	1,111	761
Other Postgraduate courses	2,679	2,567	2,052	1,517
Total	**7,141**	**7,152**	**6,455**	**5,098**

Notes: Including Chinese nationality. Data from course registration 2013/14 are provisional.

Table 2 Chinese students study at UAB

Type of study	Number of students			
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Bachelor' s Degree	24	39	44	89
Master	34	52	106	110
Doctorate	23	50	74	90
Mobility and Exchange	21	29	41	41
Other Postgraduate courses	141	130	90	116
Total	**243**	**300**	**355**	**446**
The proportion of international students	**3.4%**	**4.1%**	**5.4%**	**8.7%**

There are 37 newly enrolled Chinese Ph.D. students at UAB in September of 2013. (www.uab.cat/web/study-abroad/phds/). Twenty Chinese students volunteered to be involved in this study, and the others could not be contacted due to incomplete or outdated address and telephone information. These students are in their first year and all of them live in the Vila campus (residential complex of the UAB). They cannot speak Spanish or Catalan and all of them are in Spain for the first time. The participants ranged in age from 24 to 42 years with a mean of 33 years old. They were from 12 cities in China, including Wuhan, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Chongqing and Kunming, big cities in the southern and northern parts of China. The participants were majoring in International Economy (n=1), Global Ecology(n=2), Law(n=1), Education(n=2), Communication and Journalism(n=1), Chemistry (n=2), Political (n=1), Food Science (n=1), Environmental Science (n=1), Astronomy (n=1), Health Psychology Studies (n=1), Compute Science (n=1), Electronic Engineering and Telecommunications (n=2), History (n=1), Materials Science(n=2) fields.

Among the 20 participants, a subsample of 8 students was selected for an interview. The criteria for selecting the subsample was gender balanced composition, thematic doctoral research, as well as some subsample attend some course with local students. The purpose of selecting subsample was to ensure that the data from the survey could be closely comparable and reflective of reality of individual experience at UAB. Consequently, among these eight Ph.D. students, five were male and three female, while five were from social science and others from natural science. Two of them attended one to three course with master's degree students. All of the students registered in a Chinese QQ group chat, in which students shared their viewpoints just like local students using WhatsApp in Spain.

In previous contacts with the students, the major problem that arose was the challenges they encountered as they adapted to new university. The symptom they experienced was an illness causing them to become depressed, lethargic, hideaway in their apartment, feeling homesick, and eating or sleeping more than normal. These symptoms were especially noticeable as students experience new academic challenges

such as increasingly independent research activities, along with language difficulties resulting from more academically based classroom discussions (Kim. & Kang, 2007). Base on this situation, this study was undertaken within the context of UAB.

2.3.2 Survey instruments and measures Instruments for Data Procedure

Based on critical incident methodology, the data was collected through Questionnaires and Interviews.

Questionnaire: The purpose of the Questionnaire was to investigate which critical incidents did the Chinese students had to cope with in university, in particular exploring the factors that they influenced more as well as the strategies student used to cope during their adaptation at UAB. The questionnaire covers three major dimensions: academic critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents, psychological critical incidents. The researcher defined and operationalized the dimensions and format for the study project after conducting literature review. The dimension concerned operational definition, indicators, questions and type of instruments, it clarify questionnaire interrelated from project format.

Professional information

The final Questionnaire contained 31 items in three blocks (see appendix A and B). Block I items were designed to state the student's general information (sample item: "What is your field of study"). Block II items were designed to state any significant challenges event in the experience of Chinese students, including academic activities critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents and psychological critical incidents, as well as designed base acculturative stress scale for international students (Bai, 2012). Block III items were designed to state the student's effort at coping which were used to manage the challenges related to the event. Instead of attempting to account for all challenges in the experience of students, an attempt was made to understand one meaningful event in depth and students' related coping efforts. The participants were asked to scale their outstanding challenge events and the coping efforts used to manage the challenge related to the event in their experience of studying at UAB. Consequently

students generated both the events and the coping strategies that were meaningful for them, in an effort to track the process in which Chinese students who participated in our research potentially altered their world view regarding self and their understanding. The three dimension items were designed as fellow

Academic critical incidents dimension: This dimension concern Chinese students' language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, and new educational system as well as finding the factors influencing their adaptation. The items were combined to produce an overall rating of various demands in the academic dimension. Participants worded as a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "completely agree" (5 points) to "completely disagree". The items were designed base review the research on the cross-culture adaptation for international students, in which it focused on difficulties associated with the adjustment process (Arthur, 2001; Ward, 2001) especially, in language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship and new education, to state an outstanding challenges event of academic activities in the experience of Chinese students (sample item: "I feel I have big challenges when I first come I cannot express myself, reading, writing paper ad thinking in second language at UAB (Item a1)")

Sociocultural critical incidents dimension: The items were designed base on a review of the research on ability to fit in and to negotiate interactive aspects of new culture (Word and Searle1990). Chinese students' friendship with host nationals, their involvement in extracurricular activities, and the cultural distance (social customs/ norms) they experience were specifically examined. (Sample item: "It is struggle to make friends or develop relationship with my classmates, local people, and colleagues").

Psychological critical incidents dimensions: The items were designed base on a review of the stress and coping framework and emphasizes emotional well-being and satisfaction with sojourning experience (Ward & Kennedy, 2010) Chinese students' life change, personality, quantity of interaction, and social support are also given specific attention. (Sample item: I ever feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things, in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc. (Item a8)).

Strategies to cope with Academic critical incidents adaptation: This concerns Chinese students' developing of language skills, developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, as well as developing the ability to be independent and familiar with host education system. Items were designed base on situation which international students will have to cope with such as dual challenge, like every freshman entering university needing to adapt to the academic life and they have to deal with acculturation stress common to sojourners (Church, 1982). (Sample item: ". I usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan).

Strategies to cope with sociocultural critical incidents adaptation: This concerns Chinese students' developing interaction with host nationals, developing involvement in extracurricular activities, and developing culture knowledge of host cultural. Items was designed base on engagement in activities in public places, traveling, parties, cultural events, volunteering and social work, go to public place, having more opportunities to get to know the local culture by observing the way local people lived and the way society functioned as a whole.(Wang & Hannes, 2013) Attention was given to the students efforts focused on coping with and managing the challenges related to such event (Sample item: "I fell it is helpful to understand host culture when I involvement in extracurricular activities, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc.)

Strategies to cope with psychological critical incidents adaptation: This concerned Chinese students' developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process, building new relationships and winning confidence and trust from others, and developing a social network. Items were designed base on psychological adjustment originating from the stress and coping framework, and emphasizes emotional well-being and satisfaction with sojourning experience (Ward & Kennedy, 2010). Attention was focused on students' coping efforts used to manage the challenges related to the event (Sample item: I fell enjoy studying in UAB because I understand the process of adaptation and understand the stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone)

In addition, previously, the researcher conducted a pilot questionnaire with four senior Ph.D. students by interviewing at the coffee shop in Catalonia. The purpose of the pilot study was to help the investigator to refine the data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed. The researcher sent the questionnaires to them in advance by E-mail. Four senior Ph.D. students discussed the questionnaires (one was female and others were male), and they share their experience of significant challenges and coping strategies as well as commenting on when they first come. From the questionnaire, the Ph.D. students expressed that they had significant challenges when they stayed at UAB, and indicated that these challenges were related to language proficiency, teacher and teaching relationship, the new educational systems, cultural distance, independence and psychological stress from internal and external aspects from the pilot questionnaire. Consequently, the researcher revised the questionnaire before the questionnaires were distributed. The pilot study helped the researcher to realize the need for revising the wording of some of the questions and for reorganizing the order of the questions. This is a very crucial measure to guarantee the validity of data.

Moreover, the statements in the questionnaire were written in Chinese and all of the interviews with the Chinese students were conducted in Chinese. This was also a very crucial measure to guarantee the validity of the data, because the respondents could better understand each item and the questions and then express themselves clearly and accurately.

Finally, Cronbach's alpha was employed to examine the reliability of the questionnaire, it was divided into two blocks, Block I including the factors influencing coping with items and Block II included the strategies of adaptation with items, the internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .84 and .836, and the value of general Crobach Alpha of questionnaires was found to be higher than 0.7, which indicated that the items have a high degree of internal consistency for response to the questionnaires (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

Table 3 Examples of questions included in each dimension

Academic critical incidents (Block II had seven items, it concerned the challenges of Chinese students' language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship and new educational system in academic critical incidents influencing them adaptation. I feel I have big challenges when I first come I con not express myself, reading, writing paper ad thinking in second language in UAB (Item a1). I ever feel uncomfortable when the professor guided students to take responsibility for their learning. Such as doing research paper, group work, presentation and others as an examination (Item a2).	*Strategies of Academic critical incidents adaptation (Block III):* it had four items, the items concerned Chinese students' developing language skill, developing mutual understand through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, developing the ability to be independent and familiar with host education system as well as finding the strategies coping effort use to manage the challenge related to lack of language skills. I usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan (Item a1) I am able to identify similarities or differences between China and Barcelona educational systems, such as academic styles, teaching method and etc. (Item a3)
Sociocultural critical incidents: it had three items, the items concerned the challenges of Chinese student's friendship with host nationals, involvement in extracurricular activities, cultural distance influencing them adaptation. It is struggle to make friends or develop relationship with my classmates, local people, and colleagues (Item a12). I am not often participating activities with local people. Such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festival with local friends (Item a10).	*Strategies of Sociocultural critical incidents adaptation:* it had three items, the items concerned Chinese students' developing interact with host nationals, developing involvement in extracurricular activities, developing cultural knowledge of host cultural as well as find the strategies coping efforts used to manage the challenge related to event of friendship with host nationals, involvement in extracurricular and cultural distance. I usually make local friends in different ways. Such as have meal, sport,travel and made language partner, which means you teach local students Chinese as well as they teach you Spanish, etc. (Item a6) I fell it is helpful to understand host culture when I involvement in extracurricular activities, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc. (Item a4)
Psychological critical incidents: it had three items, the items concerned the challenges of Chinese students' life change, personality, quantity of interaction, social support influencing them adaptation. I ever feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc. (Item a8) I ever feel discourage, helpless, loneness when I am in different situation. such as I fell homesick when I got sick (Item a11)	*Strategies of Psychological critical incidents:* it had three items, the items concerned Chinese students' developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process, building new relationships and won the confidence and trust from others, developing social network as well as find the strategies copingefforts used to manage the challenge related to event of life change and social support. I fell enjoy studying in UAB because I understand the process of adaptation and understand the stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone (Item a8) I fell I won the confidence and trust from teacher and our friends after I have built new social network (Item a9)

Interview: The interview was developed using the critical incidents methodology to focus the inquiry while encouraging participant's to reflect on their unique experience. The goals of the interviews were: to obtain a detailed description on their real life experiences; to discover how the various factors influenced them; and to find out about the strategies for adaptation that they used in UAB. The final interview protocol contained fourteen questions related to the academic, sociocultural and psychological critical incidents (see appendix C). Each part was divided into two sections: in section one, questions were designed to state the significant challenges and events in the experience of participants, including the factors that they involved in academic, sociocultural and psychological critical incidents. And in section two, items were designed to state the student's focus on coping efforts use to manage the challenges related to the event from academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions.

In this study, the interviews remained open-ended and conversational, but the interview followed a certain format and set of questions. The questionnaire was first applies to all participants and identify potential critical incidents in the three define dimensions. Based on the analysis of the survey data, interview protocols were made that it includes semi-structured questions related to the most significant results of the questionnaires. The aim of the interview to explore the individual experience, and in this dimension, to deepen the interview. The final interview protocol contained 14 questions in three blocks related to the academic critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents and psychological critical incident dimensions (see interview protocol on appendix C). Each part had two sections, with questions which were designed to state a significant challenges event in the experience of participants, including the factors that they were involved in academic critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents or psychological critical incidents in each, from section one. In each part of section two, the items was designed to state the student's effects use for coping with and managing the challenges related to the event from one of three dimensions.

Table 4 Examples of questions of interview included in each dimension

Academic critical incidents (Part I): it had three questions, the interview explores in depth the life experiences related to critical incidents in academic critical incidents. Participants will be interviewed, the purpose of the interviews will obtain a detailed description on their real life experiences, to discover how the factors that they influenced for adaptation in academic critical incidents. When you first come can you express yourself, reading, writing paper and thinking in second language, could you elaborate on that idea (question a1)	*Strategies of Academic critical incidents adaptation (Part II):* it had three questions, the items explores in depth the life experiences related to critical incidents in academic critical incidents. Participants will be interviewed, to discover how the strategies that Chinese students coping efforts used to manage the challenge related to the factors of influencing their adaptation in academic critical incidents. What experience you usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan? Could you explain that further? (question a4)
Sociocultural critical incidents Part II : it had two questions, participants will be interviewed, the purpose of the interviews will obtain a detailed description on their real life experiences, to discover how the factors that they influenced for adaptation in sociocultural critical incidents. What experience when you first come you are not clearing or understanding their cultural values, habits behavior and celebrate different festivals. Such as kissing the cheek when you greeting, especially when it was men and woman. Could you explain that further? (question a8)	*Strategies of Sociocultural critical incidents adaptation Part II :* it had two questions, the items explores in depth the life experiences related to critical incidents in sociocultural critical incidents. participants will be interviewed, to discover how the strategies that Chinese students coping efforts used to manage the challenge related to the factors of influencing their adaptation in sociocultural critical incidents What experience you usually feel, it is helpful to understand host culture when you involvement in extracurricular activities? Could you explain that further?(question a10)
Psychological critical incidents Part III: it had two items, the items the questions explores in depth the life experiences related to critical incidents in psychological critical incidents. Participants will be interviewed, to discover how the factors that they influenced for adaptation in psychological critical incidents. What experience when you first come you feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc. Could you elaborate on that idea? (question a11)	*Strategies of Psychological critical incidents Part III:* it had two questions, the interview explores in depth the life experiences related to critical incidents in psychological critical incidents. Participants will be interviewed, the purpose of the interviews will obtain a detailed description on their real life experiences, to discover how the strategies that Chinese students coping efforts used to manage the challenge related to the factors of influencing their adaptation in psychological critical incidents What experience when you first come you feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc. Could you elaborate on that idea?(question a13)

The open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to freely express their views and opinions, and created a relatively varied and many-sided description of the reality of their individual experiences. Chinese students were interviewed with each interview lasts around 30-40 minutes. The goals of the interviews were: to obtain a detailed description of their real life experiences; to discover how the factors influenced them; and to explore the adaptation strategies that they used at UAB. The individual interviews with the participants went smoothly. All of the interviews with the participants were conducted in Chinese. This is very crucial measure to guarantee the respondents can better understand each item and the questions, and then express themselves clearly and accurately. Detailed information was acquired so it became an important supplement to the questionnaire. Each interview was audio recorded on a hand-held digital Samsung, the audio recorder captured each response and answer. After completion of the interviews, the researcher then transcribed every interview session. The completed transcriptions were reviewed and read while listening to the original recoding to check for the accuracy of each data set, and the transcript was professionally translate to English from original Chinese version and categories for coding were then developed.

2.3.3 Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was first applies to all participants and identify potential critical incidents in academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions. Based on the analysis of the survey data, interview protocols were made, which include semi-structured questions related to the most significant results of questionnaires. The aim of the interview was to explore the individual experience and to deepen the interview in three dimensions. The questions were designed to state significant challenging events in the experience of participants, including the factors that they involved in academic, sociocultural, and psychological critical incidents.

The researcher thought carefully about the theoretical framework on that basis and made the interview questions as exact and simple as possible seeking to avoid mistakes by using a clear and simple format. In order to guarantee the validity, the meanings of the questions were clarified during the interviews as necessary. Moreover, the researcher

observed and attended language lectures that the Chinese students were in and also participated in the Chinese community, built friendly relationships with them. Due to the fact that the majority of participants were far away from home for the first time, they were eager to share their ideas with someone who came from their home country. This meant they were friendly and co-operative, and therefore most of the time the interview atmosphere was relaxed and trusting.

All of the interviews with the participants were conducted in Chinese. This is very crucial measure to guarantee that the respondents could better understand each item and the questions and then express themselves clearly and accurately. Detailed information was acquired so it became an important supplement to the questionnaire. Finally, several procedures were followed to ensure the validity of coding. First the researcher (Ph.D. student) encoded a full interview. Then two professors who participated in this study mentored and supported the researcher. This procedure allowed two supervisors to define and clarify the definitive list of codes with any discrepancies discussed, and a consensus reached during revising. These procedure guaranteed the validity of this research to its maximum extent.

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants before the interview by E-mail, so that the validity of questionnaires and the data from the survey could be closely evaluated as matching the factual description of reality and individual experience at UAB. Questionnaires were sent to the whole population (37 doctoral students). Twenty questionnaires were returned by E-mail. Finally, 8 (40%) participants took part in individual interviews of critical incidents. The participants took part voluntarily, and the researcher always followed the institutional ethical standards. The researcher treated data anonymously and only for the strict purpose of this study.

Seven steps were taken in order to get accurate and relative results (see Figure 3). Observation is a means of collecting evidence, and as the quotation suggests, the observer will be able to be much more discriminating and selective in the messages that are received through informal observations in non-classroom settings. The purpose of observation is to become familiarized with the context and the participants. Firstly in

previous contacts, the researcher attended and observed some lectures and Vila university accommodation that the Chinese students were in. The purpose was to become familiar with the context and the participants. This was a source of decisive preliminary information for making the first decisions. About the Surveys and the preliminary Inquiry and helped to define the topics of greatest interest in relation to critical incidents and confrontations strategies (questionnaires to the entire sample).Then, the researcher define and operationalize the dimensions to study the project format after literature review. This was concerned with research objective, dimensions, operational definition, indicators, questions and instruments type (see Appendix A), it clarify the factors involved in and strategies use to cope with critical incidents interrelated from project format as well the observation by the researcher on language class that the participants were in. Previously the researcher conducted a pilot questionnaire with four senior Ph.D. by interview. The purpose of the pilot study was to help the investigator to refine the data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed before distributing all of the questionnaires. Then, the items in disorder of questionnaire was distributed to the participants by E-mail, the purpose to evaluate validity of questionnaires and ensure the data from the survey can be close to the fact of description of reality and individual experience at UAB and avoid automatic consciousness when the participants answered the questionnaires.

2.3.4 Procedure for Data Analysis

Data analysis, as noted by Creswell (2007), is presented when discussing data analysis in qualitative research. The steps primarily include: the researcher preparing and organizing the data for analysis, reducing the data into themes through coding and condensing of the codes, and characterizing the data in tables, figures and discussions. In this research, data analysis was composed of two parts: the questionnaires and the interviews of critical incidents. The data are analyzed in two stages. First, quantitatively, obtained through the questionnaire. Then the qualitative data, based on the interviews,

are analyzed. The questionnaire was first applied to all participants and allows an approach to the subject matter. Essentially, identify potential critical incidents in the three defined dimensions, and then based on the analysis of the survey data, protocol of the interview was made. This protocol includes semi-structured questions related to the most significant results of the analysis of the questionnaires. The qualitative analysis is the most interesting and better description of real life because it allows the experiences of the participants in relation to critical incidents and coping strategies. This is the main aim of the thesis. Two stages were held separately at UAB from the Chinese students in the study. There are many ways to analyze the research material, but because this study is a research focus on understanding, qualitative analysis were used, based upon which a conclusion was made. The purpose is to synthesize the main aspects of the results and to answer to the research questions, the procedure steps as follow:

Firstly, the data will be recorded and imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 19.0.after using the questionnaires of index for inclusion. Then, open-ended questions at the end of each sections with focus individual interviews were used to collect the qualitative data. This data analysis was undertaken to determine the main themes. ATLAS.ti Qualitative Data Analysis Software 6.2 were employed. ATLAS.ti software was used as a tool to assist in the analysis of qualitative data set (Robson, 2002). Qualitative software was integrated into the study to organize and analyze data- Unstructured data in the form of transcribed interviews which underwent data reduction prior to using ATLAS.ti software to codify the concepts represented by the data to determine emerging themes (Wllofe, 2008).

Data collected from the critical incidents was subjected to a thematic content analysis by questionnaires and interviews. Representative of participant experience consistent with categories represented in the literature, the method of constant comparison was used to code individual responses (Denzin &Lincolo, 1994).

In data analysis from the interview process, it show critical incidents of the experiences from the Chinese students (n=8) adapting to the UAB. The researcher used several steps preparing and organizing the data for analysis starting from audio-recorded,

interviewee transcribed, professional translation from Chinese to English and develop categories for coding the interviews (See Table 3.6). The data was also analyzed using ATLAS.ti Qualitative data analysis Software 6.2, which is organize text, coding findings, and added memos into project. All the data including audio recordings and follow with schedule an interview, data collection was done through face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher. The documents were into Atlas.ti software (version 6.2) as primary documents in preparation for analysis. A wealth of information concerning the phenomenon was provided through each interview, identify the code and quotations related to the three dimensions with academic critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents and psychological critical incidents. The researcher used the Atlas.ti "networks" function to create figures to identify and organize relevant quotations.

2.4 Reliability and Validity of Research Measure and Procedure

The reliability of the research means that the research results and the probability of producing results were not random. Validity and reliability ensure rigorous qualitative research that involves determining if the study is accurate, believable, and meaningful. Validity represents whether a research instrument measures with consistency what it is designed to measure (Turner, 2010). Validity brings appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness to data and logic, strength, and defense to research and subsequent conclusions (LaCoursiere, 2003). In this study, the researcher has taken some measure to ensure the data from the survey can be close to the factual description of reality and individual experience at UAB. The validity can be shown from the following:

First, Cronbach's alpha was conducted to examine the reliability of questionnaire. Internal consistency is a measure whether items that propose to measure the same general frame produce similar scores. Internal consistency is usually measured with Cronbach's alpha. The consistency of the items was measured with the total items correlation parameter method, and it was found that all the correlation coefficients were highly significant implying that all the items were consistent or reliable. According to

Cronbach's alpha internal consistency $\alpha \geq 0.9$ Excellent; $0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ Good; $7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$ Acceptable; $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ Questionable; $0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$ Poor; $\alpha < 0.5$ Unacceptable. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was employed to examine the reliability of questionnaires, as shown in Table 3.6, it was divided into two blocks, Block Ⅰ the factors of influencing coping with 14 items and Block Ⅱ the strategies of adaptation with 10 items. The internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .84 and .836, the value of General Crobach Alpha of questionnaires was found to be higher than the 0.7, it is indicated that it is high degree of internal consistency in response to the questionnaires (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

Additionally, the validity of the research refers to the extent to which the research data gives information about the phenomenon under examination. The researcher carefully thought about the theoretical framework on that basis and made the interview questions as exact and simple as possible, seeking to avoid mistakes by using a clear and simple format. In order to guarantee the validity, the meanings of the questions were clarified during the interviews as necessary.

Moreover, the open-ended interview questions sought to elicit from the participants rich description of their experience from real life through a methodical, consistent execution of the interview process. In the data analysis, ATLAS.ti software was used as a tool to assist in the analysis of qualitative data set (Robson,2002). Unstructured data in the form of transcribed interviews underwent data reduction prior to using ATLAS.ti software to codify the concepts represented by the data to determine emerging themes (Wllofe, 2008).

Next, procedure were employed for validity the validity of categories and coding. First, the researcher (Ph.D. student) encoded a full interview, and then two professors who participated in this study mentored and supported the researcher. This procedure allowed two supervisors to define and clarify the definitive list of codes. Discrepancies were then discussed, and a consensus was reached during revising. Finally, approximately 27 codes were procured for the participants (see Table 5), for instance, there are three dimensions, academic critical incidents, sociocultural critical incidents

and psychological critical incidents, under the dimension "academic critical incidents". There are three sub-dimension language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, and the new education system. There are four codes associate with language abilities. Therefore, including dimensions and Categories for coding the content of interviews, researcher had categorized the data with final 27 codes and themes. These procedure guaranteed the validity of this research to its maximum extent.

Table 5 Dimensions and categories for coding the content of interviews

Dimensions and categories	Coding list
I. Academic critical incidents	
Language abilities	languages can impact writing assignments
	understanding lectures
	oral and written examination and the abilities to ask questions in class (Chen,1999)
	Lack of language proficiency
Developing language skill	need to adapt to the academic life
	language improved
	Interactions with host nationals provide opportunities for international students to practice their communication and language skills.(Brunetee, Hendrickson,2011)
II. Sociocultural critical incidents	
Involvement in extracurricular activities	Interaction with host nationals may include having conversations or doing activities with host nationals
Developing involvement in extracurricular activities	Engagement in activities in public places
III. Psychological critical incidents	
Life change	Expectation of difficulty and depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment (Ward& Kennedy; Ward & Searle 1993).
Developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process	To facilitate psychosocial adjustment of Chinese students, achieve a full understanding of sojourner adjustment processes (Kim,2001)

Finally, the researcher observed and attended language lectures that the Chinese students were in and also participated in the Chinese community, building friendly relationships with them. Due to the fact that the majority of participants were far away from home for the first time, they were eager to share their ideas with someone who came from their home country. This meant they were friendly and co-operative, and therefore most of the time the atmosphere was relaxed and trusting.

Summary

This research is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and endeavor to explore the factors that influenced students and the strategies for adaptation that they used. This chapter outlines the procedures and research instruments used in the study and the contents of the questionnaire for critical incidents and the in-depth interview of critical incidents. It describes the participants involved in the study and details the validity of the research.

The following chapter will discuss the answers to the research questions, and the interviews will be analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER 3　　FINDINGS

CHAPTER3 Findings

The main objective of this study is attempted to uncover factors that lead to Chinese international student successful adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness. Specifically, this study identifies critical incidents that Chinese students have to cope with their academic environment, and investigate the significant challenges and coping strategies of Chinese students studying at UAB.

This chapter presents the findings from the research conducted. The results are to identify critical incidents that Chinese students have to cope with, the factors involved in and the strategies that Chinese students used in coping critical incidents at UAB. The results are grouped in each section on this basis. First, general results are presented through the questionnaire, then specific results are provided, followed by in-depth interviews carried out with a sub-sample.

The data from the questionnaires and interviews shows the experiences of the participants' adaptation to academic environment at UAB in Spain. Their experiences are analyzed in the first part of the data collected through the questionnaire and interview, covering which critical incidents they had to cope with and what are the factors involved in critical incidents. The second part of data will illustrate how well they reconstructed the strategies used for coping in three dimensions: academic, sociocultural and psychological.

3.1 Academic critical incidents and factors involved in academic dimension

The data from the questionnaires and interviews shows the experiences of the participants' academic adaptation at UAB in Spain. Their experience are analyzed in the first part of the data, the information covers which critical incidents they had to cope with and which the factors are involved in academic dimension. The second part of data will illustrate how well they reconstructed the strategies used to cope with the academic dimension.

3.1.1 Finding factors from questionnaires

In our study, participant's academic adaptation experiences are examined from a quantitative approach based in the questionnaires, the themes emerged from the three factors prompts involved in academic. Consequently, participant's academic adaptation experience can be summarized into three factors: language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship and new education systems. With each factor, a series of ideas expressed by participants are presented. The information covers the percentages and shows the proportion of participants' responses that are represented by each items, in addition to the mean of responses related to each item. An overview can be found in Table 6. In what follows, we will elaborate on each factor.

Table 6 Frequency, percentage, mean and S.D: Summary of factors involved in academic critical incidents

Factors involved	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
Language abilities							
When I first come I cannot express myself, reading, writing paper and thinking in second language (Item a1).	0	1(5)	1(5)	8(40)	10(50)	4.35	.81
Teacher and teaching relationship							
I ever feel uncomfortable to call the teacher's name or reject, disagree with the professor's ideas & suggestions because lack of hierarchy of Chinese cultural norms when my teacher interact with me. (Item a4)	0	2(10)	3(15)	12(60)	3(15)	3.80	.83
I ever fell discouraged when my professor asked me redo work, research paper or re-credits because I am not qualified. (Item a3)	1(5)	4(20)	3(15)	7(35)	5(25)	3.55	1.23
I ever feel uncomfortable when the professor guided students to take responsibility for their learning. Such as doing research paper, group work, presentation and others as an examination. (Item a2)	1(5)	2(10)	5(25)	10(50)	2(10)	3.5	1
New Education System							
It is a big pressure for me to publish academic paper. (Item a7)	0	2(10)	2(10)	10(50)	6(30)	4	.918
I ever feel uncomfortable dealing with study and household chores such as everyday life problems rent the housing, cooking, shopping, transportation and using currency etc. (Item a9)	1(5)	2(10)	1(5)	13(65)	3(15)	3.75	1.02
I cannot freely using research instruments and academic resources, such as selecting the most suitable resource because reveled thousands of hits for every key words or operating E-book and other software resource. (Item a6)	1(5)	5(25)	4(20)	7(35)	3(15)	3.3	1.17

Note: Font Questionnaire, five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree).

The overall mean of all respondents on the items related to the factors involved in academic critical incidents were between 4.35 and 3.3. This mean indicates a situation where participants choose between agree and completely agree in the academic critical incidents. A summary is presented in Table 6.

The factor concerned participants' *language abilities* is higher response with the two agreement levels (agree and completely agree) (*M*=4.35, *S.D*=.81).However, the responses of the participants regarding the impact of the other two factors related to *Teacher and teaching relationship* and *the New Education System*, also reveal that these have a significant influence on the critical incidents involved in the academic dimension. In *the teacher and teaching relationship*, overall, the responses of the participants, in these three factors, (over 60%) indicated agreement or total agreement. Specifically, as it is shown in the Table 4.1, participants noted increased stress from experiences they found uncomfortable, such as calling the teacher's name or openly disagreeing with the professor's ideas and suggestions. This was most likely because of their sense of hierarchy from Chinese cultural norms when Chinese teacher interacted with them (item a4) (*M*=3.8, *S.D*=.83).

In addition, participants also showed two higher responses stating that they feel uncomfortable when the professor guided them to take responsibility for their learning, such as doing research paper, group work, giving presentation and others work, such as examinations. (Item a2).The critical incidents that occur in this dimension(*M*=3.5. *S.D*=1) reveals that students felt discourage when the professor asked them to re-do their work or re-credits because they were not qualified enough (item a3) (M=3.55. S.D=1).

Finally, the results also revealed the factors that have the most agreement which involved academic critical incidents related to the new education system. As is shown in the Table 6, among these factors of the critical incidents, the higher frequency with the higher agreement level is centered on the big pressure to publish academic paper. This indicates that the factor of publishing academic papers is most significant in the academic dimension (item a7). At the same time, the participants also showed higher responses regarding the factor that they cannot freely use research instruments and

academic resources, such as selecting the most suitable resource or operating E-book and other software resource (item a6) of critical incidents in the academic dimension(M=3.3. S.D=1.17) and other factor of dealing with study and household chore (item a9) (M=3.75. S.D=1.02).

In summary, Table 5 presents results from the questionnaires that illustrate the factors that had the most agreement level, which are: factors related with *language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship* (such as to call the teacher's name or reject, disagree with the professor's ideas and suggestions) and the factor of *new educational system* related with big pressure to publish academic paper. These factors are the most significant results involved in this dimension that have been deepen in the interview. Within each factors, a series of ideas expressed by participants are presented.

3.1.2 Finding results from interview

As mentioned before, during the interviews some of the participants (n = 8) were asked about their personal experiences in this dimension. The results of the interviews confirming the quantitative analysis, taken from the questionnaire data is summarized in Table 6. The factor of *language abilities* involved in academic critical incidents has a higher frequency with 45 mentions for 8 participants as shown in Table 7.

3.1.2.1 Language abilities critical incidents

Table 7 Frequency of mention categories: language abilities

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
Abilities ask questions in class	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Impact writing assignment	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	13
Lack of language proficiency	7	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	27
Understanding lectures	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total codes	11	6	4	4	4	7	5	4	45

Note: S: student; n=8

We identified four situations related to *language abilities*: impact on writing assignments, understanding lectures, abilities to ask questions in class, and lack of language proficiency.

Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis from the network by Atlas.ti 6.2 was conducted to examine the factors involved in academic critical incidents related to language abilities.

Figure 3 shows that the *language abilities* critical incidents are associated with situations of the frequency of the participants' stories involved in the academic dimension.
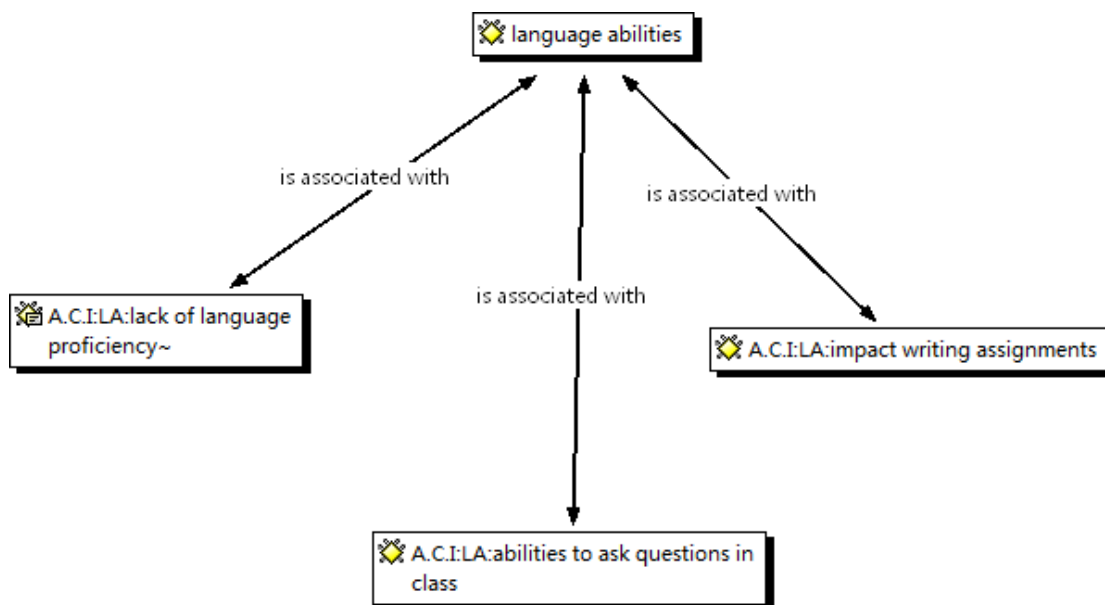
Figure 3 Factors involved in academic dimension related with language abilities

Figure 3 shows that *language abilities* involved in academic critical incidents are highly associated with 45 quotations. Lack of language proficiency and impacting writing assignments factors are higher factors association with 27and 13 quotations, respectively. Development based on content analysis from the interviews, different factors identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants manifest as follow.

In our study, participants reported that they encountered language barriers. They don't understand technical jargon which made their progress quite slow, and they couldn't understand anything advisor said since they didn't know any Spanish or Catalan which was rather frustrating.

One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

When I first arrived I couldn't understand anything my advisor said for one thing, English is his fourth language, since he speaks Spanish, Catalan, French, and English. Neither my advisor nor I are from target language countries. I bring a Chinese accent to my English which results in Chinglish; while my advisor

brings a Spanish accent which makes him rather difficult to understand. Our communication was often limited to writing notes or using Google Translate just to gain a basic understanding of one another.[1:72][8][2]

The contents of the story suggests that Chinese students encountered difficulties with language barriers and lack of effective communication when they studied, so language abilities was found as a big challenge for participants in the academic dimension from above.

Some of story lines linked to the situation of *impact that language can have on writing assignments*. Some participants reported that they never used their second language to write anything outside of English class, especially for writing something of an academic nature. They didn't know how to write, how to start writing, what to write, or what topics to write, and the most difficult part was particularly the research plan. One participant shared his experience as follows:

In China I almost never used my second language to write anything outside of English class so my foundation was not very good, especially for writing something anything of an academic nature. [1:73][9]

Another participant shared her experience as follows:

The most difficult part for me in writing is particularly the research plan. It is the most challenging part for me. [4:28][12].

The results indicated that difficulties in academic writing was found to be big challenge for participants. On one hand, in terms of results of students' language skills, and on the other hand, western views of academic writing were different. Chinese students were accustomed to indirect writing styles and unaccustomed to analyzing the strengths and weakness of an argument from collectivism view. It is highlighted in the contents of the stories that language can impact writing assignments as a significant challenge that they face in their study.

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[2] [N1：N2][N3]: The first number (N1) refers to the primary document, which in case is the transcript of each student, the second number (N2) is the number of order, and the last number (N3) is the paragraph in which the appointment is located.

Moreover, international students at various situations identified language skills related to aspects other than writing. Participants also mentioned such as lack of language proficiency for asking questions and understanding lectures issues. All the participants express that they didn't understand well even after reading English materials several times, because it is in their second language. They reported that reading in their second language made it difficult for them to understand the content and also made it slower to read. Aside, the advisor and colleagues they communicated with have really strong accents, fast speed and different vocabulary usage. In addition, they didn't know what to say, how to express themselves, and were afraid to ask questions. One participant shared his experience linked to his lack of language proficiency situation as follows:

In reading English materials, because it is in the second language it made me difficult and slow to read. [3:35][7].

The advisor and my colleagues have really strong accents and they communicate really fast and that their vocabulary usage is not the same [4:62] [10].

Moreover, some of story lines linked to the student's abilities to ask the questions and understanding lecture, the participant states that

I was scared to say anything because I worried that my spoken grammar would be wrong and people would laugh at me. [1:7][10]

The entire class is in English, with the addition of the various instructors' accents, I can only understand 10-20%, which is really discouraging.[2:2][9]".

The results illustrated that difficulties in understanding or misunderstanding, difficulties in understanding the lecture, difficulties in communication and fear of asking questions were found as challenge for participants, these appeared to be in term of vocabulary, language speed, students' language skills, face value, and the elements of power distance and teacher's authority from Confucian-heritage, as well as indirect communication styles from collectivism concept. These situations related to language abilities were influencing Chinese students coping, ability. However, the data highlighted in the contents of the story suggests that the more difficulties impact writing assignments than other aspects listed above.

3.1.2.2 Teacher and teaching relationship

Aside, teacher and teaching relationship is another factor involved in academic dimension. The factor of *teacher and teaching relationship* is based on the result from questionnaires, and the results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative analysis, taken from the questionnaire data. It shows that the factors of teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents have a higher frequency with 32 mentions from 8 students (See Table 8).

Table 8 Frequency of mention categories: Teacher and teaching relationship

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
Difference on how to interact.	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	16
Differences in expectation between students and teachers	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	2	9
Negotiation of meaning, task	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	7
Total codes	3	6	3	4	3	4	4	5	32

Note: S: student; n=8

We identified three situations in *teacher and teaching relationship* in this study: differences on how to interact, differences in expectations between students and teachers, and negotiation of meaning, tasks. Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis from networks constructed by Atlas.ti 6.2 was conducted to examine the factors involved in academic critical incidents related with teacher and teaching relationship.
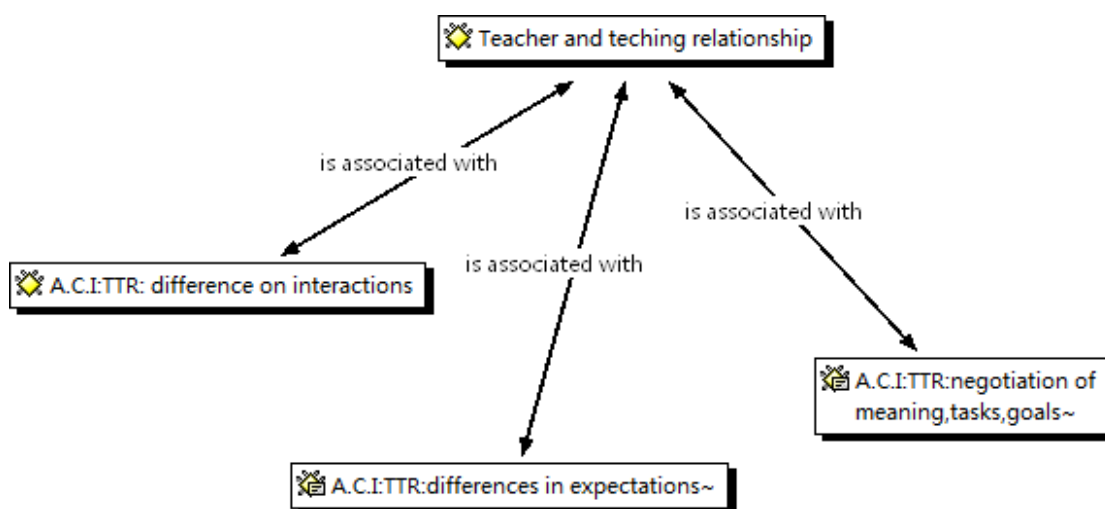

Figure 4 Factor involved in academic dimension related with teacher and teaching relationship

Figure 4 shows that the *teacher and teaching relationship* is associated with factors

related to frequency of the participants' stories involved in academic dimension. The factor of the teacher and teaching relationship involved in academic dimension is summarized in Figure 4. The situation of difference on how to interact, differences in expectation between students and teachers, and negotiation of meaning, and task are higher associated with 16, 9 and 7 quotations respectively. How these different factors are identified in the quantitative analysis and reported by participants as show as follow.

Participants reported they were more worried how to interact with their advisor, how to relate to their advisor since they were unable to call him by their name. They didn't understand anything but were afraid to ask, one participant shared her experience as follows:

> As for calling on my advisor by name, at first I was afraid to, but I didn't know what to call him "Professor ____" or "Dr. ____" or "Department Chair____. [1:36][21]

The results indicated that addressing the teacher by name was thought of as rude behavior from perspective Chinese culture. Moreover, they were afraid to ask the questions, opting for passivity, since obeying the teacher and reticence were indications of respect for the teacher from Confucian-heritage culture. It is highlighted in the contents of the story that Chinese students had encountered challenges in *teacher and teaching relationship* critical incidents that they have to cope with in academic dimension.

In addition to this, some of the stories lines are linked to the differences about how to interact. Regarding differences on how to interact, one participants shared their experience as follows:

> I didn't understand what he was saying and I was afraid to ask. I just kept nodding my head. My advisor said "If you don't understand something you should ask right away. Don't just keep nodding your head." He said it so directly, so clearly, I felt a little awkward. It was too direct. "I felt I had lost face and was quite gloomy about it all. [1:88][21]"

It is illustrated how Chinese students struggle with the differences in *how to interact*. In one hand, the gaps of miscommunication between Chinese students and their tutors

were in terms of students' language proficiency, and on the another hand, they were about culture issues on the surface. In particular, the elements of power distance and authority or rank are predominant in Confucian- heritage students, teacher the teacher is seen as to a stern parent, i.e. with attention, fear and silence. Naturally, cultures impact student's perceptions of interactions with their tutors. Moreover, Chinese students were respectful with teacher, respectful with teaching, respectful of age and maintain face-saving interactions between teachers and students. All of this highlighted how such interactions pose a significant challenge and very important issue which they faced in their study in new academic environment.

Moreover, some of the story lines are linked to situations of *differences in expectations between students and teachers*, and *negotiation of meaning, task and goals.*

All the participants express that the advisor are very difference in China and in Barcelona, participants reported that if it took too long to arrive at the main point, the advisor would become rather anxious. Then, they worried that they wouldn't be able to catch up and advisor would be upset. They were also afraid that they wouldn't do a good job and the advisor wouldn't contact them. The advisor told them if they didn't understand something they should ask right away, rather than just sitting there and nodding their head. Otherwise the advisor wouldn't know what students didn't understand and communication wouldn't be effective. They also mentioned that the advisor was not concerned with difficulties in their live. They looked forward to getting the title for their research from their advisor but then the advisor asked them to choose this by themselves. They never disagreed with their advisor and because of their high respect for teachers, they generally follow the advisor's ideas. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> I was worried that I wouldn't be able to catch up and my advisor would be upset. I can even distinguish the sound of my advisors footsteps since he needed to walk past my office every day and would always ask how things were going. I felt so much pressure. [3:55][22]

Another participant shared her experience as follows:

> In China, China's education culture which places high respect on teacher and the
> academy, we generally follow our advisor's ideas. [4:51][40]

The results illustrated that this is reflected of a relatively hierarchical structure, especially since relationships between teachers and students in China are often formal and distant. Fear and silence are normal, and students do not question teachers, or challenge their judgments the teacher's authority was absolute and cannot be challenged. Chinese students were also accustomed to indirect communication styles from their collectivisms world view. Consequently, Chinese students struggle with *teacher and teaching relationship*, these situations of teacher and teaching relationship influenced Chinese student's ability to cope. However, the data highlighted in the contents of the stories above suggests that the differences in how to interact were more challenging.

3.1.2.3 New education system

Regarding the factor of *new educational system*, we observed several critical incidents. The results from the interviews confirmed the quantitative analysis. Data shows that the *new education systems* was specifically mentioned with 86 quotes by 8 students. (A summary is presented in Table 9)

Table 9 Frequency of mention categories: New education system

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
Conflicts concerning the nature of communication	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
Embarrassed at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thoughts	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	1	9
Lack of academic research and independent research	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	16
Norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task	10	12	7	5	6	4	6	5	55
Unique nature of culture	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total codes	16	16	9	10	9	8	10	8	86

Note: S: student; n=8

We identified five relevant situations related to *new educational system* " norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought", "unique nature of culture' and "conflicts concerning the nature of communication". Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis of networks constructed by Atlas.ti 6.2 was conducted to examine the factors involved in academic critical incidents related to *the new education system.* Figure 5 shows the frequency of the quotations related to each of the situations involved in critical incidents in academic dimension.
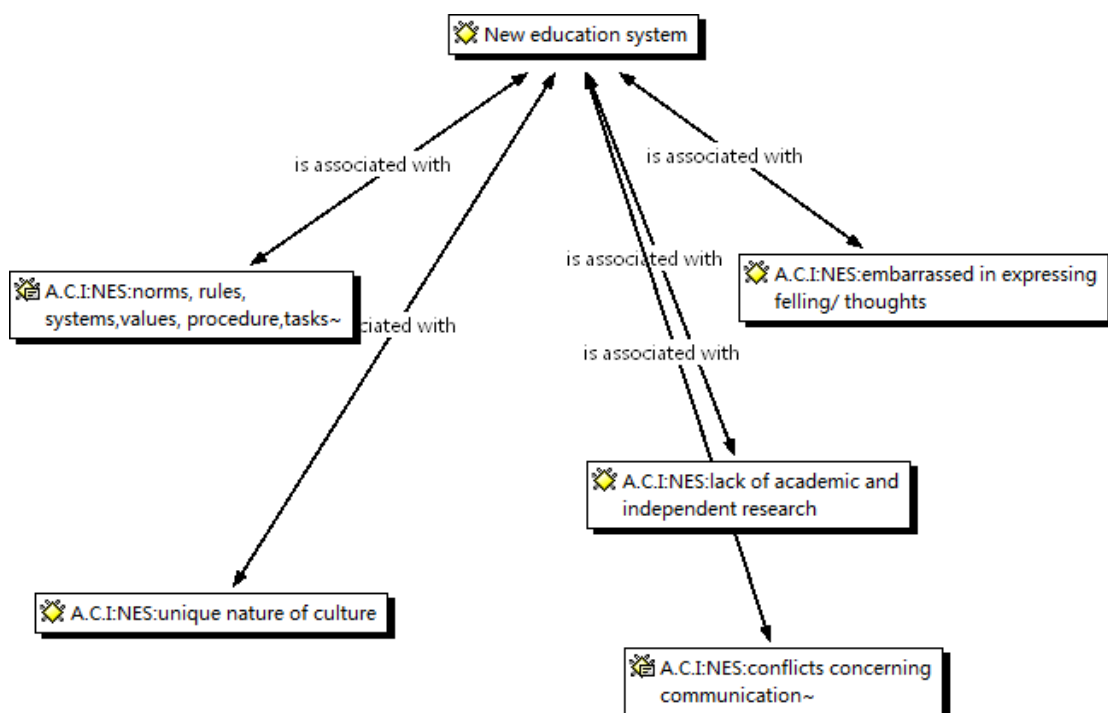

Figure 5 Factor involved in academic dimension related with new education system

The factor of *the new education system* involved in academic dimension based on the summary presented in Figure 5, shows that the factor of new education system involved in academic dimension is most highly associated with 86 quotations. The situation of "differences on norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task" and "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment during presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought" are highly associated with 55, 16 and 9 quotations respectively for 8 students. The situations of "unique nature of culture" and "conflicts concerning the nature of communication" are less associated

with 2 and 4 quotations respectively. From the content analysis of the interviews, an analysis of how different factors identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants was developed as follow.

Participants reported that they struggled with new education systems, that it was quite perplexing because they couldn't find anyone to help them during their use of software. They also had no clue about which articles they wanted, so it was difficult as they struggled to find resources. Because there is a much stronger emphasis here on one's independent study ability, which is rather weak in China, a large number of documents are not managed, and they don't know how to build own documents system. With the additional challenge of the language barrier, looking for documents was quirt difficult. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> The challenge to produce paper in the humanities which have some influence and impact is quite high. This is not only related to language, but also differences in my way of thinking.[1:47][38]

Another participant shared her experiences:

> In my survey I needed to use MAXQDA but I felt lost because I didn't know how, no one taught it, and I couldn't find anyone to help me. It was quite perplexing [1:83][30]

The results indicated that they struggled with the new western educational systems, because in areas such as knowledge, western academic thinking is a minority perspectives in China. Chinese students were accustomed to indirect styles and unaccustomed to analyzing the strengths and weakness of an argument. They also encountered the barriers of western culture and language when they studied, and new education critical incidents were found to be factors influencing participants, that they had to cope with in academic dimension

Some of the following story lines are linked to the situation of lack of academic research and independent research in our study. One of participants shared their experience as follows:

> At first I was at my wits' end. Each day felt like a year as I struggled to find

resources. Plus I didn't know what software to use for the paper or what the requirements for the paper even were. **[2:45][38]**

Another participants shared his experience:

Here there is a much stronger emphasis on one's independent study ability, which is rather weak in China. I need to learn so much on my own. I'm rather worried about my time, how to plan it and whether or not I've used it efficiently [3:53][31].

The results indicated that they struggle with academic research and independent research. On the one hand, students often resorted to over-generalizations about culture which have a surface appeal. In term of the relationship between students and teachers in China, it is to "jiao shu yu ren", which is translated as "bringing up youth to be social". The relationship between students and teachers is not only transferring information, but also, as an educator, the teacher prepares the student for all aspects of life, especially focusing on moral education. Consequently, students are used to seeking help from a teacher at school. On the other hand because of their respect for teachers and towards teaching, students generally follow the advisor's ideas. Students put more emphasis on getting great learning support from their teachers and advisers, thus, student's felt a greater need for adviser feedback and validation than other students from other country. Moreover, they preferred group work rather than individual work. Finally, specific difference exist between the teaching and learning of West and in Asia. In China, more emphasize is placed on teacher-centered instruction. However, in Spain there is a much stronger emphasis on one's ability to study independently. The data highlighted in the contents of the story suggests that the factor of *lack of academic research and independent research* is a more challenge issue for them.

Some critical incidents are linked with "differences on norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "embarrassment during presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought", "unique nature of culture and conflicts the nature of culture" Participants reported that the form of writing English and Chinese are different. The advisors here have a different role from those in China, here they only serve as guide,

unlike China, where they manage everything. If the advisors would tell the students that completing their studies is their business, they felt quite lost. In China, there are head teacher, tutors, and helpful classmates, but here everything depends on the students themselves. The software used here is different from that used in China. In China's education culture, which places high respect on teacher and academy, each instructor's personality, pedagogy, evaluation methods, expectations and approaches were different and their exams were also different. Here the exams are more tests of holistic ability.

One of participants shared their experience as follows:

> The advisor only gives general direction and won't tell you how to complete each step, so I felt quite lost. [1:31][29]

> Advisors here have a different role from those in China. Here they only serve as guides, unlike China, where they manage everything. Here they will not tell students a lot of specifics, but rather ask us to learn on our own. [2:20][20]

This reflects student's greater need for advisor feedback and validation than other students from other country, because they respect teacher and teaching value, generally follow the advisor's ideas. Chinese students place more emphasis on getting great learning support from teacher and advisers. Moreover, the western model of teaching and learning emphasize deep learning through discussion, whereas, Asian instruction is more didactic in nature and more emphasizes memorization. The data from the story suggests that these situations relate to the new educational systems influence Chinese students ability to cope. However, the data highlighted in the contents of the story suggests that students were more challenge in lack of academic research and independent research situation.

Summary of the factors of language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, and new educational system involved in academic critical incidents. Figures 6 displays that factors of language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, and new education system involved in academic critical incidents.
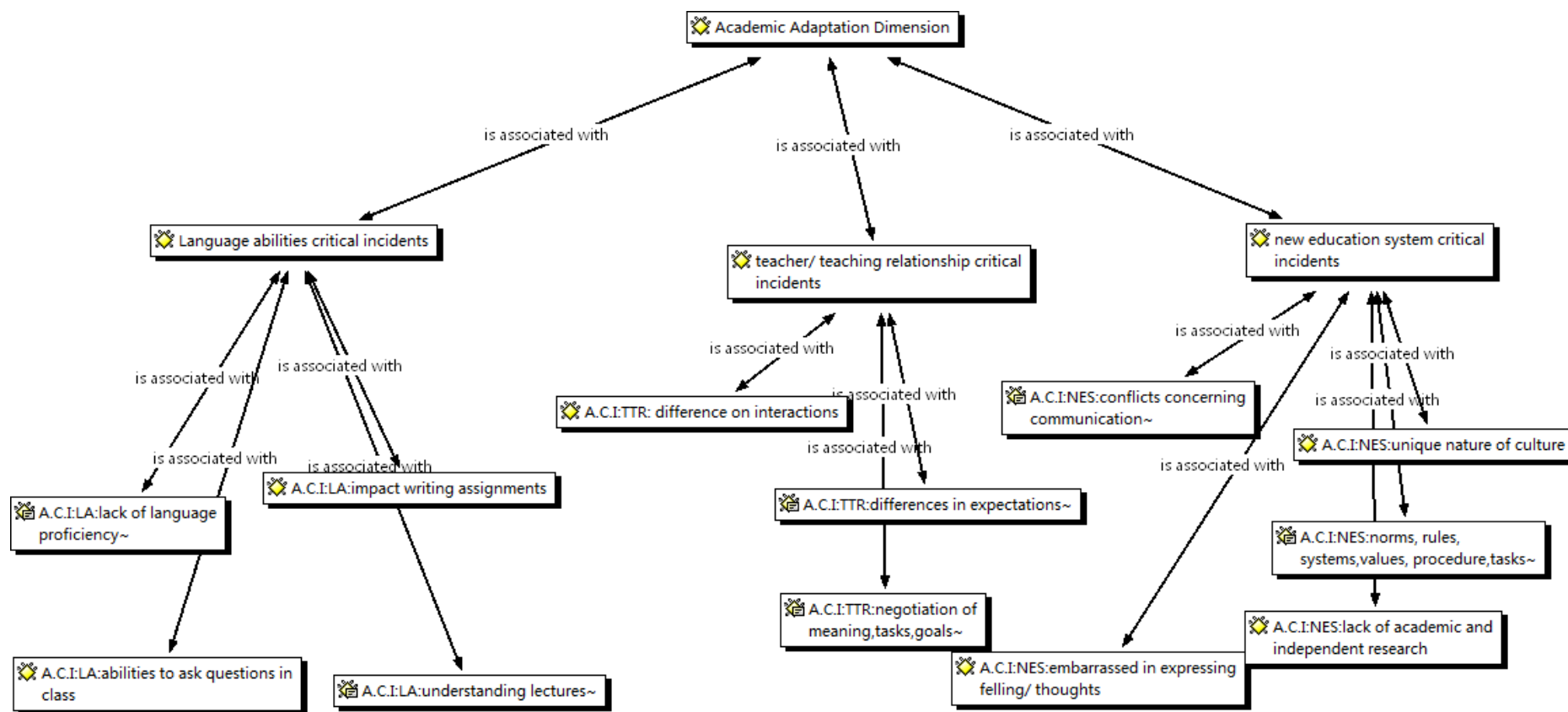
Figure 6 Factors involved in academic dimension

As shown in Figure 6, the contents of the story suggest the relationship of three factors involved in academic dimension. This indicates that the factors of *language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, and new academic systems* were involved in the academic dimension and influenced their ability to cope with their studies.

In Figure 6, the critical incidents concerned participants language abilities relate to academic dimension. Meanwhile, the figure also shows that language ability critical incidents relate to four situations. It is indicated that participates were influenced in language abilities, especially in language impact on writing assignments, understanding lectures, abilities to ask questions in class, and lack of language proficiency. The contents of the stories suggest that of these four challenging study situations related to *language ability*, the impact that language had on their writing assignments was the most significant. The results indicated that language skills, indirect writing styles from collectivistic worldview, face value, and the elements of power distance and teacher's authority of Confucian-heritage, influenced their ability to cope with these four situations. In short, the elements of language skills, culture of Confucian- heritage and teacher and teaching relationship influenced their ability to cope with these four situation of Language abilities critical incidents.

However, the contents of stories of the participants regarding the impact of other two critical incidents related to teacher and teaching relationship and new education system, also reveal that these critical incidents had a significant influence on their ability to cope with the academic dimension.

Thus, in the teacher and teaching relationship, the factors of teacher and teaching relationship involved in academic dimension from result. At the same time, the Figure also shows that teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents relate to three situations: *differences on how to interact; differences in expectations between students and teachers; and negotiation of meaning, tasks.* These three situations of teacher and teaching relationship were challenges they faced in their study. However, the contents of the stories suggest that differences on *how to interact* was the most significant challenge. The results illustrated that this is reflective of relatively hierarchical structure, especially

relationships between teacher and students which were often formal and distant. Students responded in fear and silence, not questioning or challenging the teacher's judgments, and were accustomed to indirect communication styles from their collectivistic worldview and language skills problems. In short, the language skills, culture, teacher and teaching relationship, and new education system influenced their ability to cope with the three situations of teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents.

Finally, the result also reveal the conclusion of factors of new education systems involved in academic incidents. As shows in the Figure 7, that new education systems critical incidents relate to five situations. it is indicated participates were influenced by *new education systems*, especially, in the situations of "norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought", "unique nature of culture" and "conflicts the nature of communication" situations. However, the content of the stories suggests that the situation of *lack of academic research and independent research* was the most significant challenge. The results illustrated that reflect student's greater need for adviser feedback and validation because of their respect for teacher and teaching, and generally follow the advisor's ideas from cultural which have a main factor. Chinese students more emphasis on getting great learning support from teacher and adviser. Moreover, the western model of teaching and learning emphasizes deep learning through discussion, whereas Chinese students were accustomed to instruction which is more didactic in nature and emphasizes memorization and indirect writing styles. In short, language skills, culture, teacher and teaching relationship, and new education systems influenced their ability to cope with five situations of new education systems critical incidents.

In summary, the content of stories suggested the three factors of critical incidents relate to each other, and these factors are intertwined with each other and influenced Chinese student's ability to cope with the academic dimension described above.

3.1.3 Finding strategies from questionnaires

After inquiring about the strategies implemented to address the above challenges. It was found that students developed strategies to deal with the difficulties. The themes that emerged from the three strategies for coping prompts: *developing language skill; developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship; and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system.* The percentages for each item and the mean of responses related to each item are shown in Table10.

Table 10 Coping strategies in academic critical incidents

Strategies for coping academic critical incidents	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
developing language skills I usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan? (Item a1)	0	0	0	4 (20)	16(80)	4.8	.41
developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship I am able to identify similarities or differences between China and Barcelona educational systems, such as academic styles, teaching method and etc.(Item a3)	0	0	5(25)	10 (50)	5(25)	4.0	.72
developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system I usually feel I improved in my independence (include study and life).(Item a2)	0	0	2(10)	6 (30)	12(60)	4.5	.69

Note: five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree).

The mean of all respondents' strategies for academic critical incidents coping from questionnaires was between 4 and 4.8. This mean indicates a situation where students choose between agree and completely agree. In the strategies for academic critical incidents for coping strategies summarized in Table 10, it shows that most of participants agreed that they had strategies to cope with the academic critical incidents during their stay in UAB.

These results among the academic strategies for coping with critical incidents in Table 9, it shows highlights for coping, they were concerned with *developing language abilities* (item a1). (M=4.8, S.D=.41); 80% of the participants stated completely agree, and 20% chose agree. Students of the sample also agreed that *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with the host education system* (item a2) worked as a strategy to address critical incidents in the academic dimension (M = 4.5, SD = .68); 60% of completely agree, 30% agree). To a lesser extent, participants also showed agreement on the strategy concerned with a3, *Chinese students developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship* (item a3). This strategy was implemented with significant frequency (M = 4.0, SD = .72); 25% of the participants stated completely agree, and 50% chose to agree.

In summary, the results from the questionnaire illustrate that the strategy related to language abilities, strategy for *developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching*, and strategy for *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system*. These strategies were implemented to address the factors involved in critical incidents in the academic dimension. The results of the interviews submitted subsequently revealed some personal experiences in these respects.

3.1.4 Finding strategies from interview

The interview individually identified and developed experience that helped to illustrate how these strategies determines the critical incidents in academic dimension. From a qualitative point of view, this is the data of interest, as well as some stories reported by participants, to help create a better understanding of how the different stories

from individual experience were used to cope with the academic dimension. Within each one, a series of ideas expressed by participants are presented.

3.1.4.1 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing language skills

We identified three situations relation to *developing language skills*: language improvement; interactions with host nations; and need to adapt to the academic life.

Table 11 Frequency of mention categories: Developing language skills

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
Language improved	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	4	22
Interactions with host nationals	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	13
Need to adapt to the academic life.	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Total codes	5	6	4	4	5	3	7	5	40

Note: S: student; n=8

In the strategies used to cope with academic critical incidents, developing language skills are summarized in Table 11. It shows that developing language skills were more prominent, with 40 times mentioned coded for 8 students. The three situations related to *developing language skills*, the situation of language improvement, and interactions with host nationals are highly associated with 22 and 13 quotations respectively. The situation of need to adapt to the academic life is less associated with 5 quotations.

Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis of network by Atlas.ti 6.2 was conducted to examine the strategy used to cope with academic critical incidents related to developing language skills that influence their coping.

Figure 7 shows the strategies of *developing language skills* related to frequency of participants' stories use to cope with academic dimension.
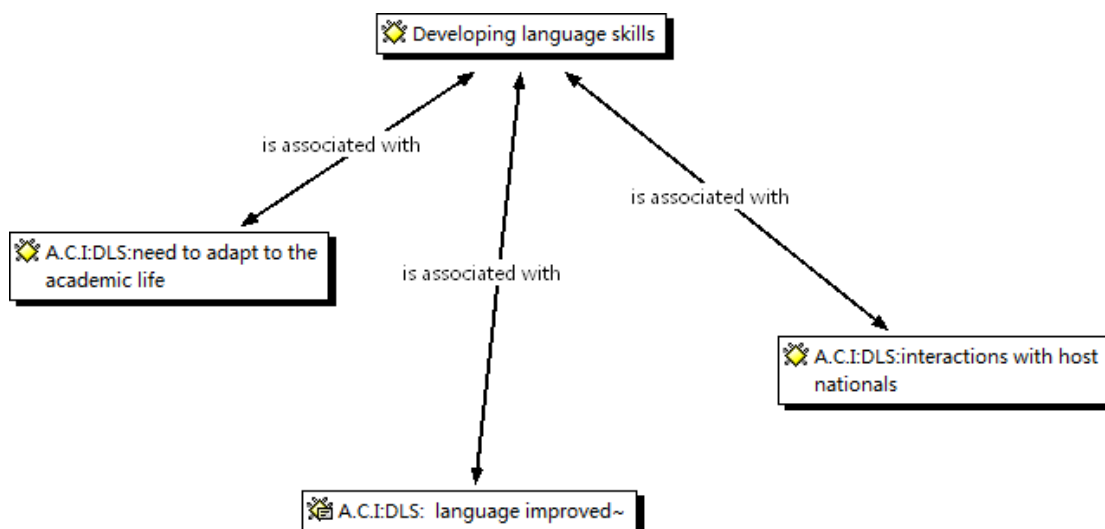
Figure 7the strategies of developing language skills use to cope academic dimension

The strategies of developing language skills use to cope with academic dimension is summarized in Figure 8. It shows that *the strategy of developing language skills* related to three situations, how different situations identified in the quantitative analysis and reported by participants is described as follow.

In our study, participants reported that they read many papers, writing books, and it was slow but steady accumulation. Through monthly reports to advisors, through writing a research plan, attending Spanish classes, writing classes, English thesis courses online, and imitating the paper. One of participants shared his experiences in language improved situation as follows:

Through forcing myself to read more I slowly improved as I read more and more. I could basically understand the organization of the papers and progressed from reading one paper a week to being able to read 3-5 papers per week. [2:68][13]

Another participant shared her experiences:

I attended Spanish classes and now I know how to speak a little of it with English. I can better understand the advisor and gradually familiar with their accents and words used here. [7:54][15]

The contents of the stories suggest that the language improvement of developing language ability was very important strategy for successful Chinese international student's adaptation. They developed language abilities through different aspects, such as reading more English paper, imitating the paper, attended Spanish classes, writing classes,

English thesis courses online etc. Language ability affected their academic achievement and adjustment while they studied at UAB. Therefore, language improvement of *developing language skills* were in integral strategies, which were very practical and important for them. The contents of the story suggest that it is a very significant strategy use for coping with and managing the factor of language abilities in academic dimension based on what has been mentioned above.

Some of story lines linked to the strategies of *developing interactions with host nations* and *need to adapt to the academic life*. Participants reported that they improve their language through communicating more with classmates and teachers, advisors, learning more about the local culture, making preparation prior preparation to meetings, becoming more familiar with their pronunciations as well as adapting to their accents and their vocabulary usage after attending Spanish classes. Through previewing the content of a class, students were slowly able to adjust to the instructions' methods, lecture style, accents and overall approach to class. One of participants shared his experiences in language improved situation as follows:

> After learning more about local cultures well as communication more with colleagues and advisor, I can now express myself reasonably well through prior preparation.[3:62][18]

The results indicated language improved through interact increased was found to be another practical strategy for participants. Effective communication in the language of the host country has implications for the academic achievement, and at same time, language improved through interact increased. On one hand, Chinese students' English skills were already improved through more teachers and colleagues interaction. On the other hand, learning the host culture affected their academics. Meanwhile, they deal with these challenges and adapted to the academic life when they studying at UAB. The contents of their stories suggest that these situations of developing language skills were integral strategies, which were very practical and important for them, however, the data highlighted in the contents of the story suggests that language improvement was more significant based on the result from above.

3.1.4.2 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship

Developing mutual understanding through various channels between teachers and teaching relationship was another strategies use to cope in academic dimension. This strategies are summarized in Table12. It shows that this strategy had a higher frequency with 37 mentions from 8 students.

Table 12 Frequency of mention categories: Developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total Codes
Different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona.	3	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	14
Understand became engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations	5	5	2	3	2	2	1	3	23
Total codes	8	7	3	5	3	3	4	4	37

Note: S: student; n=8

We identifies two situations related to strategies of *developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship*: understand how to become engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles, and expectations different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona. Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis was conducted to examine whether or not the strategies of teacher ad teaching relationship were used to cope with the academic dimension (see figure.8)

Figure 8 shows the strategies of developing mutual understanding related with frequency of participants' stories use to cope with.
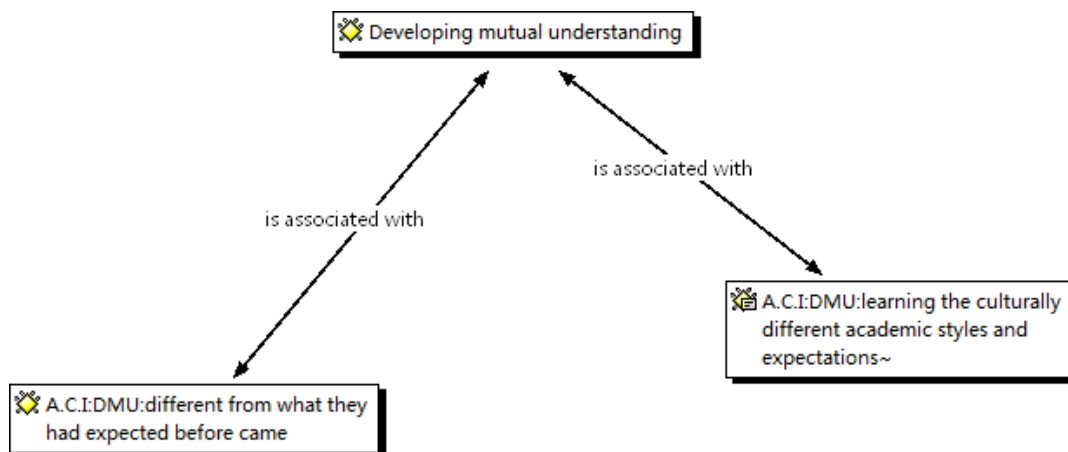
Figure 8 the strategies of developing mutual understanding use to cope academic dimension

The strategies of developing a mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship is summarized in Figure 8, and it shows that the strategy is highly associated with 37 quotations. Two situations related to strategies of *developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship*, the situation of "understand becoming engaged in learning in the culturally different academic styles and expectations", and "different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona" are highly associated with 23 and 14 quotations respectively. The different strategies identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants are described as follow.

Participants reported that "when in Rome," they "do as the Roman do"; calling their advisor by name and asking or e-mailing questions directly. By using direct communication that way, students became clear about the advisors' style after rubbing shoulders with them, having honest discussion about the issue. They came to understand that the advisor paid special attention to them, as well as coming to understand the education culture. Along with this understand that the relationship between students and advisor is quite relaxed or equal, came the lessening of students' psychological fear of advisors, and the students acquired more space because of self- directed learning. One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

My advisor held in-depth discussions with me and came to understand more about China's education culture which places high respect on teachers and the academy. He encouraged me "If you don't understand just ask me directly. You

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don't need to keep nodding your head. If you do I won't know how much you understand." I slowly adapted to this approach, and later, if I had a problem, I would send my advisor an email or ask him directly. [2:26][25]

Another participant shared her experiences:

He said that if I had any problems I could call him up at any time and that the purpose of our chats was to solve problems. He encouraged me to ask questions and interrupt him at any time during our talks so that we could solve the problems. I gradually noticed that my advisor paid special attention to me. He would often ask "How's it going? How is your work today?" This was not because he was afraid that I was lazy and wouldn't study, but rather that he was concerned to know if I was adjusting well to the work here and able to organize my time effectively. [3:57][25]

The results illustrated that student developed understanding of, and became engaged in learning, the culturally different academic styles and expectations at UAB. They also developed in their understanding of how Chinese cultural conditioning was influencing them and how some values of their own culture may cause problems in the host culture. Chinese students developed understanding of the relationships between teacher and students, as well as the concept of cultural difference, and gained a knowledge of the host country and culture, especially education culture differences between Western and Chinese. In this way, Chinese students made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment. It should be highlighted that the coping strategies were very practical and important for them, for coping with the factor of teacher and teaching relationship in the academic dimension based on the above.

In addition to this, some of story lines are linked to the "different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona factor". Participants reported that upon discovering that the relationship and position of students is different here than it is in China, the learning atmosphere felt much more relaxed at UAB. The advisors encourage students to try a different methods to resolve the problems and always smiles and respect everyone's thoughts, which fell motivation.

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One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

I know that in each meeting my advisor likes to get to the main points directly. Our discussions are also quite unlike those between advisors and students in China. There's no need to beat around the bush and make the advisor guess. Instead we're quite direct, simple and clear. [2:30][26]

Another participant shared her experiences:

I slowly find that the teachers and students here respect everyone's thought. [7:68][55]

The results illustrated that student: developed understanding of what different relationship between teachers and students from China and Barcelona; developed understanding of host communication styles from Western culture; developed understanding of the educational and cultural difference are between Western and Chinese culture. As students became less shy, fearful, passive and silence, they made progress in adaptation. It should be highlight that these situations of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship, strategies and coping efforts were used to manage students' issues related to teacher and teaching relationship. However, comparing the contents of the story and the figures from the interview results seems to indicate that the interview results place more significant on "understanding how to become engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations".

3.1.4.3 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host educational system

Developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system was another strategy. We identifies two situations related to developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system: "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help", and "new learning and loss of old habits or "push and pull", in losing, and gaining self-renewal" in academic dimension.

Table 13 Frequency of mention categories: developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system

Code categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
The willingness to change is imperative to learn how to be independent and familiar with host education system without family members and close friends around to help	7	5	2	9	4	7	6	4	44
New learning and loss of old habits or "push and pull", in losing, and gaining self-renewal.	1	6	3	3	4	1	2	0	20
Total codes	8	11	5	12	8	8	8	4	64

Note: S: student; n=8

The strategies of developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system are presented in Table13. It shows that this strategy is the most frequent with 64 mentions from 8 students.

Based on what has been mentioned above, an analysis was conducted to examine whether the strategies of *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system* was used to cope with academic dimension.

Figure 9 shows the strategies of developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system related with frequency of participants' stories use to cope with the academic dimension
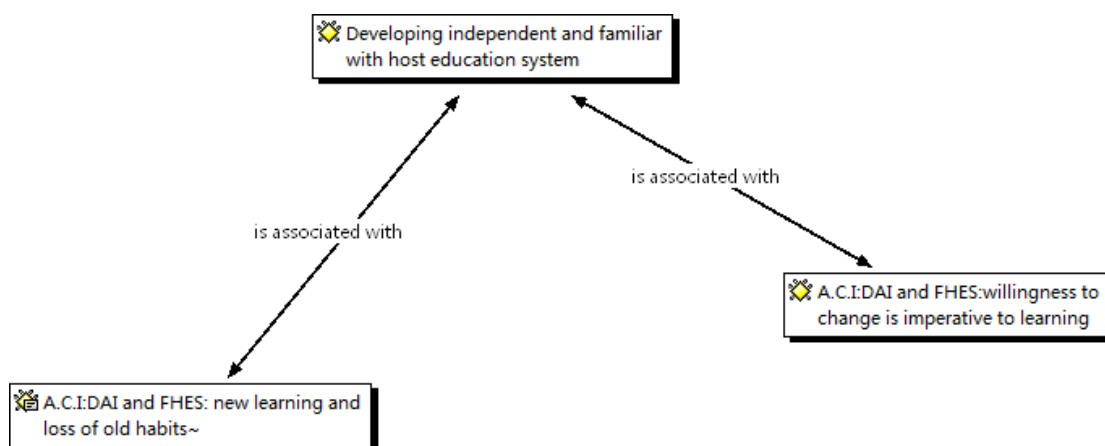

Figure 9 Strategies of developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system use to cope academic dimension

The strategies of *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system* are summarized in Figure 9. It shows which strategies are associated more with 64 quotations for two situation: *"the willingness to change are imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with host education system without family members and close friends around to help"*, and *"new learning and lose old habits or "push and pull", in losing, and gaining self-renewal"* are highly associated with 44 and 20 quotations respectively. The different strategies identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants are described as follow.

Participants reported that they created a blog from their web searches and reading as a way to collect all of the useful materials in one place. By using software to analyze and learn themselves, students were able to organize their study and free time. By studying Spanish, and finding some books online, students progressed from knowing nothing at the beginning to learning and understanding how to use and imitating the model of others to building databases, and learn new software. By improving their English and working on their academic writing skills, students learned to resolve their problems, mainly by searching for help on the internet. As they slowly read through English paper, they began to feel that the key to learning was to develop an awareness of which questions were really important. Engaging in the process of first proposing a question, then answering the question and then explaining why they proposed this question helped students to learn how to think critically, and develop their exploratory capabilities from real life situation. Taking initiative and organizing their own time, learning to not be passive, but active in their learning were important adjustment for students. One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

> Slowly through this process I learned that I should do more thinking myself and learn how to do critical thinking. Every meeting I should have my own problems, ideas, and after having the idea I should discuss it with my advisor if it is suitable for me to do it so that our communications are more efficient. [7:59][25]

Another participant shared her experiences:

> What I have learned this year and what needs to be improved for the following work prospects became clearer. I will initiatively organize my own time and learn to not be passive, but active in learning. I'm more independent and active now. [7:64][36]

The results illustrated that student: developed understanding of host educational cultural; developed understanding of the western academic thinking and western models of teaching and learning; developed language skills; developed identifies to identify similarities or difference in communication patterns between collectivism and individualism worldview. Chinese students gained new knowledge, independent study was achieved, culture understand was extended, language proficiency was improved, and ultimately they made progress in adaptation. All of which highlight that their adaptation strategy was a very important issue for them based on what has been mentioned above.

In addition to some of story lines linked to *new learning and loss of old habits or "push and pull", in losing, and gaining self-renewal*. The participants reported that they slowly worked on using conjunctions more accurately and also focused on using more academic vocabulary, as well as learn that English writing doesn't require a lot of fancy style so they did not need to be afraid of make mistakes. They not afraid make mistakes. Losing face and being laugh by others in the process of speaking, they were able to find a good way to conduct closed-book exam and open-book exam, and at same time they were able to have own methods for choosing papers. By sharing advisor paper or relevant article, they were able to submit papers to a conference first, and were able to get confidence publish more important papers. By gaining some knowledge of local people's personalities and students were able to realize that advisors were not pushing them to hurry up or putting pressure on them. They were able to develop own practical abilities, where slowly their potential is triggered after through self-learn, free and more relaxing to ask questions made them not afraid asking questions, designing a time table, analyze what to do next manager the challenge organize time of living and study, there are no wrong thinking only different point of view from advisor mentioned let they not shy

anymore and not afraid of losing face, going to a Spanish website they could get a lot of information after knowing the Spanish, the life become much easier. One participant shared his experiences as follows:

> My language teacher said that there are no wrong thinking only different points of view and there are reason if something exists. So than communicating with the locals I'm not shy anymore and not afraid of losing face. I say what I want to say which I don't feel that tired and more simple. [7:67][55]

The results illustrated that Chinese students improved their language skills and identified similarities or difference between China and Barcelona communication patterns and educational culture. Chinese students gained new knowledge from the process of new learning. Through the loss of old habits or indistinct cultural values, such as face value, respect value and gaining self-renewal, they made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment. Through the loss of old habits or indistinct the cultural values, and gaining self-renewal, they adapted to new education environment. It should be highlighted that these situations of the coping strategies used to manage their issues related to new education systems, however, the contents of the story suggest that the figures from the interview results indicated that developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system was more significant.

3.1.4.4 Summary of strategies used to cope academic dimension

The results of the interview figures display that the strategies used to cope with academic dimension are associated with the strategies of developing language skills, developing mutual understandings through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, these strategies are based on the summary presented in figure 10
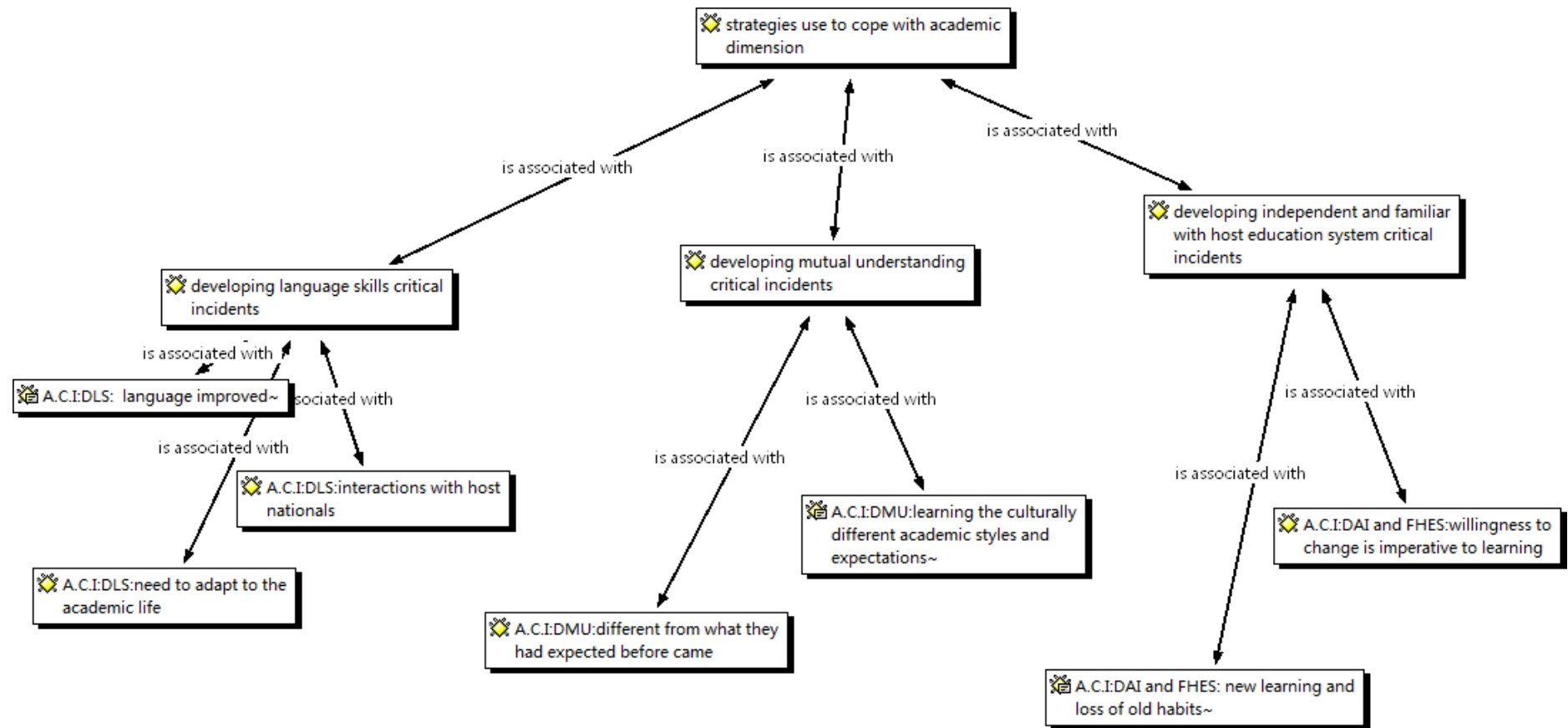
Figure 10 Strategies use to cope academic dimension

In the summary, The Figure 10 displays that strategies of developing language skills, developing mutual understandings through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, As shown in Figure 10, development based on content analysis from the interviews, are related to three strategies used to cope with academic dimension: *developing language skills*, *developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher* and *teaching relationship*, and *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education systems*

in Figure 10, the strategies of developing language skills critical incidents relate to relate to three situations in academic dimension, it is indicated the strategies used to cope in academic dimension, especially, in the situations of language improvement, interactions with host nations and adapt to the academic life, these three situations of developing language skills strategies used to cope with academic dimension when they stay in. The results indicated that effective communication by developed language ability, and language improved by interact increased, students developed language abilities through different aspects, (developed language skills and developed interact with teacher) and these strategies affect academic achievement and adjustment.

However, the contents of story of the participants regarding the two strategies of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, also reveal that these strategies used to cope with academic dimension.

Strategy of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship, the figure shows that this strategy relate to two situations. the results illustrated developed understanding of the concept of cultural difference and have a knowledge of the host country, especially education culture difference between Western and Chinese; developed understanding of culturally different academic styles and expectations; developed understanding of how Chinese cultural conditioning has influenced them and how some values of them own culture may cause problems in the host culture; developed understanding of what differences relationship

between teachers and students from China and Barcelona; developed understanding of host communication styles from individualism. Chinese students become not shy, fear, passive and silence, they made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment.

Finally, the result also revealed the conclusion that the strategy of *developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system*, as shows in the figure 4, this strategy relate to "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help", and "new learning and loss of old habits or push and pull, in losing, and gaining self-renewal" two situations. The results indicated developed understanding of the western academic thinking, west model of teaching and learning, developed self-reliance, developed host cultural understanding, developed language skills, developed identifies similarities or difference communication patterns between collectivism and individualism, at meantime educational culture between West and culture of Confucian- heritage, Chinese students gain new knowledge, therefor, independent study was achieved, culture understand was extended, language proficiency was improved, from the process of new learning, loss of old habits or indistinct the cultural values, and gaining self-renewal, they made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment.

In summary, the content of stories suggested three strategies related to each other, these strategies intertwined each other and used to cope in academic dimension from above.

3.2 Sociocultural critical incidents and factors involved in sociocultural dimension

Aside from this, sociocultural is another dimension influencing them. The data from the questionnaires and interviews shows the experiences of the participants' sociocultural adapting to UAB. Their experiences are analyzed in the first part of the data; the information covers which critical incidents do they have to cope with and which are the factors are involved in sociocultural dimension. The second part of data will illustrate how well they reconstructed the strategies used to cope in sociocultural dimension.

3.2.1 Finding factors from questionnaires

From a quantitative approach based on in the questionnaires, the themes that emerged from the three factors prompts, consequently, participants' academic adaptation experience and can be summarized into three factors: *involvement in extracurricular activities; friendship with host nationals; and cultural distance.* In what follows, we will elaborate on each factor.

Table 14 Frequency, percentage, mean and S.D: Summary of factors involved in sociocultural critical incidents

Factors involved	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
Involvement in Extracurricular activities							
I am not often participating activities with local people. Such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festivals with local friends.(Item 10)	0	1(5)	3(15)	11(55)	5(25)	4	.79
Friendship with host nationals							
It is a struggle to make friends or develop relationship with my classmates, local people, and colleagues.(Item 12)	1(5)	4(10)	4(20)	7(35)	4(20)	3.45	1.19
Cultural distance							
I am not clearing or understanding their cultural values, habits behavior and celebratation different festivals. Such as kissing the cheek when I greeting, especially when it was men and woman. (Item 13)	1(5)	2(10)	0	14 (70)	3(15)	3.8	1.01

Note: Font Questionnaire, five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree).

The over mean of all respondents on the items related to the factors involved in sociocultural dimension were between 4 and 3.45. This mean indicates a situation where participants choose between agree and completely agree in the sociocultural dimension. A summary is presented in Table 13.

The factor concerned participants' of *cultural distance* is a higher response with the two agreement levels (over 85% agree and completely agree) (M=3.8, S.D=1.01). However, the responses of the participants regarding the impact of the other two factors related to *involvement in extracurricular and friendship with host nationals*, also reveal that these have a significant influence on the critical incidents that involved in the sociocultural dimension. In the *involvement in extracurricular* factor, overall, the responses of the participants, in this factor, (over 80%) indicated agreement or total agreement. Specifically, as it is shown in the Table 14, participants noted increased stress from experience they found often not participated activities, such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festival with local friends (item a10) (M=4, S.D=.79). In addition, participants also showed two higher responses stating that they feel uncomfortable concerned *the friendship with host nationals* involved in sociocultural critical incidents. As show in the Table 14, the critical incidents that occur in this dimension, it reveal that students felt struggle to make friends or develop relationship with classmates, local people and colleagues (item 12) (M=3.45, S.D=1.19).

In summary, the results from the questionnaires showed the factors that most agree were the factor of *cultural distanc*e relating to not clearly understanding host cultural values, habits and behavior. Such as kissing the cheek when greeting, especially between men and woman. And also the factor of involvement in extracurricular link with not often participating activities with local people, such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festival with local friends, these two factors are most significant results involved in this dimension to deepen interview.

3.2.2 Finding results from interview

The factors of *involvement in extracurricular* and *cultural distance* involved in sociocultural dimension are higher responses with two agreement levels from questionnaires, the results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative analysis, taken from the questionnaire data, based summary is presented in Table 15. Two situations involved in sociocultural dimension are higher frequency with 8 participants for 28 times mentions, the "transition between cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress situation" of cultural distance critical incidents, and "the interaction with host nationals situation" of involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents. These two situations were higher associate with 19 and 9 quotations from Table 15 first.

Table 15 Frequency of mention categories: involvement in extracurricular and cultural distance

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
•Interaction with host nationals	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
•The transition between more distant cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress	5	3	4	1	1	1	3	1	19
Total codes	6	5	5	2	2	2	4	2	28

Note: S: student; n=8

The factors related to sociocultural adaptation dimension as shown in Table 15 presentation, development based on content analysis from the interviews, how different factors identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants manifest as follow.

3.2.2.1 Cultural distance

We identifies one situation related to *cultural distance*: "the transition between more distant cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress". In our study, participants reported that the locals' attitude towards life, their personality, and the distance between men and women, it's too rigid because everything is by the book, behavior and lack of empathy all make them rather confused and incomprehensible.

One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

> I did **not understand** the culture and custom here, so the custom of a kiss each other's cheek for greetings made me **uneasy** and I would unconsciously avoid it. Their attitude towards life, the way of life, sometimes I feel that working process is too slow here.[4:73][59]

It is highlighted in the contents of the story suggest that Chinese students had encountered new cultural phenomena and cultural differences between Barcelona and their home countries. Cultural distance was found big challenge for participants, they have to cope in sociocultural dimension from above.

The stories lines linked to the situation of *the transition between more distant cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress.* One participant shared his experience as follows:

> I feel that the locals' attitude towards life, their personality, the distance between men and women, their independence and lack of empathy all make me rather confused [3:67][42]

Another participant shared their experience as follows:

> In the beginning I was unsure of the culture and custom here. I was uncomfortable with the greeting style here where there are physical contacts between each other. I would think why would they do that? I was nervous and didn't know how to respond. I was a little shy and embarrassed. Their attitudes towards life and study is very different also. Their lifestyle is different and I sometimes feel that the work here is very slow.[5:32][48]

> They don't consider others' feelings and seem selfish and self-centered. Everything requires an appointment [2:57] [53]

The results illustrated that cultural distance made participants rather confused and embarrassed, which in term of the gap between the sociocultural systems of China and Spain, especially in encounter new cultural phenomena, new cultural norms and ways of behavior that differ from their own. These situations of cultural distance are significant challenge and influencing Chinese students of coping as shown from the above.

3.2.2.2 Involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents

Aside from this, *Involvement in extracurricular activities* is another factor involved in sociocultural dimension. We identified one situation related to *involvement in extracurricular activities*: interaction with host nationals. In our study, participants reported that they were more worried their study, language abilities, and written English papers. A lot of pressure is placed on them to learn new things, consequently they don't have time or energy to participate in any other activities.

One participant shared his experience as follows:

> At first I was under a lot of stress to write English papers and so I didn't have time or energy to participate in any activities. [2:73][47]

The highlighted portion in the contents of the story suggest that Chinese students had encountered reluctance with involvement in extracurricular activities. In terms of the difficult language barriers and difficult in understand the cultural and interaction with host students. Involvement in extracurricular activities was found challenge for participants. They have to cope in the sociocultural dimension from above.

The stories lines are linked to the situation of *the interaction with host nationals*. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> At first it was difficult because of the language and a lack of friends. There was also the stress of studying. I basically didn't participate in any activities. Because I had just arrived I didn't have any friends or people to help me, much less to do things with. [1:50] [43]

Another participants shared their experience as follows:

> It was hard at first because of the language barriers and trying to adapt to the new environment I was really busy with a lot of pressure so I barely went outside. [6:1] [50]

> It was hard at first, I was like blinded person touching an elephant. It was hard. I lived in Vila and generally I would study at home [8:29][38]

The highlighted contents of the story suggest that Chinese students had encountered challenges in interaction with host nationals due to language barriers, difficult in understand the cultural and a different western education system made them stress. In addition, host students had a disinterest in initiating friendship with them. Doctoral students here are one-on one modes, especially in thematic doctoral research from social science, they study by themselves at room. This is unlike China, where classes are conducted with the concept of close classmates and seniors from systems difference systems and section. Students will attend lectures that are on different subjects during different academic periods in one semester on campus, which means that the Chinese

students seldom get to meet their classmates who had chosen the same subject as they had. Also host students would leave immediately after the class was over and this made frequency of interaction minimal. It was quite perplexing because couldn't find anyone to help during involvement in difficult situation. The data highlighted in the contents of the story suggests the interaction with host nationals was found challenging for participates as show above.

In summary, Figures 11 displays that factors of *cultural distance critical incidents* and *involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents* involved in sociocultural dimension based on summary as presented.
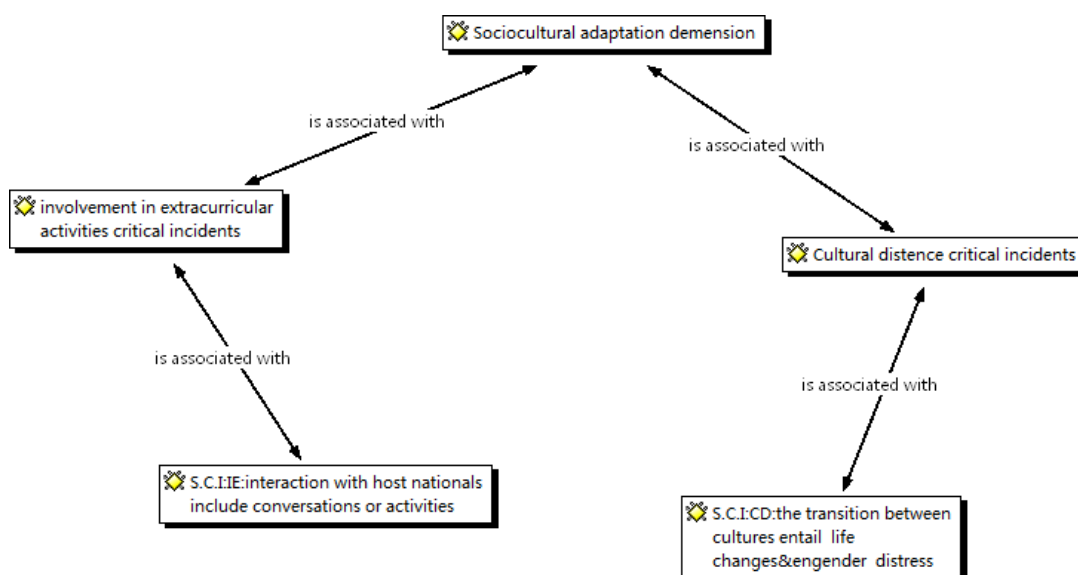
Figure 11 Critical incidents involved in sociocultural adaptation dimension

As shown in the Figure 11 presentation, development based on content analysis from the interviews suggest that: two factors relating to involvement in sociocultural dimension from interviews. This indicates a situation that the factors of *involvement in extracurricular activities* and *cultural distance* involved in sociocultural dimension influence their coping levels with their studies.

In Figure 11, the critical incidents concerned *involvement in extracurricular activities* related to sociocultural dimension, meanwhile, the figure also shows that *involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents* related to the situation of "interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities". It is indicated participants were influenced in involvement in extracurricular activities especially, in the situations of

interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities as challenges they face in their study. The results indicated that on the one hand, language barriers, difficult with understanding the cultural and different western education system made them stressed. On the other hand, difficult interactions with host students, in term of host students disinterested in initiating friendship with them. The data from story suggest that the situation of *interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities* related to extracurricular activities critical incidents, its influenced Chinese student's ability to cope.

However, the contents of story of the participants regarding the impact of other critical incidents related to *cultural distance* also reveal that these critical incidents have a significant influence on coping in the sociocultural dimension.

Thus, in the cultural distance, the factors of cultural distance critical incidents involved in sociocultural dimension from figure. Meanwhile, the figure also shows that cultural distance critical incidents relate to the *transition between cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress* situations. The results illustrated that there is gap between the sociocultural systems of China and Spain, especially in encountering new cultural phenomena, new cultural norms and ways of behavior that differ from their own. The situations illustrate the *cultural distance* critical incidents influenced Chinese students ability to cope.

In summary, the content of the stories suggested two factors of critical incidents relate to each other, these factors intertwined each other and influencing Chinese students ability to cope in sociocultural dimension from above.

3.2.3 Finding strategies from questionnaire

After inquiring about the strategies implemented to address the above challenges, it was found that students developed strategies to deal with difficulties. The theme that emerged from the three strategies for coping prompts: *developing culture knowledge of host cultural, developing involvement in extracurricular activities*, and *developing interact with host nationals*. The percentages for each items and the mean of responses related to each item are shown in Table 16.

Table 16 Coping strategies in sociocultural critical incidents

Strategies for sociocultural critical incidents coping	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
Developing involvement in extracurricular I fell it is helpful to understand host culture when I involvement in extracurricular activities, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc. (Item a4)	0	0	1(5)	9(45)	10(50)	4.45	0.60
Developing culture knowledge of host cultural I fell it is helpful if I had previous experience study abroad or general knowledge about Barcelona before studying in UAB.(Item a5)	0	1(5)	5(25)	9(45)	5(25)	3.90	0.85
Developing interact with host nationals I usually make local friends in different ways. Such as have meal, sport, travel and made language partner, which means you teach local students Chinese as well as they teach you Spanish, etc.(Item a 6)	0	2(10)	3(15)	10(50)	5(25)	3.90	0.91

Note: From Questionnaire, five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree)

The mean of all respondents the strategies for sociocultural dimension coping from questionnaires were between 4.45 and 3.9. This mean indicates a situation where students choose between agree and completely agree. In the strategies for sociocultural critical incidents for coping summarized in Table 16. It shows that most of participants agree that they had strategies cope with the sociocultural dimension during their stay at UAB.

These results among the sociocultural strategies for coping critical incidents in Table 16 highlights that, for coping, they were concerned with *developing involvement in extracurricular* (item a4) (*M*=4.45, *S.D*=.60); 50% of the participants stated completely agree, 45% chose agree.

Students of the sample also agree that *developing cultural knowledge of host cultural* (item a5) works as a strategy to address critical incidents in the sociocultural dimension (M = 3.9, SD = .85); (25% of completely agree, 45% agree and 5% disagree). To a lesser extent, participants also showed agreement on the strategy concerned with a6 Chinese students developing interact with host nationals (item a6). This strategy was implemented with significant frequency (M = 3.9, SD = .91); 25% of the participants stated completely agree, 50% were agree and 10% disagree).

In summary, the results from the questionnaire illustrate that the strategy related to *developing involvement in extracurricular activities*, *strategy of developing culture knowledge of host cultural*. These strategies were implemented to address the factors involved in critical incidents in the sociocultural dimension. The results of the interview submitted subsequently revealed some personal experiences in these respect.

3.2.4 Finding strategies from interview

The interview individually identified and developed experience that help to illustrate how these strategies determined the critical incidents in sociocultural dimension. The strategy of *developing involvement in extracurricular activities*, and strategy of *developing culture knowledge of host cultura*l are a higher response with two agreement levels from questionnaires. The results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative analysis taken from the questionnaire data. In the strategies used to cope with sociocultural dimension, the developing involvement in extracurricular activities and

developing cultural knowledge of host culture based summary is presented in Table 17. It shows that are protruded coding with 8 participants for 63 times mentioned. The "engagement in activities in public places" of developing involvement in extracurricular activities, and "perceived similarities and difference between two cultures situation" of developing cultural knowledge of host cultural, these situations are higher associated with 10 and 53 quotations.

Table 17 Frequency of mention categories: Developing involvement in extracurricular activities and developing culture knowledge of host cultural.

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
perceived similarities and difference between two cultures	2	4	16	11	4	8	5	3	53
engagement in activities in public places	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	10
Total codes	3	5	17	13	5	10	6	4	63

Note: S: student; n=8

The interview individually identified and developed experience that help illustrated how this determines the critical incidents in sociocultural dimension. From a qualitative point of view, this is the data of interest, as well as some stories reported by participants, to help create a better understanding of how the different stories from individual experience are used to cope with in sociocultural dimension. Within each one, a series of ideas expressed by participants are presented.

3.2.4.1 Strategies of sociocultural dimension adaptation: Developing cultural knowledge of host cultural

We identified the situations "perceived similarities and difference between two cultures" related to *developing cultural knowledge of host cultural*. In our study, participants emphasized many times manner of expressing, distinction between life and work, man and women distance, relationship, rules, direct and indirect communication, living style, collectivism of China and the individualism here, behavior and on different ways to distinguish between Chinese and Spanish cultures. One of participants shared his experiences in language improved situation as follows:

> As I got to know more local people I learned more about the collectivism of China and the individualism here [2:59][55]

Another participant shared her experiences:

> They think that work is work and life is life. The distinction between the two is quite clear. In China, our work is part of our life and it's difficult to separate them clearly. [3:12][50]
>
> Interaction with the locals for a certain amount of time I start to accept the custom of a kiss each other's cheek because it's the most common thing here, just like what was do in China where we shake hands for a greeting with someone[4:5][62]
>
> They are really independent and they like to have to have their own space, but we like to live with our parents. [5:34][53]

The contents of the story suggest that different social and cultural atmosphere influenced participants sociocultural adaptation, developed understanding new knowledge, developed understanding of customs and life style, developed understanding host customs, developed understanding the difference and similarity between China and Spain. After contact with local people, they gain new knowledge and understanding of the life style, values, norms and customs of host society, and they made progress in adaptation. The highlight strategies are very practical and important for them. It is used to cope with the factor of cultural distance critical incidents in sociocultural dimension based on what has been mentioned above.

3.2.4.2 Strategies of sociocultural dimension adaptation: Developing involvement in extracurricular activities

Aside from this, *developing involvement in extracurricular activities* is another strategies involved in sociocultural dimension. We identified the situation of "engagement in activities in public places" relation to developing involvement in extracurricular activities. In our study, participants reported they engagement in activities in public place such as participated in Chinese cultural festival, some parties and conferences, football games every week, go barbecuing, swimming, participated local friends weddings, birthday, go mountain climbing, hiking, traveling, interviewing

government officials and locals from different channel to have conversations and in participated in activities with host nationals. One of participants shared his experiences in engagement in activities in public places situation as follows:

> I participated in the Chinese Cultural Festival organized by the university. A few local or Spanish students were interested in Chinese calligraphy so I gave them Chinese names and wrote them using calligraphy. At the festival we made some Chinese food and wrapped some Chinese dumplings (jiaozi). All the Spanish students and the other international students said everything tasted good. I made a few friends as a result of this. [1:53][45]

Another participants shared their experiences:

> Sometimes I get to travel together with my colleagues and go barbecuing, swimming, and inviting them to birthdays. I would also be invited to their weddings and I made many local friends as well. [4:3][56]

> I would invite some friends that have similar tastes to my house for dinner. People all need communications. Hiking over the weekend and running to exercise [6:14][76]

> I had a few colleagues who had been to China for some conferences and were interested in China. They were really friendly and invited me to participate in some parties. [2:74][49]

The results indicated that they developed understanding the local culture by observing, developed their language proficiency as well as developed relationship with host people after engagement in various kind of activities in public places, such as cooking and eating with friends, traveling with friends, attending parties and cultural events, attending football game. The highlight the strategy is a very practical issue for them from based on what has been mentioned above.

Figures 12 display strategies of *developing involvement in extracurricular activities* and *developing culture knowledge of host cultural*, these strategies were based on the summary presented.
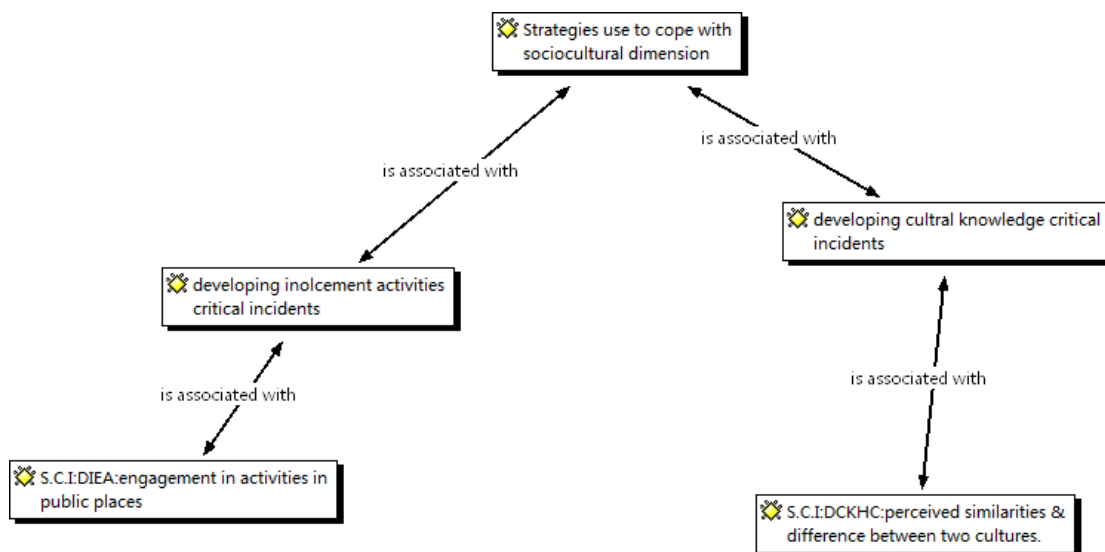
Figure 12 Strategies use to cope with sociocultural dimension

As shown in Figure 12 presentation, development based on content analysis from the interviews, all the contents of the story suggest two strategies used to cope with sociocultural dimension from interviews. This indicates a situation that the strategies of developing involvement in extracurricular activities and developing culture knowledge of host cultural used to cope with sociocultural dimension.

The strategies of developing culture knowledge of host cultural related to the situations perceived similarities and difference between two cultures, Indicated are the strategies used to cope in sociocultural dimension they stay in. The results indicated that developed understanding new knowledge, developed understanding of customs and life style, developed understanding host customs, developed understanding the difference and similarity between China and Spain after having contact with local people, gave them new knowledge and understanding of the life style, values, norms and customs of host society which helped them make progress in adaptation.

The result also indicated the strategy of *developing involvement in extracurricular activities*, as shows in the figure 13. This strategy relate to the situation of "engagement in activities in public places". The results indicated they developed understanding of the local culture by observing, developed their language proficiency as well as developed relationship with host people after engagement in various kind of activities in public places, such as cooking and eating with friends, traveling with friends, taking the parties

and cultural events, joined the football game. These things help make progress in adjusting to their new academic environment.

In summary, the content of stories suggested two strategies relate to each other. These strategies intertwined each other and used to cope in sociocultural dimension at UAB.

3.3 Psychological critical incidents and factors involved in psychological dimension

Moreover, the psychological dimension influenced their adaptation. The data from the questionnaires and interviews shows the experiences of the participants' psychological adapting to UAB. Their experience are analyzed in the first part of the data, the information covering which critical incidents they have to cope with and which are the factors involved in psychological dimension. The second part of data will illustrate how well they reconstructed the strategies use to cope in psychological dimension.

3.3.1 Finding factors from questionnaires

As we sew in the theoretical framework, several factors are involved in critical incidents. From a quantitative approach based in the questionnaires, the themes that emerged from the three factors prompts, participant's psychological adaptation experience can be summarized into three factors: *life change, personality and social support.* We found that the percentage shows the proportion of participants' responses that are represented by each items, and the mean of responses related to each item are shown in Table 18. In what follows, we will elaborate on each factor.

Table 18 Frequency, percentage, mean and S.D: Summary of factors involved in psychological critical incidents

Factors involved	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure(%)	Agree (%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
a. life change							
•I ever feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc.(Item a8)	0	3(15)	0	12(60)	5(25)	3.95	0.95
b. Personality							
•I ever feel discourage, helpless, loneness when I am in different situation. such as I fell homesick when I got sick(Item a11)	0	5(25)	1(5)	12(60)	2(10)	3.55	0.99
c. Social support							
•I don't know who can help me when I am in helpless. Such as health problem, I cannot finding right place to see doctor or counselling center when I got sick.(Item a14)	0	2(10)	2(10)	12(60)	4(20)	3.9	0.85

Note: Font Questionnaire, five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree).

The overall mean of all respondents on the items related to the factors involved in psychological dimension between 3.55 and 3.95 from questionnaires. This mean indicates a situation where participants choose between agree and completely agree in the psychological critical incidents, items based summary is presented in Table 18.

The factor concerned participants' *life change* is a higher response with two agreement levels (agree and completely agree) (M=3.95,S.D=0.95). However, the responses of the participants regarding the impact of other factors related to social support, it also reveal that this have a significant influence on the critical incidents that are involved in the psychological dimension. Overall, the responses of participants, in this factor, most participants (over 60%) indicated agreement or total agreement. Specifically, as it is shown in the Table 17, participants noted increased according to experiences from not knowing who can help them when they were in a helpless situation (M=3.90, S.D=0.85)

In addition, participants showed less agreement regarding the factor that they feel discourage, helpless, loneness when they were in difficult situation (M=3.55, S.D=0.99) of critical incidents in the psychological dimension.

In summary, Table 17 presents figure and results from the questionnaires that illustrate the factors that most agree was noted the factor of life change related with when they feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, and the factor of social support related to not knowing who can help them when they were in a helpless situation. These factors are most the significant results involved in this dimension to deepen interview.

3.3.2 Finding result from interview

As mentioned before, during the interviews some of the participants (n = 8) were asked about their personal experiences in the psychological dimensions studied. How different factors identified in the quantitative analysis in critical incidents reported by participants manifest as follow.

The factors of *life change* critical incidents and *social support critical incidents* involved in psychological dimension are higher associated with two agreement levels from questionnaire, the result of the interviews confirmed, and the quantitative analysis, taken from the questionnaire data, based summary is presented in Table 19.

Table 19 Frequency of mention categories: life change and social support (Table 4.24)

Codes Categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
•depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	13
•international students office need to provide receptive climate	4	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	15
Total codes	6	4	5	3	2	2	4	2	28

Note: S: student; n=8

The depression indicated difference in sociocultural adjustment situation of *life change critical incidents* and *international student's office need to provide receptive climate situation* of social support critical incidents are higher associated with 13 and 15 quotations in Table 19 presentation, development based on content analysis from the interviews, how different factors identified in the quantitative analysis reported by participants manifest as follow

3.3.2.1 Life change critical incidents

We identifies the situation of depression, indicated by difference in sociocultural adjustment relation to *life change critical incidents.* In our study, participants reported that because their environment changed, they felt lonely, depressed, helpless, homesick and pressure. One of participants shared his experiences as follows:

> At first I didn't have any friends and all my beloved classmates and family were not with me so I felt quite lonely and homesick.[1:96][61]

Highlighted in the contents of the story suggest that there were psychological adjustment influenced by life change. Psychological difficulties in Chinese students linked of life changes made them feel lonely, homesick and stress after entry into a new culture without familiarity environment at UAB. *Life change* was fond challenge for participants, they have to cope in psychological dimension from above.

The stories lines linked to the situation of the transition between more distant cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> I first came I couldn't cook. I was pretty incompetent so I worried about becoming sick. When I was discriminated against I felt that life was unjust. That is Chinese word "jiao tian tian bu ying, jiao di di bu ling" which means In heaven or on the earth, I can hardly find one to ask for help. [2:61][60]

Another participants shared their experience as follows:

> I felt really lonely. I couldn't cook and wasn't used to eating western food every day. I also wasn't skilled at organizing my own life. I really worried about getting sick. [3:27][71]
>
> I had not friends at first and my family is not around. The environment has changed and I felt really lonely, I don't know how to cook. I felt really uncomfortable with no sense of belonging and often cry alone in my dorm. [7:47][59]

The results illustrated that on the one hand, in term of cultural distance, life changes made participants psychological difficulties adjustment, On the other hand, more emphasis was on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence from Confucian-heritage culture, thus, they felt lonely, homesick, helpless, afraid sick and stressed without new social network after entry to a new culture. These situations of life change as significant challenge and influenced Chinese student's ability to cope from above.

3.3.2.2 Social support critical incidents

Aside for this, social support critical incidents is another factor involved in psychological dimension. We identifies the situation of *international student's office need to provide receptive climate* in relation to social support critical incidents. In our study, participants reported that difficulties in applying for NIR(resident card), the service of International Welcome Point(IWP) needs to improve, there was no manual to

guide them which was difficult, there wasn't an international hospital for international students, especially a challenge with language barriers, they couldn't speck Catalan and Spanish. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> I didn't even know where to get copies made or how to have them made (because the language in Catalan from copy machine). I could only ask for help from my advisor. [1:89][43]

Highlighted in the contents of the story suggest that psychological adjustment influenced by social support, in term of language barriers and cultural distance, made participants' psychological adjustment difficult, especially because they were eager to get help from social support after entry to a new culture. The contents of the story suggests the social support was found to be challenge for participates from above.

The stories lines linked to the situation of international students office need to provide receptive climate. One participant shared his experience as follows:

> The worst thing is doing NIR. Each year is a different policy. And the language barrier makes communication impossible. Their attitude is so bad. They're hosting foreign students but they don't even speak English. It's so unreasonable. [1:57][50]

Another participants shared their experience as follows:

> When I first arrived no one told me where the hospital was or what to do if I got sick or lost my passport or money or credit card. There was no student handbook. I couldn't speak Spanish and could only ask for help from IWP. It was really difficult [1:69][69]

> It's difficult to apply NIR, the service of IWP need improve, and there is not international hospital for international students. The people from public security bureau cannot speak English [2:64][68]

> I first came I didn't have any friends to tell me how to apply for NIR. I asked my local colleagues, but they don't need to go through this process so they didn't know either. I can't speak Spanish and when I inquired at the appropriate departments they would never explain the entire process so you could only learn a little and complete a little. [3:31][78]

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The contents of the story suggest that they felt discourage, helpless. On one hand, in term of language barriers and cultural distance, it made participants' psychological adjustment difficulties, and they felt discourage. On the other hand, their negative experience with international student's office, counselling centers, health services, and some public service such as police station for extension residents' card, it indicated that the campus needed to provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness of the needs of the Chinese international students from above.

In summary, Figures 13 display that factors of *life change critical incidents* and *social support critical incidents* involved in psychological dimension based summary is presented.
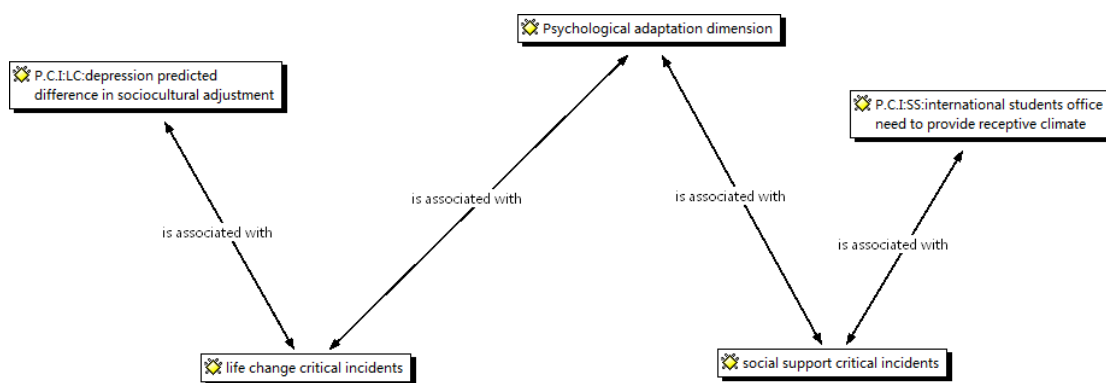
Figure 13 Critical incidents involved in sociocultural dimension

As shown in Figure 13 presentation, development based on content analysis from the interviews, all the contents of the story suggest two factors involved in psychological dimension from interviews. This indicates a situation that the factors of *life change critical incidents* and *social support critical incidents* involving in psychological dimension and influencing their coping abilities in their study.

In Figure 13, the critical incidents concerned *life change* relate to psychological dimension, meanwhile, the figure also shows that life change critical incidents relate to the situation of "depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment". It is indicated that participates were influenced in life change especially, in the situations of depression and predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment as challenges they face with their study. The results indicated that on the one hand, in term of cultural distance, life changes huge difference, these made participants have psychological difficulties with

adjustment. On the other hand, there was more emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence from Confucian-heritage culture, thus, they felt lonely, homesick, helpless, afraid sick and stress without social network after entry to a new culture. These challenges influenced them for coping.

The contents of stories of the participants regarding the impact of other critical incidents related to social support also reveal that this critical incidents have a significant factor influenced students coping abilities in the psychological dimension.

Thus, in the social support, the factors of social support critical incidents involved in psychological dimension from figure. Meanwhile, the figure also shows that social support critical incidents relate to "the international student's office need to provide receptive climate" situations. The results illustrated on one hand in term of language barriers and cultural distance, it made participants' psychological adjustment difficulties, they felt discourage. On the other hand, their negative experience with international student's office, counselling centers, health services, and some public service such as police station for extension residents' card, it indicated that the campus needed to provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness of the needs of the international students. The situations of social support critical incidents of Chinese students show how they are influenced regarding coping.

In summary, the content of stories suggested two factors of critical incidents relating to each other, these factors intertwined each other and influencing Chinese students with coping in psychological dimension from above.

3.3.3 Finding strategies from questionnaires

After inquiring about the strategies implemented to address the above challenges, it was found that students developed strategies to deal with difficulties. The themes that emerged from the three strategies for coping prompts: *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process*, *building new relationships and won the confidence and trust from others*, *developing social network*. The percentage for each items and the mean of responses related to each item are shown in Table 20.

Table 20 Coping strategies in psychological critical incidents

Strategies for coping psychological critical incidents	Completely Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree(%)	Completely Agree (%)	Mean	S.D
a. developing the abilities to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process •I fell enjoy studying in UAB because I understand the process of adaptation and understand the stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone. (Item a8)	0	1 (5)	1 (5)	8 (40)	10 (50)	4.35	0.81
b. building new relationships and won the confidence and trust from others •I fell I won the confidence and trust from teacher and our friends after I have built new social network. (Item a9)	0	2 (10)	0(0)	13(65)	5(25)	4.05	0.82
c. developing social network •I know where to seek help when I have problems. (Item a10)	1 (5)	0	3 (15)	13(65)	3 (15)	3.85	0.87

Note: Font Questionnaire, five-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, completely agree).

3.3.4 Finding strategies from questionnaires

The mean of all respondents' strategies for psychological dimension coping from questionnaires between 4.35 and 3.85 from questionnaires. This mean indicates a situation where students choose between agree and completely agree. In the strategies for psychological critical incidents coping, strategies based summarized in Table 20, it shows that most of participants agree that they had strategies to cope with the psychological critical incident during their stay at UAB.

These results among the psychological strategies for coping critical incidents, Table 20 shows highlights for coping, and it concerned developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process(item a8) (M=4.35,S.D=0.81, 50% of the participants stated completely agree, 40% choose agree). Students of the sample also agree that developing social network(item a 10), work as a strategy to address critical incidents in the psychological dimension (M=3.85, S.D.=0.87, 15% of the participants stated completely agree, 65% were agree, 15% were not sure, 5% were completely disagree. To a lesser extent, they also showed agreement on the strategy concerned building new relationships and won the confidence and trust from other (item a9) M= 4.05, S.D=0.82, 65% the participants stated agree, 25% were completely agree 10% were disagree),

In summary, the results from the questionnaire presented were that it illustrate the strategy related to *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* and *strategies for developing social network.* These strategies are the most significant results, and implemented to address the factors involved in critical incidents in the psychological dimension. The results of the interview submitted subsequently reveled some personal experience in this respect.

3.3.5 Finding strategies from interview

The interview individually identified and developed experience that help to illustrate how this strategies determines the critical incidents in psychological dimension. *The strategy of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* and *strategies of developing social network* are higher response with

two agreement levels from questionnaires. The results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative analysis taken from the questionnaire data. In the strategies used to cope with psychology dimension, the *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* and *strategies of developing social network* based summary is presented in Table 21. It shows that are protruded coding with 8 participants for 27 times mentioned. The psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes saturation of *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process*, and *inclusive attitude culture with cultural diversity* situation of developing social network are higher associated with quotations 14 and 13.

Table 21 Frequency of mention categories: developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process, developing social network

Codes categories	S:1	S:2	S:3	S:4	S:5	S:6	S:7	S:8	Total codes
•psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes	1	2	1	3	1	1	3	2	14
•inclusive attitude culture with cultural diversity	2	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	13
Total codes	3	3	4	6	2	2	4	3	27

Note: S: student; n=8

The interview individually identified and developed experience that help illustrated how this determines the critical incidents in psychological dimension. From a qualitative point of view, this is the data of interest, as well as some stories reported by participants, to help create a better understanding of how the different stories from individual experience were used to cope with psychological dimension. Within each one, a series of ideas expressed by participants are presented.

3.3.5.1 The strategies of psychological dimension adaptation: Developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process

We identified the situations of psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes related to "developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process". In our study, participants reported that facilitating their psychosocial adjustment through different exercises, learning local language, enjoying the cooking,

strengthen their heart and enjoying lonely life, meanwhile students also expressed they understand adjustment process slowly, they developing the abilities to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process. One of participants shared his experiences in language improved situation as follows:

> If I didn't know how to cook I'd use Skype to call home and ask for instructions or else search online. Later I learned how to cook quite well and even earned an online Chinese cooking certificate [1:101][63]

Another participant shared her experiences:

> We have to run during football even though is very tiring, but it is also very comfortable and good to activate my muscles. It helps me improve my skill in football and it also helps my body to relax. [4:19][56]
>
> but slowly I got used to it. Sometimes I can also enjoy my time alone because studying abroad and living here you may feel lonely all the time and most of the times I'm alone. [7:49][61]
>
> Most importantly I should strengthen my heart especially when I'm sick. I should encourage myself and be strong, telling myself everything will be fine. With a strong heart than you won't feel too lonely and you can face many difficulties in life. [7:50][61]
>
> I swim twice a week and fitness three times a week. If I can't cook something I search for the recipe online and teach myself. Gradually my health improved and the exercise helped my emotional health as well. [3:30][73]

It is indicated in the contents of the story suggest that on one hand, developed social interaction with host nationals , developed engagement meaningful social activities, they gain new knowledge, accept and comply with host norms, customs, reduce the stress and facilitate psychological adjustment. On the other hand, developed language skills, developed the abilities to be independent and developed understanding the intercultural adjustment process. Thus, they strengthen their heart and enjoying lonely life, they made the progress in adaptation. It is highlight the strategies very practical and important for them, it is used to cope with the factor of life change critical incidents in psychological dimension based on what has been mentioned above.

3.3.5.2 Strategies of psychological dimension adaptation: Developing social network

Aside from this, *developing social network critical incidents* was another strategies use to cope in psychological dimension. We identified the situation of "inclusive attitude culture with cultural diversity" relation to developing social network. In our study, participants reported they gradually developed their own social network, most problems could be solved by asking other Chinese friends, colleagues, landlord or rely on themselves and find their own way. One of participants shared his experiences

> I gradually developed my own social network. Most of the problems I encountered could be solved by asking other Chinese students or friends. Some problems I needed to rely on myself and find my own way. [1:100][71]

Another participants shared their experiences:

> Slowly I have established a network because there are common needs and experience. Most of the questions you could be asked to a Chinese student or friends [4:23][86]

> I can't speak Spanish or Catalan and police there cannot speak English, so asking a colleague who knows Spanish or Catalan to write me what I need to say in advance would prevent a run back and a good reference for next time. [4:24][86]

> Slowly developed my own social network because of common needs and experience you can ask questions to most of the Chinese students, friends, and landlords. [6:16][82]

The results indicated that they developed social network and solved problems in difficult situations by different ways. Set up new social network, it reduced the stress and homesick through interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence with people from same country, they made the progress in adaptation. It is highlight the strategy is a very practical issue for them from based on what has been mentioned above.

In summary, The Figures 14 display that *strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process*, and *strategies of developing social network*, these strategies were based on the summary presented.
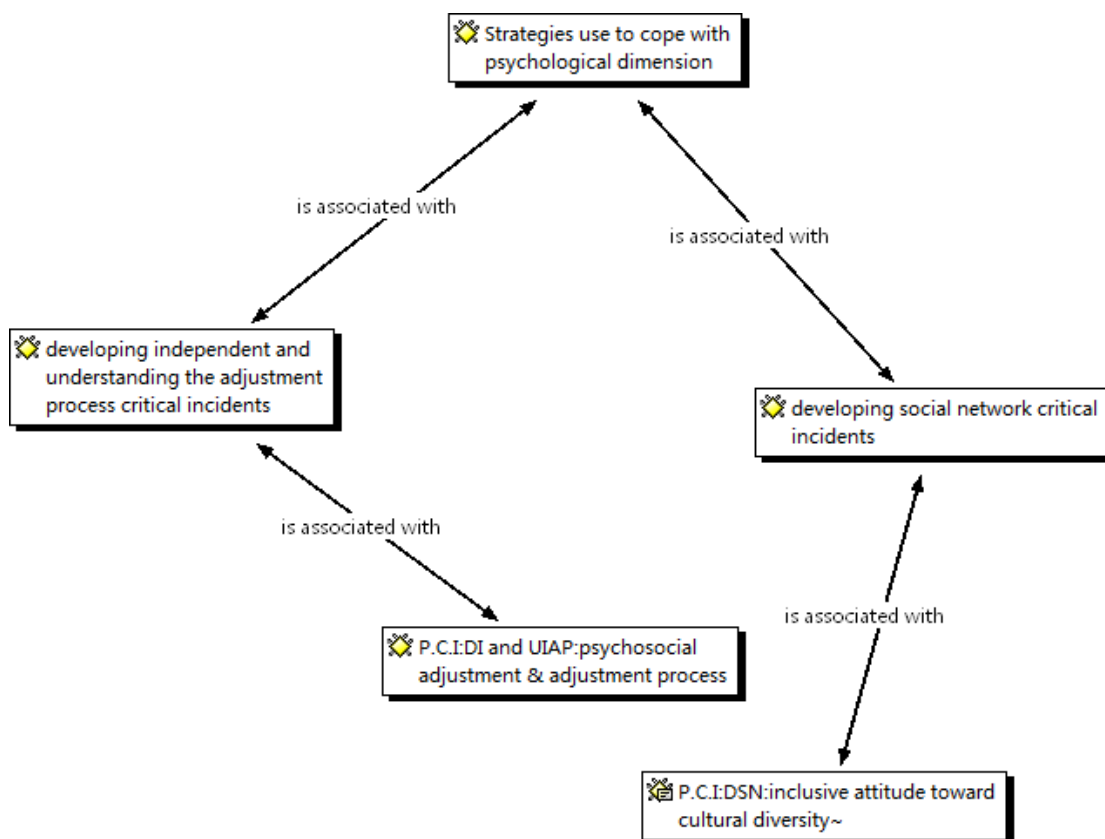
Figure 14 Strategies use to cope with psychological dimension

As shown in Figure 14, development based on content analysis from the interviews, all the contents of the stories suggest strategies used to cope with psychological dimension from interviews. This indicates a situation that the strategies of *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* and *developing social network* use to cope with psychological dimension.

The strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process relate to the situations of psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes. Indicated are the strategies used to cope in psychological dimension when they stay in. The results indicated that on one hand, developed social interaction with host nationals, developed engagement meaningful social activities, they gain new knowledge, accept and comply with host norms, customs, reduce the stress and facilitate psychological adjustment. On the other hand, developed language skills, developed the abilities to be independent and developed understanding the host cultural adjustment process. Thus, they strengthen their heart and enjoying lonely life, they made the progress in adaptation.

However, the result also revealed the strategy of *developing social network*, as shows in the figure 15, this strategy relate to the situation of inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity. The results indicated they developed social network and solved problems in difficult situations by different ways. Set up new social network, it reduced the stress and homesick through interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence with people from same country, they made the progress in adaptation. Therefore, language proficiency was improved, culture understand was extended, independent abilities was enhanced, frequent interaction with host nationals was increased, stress and homesick was reduced, they facilitated their psychological adjustment.

In summary, the content of stories suggested two strategies related to each other, these strategies intertwined each other and were used to cope in psychological dimension from above.

Summary

This chapter has covered three major dimension which are academic, sociocultural and psychological of Chinese students study in UAB. The results of the questionnaires and interviews were collated and examined, conclusions were drawn regarding the factors involved in and the strategies use to cope in UAB.

The following significant results from the study were noted:

All the contents of the story suggest that Chinese students adapt to academic environment at UAB, they have to cope specific critical incidents from Academic, sociocultural and psychological dimension.In academic dimension,the contents of the story suggest related to Chinese students' language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, new educational system three critical incidents. In sociocultural dimension it included involvement in extracurricular activities, cultural distance critical incidents. And psychological dimension concerned Chinese students' life change, social support critical incidents

Aside, the contents of the story also suggest that the factors involved in these critical incidents, the most significant results were the followings:

Academic dimension:

The critical incidents concerned participants language abilities relate to academic dimension, meanwhile, the figure also shows that language abilities critical incidents relate to four situations, especially, in the situations of language impact writing assignments, understanding lectures, abilities to ask questions in class, and lack of language proficiency, these four situations of language abilities as challenges they face in their study

However, the contents of story of the participants regarding the impact of other two critical incidents related to teacher and teaching relationship and new education system, also reveal that these critical incidents have a significant influence coping in the academic dimension. Thus, in the teacher and teaching relationship, the factors of teacher and teaching relationship involved in academic dimension, meanwhile, it also shows that teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents relate to three situations. the situation of differences on how to interact, differences in expectations between students and teachers, and negotiation of meaning, tasks, these three situations of teacher and teaching relationship as challenges they face in their study.

Finally, the result also support the conclusion that the factors of new education systems involved in academic incidents. New education systems critical incidents relate to five situations. especially, in the situations of "norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thought", "unique nature of culture" and "conflicts the nature of communication" situations.

Inquired about the strategies implemented to address, students have developed strategies to deal with the difficulties, all the contents of the story suggested related to three strategies used to cope with academic dimension from interviews. Developing language skills, developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education systems used to cope with academic dimension.

The contents of the story also revealed the strategies of developing language skills related to three situations in academic dimension, in the situations of language improvement, interactions with host nations and adapt to the academic life, these three situations of developing language skills strategies used to cope with academic dimension when they stay in. However, the contents of story of the participants regarding the two strategies of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, also revealed that these strategies used to cope with academic dimension. Strategy of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents, it showed that this strategy relate to two situations, in the situation of understand became engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations, and different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona, these two situations of developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship used to cope with critical incidents when they stay in.

Finally, the result also revealed the conclusion that the strategy of developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system, this strategy relate to "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help", and "new learning and loss of old habits or push and pull, in losing, and gaining self-renewal" two situations, these two situations used to cope with critical incidents when they stay in.

Sociocultural dimension:

Aside, all the contents of the stories also suggest that Chinese students adapt to academic environment at UAB, they have to cope specific critical incidents from sociocultural. The critical incidents concerned participants were influenced in the involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents, especially in the situation of interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities, the situations of involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents influencing Chinese students

coping. However, the contents of stories of the participants regarding the impact of cultural distance critical incidents especially, in the transition between cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress situations, the situations of cultural distance criticalinfluencing Chinese students coping in sociocultural dimension.

Students have developed strategies to deal with the difficulties, all the contents of the story suggested related to two strategies used to cope with sociocultural dimension. The Strategy of developing culture knowledge of host cultural and the strategy of developing involvement in extracurricular activities used to cope with sociocultural dimension. The contents of the story also revealed the strategies of developing culture knowledge of host cultural related to in the situations perceived similarities and difference between two cultures used to cope in sociocultural dimension when they stay in. However, participants regarding related to the strategies of developing involvement in extracurricular activities, especially the situation of engagement in activities in public place used to cope with sociocultural dimension.

Psychological dimension:

Finally, the contents of the stories also suggest that Chinese students adapt to academic environment at UAB, they have to cope specific critical incidents from psychological dimension. The critical incidents concerned participants were influenced in in life change critical incidents and social support critical incidents. The participants regarding were influenced in life change critical incidents, especially in the situation of depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment, the situations of life change critical incidents influencing Chinese students coping. However, the results also revealed that participates were influenced in social support critical incidents, especially in the international students office need to provide receptive climate situations, the situations of social support critical incidents influencing Chinese students coping.

Students have developed strategies to deal with the difficulties, all the contents of the story suggested related to two strategies used to cope with psychological dimension. The strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process and the strategy of developing social network used to

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cope with psychological dimension. The contents of the story also revealed the strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process related to in the situations of psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes use to cope psychological dimension when they stay in. However, participants regarding related to the strategy of developing social network, especially in the situation of inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity used to cope psychological dimension.

In sum, these factors of critical incidents relate to each other and influenced Chinese students coping in new academic environment. Inquired about the strategies implemented to address, the content of stories suggested these strategies related to each other, intertwined each other and used to cope in academic, sociocultural and psychological dimension. These strategies of coping associated with better academic and psychological adjust lower sociocultural difficulty, develop their empathy, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, capability, confidence, therefore, their language proficiency was improved, culture understand was extended, independent abilities was enhanced, frequent interaction with host nationals was increased, stress and homesick was reduced, they facilitated their adaptation in new academic environment. Consequently, they were able to maintain their own cultural identity and embrace their host culture enjoying the best of both worlds.

CHAPTER 4　　DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 4 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out how Chinese students adapt to UAB in Spain, especially to know their academic adaptation experience. This investigation's main objectives were: (1) to identify critical incidents that Chinese students have to cope with, (2) to describe the factors involved in these critical incidents, and (3) to explore the strategies that Chinese students use to cope with critical incidents in academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions. Considering the literature that has been discussed above, as well as the results from the analyses, this section will provide evidence that the research questions of the study have been thoroughly addressed.

In an increasingly globalized world, students are seeking to study abroad. They face complex challenges with language skills, building new relationships, culture shock, cultural norms and the academic expectations of a new educational system (Mori, 2000). In our study, the intercultural communication competence (ICC) framework between individuals was used as a measure of their capabilities. ICC remain constant across all intercultural situations regardless of the specific cultures involved. There is a special focus on an individual's abilities to interact in a variety of intercultural communication events (Kim, 1991). However, adaptation has also been described as part of the communication competence in many foundational models of ICC, where adaptation is a process where individuals in cross-cultural communication situations change their communicative behavior in order to diminish misunderstandings with the culturally different other (Rodriguez & Cai, 1996). Consequently, cross-cultural adaptation literature describes modes of cross-cultural adaptation and focuses on host communication competence.

Cross-cultural adaptation refers to how international students choose to cope with cultural changes (Adler, 1987; Hofstede, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Ward, 1996). For instance, every Chinese student's new experience at UAB, particularly the drastic and disorienting ones that they encounter in a new environment, leads to new learning and growth. They have the capacity to face challenges, change their communicative behavior, diminish misunderstandings with the culturally different other and acquire new knowledge and

insights. The cross- cultural adaptation framework was utilized to explore the perception of Chinese international students regarding their adjustment as well as to capture the essence of cultural influences upon their academic environment. Adaptation is fundamental to human existence. However, it may be that Chinese students adapt differently from other international students at the UAB in Catalonian region. In order to investigate more specifically the Chinese international student's academic, sociocultural and psychological adaptation experience, a literature review on Chinese international students adjustment research produced a range of predicator variables which were identified as influencing the intensity of the adaptation process: linguistic competence, Spanish and Chinese culture communication, cultural distance, the new education system, and social network, all of which were used to research the essence of the cultural influences upon their academic, sociocultural and psychological adjustment. Investigation reveals the barriers Chinese Ph.D. international students encountered, especially when trying to make sense of new knowledge or trying to acquire skills, which may bring them a sense of "study shock." These barriers were, for example poor knowledge about western educational system, western culture, communication, beliefs and academic language, etc. (Hung & Hyun, 2010, p. 32).

The study reflects the reality of individual experiences and how transitions are made by Chinese Ph.D. students at UAB, from three dimensions. In what follows, we will elaborate on each one.

4.1. Academic critical incidents and factors involved in academic dimension

The results of this study show that language abilities' critical incidents relate to three situations: "writing assignments"; "understanding lectures"; "asking questions in class." Regarding the impact of other two kinds of critical incidents relating to *teacher and teaching relationship* and *new education system*, these critical incidents also have a significant influence on students' ability to cope with the academic dimension. The situation of "differences on how to interact," "differences in expectations between students and teachers," and "negotiation of meaning, tasks" arise as part of teacher and

teaching relationship. The education system's critical incidents relate to five situations: "norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and difficulty in expressing feelings or thoughts" and "unique nature of culture" leading to "conflicts of communication". The results highlight that the factors of *language abilities critical incidents*, *teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents, and new academic systems critical incidents* intertwined each other, and these factors are involved in the academic dimension and influenced their ability to cope with their studies.

These findings are consistent with many other studies, for example, in Church's study, he points out that "the most important problems appear to be language difficulties, finances, adjusting to new educational system, homesickness, adjusting to social customs and norms and for some student's racial discrimination" (Church1982: 544). The results are also supported by Rienties, and Ramsay, *Academic adjustment* referred to which students cope with the various demands in an educational context, including students' motivation and academic achievement (Rienties, 2012 Ramsay1999).

While the factors of language abilities and new education systems are often studies, the factor of teacher and teaching relationship are less mentioned, particularly little research for investigation personal experience by critical incidents method. This study contributes to *the language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship, new education systems critical incidents* as crucial factors through analyzing critical incidents, which also were found to be intertwined and influenced Chinese Ph.D. international students' abilities for coping. In addition, identified how these factors influence the intensity of adaptation process.

The teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents are a significant factor. Doctoral students at UAB are tutored in a one-on-one mode and focused on writing and defending their dissertation. The teacher and teaching relationship naturally has an impact on the student's perceptions. In particular, miscommunications between Chinese students and their tutors easily happen because of communication styles, and because Chinese students are not used to doing independent research. Education cultural background differences between China and Spain explain why Chinese students have a

great need for adviser feedback. They place more emphasis on getting learning support from their adviser and rely on a hierarchical structure between teacher and student. So that *the factor of teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents* become extremely important during adaptation to a new academic environment. It may influence their abilities for coping due to teacher and teaching relationship, in further, it could more test the factor of teacher and teaching relationship in different groups from Confucian-heritage area.

4.1.1 Language abilities critical incidents

This study indicated that *language abilities critical incidents* were found to be challenging for participants when they study at UAB. Language difficulties impact: "writing assignments," "difficulties in understanding the lecture"; "difficulties in communication" and "being afraid to ask questions" which in terms of vocabulary, speed, students' language skills. The results also reveal that culture is a significant factor, and root of the problem influenced their abilities for coping. Confucian-heritage students bring with them the concept of power distance, authority ranking, face values, and indirect communication styles.

Numerous studies have shown that academic adaptation problems for international students, especially for non-native English speakers tend to focus on language abilities (Andrade, 2006). For instance, Chinese students encounter difficult language barriers when they study in a European country (Wang & Hannes, 2014). Similarly, difficulties in academic writing, which may be a result of students' language skills, and western views of academic writing are minority perspectives (Holmes, 2004). Chinese students are reported to be modest and given to face-saving techniques, in collaborative projects (Liu et al. 2010). Moreover, the elements of power distance and authority ranking predominant in Confucian- heritage area cultures also impact student's perceptions of and interactions with their instructors (Bond, 1996).

As previously noted, the factors of language abilities, culture characteristics, difficulties with academic writing and influence international students' coping ability. However, this study contributes to several areas: Firstly, after through analyzing critical incidents, it is showed that *the language abilities critical incidents* are strongly related to

language skills, the culture of Confucian-heritage and teacher and teaching relationship. Language skills, indirect communicating styles from collectivistic worldview; face value, the elements of power distance and teacher's authority of Confucian-heritage, all influence them firmly.

Secondly, in term of culture as root of the problem, cultural competence is strongly related to language competence. The difficulties of Doctoral students with academic writing may be a result of their language skills, but also of western views of academic writing. In addition, the critical incidents technique was used to examine events and Chinese international students' perspective, and to develop the ability to see interaction situations from perspectives of Chinese and Catalonia cultures.

4.1.2 Teacher and teaching relationship involved in academic critical incidents

The result showed that participants were influenced by *teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents*. Teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents relate to three situations: "*differences on how to interact,*" "*differences in expectations between students and teachers*," and "*negotiation of meaning, tasks*". On one hand, the gaps and miscommunication between Chinese students and their tutors were in terms of students' language proficiency. On the other hand, they were about culture.

This is consistent with the finding that most difficulties and misunderstandings encountered by international students are traced to cultural distance. Chinese students have particularly strong experiences in this area because of the considerably different features of western culture and Chinese culture, (Latourette, 1964; Hall & Wang, 1996; Samovar Porter & Stefani, 2000; Wu & Rubin, 2000). The elements of power distance and authority ranking predominant in Confucian-heritage areas impact students' perceptions of and interactions with their instructors (Bond,1996). Chinese students rely on, take refuge in, face-saving techniques in collaborative projects (Liu et al. 2010)

This findings supported those previously noted above, however, *teacher and teaching relationship* less mentioned in previously studies.

It is indicated that *teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents* relate to three situations: the situation of "*differences on how to interact,*" "*differences in expectations between students and teachers*," and "*negotiation of meaning, tasks.*" On one hand, the

gaps and miscommunication between Chinese students and their tutors were in terms of students' language proficiency. On the other hand, they were about culture. This is revealed from several aspects as the following.

Firstly, it is reflected in a relatively hierarchical structure. Relationships between teacher and students in China were often formal and distant, with fear and silence, as with a stern parent, i.e., usually students do not question teachers, or challenge their judgments. The teacher's authority is absolute.

Secondly, Chinese students were accustomed to indirect communication styles from a collectivist worldview as well as from the values of face stemming from Chinese philosophical roots.

Thirdly, Chinese students have been respectful of the teacher, respectful of the teaching, respectful of age and give priority to face-saving in interactions between teachers and students.

Moreover, Chinese students have a greater need for adviser feedback and validation because of their respect for the teacher and they generally follow the advisor's ideas. Chinese students place emphasis on getting learning support and help from teacher and advisers. Finally, in China, the teacher-students relationship is to "jiao shu yu ren", which is translated as "bringing up youth to be social." The relationship between students and teachers is not only transferring information, but also the teacher prepares the student for all aspects of life, mainly focusing on moral education.

Differences on how to interact, reflect the effective communication between teacher and students; *differences in expectations* between students and teachers have an effect on the student's independent research abilities; *the situation of negotiation of meaning, tasks* reflect the student's perspective of education cultural background. These situations are intertwined with each other and strongly related to the factors of language skills, culture, and new education systems. It may be influencing them abilities for coping due to teacher and teaching relationship.

4.1.3 New education systems critical incidents

The results also indicated that participants were influenced by new education system's *critical incidents*, which relate to five situations: "*norms, rules, systems, values,*

procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and difficulty in expressing feelings or thoughts-", "unique nature of culture" and "conflicts the nature of communication" situations. It included two aspects (the relationship between teacher and teaching and different model of teaching and learning) in a new education system.

For the relationship between teacher and students, the results reflected that students had a greater need for adviser feedback and validation because of the respect they feel about teachers and teaching. They generally follow the advisor's ideas according to Chinese cultural patterns of education. Chinese students place more emphasis on getting learning support from teachers and advisers, but at the UAB the role of the teacher is only to serve as guides; The culture also impacts student's perceptions, because they were used to seeking help from a teacher at the school.

Regarding different model of teaching and learning, the results reflected that the western model of teaching and learning emphasizes learning through discussion, whereas Chinese students are accustomed to an instruction which is didactic and emphasizes memorization and indirect writing styles. Chinese students are accustomed to indirect styles and unaccustomed to analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, so UAB brings them a new system of education where their knowledge of academic thinking is a minority perspective.

Chinese students prefer interpersonal relationships rather than impersonal connectedness of roles. Ph.D. programs in China follow a traditional model which includes both coursework (compulsory and selective course) and dissertation research. Doctoral students in Spain are tutored in a one-on-one mode; their study depends on their own initiative. Chinese students become aware of the *lack of academic research* in their own background and experience the new need for doing *independent research* as a big challenge of great importance for them.

Asian international students may encounter barriers when trying to make sense of new knowledge or trying to acquire skills, which may bring them a sense of "study shock". This happens when they find out how different western educational systems, western culture, beliefs, and academic language are from what they were used to (Hung

& Hyun, 2010, p. 32). Critical incidents of the new education system are usually related to values emphasized by society, as well as the unique nature of each culture, the conflicts concerning interaction, the nature of communication and the level of participation in the classroom (Keith, 2009). Cross (1995) already noted that it may be easy to change an eating habit or to learn a new language, but it may be very difficult to change deeply held beliefs and cultural values, such as the collectivistic worldview shared by most Asian students, which is in contrast with more individualistic value, held by many European students.

In summary, participants referred to numerous events of confusion, frustration, and struggle.

4.1.4 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing language skills

Inquiring about the strategies implemented to address, we found students have developed strategies to deal with the difficulties. The results indicate that the strategies of developing language skills, developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship, and developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education were used to cope with academic dimension.

The strategies of developing language skills relate to three situations, "*language improvement*", "*interactions with host nations*" and "*adapt to the academic life*". The results indicated that effective communication is developed by language ability and increased students' interactions. Thus, students developed language abilities through different aspects and they discover that they can affect academic achievement and adjustment.

These findings are consistent with many studies. As social contacts increase, language improves, and as language improves, social contact increases (Church, 1982). Interactions with host nationals provide opportunities for international students to practice their communication and language skills (Hendrickson, 2011). Therefore, effective communication in the language of the host country has implications for academic achievement (Mori, 2000).

Chinese students in this study demonstrated a high degree of flexibility, persistence,

and openness to the experience of the new academic environment.

4.1.5 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship

Developing mutual understanding through various channels between teacher and teaching relationship was another strategy used to cope with teacher and teaching relationship critical incidents. The results demonstrate a developing understanding from the students regarding the concept of cultural differences, particularly education culture difference between Western and Chinese. Students also developed a better understanding of culturally different academic styles and expectations; developing an understanding of how Chinese cultural conditioning has influenced them and how some values of them own culture may cause problems in the Catalonian culture. Developing an understanding the differences in the relationship between teachers and students from China and Barcelona; developing an understanding of host communication styles, viz. individualism was important as well. Therefore, knowledge of the Catalan identity improved, independent study was achieved, their empathy, tolerance, and flexibility were enhanced too.

Chinese students moved out of being shy, fearful, passive and silence. They maintained their own Chinese cultural identity and embrace their host Catalan culture. They made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment.

The finding is consistent with many studies, for example, international students from cultures of high cultural distance find it more difficult to understand and adapt than students from cultures of low cultural distance (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). Wang (2014) noted that Asian students created chances to observe the local society and develop a deeper understanding of the cultural difference between Western cultures and that of their home countries.

Additionally, this study revealed that Chinese students' open-mindedness, flexibility, and positive attitude allowed them to embrace the new academic environment.

4.1.6 Strategies of academic dimension adaptation: Developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system

Developing *the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system*

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was another strategy. This strategy relates to two situations: "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help"; and "new learning and loss of old habits or push and pull, in losing, and gaining self- renewal." The results indicated that students developed an understanding of Western academic thinking and the model of teaching and learning. They developed self-reliance, understanding of the host culture, improved their language skills, identified similarities or differences in communication patterns between collectives and individuals, as well as identified similarities or differences between both Western and Confucian- heritage educational systems. Chinese students gain new knowledge; therefore, independent study was achieved, a culture understanding was extended, and language proficiency was improved. The process of new learning, loss of old habits or indistinct the cultural values, and gaining self-renewal, help them to make progress in adjusting to their new academic environment.

The findings are consistent with many pieces of research. The principle of a simultaneous interplay of new learning and loss of old habits make it plain that as strangers, people cannot realistically choose between keeping their original identity intact and adapting to new environment successfully (Kim 2001).

Besides, using critical incidents method, this study revealed that Chinese Ph.D. students used flexible strategies to cope with challenges. At the same time, students showed awareness these challenges were part of the process and could overcome with time and experience.

4.2 Sociocultural critical incidents and factors involved in sociocultural dimension

The findings of this study indicated that the factors of involvement in *extracurricular activities* and *cultural distance* influenced their abilities for coping. The results also showed that the *involvement in extracurricular activitie*s related to the situation of "interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities". Meanwhile, the results indicated that *cultural distance critical incidents* relate to "the transition between cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress situations".

The findings are consistent with many studies. For example, Ward has previously argued that sociocultural adaptation is more appropriately situated within the culture

learning tradition (Ward, 1998). Sociocultural adjustment concerns people's sense as to how well they can "fit in" to new environment, which is best explained within a social skills or cultural learning paradigm (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006), and Ward points out that social learning models emphasize the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills and behaviors through contact with hosts (Searle& Ward, 1990). Researchers also focus on close contact with host nationals, social support, involvement in extracurricular activities, good language skills. (Forbush & Welles, 2016; Swami, 2009; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Wangle & Kanungo, 2004; Zhang & Goodson, 2011).

In summary, the results supported and confirm previously noted, the factors of involvement in extracurricular activities, social sport, and close contact with host nation have been found influencing over Chinese international student's adaptation. However, this investigation contributes using the critical incidents method; this study shows the factors of the *involvement in extracurricular activities* and *cultural distance critical incidents* embraced in sociocultural dimension, and these factors intertwined and influenced Chinese Ph.D. international students' abilities for coping when they study in UAB. It is highlighted from results that the *interaction with host nationals* was a significant factor that influenced participants in sociocultural and psychological aspects. In China they have an emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence related to the collectivist worldview, however, doctoral students here are one –on one mode, particularly doctoral students from social science, they study by themselves at the dormitory.

One –on one mode without more interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence in Catalan culture, is a significant factor in the sociocultural and psychological students' adjustment. The factors of interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence students from Confucian-heritage area are less mentioned in the previously studies in Europe, but it seems to be significative to students from a Confucian-heritage area. Thus, in further, should be better investigated.

4.2.1 Cultural distance

Cultural distance made participants in this study rather confused and embarrassed regarding such topics as attitude towards life and work in China and Spain, local people's

personality, the distance between men and women, being self-centered, everything is by the book, independence and lack of empathy. These situations of cultural distance were found to be a significant challenge with a big influence on how Chinese students were able to cope.

The findings are concordant with several studies. Cultural distance has been regarded as an important factor in adjustment to cultural change in that the transition between more distant cultures may entail greater life changes and engender more distress (Starle & Ward, 1990). The greatest sociocultural difficulties are expected at the point of entry for the sojourner with the least familiarity with and knowledge of the host culture (Ward et al. 1998).

The results confirmed and supported the previously studied and contributes to the notion that cultural distance critical incidents are strongly related to *the transition between cultures and engender more distress*. The results illustrated that the gap between the sociocultural systems of China and Spain, affects particularly, in encounter new cultural circumstances, new cultural norms and ways of behavior, different from their own. The cultural distance influenced Chinese students' abilities for coping critical incidents. In addition, we identified how these factors affect the intensity of the adaptation process.

4.2.2 Involvement in extracurricular activities critical incidents

It is evident from results that participants were influenced *by critical incidents regarding their Involvement in extracurricular activities.* Concerning language barriers, the difficulties of understanding the culture and different education system gives rise to stress for Chinese students. This is aggravated by the fact that they don't have classmates, and host-culture students may disinterest in initiating a friendship with them.

This finding is consistent with studies which identify the factors that a close contact with host-culture nationals, involvement in extracurricular activities, good language skills facilitate socio-cultural adjustment of international students (Swami, 2009; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006).

However, this study highlights the relevance of s*pecific aspects* of the *involvement in extracurricular activities such* as "interaction with host nationals that

include conversations or activities." In these activities language barriers are present, and difficult the understanding of the different western education and cultural system and the apparent disinterest in initiating a friendship with them. However, Chinese students miss having classmates: "Tong Xue", which means "classmate" in English, and is associated with a strong family feeling among classmates in China, emphasizing the interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence stemming from collectivist worldview (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Students share the same dormitory, share information, eat together and study together for their whole college life, they help each other in difficult situations. Classmates often maintain meaningful relationships of mutual obligation with each other after long they have graduated in China (at any level: primary, middle school, high school, and university classmates). However, doctoral students in UAB study alone, they study by themselves in the room, unlike in China where studying in classes is the rule (within the concept of close classmates and seniors from different sections). For this reason, they feel discourage without more interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence in Catalan culture, which may be a significant factor influencing their sociocultural and psychological adjustment. Moreover, Chinese students clearly identified their academic adaptation experience in the current study, as a negative experience of encountering cultural differences. This acknowledgment was later perceived as a useful resource for them.

4.2.3 Strategies of sociocultural dimension adaptation: Developing cultural knowledge of host cultural

A new knowledge, a new understanding of customs and lifestyle of the host culture, and the differences and similarities between China and Spain have enabled Chinese students to make progress in their adaptation.

Various studies also suggest that lack of knowledge of a new culture allows students to perceive cultural distance, which has been defined as perceived similarities and differences between the sojourner's home culture and the culture of the host country. Greater perceived cultural distance is associated with higher social difficulty, which is inversely related to sociocultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Through contact with local communities, international students gain new knowledge and understanding of

the lifestyle of host society (Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune, 2011). This investigation confirms this notion. This study also showed the *strategies of developing culture knowledge of host cultur*e such as a more developed understanding of Barcelona's customs and lifestyle and awareness of the difference and similarity between China and Spain. In addition, this study also showed that using strategies of social media such as Facebook, Wechat, QQ and Whatsapp, and participating in activities in Vila when they live in student's dormitory is also helpful.

4.2.4 Strategies of sociocultural dimension adaptation: Developing involvement in extracurricular activities

The results showed that the strategies relate to "*the situation of engagement in activities in public places*". The strategies of developing understanding of the local culture by observing, by becoming more proficient at language, forming relationships with host-culture people through engagement in various kind of activities in public places at Catalonia area, such as cooking and eating with friends, traveling with friends, attending parties and cultural events, joining in football, volunteering and social work, all facilitated progress in adaptation at UAB. They provided opportunities to get to know the local culture and the way society functioned as a whole (Wang & Hannes, 2014).

4.3 Psychological critical incidents and factors involved in psychological dimension

The results showed that the factor of *life change* and *social support* involved in psychological dimension influence their coping with their study at UAB.

The finding is consistent with Ward's study (Ward & Kennedy, 2010) who points out that psychological adjustment is originated from the stress and coping framework and emphasizes emotional well-being and satisfaction with sojourning experience. Psychological adjustment, linked to depression or more mood disturbance is affected by personality factors, life changes, and social support from host nationals. Both, locus of control and extraversion have been linked to psychological well-being in sojourners, however, internal locus of control has been consistently associated with psychological adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 2010). Social connectedness with host nations and social interaction with host national explained both psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment (Zhang, 2011).

The results of this thesis were described, according to the experiences of the Chinese students, this findings supported and confirmed previously noted above. The factors of *life change* and *social support* have been found influencing to international student's adaptation. As*ide, t*he *life change critical incidents* strongly relate to the situation of "depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment", particularly related to Chinese emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence. Chinese doctoral students at UAB study along the new academic environment without more interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence. In addition, *social support is not* enough, the international student's office need to provide receptive climate situations, particularly, they cannot speak Spanish or Catalan, and all of them are in Spain for the first time. Language barrier, cultural distance life changes, all influenced their abilities for coping critical incidents during their adaptation to Catalan culture. This study offers a more holistic view of the Chinese international student experience from academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions.

4.3.1 Life change critical incidents

It is indicated that participants felt loneliness, homesick and stress entry to a new culture, on the one hand, cultural distance and *life changes* hinders participants adjustment. On the other hand, more emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence is needed to manage eagerly. Thus, they felt loneliness, homesick, helpless, afraid sick and stress without social network after entry to a new culture. These situations of life change are an outstanding challenge and influenced Chinese student's abilities to adapt.

Similarly, Ward (et.al,1998) have previously argued that psychological adjustment is best to understand within a stress and coping framework while sociocultural adaptation is more appropriately situated within the culture learning tradition. Yang argued interdependent self-construal is defined by the emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence, and the orientation toward the harmonious functioning of the collective needs and goals (Yang et al. 2006).

This finding confirmed all previously noted above and better understand international student's experience of cross-cultural transitional process, in addition, the

factor of *life change critical incidents* strongly related to the "situations of depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment". Because of cultural distance, and huge differences on lifestyle, they cannot rely on the interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence they brought with them from a Confucian-heritage culture. These factors are intertwined and influenced their abilities for coping. Moreover, this study identified how these factors affect the adaptation process, and how to better understand their adaptation process from critical incidents.

4.3.2 Social support critical incidents

The results indicated that participants were influenced *by social support critical incidents*. *Social support critical incidents* strongly relate to the situation of *international students office that need to provide receptive climate situations*. Chinese students find it difficult to use social support systems, mainly because of language difficulties, they can't speak Catalan, however, Catalan as the main language for teaching and communication in Catalonian areas. This, along with perceived cultural distance, makes their psychological adjustment difficult and tends to discourage them. They report negative experiences with the international student office, counselling centers, health services, and some public services such as police (for extension of residents' card). It indicated that campus needed to provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness of the needs of the international students.

Other studies identified that students affairs professionals perceive international students to be well-adjusted, satisfied with their educational experiences and to have typical concerns and feelings (Walker, 2001). Collaborative efforts among various campus entities such as Academic programs, International students' office, Counselling centers, Health services are needed to provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness of the needs of the international students (Jocab & Greggo, 2001).

4.3.3 The strategies of psychological dimension adaptation: Developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process

The results indicated that the *strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* relate to the "situations of

psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes". This embraces a developed social interaction with host nationals, a developed engagement in meaningful social activities, a developed language skills, and also the need to improve the abilities to be independent and to better understand the Catalan culture during their adjustment process. Thus, they strengthen their heart and enjoying lonely life, their progress in adaptation. These strategies Chinese students used to overcome their psychological difficulties were to develop their personal independence and to make progress as quickly as they can with understanding the new culture.

Similarly, Kim (2001) pointed out the importance to facilitate psychosocial adjustment of Chinese students, helping them to achieve a full understanding of sojourner adjustment processes. As well, social connectedness with host nationals, adherence to the host culture, and social interaction with host nationals, explained both psychological and sociocultural adjustment domains (Zhang, 2011). In addition, this study revealed that Chinese students' tolerance for ambiguity, strength of personality and determine persistence.

4.3.4 Strategies of psychological dimension adaptation: Developing social network

The results indicated the *strategy of developing social network* relate to the situation of "inclusive attitude towards cultural diversity". Participants developed a social network and solved problems in difficult situations by different ways. Set up a new social network, reduce the stress and homesick through interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence with people from the same country, consequently, they made a progress in their adaptation. Therefore, the students' language proficiency was improved, culture understand was extended, independent abilities were enhanced, frequent interaction with host nationals was increased, stress and homesick was reduced, all of these facilitated their psychological adjustment.

The finding is consistent with studies which identified that Open campus culture with an inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity is necessary for international students to successfully pursue the integration strategy (Berry, 1997).

Summary:

In summary, the purpose of this study is to examine how Chinese Ph.D. students

adapt to the new academic environment in UAB, in the Catalan area of Spain. This study contributes to a more holistic view of the Chinese Ph.D. international student experience in the academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions. The important factors in the students' experience in UAB have been identified, namely, critical incidents in the academic, sociocultural and psychological dimensions. What Chinese Ph.D. students have found most challenging in the academic dimension are *language competence, teacher and teaching relationship* and *new education system,* with *teacher and teaching relationship* being the most important for their adaptation. *Interaction with host-culture nationals* was found to be crucial for Chinese students' efforts to adapt to the sociocultural and psychological dimensions.

CHAPTER 5　　CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Based on the discussion in Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Chapter Four, this chapter draws conclusions and summarizes the findings of the research about how do Chinese students adapt to the new academic environment at UAB, Spain. It covers the factors influencing their adaptation, their strategies for coping to a new academic environment, as well as the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Conclusion of This Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the Chinese Ph.D. students adapt to academic environment at UAB, in Catalan area, Spain. This investigation proposes main objectives which are: the process of academic adaptation, which is of interest to the researcher who is attempting to uncover factors that lead to successful adaptation and cross-cultural effectiveness for Chinese international students. Specifically, the study attempts to investigate the major challenges and coping strategies of Chinese students studying at UAB. Based on review of the literature relating to ICC, cross cultural adaptation, cross cultural adaptation in communication situations, and review the current descriptions of the factors influencing international students' adaptations to new academic environments, covering factors influencing international students' adaptations in university as well as strategies used to cope with critical incidents. Critical incidents were collected from Chinese Ph.D. international students regarding challenging experience and selected coping strategies. To identify factors and strategies related to critical incident, we find:

The important factors related to the student's unique experience in UAB have been identified, which coved the critical incidents from academic, sociocultural and psychological dimension. These factors intertwined each other and influenced Chinese Ph.D. student's immersion into the Catalan campus life. Factors involved and strategies used to cope with academic, sociocultural and psychology dimension respectively.

Factors involved and strategies used to cope with academic dimension:

The results of this study show that *language abilities*' critical incidents relate to three situations: writing assignments, understanding lectures, asking questions in class. Regarding the impact of other two kinds of critical incidents relating to *teacher and teaching relationship* and *new education system*, these critical incidents also have a significant influence on students' abilities to cope with the academic dimension. The situation of "differences on how to interact", "differences in expectations between students and teachers", and "negotiation of meaning, tasks" arise as part of teacher and teaching relationship. The education system's critical incidents relate to five situations: "norms, rules, systems, values, procedure, task", "lack of academic research and independent research", "embarrassment at presentation and difficulty in expressing feelings or thoughts" and "unique nature of culture" leading to "conflicts of communication". These factors are involved in the academic dimension and influenced Chinese Ph.D. students' abilities to cope.

After inquiring the strategies implemented to address the challenges, the result showed that students developed strategies to deal with the difficulties.

The strategies of *developing language skills*; *developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teachers and the teaching relationship*; and *developing the ability to be independent and familiar with the host education system.*

The strategies of developing language skills relates to three situations: language improvement; interactions with host nations; and adapting to academic life. Regarding the two strategies of *developing mutual understanding through various channels between teachers and the teaching relationship,* and *developing the ability to be independent and familiar with the host education system* also reveal that these strategies were used to cope with the academic dimension. For the strategy of *developing mutual understanding through various channels between teachers and the teaching relationship critical incidents*, the results shows that this strategy relates to two situations: "different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona"; " understand became engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations"; the results also

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revealed   the *strategy of developing the ability to be independent and familiar with the host education system critical incidents*, this strategy relates to two situations: "the willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with the host education system without family members and close friends around to help"; and "new learning and loss of old habits or push and pull, in losing, and gaining self-renewal."

Factors involved and strategies used to cope with sociocultural dimension:

In the sociocultural dimension, the result of this study indicated that the factors of involvement in *extracurricular activities* and *cultural distance* involving in sociocultural dimension and influencing their coping in their study. The results also showed that the *involvement in extracurricular activities* critical incidents related to the situation of "interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities". Meanwhile, the results indicated that *cultural distance critical incidents* relate to "the transition between cultures entail greater life changes and engender more distress situations". These factors influenced Chinese Ph.D. students' abilities to cope.

The result showed that students developed strategies to deal with the difficulties. *the strategies of developing involvement in extracurricular activities* and *developing culture knowledge of host cultural* used to cope with sociocultural dimension.

This strategy of *developing involvement in extracurricular activities* relate to the situation of "engagement in activities in public places". Regarding the strategies of *developing culture knowledge of host cultural* also reveal that this strategy was used to cope with the sociocultural dimension. The results shows that this strategy relates to the situations: perceived similarities and difference between two cultures. These strategies were used to cope with sociocultural dimension.

Factors involved and strategies used to cope with psychological dimension:

Moreover, the result indicated that the factors of *life change critical incidents* and *social support critical incidents* involving in psychological dimension and influencing their coping in their study. The results also showed that the *life change critical incidents* related to the situation: "depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment" Meanwhile, the results also indicated that *social support critical incidents* relate to the

situation: "international student's office need to provide receptive climate situations". These factors influenced Chinese Ph.D. students' abilities to cope in psychology dimension.

The result showed that students developed strategies to deal with the difficulties.

The results showed that the strategies of *developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process* and *developing social network* use to cope with psychological dimension.

The strategies of developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process related to the situations: "psychosocial adjustment and adjustment processes". However, the results also revealed the strategy of *developing social network* related to the situation: "inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity", these strategies were used to cope with critical incidents in psychological dimension.

The result highlight that the more challenging in academic dimension impact are on *language abilities, teacher and teaching relationship and new education system* during three dimensions; in addition, the *teacher and teaching relationship* became extremely important during adaptation new academic environment for this group, it may influence Chinese Ph. D. students' abilities for coping due to *teacher and teaching relationship* in academic detention. Moreover, it also highlight that *the interaction with host nationals was found* root of problems influenced Chinese students in sociocultural and psychological dimension, it may influence them abilities for coping due to interpersonal connectedness and emotional interdependence in Catalan culture.

This study try showed how Chinese international students make meaning of their cross cultural adaption, particularly better understand their adaptation process from critical incidents. In previous studies, research has been conducted on the factors influencing international students in their adaption in academic, sociocultural or psychological dimensions respectively. However, this study contribution to a more holistic view of the Chinese Ph.D. international student experience from academic, sociocultural and psychological three dimensions.

5.2 Educational Implications

After presenting the discussion and conclusions of this research, it is also important to briefly introduce some educational implications that derive from the results obtained in this study.

An increasing number of students from China participate in the global educational market, however, due to the large cultural disparity between Western and Asian countries, their adaptation is particularly challenging. Especially, among students who experience new academic challenges, such as increasingly independent research activities, along with language difficulties resulting from more academically based classroom discussions (Kim 2007). For these reasons, the question of this study is to focus on new Ph.D. Chinese students, the purpose of the this study was to investigate which critical incidents Chinese student have to cope with in the academic environment at UAB, to investigate how the factors influence them, as well as to analyze and understand what strategies Chinese students used to cope with critical incident adaptation experiences in university.

It is crucial for Chinese Ph.D. students to understand the key features of a typical international Ph.D. study in Barcelona. It is a more significant and important factor of critical incidents from the content of story suggests. Thus, the results provide some meaningful implications for both educators and students. To overcome or decrease the factor of teacher and teaching relationships influenced Chinese students. Firstly, faculty members may not be aware of the unique needs of this population and may lack the knowledge to support them adequately, especially, as the number of Chinese international students grows. It perhaps could be better for educators in university to understand this population, so that they can effectively assist the students' adaptation to their new academic environment. Faculty advisors and instructors could consider the differences in teaching and learning styles between Chinese and Spanish academic cultures and employ more effective instruction methods for these international students. Thus, the results may be beneficial for university to provide information and training for professionals working with Chinese international students. Special training would help professors negotiate the unique challenges of this relationship, as well as also help facilitate the students' transition and prepare students for overseas effectiveness.

Aside, Chinese educational institutes should develop students' individual abilities to adapt to new cultures and new academic environment, at the same time, develop and understand how Chinese education cultural conditioning has influenced Chinese international students and how some values of their own culture may cause problems in the Catalonian culture. Identify the main differences and similarities between the typical communication styles of Chinese culture and Catalonia culture. For instance it would be advantageous to provide incoming Chinese international students with relevant information, particularly cultural information, before they leave their home country, the results may be beneficial for Chinese educational institutes to provide information. Advance preparation for the international students training course would be useful where possible, offering an online information video, passing on lists of helpful books, websites, and international student blogs would also be advantageous when they first arrive or at the beginning of their studies.

Moreover, critical incidents are useful to identify what is at issue, when all the critical incidents are collected, it help to analyze and sorted by one self into categories by network. It provides awareness and understanding of values, feelings and attitudes of cultural understanding between people in other cultures. The factors that emerged from this study, and individual experience identified could be utilized by counsellors to help ease the transitional period of individuals who study abroad. And counsellors could offer critical incidents from this study to illustrate how other international students have managed their transition. They could also use this information to inform the design and implementation of counselling strategies and interventions. The result could also use with international student clients to identify their personal resources and examine, how these strengths could be employed to facilitate their transition. Exploring and building these personal resources is in line with the developmental approach supported by the field of counselling psychology.

Finally, the result also highlight the unique contribution Chinese international students' experience offer and useful information would also help facilitate the international students' transition and involved in new academic environment.

5.3 Limitations and perspective

Despite the factors and strategies that have been justified as an appropriate research approach for addressing the questions of the study, a number of limitation need to acknowledge.

Firstly, because of the limited time and resources available to the author of this thesis, only 20 Ph.D. students were involved in the sample analysis at UAB. The study should be extended to other Spanish universities, using a larger number of participants so that a more comprehensive picture could be given of the Chinese students' academic adaptation processes, experiences and preferences in various contexts as they adapt to a new cultural environment. However, in order to make a comprehensive study, this study used quantitative and qualitative approach, quantitative based in the questionnaires. The information covers the percentages and shows the proportion of participants' responses that are represented opinions by each items, quantitative data can help with the qualitative side of a study during design by finding a representative sample; a qualitative of gathering information regarding participants' experiences in a cross- cultural environment situation based on the interviews, the method is used for a better description of real life, and the purpose is to make a comprehensive study on the research subject as well as making it possible to find relative answers for the research questions, and be able to use one or various methods in order to address specific questions

Secondly, although the researcher tried to simplify the investigation items to make them more easily comprehensible, the students' capacity to understand and their corresponding response could not be controlled. And then, English is the second language of the researcher, the limitation of translation from Chinese into English has to be considered, because of the different perception of the concepts in different cultural backgrounds. The researcher enlisted the services of a professional translator to check with the translation of data, with the purpose of guaranteeing the validity of the data.

Chinese educational institutes are developing students' individual abilities to adapt to new cultures and new academic environments. In spite of this, however, developing students' abilities to adapt in different cultural environments, will most likely be an uphill battle. This study contributes to a foundation for further exploration of these areas, it is

suggested that future studies in this field should cover more specific variables influencing the adaptation for Chinese international students, such as personality and family background variables. We look further at the positive and negative aspects specifically as adaptation problems, to explore which kinds of intervention measures could best help freshmen deal with their adaptive problems, in order to help Chinese international students to be successful requires at UAB. Moreover, we also look further to explore the experience of Ph.D. Chinese student's returnees after they back to China.

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Appendix A Questionnaire in English

Dear my friends,

Educational Phycology of University Autonoma de Barcelona is conducting an investigation into Chinese students' academic adaptation at UAB, the information will help the researcher to investigate Chinese students' adaptation experience of their academic areas in UAB.

The following information will be kept strictly confidential, the information will not be provided to third parties without the consent of the respondents. Thank you for your cooperation!

These parts of the questions are to know about the Chinese students' adaptation experience of their academic areas in UAB in order to classify of all questionnaires. You have all the information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

General Information

Part I. Please choose only one answer

1、Your gender：_____

  A. Male   B. Female

2、Which parts of China are you come from：_____

A. South part of China   B. North part of China   C. other _____ _

3、Your age：_____

A. 18-25   B.26-30   C.31-35   D.36-40   E.41-45   F. Over 45
4. What is field of study _____
A. Linguistics   B. Economics C. Management   D. Science and Engineering   E. Arts   F.

Medical Science   G. Psychology   H. Sociology   I. Other， please specify

5. Your prior transitional experience
A. I have never been abroad before B. I have been abroad for less than 3 months **C**. I have been abroad more than 3 months   D. I have never experienced domestic relocation prior to going Spain
6. What is your current living situation?
A. lone   B with family member   C. with partner   D. with others (such as roommate, friends etc.)
7. Are you employed?
A. No   B. Full time   C. Part time

Part Ⅱ. Outstanding challenge of academic critical incidents in UAB

Blow is a series of statements about you experienced during your study in UAB when you first come? Please circle the degree of your agreement.

1=completely disagree 2=disagree 3= not sure 4=agree 5= completely agree					
1.	When I first come I cannot express myself, reading, writing paper and thinking in second language.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I ever fell discourage when my professor asked me redo work, research paper or re-credits because I am not qualified.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I ever feel uncomfortable when the professor guided students to take responsibility for their learning. Such as doing research paper, group work, presentation and others as an examination.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I ever feel uncomfortable to call the teacher's name or reject, disagree with the professor's ideas & suggestions because lack of hierarchy of Chinese cultural norms when my teacher interact with me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I feel I improved in my career chances since I studied in UAB.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I cannot freely using research instruments and academic resources, such as selecting the most suitable resource because reveled thousands of hits for every key words or operating E-book and other software resource.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	It is a big pressure for me to publish academic paper.					
8.	I ever feel uncomfortable dealing with study and household chores such as everyday life problems rent the housing, cooking, shopping, transportation and using currency etc.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	It is struggle to make friends or develop relationship with my classmates, local people, and colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am not often participating activities with local people. Such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festival with local friends.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I am not clearing or understanding their cultural values, habits behavior and celebrate different festivals. Such as kissing the cheek when I greeting, especially when it was men and woman.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I ever feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I ever feel discourage, helpless, loneness when I am in different situation, such as I fell homesick when I got sick.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I don't know who can help me when I am in helpless. Such as health problem, I cannot finding right place to see doctor or counselling center when I got sick.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Other , please specify.					

Part III Please circle the degree of your strategies use to cope with academic critical incidents in UAB.

1=completely disagree 2=disagree 3=in the middle 4=agree 5= completely agree					
1.	I usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am able to identify similarities or differences between China and Barcelona educational systems, such as academic styles, teaching method and etc.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I usually feel my language significantly and academic research abilities improved.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I usually feel I improved in my independence (include study and life).	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I usually make local friends in different ways. Such as have meal, made language partner, which means you teach local students Chinese as well as they teach you Spanish, sport or travel etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I fell it is helpful to understand host culture when I involvement in extracurricular activities, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I fell it is helpful if I had previous experience study abroad or general knowledge about Barcelona before studying in UAB.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I fell enjoy studying in UAB because I understand the process of adaptation and understand the stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ifell I won the confidence and trust from teacher and our friends after I have built new social network.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I know where to seek help when I have problems.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Other , please specify					

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher Lin Cai by e-mail sent to cailinhelen2006@gmail.com, cailinhelen2006@hotmail.com

You can reach the researcher during regular business hours (i.e.8:00AM-5:00PM), Tel: 6921061XX

If you want to have the result of the survey, please write me an email. I will send you my report to you when I finish it.

Thousands thanks for your kind help and enjoy your time in UAB!

Appendix B. Version of the questionnaire in Chinese

亲爱的朋友：

您好！我叫蔡琳是巴塞罗那自治大学 2013 级教育心理学系的博士研究生，目前在从事有关留学生的跨文化适应方面的研究，并在此研究的基础上撰写我的博士论文。本项调查想了解您在 UAB 大学的学习情况，您的信息对我的研究有非常大的价值。请您帮我填写下列问卷内容（中英文均可）。非常感谢您真诚的帮助！

（一） 基本资料

请根据题目选择一个答案

1、性别： A. 男　　　　　　B 女

2、您来自：

A 中国北方　B 中国南方　C 其他

3、您的年龄：

A. 18-25　B.26-30　C.31-35　D.36-40　 E.41-45　F.45 以上

4. 您来自西班牙留学的专业

A. 语言类　 B. 经济类　C.管理类　D.理工类　E.心理学　F.医学类

G. 旅游类　　 H. 社会学　I. 其他，请说明

5. 您留学前的经历

A. 我以前从未有过出国经历　　 B.我曾经出国三个月以下　　　 C.我曾经出国三个月以上　　 D.来西班牙之前，我从未离开出生的地方

6. 您目前的生活状况

A. 一个人住　 B. 和家人住　C. 和伴侣居住　　 D. 其它（例如室友、朋友等）

7. 你在巴塞有工作吗？

A. 没有　　　　　　　 B. 专职　　　 C. 兼职

Part Ⅱ

当国际学生进入一个新的环境时，会面临很多文化冲击，以下描述是关于中国学生刚到巴塞罗那，在适应这里的生活、学习过程中可能遇到的困难、情景，请您选择最符合您的实际情况的选项上打钩

1=完全不同意　　2=不同意　　3=不确定　　　4=同意　　　　5= 完全同意					
1.	刚来时，我不能很自如的用英语或第二语言思考、表达、阅读和写作。	1	2	3	4	5
2.	我曾经不太适应这里的导师指导学生自主学习、自我负责，例如，介绍分享、小组协作、研究论文，在规定的时间内在线完成试卷等灵活多变评估学生学习的方式。	1	2	3	4	5
3.	当我的导师让我重做、重写或重修课程，我曾感到沮丧。	1	2	3	4	5
4.	由于文化不同，我曾经不太习惯直呼老师的名字或当面否定老师的想法、建议	1	2	3	4	5
5.	在 UAB 学习会将有益于我今后的职业生涯。	1	2	3	4	5
6.	我不能自如地运用研究工具及学术资源，诸如，如何从海量资源中通过关键词选择最佳资讯，使用电子书籍及其他软件资源等。	1	2	3	4	5
7.	发表国际学术文章对我有一定的压力					
8.	刚开始，身边没有亲人、熟悉的同学、朋友的新环境会让我感到孤独。	1	2	3	4	5
9.	既要应对学习，又要处理诸如，租房、做饭、购物等日常生活琐事，这些都曾让我倍感不适，学习占用了很多时间。	1	2	3	4	5
10.	刚开始，我不经常与当地人一起参加各种娱乐活动。如：学术活动、体育活动以及和当地的朋友参加各种节日的庆祝活动。	1	2	3	4	5
11.	刚开始，当我遇到困难时，我曾感到孤独、想家、无助，例如我生病时想家.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	与同学，当地人，同事交友或增进彼此之间的友谊，此事颇非周章。	1	2	3	4	5
13.	刚开始，我不太了解当地人的文化价值观，行为习惯，节庆风俗，尤其是见面时，异性间的脸颊轻吻礼使人有点尴尬。	1	2	3	4	5
14.	刚开始，当一筹莫展时，我不知道如何求助，向谁求助。例如：我生病时不知道到哪里去看病，找谁咨询。	1	2	3	4	5
15	其他					

Part III

以下描述是关于中国学生在适应这里的生活、学习过程中，针对遇到的困难、情景，所采取的适应策略。请您选择最能描述你经验的选项上打钩。

1=完全不同意　　2=不同意　　3=不确定　　　4=同意　　　　5= 完全同意					
1.	我觉得英文说得流利或者会说一点西语、加语对我有帮助	1	2	3	4	5
2.	现在个人的独立能力，包括学习和生活方面都有了进步。	1	2	3	4	5
3.	现在，我能区分出国内高校与巴塞罗那在教育体制的不同，例如，学术风格，教学方法等。	1	2	3	4	5
4.	我觉得参加各种课外活动有助于了解当地的主体文化，例如，参加聚会、参观博物馆、体育运动、社会工作等。	1	2	3	4	5
5.	在来巴塞罗那留学之前，有出国学习的经历或对巴塞罗那的文化有一定的了解，对我在 UAB 学习适应有一定帮助。	1	2	3	4	5
6.	现在我通过不同的方式结识当地的朋友。例如：一起吃饭，旅游、运动、交语言伙伴等等	1	2	3	4	5
7.	我感到我的语言能力及学术研究能力有了明显的提高	1	2	3	4	5
8.	我感受到了在 UAB 学习的乐趣，因为我体验了适应的过程，同时体会到，跨文化适应的紧张或压力可能是每个人都会有的经历。	1	2	3	4	5
9.	通过努力，我赢得了老师、同事、朋友的信任，我变得自信了，我开始建立了新的社会网络。	1	2	3	4	5
10.	现在当有问题时，我知道解决办法，我知道如何求助、向谁求助。	1	2	3	4	5
11.	其他					

如果您有问题，请直接与蔡琳联系：我的邮箱地址　799404072@qq.com, cailinhelen2006@hotmail.com

我的联系电话：Tel:692106176（早上 8:00AM 至下午 5:00PM）
如果您想知道此次调查的结果，请给我发邮件。我完成数据整理后会给您发过去.
万分感谢您的善意帮助，祝您在巴塞罗那学习、生活愉快！

Appendix C. Interviews

 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL:
- o Introduction of the researcher
- o The purpose of an interview
- o Interview procedures
- o Duration of interview: 30-40 minutes
- o Main questions

Part 1 –
ACADEMIC CRITICAL INCIDENTS
a. Language abilities
1. What experience when you first come did you find to be language barrier especially in study UAB, such as write term/ research paper in second language, reading, thinking in second language, participating team discussions / class discussion , talk to professor, understanding well what others were saying , ask questions, speak second language or more languages and so on?
   Could you elaborate on that idea?
b. Teacher and teaching relationship
2. What experience you feel uncomfortable to call the teacher's name and reject or disagree with the professor's ideas & suggestions in the class or at work because lack of hierarchy of Chinese cultural norms when you teacher interact with you? Would you explain that further?
c. New educational system
3. What experience it is a big pressure for you to publish academic paper, especially higher IF academic paper? Could you explain that further?

 SOCIOCULTURAL CRITICAL INCIDENTS
d. Involvement in Extracurricular
4. What experience when you first come that you are not often participating activities with local people. Such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming or celebrating festival with local friends. Can you explain on that idea?
   Cultural Distance
5. What experience when you first comeyou are not clearing or understanding their cultural values, habits behavior and celebrate different festivals. Such as kissing the cheek when you greeting, especially when it was men and woman. Could you explain that further?
PSYCHOLOGICAL CRITICAL INCIDENTS
a. Life change
6. What experience when you first come you feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things in new environment, such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc. could you elaborate on that idea?
b. Social support
7. What experience when you first come you don't know who can help you when you were in helpless. Such as health problem, you cannot finding right place to see doctor or counselling center when you got sick. Could you elaborate on that idea?

Part 2 -
STRATEGIES FOR COPING ACADEMIC CRITICAL INCIDENTS
a. Developing language skill
1. What experience you usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan? Could you explain that further? Which of strategies did you use?

2. What experience you usually feel your language significantly and academic research abilities improved, which strategies did you use, could you explain further?

b. Developing the abilities to be independent and familiar with host education system
3. Which strategies did you use to improve in your independence (include study and life), could you give me an example?

STRATEGIES FOR COPING SOCIOCULTURAL CRITICAL INCIDENTS

c. Developing involvement in extracurricular
4. What experience you usually feel, it is helpful to understand host culture when you involvement in extracurricular activities, which strategies did you use, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc. could you elaborate that idea?

STRATEGIES FOR COPING PSYCHOLOGICAL CRITICAL INCIDENTS

a. Life change---Developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process
5. What experience you feel enjoy studying in UAB because you understand the process of adaptation and understand the stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone. Could you explain that further?

Appendix D. Definition and Operationalization the dimensions of the study

Research objective	Dimensions	Operational Definition	Indicators	Question(Items)	Research instrument
1.-**Which academic critical incidents did Chinese students have to cope with in University?**	--**Academic Activities Critical Incidents** e. Language abilities	In the academic domain, languages can impact writing assignments, understanding lectures, oral and written examination and the abilities to ask questions in class (Chen,1999) Effective communication in the language of the host country has implications for academic achievement. (Mori,2000)	Students feel uncomfortable due to the lack of language proficiency.	(1)Have you ever feel uncomfortable specking, reading, writing paper and thinking in second language? (2)Have you ever feel uncomfortable participating in class discussions or students questions? (3) Have you ever feel not understanding well what others were saying? (4) Have you ever feel misunderstood when you communicated with local students or other international students at the university? (5) Have you ever feel uncomfortable specking in second or more languages such as speaking Spanish/ Catalan?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview Interview
	b. Teacher and Teaching Relationship	Teachers and teaching are incidents about Compliance with academic standards, differences in expectations between students and teachers, negotiation of meaning,	1. The students feel uncomfortable due to the teacher interact with them in direct way.	（1）Have you ever feel disturbed the way your teacher talks to you? (2) Have you feel uncomfortable they spoke Catalan when you were on the work team with your classmates?	Questionnaire Interview

			tasks, goals ... Differences on how to interact (affection, empathy, support, etc.) (Weise, 2011)	2. Students feel unsatisfied due to the lack of empathy.	(1) Have you feel uncomfortable when your professor asked you redo work or re-credits because you are not qualified?	Interview
					(2)Have you feel uncomfortable when your professors or classmates expressed their ideas in a direct way, which let you "lose face"	Interview
					(3)Have you ever feel indifferent the way your teacher interact with you, such as in research paper, thesis and task etc.?	Questionnaire
						Interview
				3.Students feel uncomfortable due to the lack of formality in the treatment and difference in expectations	(4) Have you ever feel too picked the way treatment with you at work? (1) Have you ever feel uncomfortable when the professor guided students to take responsibility for their learning?	Interview
					(2) Have you ever feel uncomfortable when the teacher and students did the actual teaching through discussions and presentation	Interview
					(3) Have you ever feel uncomfortable the way you not just listener in the class but teacher need your comments and questions?	Interview

				(4) Have you feel uncomfortable to reject or disagree with the professor's ideas & suggestions in the class or at work?	Interview
				(5) Have you ever feel uncomfortable studying in UAB without Chinese "Banzhuren" or "Fudaoyuan" help when you were in difficult situations at school?	Interview
				(6) Have you ever feel uncomfortable getting self-respect from your capabilities and confidence?	Interview
				(7) Have you ever feel uncomfortable as a volunteer, working with your professors or colleagues?	
				(8)Have you ever feel uncomfortable with the time concept such as when the teacher, or colleagues were late when you were in class or made an appointment?	Interview
				(9)Have you ever feel uncomfortable	Questionnaire
			4. Students feel uncomfortable due to the lack of respect hierarchy, respect for age and harmony?	when the class did not start or end on time? (1) Have you ever feel uncomfortable to call the teacher's name and reject or disagree with the professor's ideas	Interview

			&suggestions in the class or at work because lack of hierarchy of Chinese cultural norms when your teacher interact with you?	
			(2) Have you ever feel uncomfortable asked questions in the lectures when you did not know what he or she said?	Interview
			(3) Have you ever feel uncomfortable to reject or disagree with the professor's ideas & suggestions in the class or at work?	
	c. Students' Motivation	Individuals' motivations and attitudes relevant to intercultural communication, and a tolerance for ambiguity and anxiety while being faced with intercultural situations(Kim,1991).This positive attitude which adds to a strangers' willingness to attend to new and changing circumstances (Kim, 2001).	Student's motivation and attitude reflect which adds to their willingness to attend to new and changing circumstances.	(1)Have you feel you improved in your career chances since you studied in UAB?	Questionnaire
				(2) Have you feel the living and working conditions in UAB, such as facilities, laboratories are better than back home?	Interview
				(3)Have you feel UAB tuition fees are lower than in other countries?	Interview
				(4)Have you feel this opportunity offered you a good chance to travel around Barcelona and understand Catalan culture?	Interview
				(5)Have you feel this opportunity offered you a good chance to improve	Interview

				your Spanish skills and to learn about Spanish culture?	
				(6)Have you feel the curriculum programs in a UAB fit you?	Interview
				(7)Have you feel the specialties that you are dealing with in UAB have a higher international academic status than back home?	Interview
				(8)Have you feel this opportunity offered you a good chance to improve your abilities to adapt to unfamiliar culture?	Interview
	d. New Educational System 1)Academic Activities	Critical incidents of new education system are related to society emphasize values, unique nature of culture , conflicts concerning the kind of interaction, the nature of communication and level of participation in classroom (Keith,2009)	1. The students feelwhile meet the new challenges and uncomfortable with different ways and activities to evaluate of their accomplishment instead of focus memory, and lack of confidence. Explain: (Chinese Examination-oriented education, different ways of teaching.eg. cramming method of teaching, learning by rote or to cram	(1) Have you ever feel stress when you doing research paper, group work and presentation and others as an examination?	Questionnaire
				(2) Have you ever feel uncomfortable with professor's teching and learning methods?	Interview
				(3) Have you ever feel uncomfortable understanding research, task. group work requirements ?	Interview
				(4) Have you ever feel uncomfortable accepting the new extracurricular academic activities?	Interview
				(5) Have you ever feel uncomfortable	Interview

			for exam;students feel uncomfortable while required to do a lot of rote very often.	accepting the evaluation instead of focus memory? (6)Have you ever feel comfortable to participate your classmate and colleague debate? (7)Have you ever feel uncomfortable participating working with your professors group or colleagues?	Interview Interview
			Students feel uncomfortable due to the lack of academic research and independent research such as get information skills	(1)Have you ever feel uncomfortable using research instruments and academic resources, such as selecting the most suitable resource because reveled thousands of hits for every key words or operating E-book and other software resource? (2) It is a big pressure for me to publish higher IF academic paper. (3) Have you ever fell uncomfortable useing University websit or the library database? (4) Have you ever feel uncomfortable operating E-book and other software resource?	Questionnaire Questionnaire Interview Interview
			Students feel uncomfortable due to time management which are	(1)Have you ever feel uncomfortable dealing with study and household chores such as everyday life problems	Questionnaire

			balancing study and life, lack of ability to live independently in host country.	rent the housing, shopping, transportation and using currency etc.? (2)Have you ever feel uncomfortable cooking by yourself after or before class?	Interview
	----**Sociocultural Critical Incidents** a. Friendship With Host Nationals	Oberg's(1960) conceptualization of cultural shock included the sense of losing one's friends. International students often struggle to make friends (Ward, 2001), therefore who are able to develop friendly relationship with local nationals will be more adapted.	1. Students lack of establish a new social network for accomplishing their academic goals. 2.Students often struggle to make local friends and develop friendly relationship with local friends 3. Students lack of host culture understanding, they adapt experience great difficulties in different features between Western and Chinese culture.	(1)Have you ever feel it is struggle to make friends or develop relationship with my classmates, local people, and colleagues? 2. Have you ever feel uncomfortable if your friends did not always get together whenever at university or out of university? (3)Have you ever feel comfortable to accept the way of western classmates' relationship?	Questionnaire Interview Interview
	b. Involvement in Extracurricular activities	Interaction with host nationals may include having conversations or doing activities with host nationals, such as having meals, playing sports, collaborating in class work or community	1.Students fell unconfortable due to lack of opporyunity to freely interact with other students.	(1)Have you ever feel comfortable to participate activities with local people? Such as in academic activities, Ping-Pong, badminton, swimming, have a party or celebrating festival with local friends.	Questionnaire

		activities, research shows the more international students in the United states interact with Americans, the better they adjust sociocultural.(Li & Gasser, 2005)		(2)Have you ever feel uncomfortable having a part time job or volunteer in class work?	Interview
				(3)Have you ever feel uncomfortable taking part in Spanish/ Catalan cultural class?	Interview
				(4)Have you ever feel uncomfortable vising museums (such as historical, national museums) or travel with Spanish friends?	Interview
				(5)Have you ever feel uncomfortable participating in academic report/ academic activities, conference?	Interview
				(6)Have you ever feel uncomfortable taking part in students' activities such as weekend parties or volunteer services?	Interview
				(7)Have you ever feel uncomfortable participating in the academic salon in UAB?	Interview
				(8)Have you ever feel uncomfortable taking part in research projects assisted by Spanish scholars or professors?	Interview
				(9)Have you ever feel uncomfortable watching Spanish movies or read Spanish newspapers at the student	Interview

			union in the UAB?	
			(10)Have you ever feel uncomfortable making local friends at school?	Interview
			(11)Have you ever feel uncomfortable making Chinese food for your friends?	Interview
			(12) Have you ever feel uncomfortable playing sports with your local friends such as Ping-Pong, badminton, Yoga, swimming?	Interview
			(12)Have you ever feel uncomfortable celebrating festival with local friends?	Interview
	c. Cultural Distance(Social Customs/ norms	Cultural distance has been regarded as an important factor in adjustment to cultural change in that the transition between more distant cultures may entail greater life changes and engender more distress.(Starle& Ward,1990)	1. Students fell unconfortable due to lack of host culture understanding, such as different norms,cultoms, habits,leisure activities?	(1) Have you feel clearing or understanding their cultural values, habits behavior and celebrate different festivals？	Questionnaire
				(2) Have you ever feel uncomfortable kissing the cheek when you are greeting, especially when it was men and woman?	Interview
				(3) Have you ever understand local student's and professor's communication style (both direct and indirect style)?	Interview
				(4) Have you ever understand jokes and humor when you communicated with other students and professors?	Interview

				(5)Have you feel uncomfortable saying "thank you" when someone complimented you? (6) Have you ever feel uncomfortable when your friends kissed on the campus or in the classroom? (1) Have you feel uncomfortable to	Interview
			2. Students' profile (collectivistic orientation and confucian tradition) behavior influences adapt in.	express your ideas at lectures because you might be embarrassed or lose face? (2)Have you feel embarrassed or lose face when you do not understand what they said or someone did not understand what you really meant?	
	-----**Psychological Critical Incidents** a. Life Change	Psychological adjustment was predicted by satisfactory relationships with host nations, extraversion, life changes and social difficulty, while cultural distance, more dependent upon variables such as length of residence in new culture, and quantity of interactions with host nationals, expectation of difficulty and depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment (Ward& Kennedy; Ward & Searle 1993).	1. Students fell unconfortable due to lack of psychological pre-prepare to adapt unfamilar cultural.	(1)Have you ever feel uncomfortable living alone in Barcelona without familiar things such as family members, friends, classmates, relatives, etc.? (2)Have you ever feel uncomfortable over-maintain your health without you family members and your friends? (3)Have you ever feel uncomfortable changing from your home typical daily schedule including meal, rest, and work time to host daily schedule? (4) Have you ever feel uncomfortable adapting in unfamiliar culture?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview

	b. Personality	Characteristicsof the self also plays a role in the consequences of the intercultural contact (Allport,1954). Lee and Robbins(1998) posed social connectedness as the subjective awareness of being in close relationship with the social word and reflects an internal sense of belonging to that world The adaptive personality has the following characteristics: openness (flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity), personality strength (risk taking, hardness, persistency, and self- control), positiveness (Kim, 2001: 98).	1. Openness characteristics will help students to adapt to unfamiliar culture.	1. How often you had experienced feeling discourage, helpless and depress when you are in difficult situation? 2. How often you had experienced feeling lonely and bored in your dormitory? 3. How often you had experienced certain feeling homesick?	Questionnaire Interview
	c. Quantity of Interaction	Lee and Robbins(1995) reasoned people with high social connectedness can effectively manage their feelings and needs and are thus less prone an anxiety and depression	1. Students lack of opportunity to freely interact with other students.	(1) How often you had experienced playing sports with your local friends such as Ping-Pong, badminton, Yoga, swimming, have meal or celebrating festival, travel with local friends?	Interview
	4. Social Support	Collaborative efforts among various campus entities. For instance, Academic programs,	1.Students need help from university hospital, host social support, and	(1) Have you ever feel youdon't know who can help you when you are in helpless. Such as health problem, you	Questionnaire

		international students office, counselling centers, health services are needed to provide a receptive climate that reduces discrimination and increases awareness of the needs of the international students(Jocab& Greggo,2001)	friends from same country to reduce discrimination	cannot finding right place to see doctor or counselling center when I got sick. (2)Have you feel uncomfortable talking or asking about confuse questions from IWP? Such as Nir, return permit card and medical insurance	Interview
Strategies for coping Academic activities Critical Incidents Adaptation					
What strategies have Chinese students use to cope with academic critical incidents adaptation in university of new cultural environment?	a. Developing languageskill	As students will have to cope with a dual challenge, like every freshman entering university they need to adapt to the academic life. In addition, they have to deal with acculturation stress encountered by every sojourner (Church, 1982); as social contacts increased, language improved, as language improved, social contact increased (Church, 1982). Interactions with host nationals provide opportunities for international students to practice their communication and language skills.(Brunetee, Hendrickson,2011)	1.Participants have developing several active coping strategies to deal with language barriers, attended language course, joined a language exchange program, the courses provide students useful and interesting information on Barcelona culture and society	(1) Did you usually feel it is helpful when you speak English fluently or speak a little Spanish or Catalan? (2)Did you usually take part in Spanish/ Catalan/English language or cultural classes? (3) Did you usually use the English Spanish or Catalan language in your daily interactions? (4) How did you usually improve your language skill?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview

	b. Developing mutual understanding through various means and channels between teacher and teaching relationship.	The relationships with UAB faculty members were different from what they had expected before they came to Barcelona. They became dissatisfied with their professors, because they did not meet their expectations.	1. Understand became engaged in learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations, students made progress in adjusting to their new academic environment. Understand how Chinese cultural conditioning has influenced you and how some values of you own culture may cause problems in the host culture	(1) What did you identifies similarities or differences between China and Barcelona educational system?such as academic styles, teaching method and etc.	Questionnaire
				(2)Did you usually ask about confuse the academic questions to your professors, colleagues and friends?	Interview
				(3) Did you accept your professors or classmates expressed their ideas in a direct way?	Interview
				(4) Did you accept when the teacher and students did the actual teaching through discussions and presentation	Interview
					Interview
				(5) Did you accept when the professor guided students to take responsibility for their learning?	Interview
				(6) What did you learn from presentation or discussions process?	Interview
				(7) What did you learn after you take responsibility for your learning?	Interview
				(8) Did you usually take part in research projects assisted by Spanish teacher or professors?	

	c. Developing studentsmotivation	Individuals' motivations and attitudes relevant to intercultural communication, and a tolerance for ambiguity and anxiety while being faced with intercultural situations (Kim,1991).	1.Look on the brighter side of things in the face of inevitable frustrations rather than engaging in negativity	(1)Did you usually feel your language significantly and academic research abilities improved?	Questionnaire
				(2) Did you usually feel your knowledge increased?	Interview
				(3) Did you usually feel you improved in your ability to obtain research information?	Interview
				(4)Did you usually feel you improved in your academic research abilities?	Interview
				(5)Did you usually feel you improved in international academic exchange abilities?	Interview
				(6)Did you usually feel you improved in your social interaction activity?	Interview
				(7)Did you usually feel you improved in your self-confidence?	Interview
				(8)Did you usually feel you improved in your empathy, flexibility, and tolerance for ambiguity?	Interview
				(10)Did you feel this opportunity offered you a good chance to improve your abilities to adapt to unfamiliar culture?	

d. Developing the ability to be independent and familiar with host education system	Chinese students are likely to be embarrassed at presentation and also experience difficulty in expressing their feelings or thoughts. These factors may arise due to their lack of language proficiency as well as to their Chinese value of not offending or directly challenging other student's ideas (Greer,2005). The principle of simultaneous interplay of new learning and loss of old habits make it plain that as strangers, people cannot realistically choose between keeping their original identity intact and adapting to new environment successfully (Kim 2001).Adaptive changes are an inevitable part of the dialectics of "give-and-take" or "push and pull", in losing, and gaining self-renewal.	1. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". The willingness to change is imperative to learning how to be independent and familiar with host education system without family members and close friends around to help.	(1) Did you usually feel you improved in your independence (include study and life)? (2) Did you usually feel you improved you confidence? (3)Did you feel comfortable to participate your classmate and colleague debate? (4) Did you very hapy to make presentation and group work? (5) Did you comfortable with professor's teching and learning methods?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview Interview

	Strategies of coping　Sociocultural Critical Incidents				
	a.　Developing interact with host nationals	Through contact with local communicates, international students gain new knowledge and understanding of the life style, values and customs of host society (Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune,2011)	1. Students developing interact with local students and friends, they gain new knowledge and understanding the host culture.	(1) Did you usually make local friends in different ways? Such as have meal, made language partner, which means you teach local students Chinese as well as they teach you Spanish, sport or travel etc. (2)Did you usually viersit Spanish colleagues or classmates? (3) Did you usually make local friends at school?	Questionnaire Interview
	b.　Developing involvement in extracurricular activities.	Engagement in activities in public places, traveling, parties, cultural events, volunteering and social work , go to public place, give more opportunities to get to know the local culture by observing the way local people lived and the way society functioned as a whole.(Wang & Hannes, 2013)	1. Developing interactional activities with other students and Engagement in activities in public places. Students participated in some sport activities of their own liking taking relaxation to cope with change and stress.	(1) Did you feel it is helpful to understand host culture when I involvement in extracurricular activities, such as party, visit museums, sport, social work and etc.？ (2) Did you usually have a part time job or volunteer in UAB? (3) Did you usually visit museums (such as historical, national museums) or travel Barcelona or Spain? (4) Did you usually participate in academic report/ academic activities?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview

				(5) Did you usually take part in students' activities such as weekend parties or volunteer services?	Interview
					Interview
				(6) Did you usually participate in the academic salon in UAB?	Interview
				(7) Did you usually celebrate festival such as Christmas, Dia de los Reyes San Joan with your local friends?	
					Interview
				(8) Did you participate in Chinese activities	
	c. Developing culture knowledge of host cultural	General knowledge about a new culture(Pruitt,1978) and previous experience abroad (kilinebeerg&Hull,1979) The lack of knowledge of a new culture might have engendered international students to perceive cultural distance, which has been defined as perceived similarities and differences between the sojourner's home culture of the international students and the culture of the host country. Greter perceived cultural distance is	1.Cultural understanding (verbal and nonverbal patterns) can help the students to share the locals' behavior to interpret the hidden, unspoken assumptions operating in the host culture, and to see how and why the locals communicate in the ways they do. A deep level of understanding of the local culture involves knowledge of its historical, political,	(1) Do you feel it is helpful if I had previous experience study abroad or general knowledge about Barcelona before studying at UAB. (2)How much knowledge about Barcelona did you know before you came? (3) Did you participate in any training (courses) in intercultural communication before studying in UAB? (4) Did you had previous experience abroad before studying in UAB (5)Did you usually feel host culture	Questionnaire
					Interview
					Interview
					Interview

		associate with higher social difficulty, which is inversely related to sociocultural adjustment.(Ward&Kennedy,1993	economic, and religious and educational institutions. As well as its values, technologies, attitudes, beliefs, respected and distinguished communication by correct or right behavior after psychological internal management and external psychological outcomes.	knowledge increased such as historical, political, economic, religious, educational institution, social-economic conditions, norm and taboo?	Interview
	Strategies of coping Psychological critical incidents				
	a. Life change--Developing the ability to be independent and understanding the intercultural adjustment process	To facilitate psychosocial adjustment of Chinese students, achieve a full understanding of sojourner adjustment processes (Kim,2001)	1.-Try to enjoy being alone at times through appropriate ways. Understanding of sojourner adjustment processes, understanding that stress is a natural feeling that can be experienced by anyone in a demanding situation. Identify the typical stages of adaptation and learn to tolerate and cope with.	(1)Did YOU feel enjoy studying in UAB, and how did you rate your overall adjustment to UAB life?	Questionnaire

	b. Personality----Building new relationships and won the confidence and trust from others	Engage international students in enduring and meaningful social activities with other(Jacob& Greggo,2001)	1. Students making a conscious effort to participate in the host culture and won the confidence and trust from others. More and more students became more talkative and got used to discussions.	(1).Did you feel you won the confidence and trust from our friends after you have built new social network? (2) Did you feel you homesick and loneliness mostly?	Questionnaire Interview
	c. Developing quantity of interaction	Social connectedness with host nationals, adherence to the host culture, and social interaction with host nationals, explained both adjustment domains. (psychological and sociocultural Zhang, 2011)	1. Developing quantity of interaction with host nations, students could identifies similarities or differences between China and Barcelona, such as communication patterns, social taboo and lifestyle .Maintaining a positive attitude and living happily. The activities interaction with host nationals to avoid isolation, loneliness and depression.	(1).How often you had experienced playing sports with your local friends such as Ping-Pong, badminton, Yoga, swimming, Taiji have meal, making Chinese cuisine or celebrating festival, travel with local or other international friends?	Interview

	d. Developing social network	Open campus culture with an inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity is necessary for international students to successfully pursue the integration strategy, (Berry,1997)	1. Cultivate a personal and active support system, such as talk over problems with Chinese friends, receiving emotional and other support from family and friends by E-mail or telephone and international affairs office.	(1) Did you know where to seek help when you have problems? (2) How often did you call your family? (3) Did you talk over problems with your Chinese friends from UAB or from family member of China? (4) Did you get some information from other way or channel such as IWP or Chinese communities?	Questionnaire Interview Interview Interview

Appendix E: Codes list

Code-Filter: All

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HU: 111

File: [F:\录音访谈\111.hpr6]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 2015-07-12 05:04:23

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A.C.I:DAI and FHES: new learning and loss of old habits

A.C.I:DAI and FHES:willingness to change is imperative to learning

A.C.I:DLS:deal with acculturation stress

A.C.I:DLS:interactions with host nationals

A.C.I:DLS:language improved

A.C.I:DLS:need to adapt to the academic life

A.C.I:DLS:social contacts increased

A.C.I:DMU: dissatisfied with their professors

A.C.I:DMU:different from what they had expected before came

A.C.I:DMU:learning the culturally different academic styles and expectations

A.C.I:LA:abilities to ask questions in class

A.C.I:LA:impact writing assignments

A.C.I:LA:lack of language proficiency

A.C.I:LA:understanding lectures

A.C.I:NES:conflicts concerning communication

A.C.I:NES:embarrassed in expressing felling/ thoughts

A.C.I:NES:lack of academic and independent research

A.C.I:NES:lack of language proficiency and not challenging other ideas

A.C.I:NES:norms, rules, systems,values, procedure,tasks

A.C.I:NES:society emphasize values

A.C.I:NES:unique nature of culture

A.C.I:TTR:difference on interactions

A.C.I:TTR:differences in expectations students & teachers

A.C.I:TTR:negotiation of meaning,tasks,goals

P.C.I:DI and UIAP:psychosocial adjustment & adjustment processes

P.C.I:DSN:inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity

P.C.I:LC:depression predicted difference in sociocultural adjustment

P.C.I:LC:length of residence in new culture

P.C.I:LC:quantity of interactions with host nationals

P.C.I:SS:international students office need to provide receptive climate

S.C.I:CD:the transition between cultures entail   life changes&engender   distress

S.C.I:DCKHC:perceived similarities & difference between two cultures.

S.C.I:DIEA:engagement in activities in public places

S.C.I:IE:interaction with host nationals include conversations or activities