

The factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies

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Abstract:

In the context of globalization trend in nowadays, Irish workplaces have become a multicultural place involves many employees from different cultures. (Wagner, 2012) As well as, Chinese ethnic group was one of the biggest immigrant groups in Ireland, (our health service, 2019). Thus, the acculturation process of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces was an interesting topic to investigate. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the major factors that affect the acculturation attitude (Berry J. W., 2006). of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. Qualitative research methods have been selected and five semi-structured interviews of Chinese employees who have been working in different industries in Ireland for over 5 years have been conducted for this research.

The key findings of this research were corresponding with most of the previous findings in literature reviews. That is factors that related to sense of self such as high-differentiation and self-efficacy, or emotional oriented factors such as affective workgroup commitment had a larger impact on the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces than external objective factors, such as language barriers or work discrimination. (Johnson, 2017), (Saissy Magnet de, 2009), (Ying Lua*, 2013). The findings have emerged from the analysis of six themes through coded data. The key themes were identified regarding each considered factors above to achieve the research objectives were derived from the research question. These findings could enhance the acculturation process of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces by knowing the essential factors that affect their acculturation attitude, in order to facilitate the harmony of Irish workplaces.

Declaration:

This work submitted for examination is entirely the author's work and that all materials referenced, all ideas and all verbatim excerpts obtained during the research of the dissertation have been properly and accurately acknowledged. (The NCI official declaration form attached in the Appendix).

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Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to identify the major factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. In the context of globalization, multicultural workplaces have been appearing more and more (Wagner, 2012). As Chinese people was one of the largest immigrant groups in Ireland (our health service, 2019), it was vital to understand how Chinese employees fit into the workplace in their host country. Only by understanding what the root factors were which affect acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in their workplaces, we could facilitate the harmony of organizations and gain better development in the future.

An array of research on this topic revealed that factors related to sense of self made a profound impact on Chinese immigrants in host countries. Differentiation of self, self-efficacy, and affective workplace commitment were the major factors that all had a positive correlation with acculturation attitude in previous studies. (Johnson, 2017), (Saissy Magnet de, 2009), (Ying Lua*, 2013). Furthermore, some of the research has indicated that negative acculturation attitudes (separation or marginalization) were associated with language barriers and racism. (NiJun, 2019) (King-O'Riain, 2008) (Yifeng Wei, 2015). However, as there was a lack of research focused on Chinese employees in Irish workplaces, this is an interesting and meaningful research question to be studied.

This study applied the qualitative research method. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with five ordinary Chinese-born employees who have worked in Ireland for more than five years in completely different industries. The results of the thematic analysis indicated that factors that related to sense of self, such as high self-differentiation, would have a bigger impact on the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies, compared to objective factors such as language barriers. Furthermore, two other sense of self-oriented factors, self-efficacy, and affective workgroup commitment, has also been applied and tested in this research. The findings regarding these two factors were different from the results of previous research. The patterns between these two factors and the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees at work were not clearly illustrated so that some initial research directions have also been indicated in this research for the future.

Literature Reviews:

Background:

Chinese people are one of the largest minority ethnic groups in Ireland and they have always been a huge percentage of the workforce in Ireland. China and Ireland are two completely distinct countries and culture is a very broad topic. This made the question, "How would Chinese immigrants adapt to a brand-new western culture?", an interesting topic. Therefore, this research attempted to target the factors that affect the acculturation of Chinese immigrants in their host country's working environment.

The Multicultural Workplace

It has been pointed out that international migration has become a popular trend in today's world. Approximately more than 160 million people are living outside their birth country, which was a good reason to believe that globalization is the main driving force of migration across the world. Castles (1999) indicated that the flow of labor has grown based on the liberalization policy with globalization; so that international migration was also considered as a component of globalization. (Castles, 2002) (Effects of Globalization on Migration, 2018).

In the context of the international migration wave caused by globalization, multicultural investments have increased as well. Therefore, a lot of countries have started recruiting highly skilled employees and professional technicians to attract more foreign investments. (Wagner, 2012). On the other hand, due to globalization, the flow of capital and commodities between rich and poor countries could not counteract the lack of employment in poor countries anymore. This meant that the lack of employment in poor countries was relatively bigger than in rich countries. Employees from poorer countries were forced to seek work opportunities abroad. (Wagner, 2012) Consequently, workplaces were increasingly transforming into multicultural places that include numerous international employees from a variety of ethnic groups. (Wagner, 2012).

Pasca and Wagner (2012) demonstrated that in the context of the globalization trend, empirical evidence implied that a constant dynamic change has been applied in workplaces in Canada. As a result of this, both local and international employees have experienced pressures. Multicultural issues such as language barriers and cultural values have appeared in the new culturally diverse workplaces. (Wagner, 2012) White also believes that culture is a complicated and essential mechanism that is used to adapt to the external environment (Dey et al., 2019). Therefore, with the increment of multicultural workplaces worldwide, multicultural conflicts and obstacles have occurred inevitably in the workplace. For immigrant employees, how to deal with different cultures in the workplace has become an essential topic.

The Meaning of Acculturation

Acculturation was introduced to describe the process and progress of both behavioral and psychological changes of an individual or group experiencing long-term contact with another culture. (Matsudaira, 2006; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003)

Ni (2019) indicated that when immigrants suddenly changed their lives and work environment from their original country to the host country, they might feel disconnected due to unfamiliar languages, behaviors, rules, habits, symbols, beliefs, and values. The conflict between two cultures appeared as a result of that. Therefore, immigrants had to face the dilemma of cross-cultural adaption, but should they keep their original culture or adapt to the host culture? This was an unavoidable challenge for immigrants (Ni, 2019). No matter which adaption approach immigrants have chosen, all of them were considered a

part of the process of acculturation.

In the earlier stage, most research had not arrived at a consensual definition on the meaning and composition of acculturation. The majority of the studies thought that the composition of acculturation is confusing and blurred and thus it has lacked the consistency of conceptualization. (Mehta, 1998)

Additionally, Berry indicated that the composition of acculturation is extremely essential in comprehending how different acculturating groups, (such as Chinese employees in Irish companies) manage the acculturation in a new cultural environment (Berry, 1997). Therefore, a variety of acculturation theories arose that aimed to explain the reason, the method, and the extent of how immigrants would keep their original culture, adapt to the host culture, or even generate a new culture. Even though all the theories are different, they all have one ideology in common, which is, acculturation is a complicated process. (Sonderegger & Barrett, 2004) Immigrants need to learn the host culture's characteristics deliberately or accidentally and be able to combine them with their original features to adapt to the host cultures. (Berry, 2002). However, the bigger the gap between original and host cultures, the more difficult it is for immigrants to adapt. (Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

The Pattern of Acculturation

Acculturation attitudes were described as individual lifestyle choices with regards to immigrants' heritage culture and host culture. This also represented immigrants' perception of how they would prefer to live in the host country. (Ying Lua*, 2013) Many researchers have investigated the pattern of acculturation. Among the theoretical frameworks corresponding to the attitudes of acculturation, the most popular and inspirational model is Berry's model (Figure 1) (Berry 2006) (Ying Lua, 2013).

Castles (2002) demonstrated three acculturation methods of immigrations in host countries: assimilation, differential exclusion and multiculturalism. (Effects of Globalization on Migration, 2018) In Castles (2002) research, assimilation illustrated that immigrants prefer to accept and adapt their new culture and society rather than keep their heritage culture. These immigrants have transferred their loyalty and faith from their heritage culture to mainstream culture in their host country. However, due to the cultural gap, not all immigrants had an assimilation attitude. Therefore, differential exclusion appeared. These immigrants who used the differential exclusion approach were mostly from nearby countries and worked in the host country for a short period. They were only participating in a part of the local culture and society, such as the labor market, but excluded themselves from other parts of the local culture and society, such as political participation. Furthermore, as society developed, immigrants started bringing their families into the host country and gradually transitioned from "temporary immigrants" to permanent residents who have built their communities. Therefore, structural changes were implemented in the host society and cultural conflicts were caused by these immigrants. The host government was not able to eliminate those cultural changes which caused conflicts to occur. Due to this, there was an introduction of official policies for multiculturalism, initially in Canada (1971) and Australia (1973), in order to balance the multicultural differences in the host country. (Effects of Globalization on Migration, 2018). (Castles, 2002).

In comparison, the Berry (2006) model was more intuitive and classified the acculturation methods systematically into four categories, rather than the roughly divided acculturation approaches in three categories in the Castles (2002) model. Two were relatively extreme (assimilation and differential exclusion) and the third one was neutral and inclusive compared to the other two(multiculturalism).

From the study of Berry (2006), the acculturating immigrants generally face two major problems: 1) Is it vital to maintain their original cultural heritage? 2) Is it vital to interact with the other groups from the host cultures? Berry (2006) devised four different acculturation strategies that respond to these two questions and that include assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (Berry, 2006). (Ying Lua*, 2013). (Brady, & Stevens, 2019). They were considered the result of the process of characteristic psychological and behavioral changes.

Marginalization was the consequence of immigrants who abandon their original culture as well as failing to adapt to the host culture. (Ying Lua*, 2013) Refugees have experienced an unsteady life caused by war, so they tended to neither maintain their heritage culture nor accept mainstream culture even though they have resided in a new country. Due to this, refugees were more likely to hold the marginalization acculturation attitude. (Saissy, 2009) Separation was the consequence of immigrants who prefer to maintain their original cultural heritage as well as avoiding interaction with the host culture. Assimilation was the consequence of immigrants who tended to replace their original cultural heritage with the host culture. Younger generations who preferred the host country's lifestyle were more likely to hold this acculturation attitude (Saissy, 2009). Finally, integration was the consequence of immigrants who maintained their original culture as well as communicated with the host cultural group (Ying Lua*, 2013) (Saissy, 2009).

From the current research regarding acculturation attitude, many researchers have found a variety of research results. For example, Komisarof (2015) found that most American immigrants have taken the marginalization attitude while permanent residents in Japan and have taken integration as their second option. Moreover, Berry (2006) indicated that most Vietnamese and Portuguese immigrants preferred assimilation, most Algerians immigrants preferred integration, most Antillean immigrants preferred marginalization while most Moroccan immigrants preferred separation in their host country (Saissy, 2009) (Ying Lua*, 2013). They have shown variations in terms of being acculturation options. However, these results regarding acculturation attitude options were not well-defined. Although Ying (2013) also indicated that in Australia, where cultural diversity was accepted and advocated, immigrants preferred to choose integration rather than other acculturation attitudes, different immigrants would choose different acculturation attitudes in certain circumstances. (Ying Lua*, 2013)

Furthermore, there were also some other models. For example, Peñaloza (1994) introduced four approaches of acculturation: assimilation, resistance, maintenance and segregation which were derived from the Berry (1981) model. (Bidit Lal Dey and Sharifah Alwi, 2019). Additionally, Lal Dey (2019) in his research, which was derived from Berry's model as well, also devised four classifications of acculturation including resonance, rarefaction, refrainment and rebellion. Besides these models, the unidirectional acculturation model and the bi-directional acculturation model that were introduced in the research of Cleveland et al., (2016). The unidirectional acculturation model assumed that the host country's culture had gradually been replaced by the original country and the ancestral features of the original culture. Simultaneously, the bi-directional model assumed that immigrants choose different approaches to adapt and keep both the host and home country's culture. From the perspective of multi-culture and diversity, the majority of researchers supported the bi-bidirectional acculturation model. A strong research strand (Bidit Lal Dey and Sharifah Alwi, 2019) supported the bi-directional acculturation due to the extensive and inclusive characteristic of the bi-directional acculturation model.

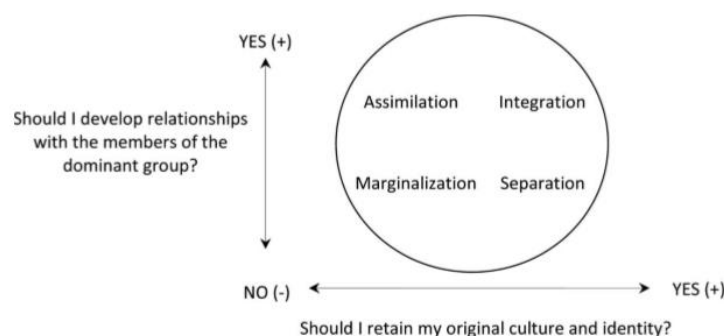


Figure 1

Factors affect the acculturation in the workplace

Much research has been done to investigate a variety of factors that affect the acculturation attitude in

workplaces and society. Most of the factors in this research were divided simply into two types: one related to sense of self and an individual's psychological status, and the other one related to the external environment and an individual's physical status.

Some researchers have pointed out that the enthusiastic sense of self-oriented factors such as self-differentiation, self-efficacy and affective commitment would have a big impact on immigrants' attitudes of acculturation in workplaces and society. Self-differentiation and self-efficacy were two similar factors but with essentially distinct characteristics. Differentiation of self illustrated that the ability to separate an individual's feelings and thinking at the intrapsychic level, and the ability to manage relationships with others at the interpersonal level (Bowen, 1978). It could also be considered as the process of experiencing intimacy with others without losing a clear and strong sense of self, simultaneously. (Karen, 2019). Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is used to measure the degree or strength of the individual's own belief in their ability to complete tasks and achieve goals. (Bandura, 1994) (Saissy, Acculturation, self-efficacy and social support among Chinese immigrants in Northern Ireland, 2009). On the other hand, effective workgroup commitment was considered an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. (Ying Lua*, 2013)

Johnson (2017) indicated that an individual who had a high differentiation of self could make better decisions without being driven by emotions and could also overcome challenges more flexibly than individuals with low differentiation of self. Simultaneously, immigrants with high self-differentiation were more capable of making sense of and balancing their two cultures. Moreover, from the perspective of acculturation, Johnson (2017) proposed that immigrants with high differentiation of self would commonly be high on cultural harmony as well. Therefore, Johnson (2017) believed that immigrants who had high differentiation of self would hold a compatible attitude of both their host and original culture, rather than the repulsive attitude. This was because they are hardly affected by cultural conflicts at any level in multicultural society and workplaces due to their high cultural harmony (Johnson, 2017).

Self-efficacy had a similar implication on social integration. Saissy (2009) indicated that self-efficacy was significantly and positively correlated with health-oriented behaviors, individual achievement and cultural integration. This meant immigrants with high self-efficacy were more confident. Consequently, these immigrants had more effective work performance than immigrants with low self-efficacy in the workplace. Furthermore, immigrants with high self-efficacy promote social interaction with mainstream cultural groups, thereby beneficially facilitating the integration of other immigrants. (Saissy, Acculturation, self-efficacy and social support among Chinese immigrants in Northern Ireland, 2009) In the context of multicultural workplaces, Ying (2013) also indicated that positive, affective workgroup commitment might drive immigrants towards the integration acculturation attitude in Australian workplaces. Ying (2013) proved in the study with sufficient evidence that the stronger the affective workgroup commitment, the higher the immigrants' sense of belonging in the host community and in the workplace. So, immigrants who had a high affective workgroup commitment tended to lean towards the integration and assimilation attitude (Ying Lua*, 2013). Ni (2019) from her interview study, has also mentioned that self-esteem helped Chinese immigrants feel accepted by the people in the host society (NiJun, 2019). Furthermore, Saissy (2009) has mentioned another considerable sense of self-related factor which was, Chinese people always feel proud of their own unique and distinct cultural heritage. Chinese immigrants thought their culture had quite a huge impact on the world. Thus, this pride of own ethnic would lead some Chinese immigrants to choose integration or separation acculturation attitude. (Saissy Magnet de, 2009)

On the other hand, some research has proved that external factors such as discrimination, racism, religion and the purpose of immigration have implications of different extents on the acculturation attitude of immigrants. Ni (2019) indicated that language barriers and certain types of discrimination affect the acculturation of Chinese immigrants in their host country. These negative factors complexed their sense of belonging in Irish society. From the result of Ni's interview, most Chinese participants had been subject to discrimination either in work or normal life and they all have felt rejected by the host culture at one time or another. Thus, the majority of Ni's participants preferred the separation attitude. Johnson (2017) also mentioned that Asian-Americans who belong to two cultures faced racial conflicts which could impact their acculturation process. (Johnson, 2017). King (2008) proposed that racial

experiences impacted Polish and Chinese immigrants' integration in Ireland in his research as well (King-O'Riain, 2008). Thus, racism and language barriers stopped immigrants acculturating into the host country at some level. However, there were a minority of participants that had adapted to life and work in the host country very well, even though they had experienced racism, due to their exceptional self-esteem (NiJun, 2019). Johnson (2017) had a very similar ideology in his research as well. He indicated that immigrants are high on cultural harmony due to their high differentiation of self and tend to possess a compatible attitude of two cultures, even though they have experienced racism and discrimination. (Johnson, 2017). Furthermore, Saissy (2009) in her study also found that religion affects the acculturation of immigrants in Northern Ireland. That is, Chinese immigrants who had the same or a similar religion with the host country's primary religion, had a compatible acculturation attitude. (Saissy, Acculturation, self-efficacy and social support among Chinese immigrants in Northern Ireland, 2009).

Overall, differentiation of self, self-efficacy, affective workgroup commitment, discrimination, racism and language barriers, were the major factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese immigrants in the host countries in the aforementioned literature. In the context of these pieces of literature, it seemed that sense of self-oriented factors had high implications on acculturation attitude compared with some other external social factors which are unrelated to sense of self. Ni (2013) and Johnson (2017) have proved that high self-differentiation and exceptional self-esteem have driven part of the immigrants towards the integration attitude when they have also experienced racism. (NiJun, 2019). (Johnson, 2017). Thus, these existing patterns provided a distinct and clear research direction for the development of this research question.

Chinese Employees in the Workplace

From the official data from Irish immigration services, the number of ethnically Chinese in Ireland was estimated at 60,000. This meant the Chinese was one of the largest minority ethnicities in Ireland (our health service, 2019). Applicants with Chinese nationality occupied 35% of the total applicants of Irish investment immigration worldwide between 2013 and 2014. It reached 48% between 2014 and 2015, ranking first in the world. Among the current permanent residence population, the population of Chinese immigrants accounted for 0.7% of the total number of residents and it has been growing rapidly compared with 0.4% in 2001. From the perspective of the age distribution, 47% of Chinese immigrants were aged between 16 and 24 in Ireland, (King-O'Riain, 2008). Besides, the Chinese community could be categorized into three groups: Chinese born in the People's Republic of China, Chinese born in Ireland and Chinese born outside mainland China, such as Hong Kong. Compared to the latter two groups, the former group was either university and language school students or professional workers in Ireland. Mandarin was the first language of this newer community, so this group maintains the most traditional habits and culture of China. They were also the focus group of this research. (King-O'Riain, 2008) (our health service, 2019)

From the perspective of acculturation attitude choices, even though most of the literature above implied that Chinese immigrants tend to hold the integration and assimilation acculturation attitudes in host countries, there were still opposing opinions about the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in workplaces.

According to Ying's research (Ying Lua, 2013), creating an affective workgroup commitment was not as simple as the theories state. Poor affective workgroup commitment might lead to a decrease in both Chinese immigrants' life and work satisfaction. Also, immigrants' mental health issues and physiological pressure might increase sharply due to the diverse changes in multicultural workplaces (Ying Lua*, 2013) (Wagner, 2012). Unfortunately, Wei (2015) proved that Chinese immigrants seek fewer consultation services than other ethnicities (Yifeng Wei, 2015). Additionally, Johnson (2017) also proved that immigrants who have more mental health problems decrease their differentiation of self. (Johnson, 2017) Therefore, these unsteady environmental factors and mental health issues might force Chinese immigrants to choose the separation or marginalization acculturation attitude in workplaces. (Yifeng Wei, 2015). King-O'Riain (2008) and Ni (Ni, 2019) have also mentioned in their research, that Chinese employees found it more difficult to completely adapt to the host country than they expected, due to the

huge cultural gap. (NiJun, 2019). (King-O’Riain, 2008).

In addition, King-O’Riain (2008) found that Chinese immigrants belong to the Target Learners category. This implied that they have chosen immigration for improving their professional skills, such as a foreign language for further development in workplaces. One of the reasons for this is that China has an extremely intense job competition market compared to Ireland (King-O’Riain, 2008). Therefore, they were more focused on their aim of immigration than the acculturation attitude in the host country which could interfere with their original and expectational acculturation attitude choices. (King-O’Riain, 2008). Moreover, Ni (2019) illustrated that many Chinese employees preferred to stay among themselves when they first arrive in the host country to attempt to eliminate their insecurity. Some Chinese employees have chosen to socialize with only other Chinese people, even though they have resided and worked in the host countries for a while. This made it difficult to learn the host language which also slowed down the process of acculturation. (NiJun, 2019).

Overall, there were a large number of factors that might stop Chinese employees acculturating into Irish companies where they work. The actual situation was more complicated than simple theoretical models. Thus, this research aimed to identify the major factors that have a profound impact on the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in the Irish workplace. According to the synthesized analysis of the aforementioned literature, the factors related to emotional orientation and sense of self tend to have a greater impact on the acculturation attitude of immigrants compared with objective factors such as languages, self-efficacy, self-differentiation, affective commitment to the organization and mental health, etc. However, there was not much research that focused on Chinese immigrants in workplaces, regarding acculturation attitude. Only Ying (2013) focused on Chinese employees in the workplace among the those studies. Therefore, there was a lack of rigorous investigation of major factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in the Irish workplace.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the factors that are related to sense of self had a huge impact on the acculturation attitude, corresponding to the analysis above. Differentiation of self, self-efficacy and affective workgroup commitment were three major factors. However, rigorous and critical research on how these factors affect Chinese immigrants in Irish workplaces was still required. Therefore, three major assumptions arose in the context of these pieces of literature:

1. *Differentiation of self and self-efficacy does affect the acculturation of Chinese immigrants in Irish companies.*
2. *High differentiation of self and self-efficacy would lead Chinese employees to choose the integration or assimilation acculturation attitudes in Irish companies.*
3. *Affective workgroup commitment would lead Chinese employees to choose the integration or assimilation acculturation attitudes in Irish companies.*

Furthermore, the objective factors caused by the external environment of the host country such as religion, language barriers and discrimination have also affected acculturation attitudes. According to the results of the research, language barriers or racism have stopped immigrants acculturating into their host society (NiJun, 2019). However, in the above finding, Saissy (2009) indicated that individuals with high differentiation of self would adapt to a new cultural environment quickly and smoothly, even if the individual had been subject to racism. (Saissy Magnet de, 2009) Therefore, another assumption arises:

4. *Objective factors such as workplace discrimination and language barriers have less impact on the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish companies than factors related to subjective factors (Differentiation of self, self-efficacy and affective workgroup commitment).*

Research Questions:

The overall research question and objective was to define the factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. In order to clarify the useful data for further analysis, five sub-research objectives were derived from the overall research objective based on the literature review section.

According to the literature review, Johnson (2017) in his empirical study of 315 Asian-American adults, found that individuals with high differentiation of self were more tolerant to other cultures and beliefs so that these individuals with high differentiation of self would be more likely to adopt the integration attitude towards acculturation. (Johnson, 2017). Saissy (2009) hypothesized and confirmed that the level of self-efficacy could affect the acculturation attitude of individuals through rigorous data analysis from 206 questionnaires. As a result of this, Saissy (2009) also showed that the marginalization acculturation attitude was linked with low self-efficacy and vice versa. (Saissy Magnet de, 2009). Johnson (2017) and Saissy (2009) both investigated the factors related to sense of self that affect Chinese immigrants' acculturation attitude in their research. They obtained similar results that show the factor is positively correlated with acculturation attitude.

Furthermore, King (2008) proposed that part of the reason that Chinese immigrants chose the separation or marginalization attitude was because of their low 'participatory belonging' to the host society. (King-O'Riain, 2008). Therefore, acculturation attitude was linked with sense of belonging. Moreover, from the perspective of workplaces, Ying (2013) in her study of 220 questionnaires, found that Chinese employees who tend to adopt the integration or assimilation attitudes had a higher affective workgroup commitment (sense of belonging to the workplace) in Australian workplaces. (Ying Lua*, 2013).

In addition to the factors associated with sense of self or sense of belonging, objective factors also impact the acculturation attitude. Ni (2019) in her study of numerous interviews revealed that racism and language barriers are the two main factors that stopped most of her participants acculturating into the host society. (NiJun, 2019). Johnson (2017) and King (2008) had similar ideologies in their studies as well. Based on the above findings, the negative acculturation attitude associated with racism and language barriers. However, Ni (2019) found that the self-confidence of participants improved over time, they gradually leaned towards the integration attitude (NiJun, 2019). Johnson (2017) had similar findings in his study. Individuals with high self-differentiation also tend to perceive their two cultures as compatible, despite experiences of racism and discrimination. (Johnson, 2017).

Overall, the main factors were self-differentiation, self-efficacy, affective workgroup commitment and objective factors (language barriers or racism) that impact the acculturation attitude of immigrants, but these findings could only be applied on certain targets, therefore, five sub-research objectives were derived from these findings, in order to test these factors on Chinese employees in Irish workplaces in this research.

Sub-research objective one:

To investigate whether self-differentiation affects the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Sub-research objective two:

To investigate whether self-efficacy affects the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Sub-research objective three:

To ascertain whether affective workgroup commitment affect acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Sub-research objective four:

To ascertain whether external factors such as Language and discrimination affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Sub-research objective five:

To investigate whether the factors related to sense of self would have a deeper impact on the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces more than the external factors.

Methodology

Introduction:

The main research question was to define the root factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. In the context of the research questions, five sub research objectives based on literature reviews were proposed in the last sections.

Therefore, it was essential to utilize a professional and appropriate research methodology to collect reliable data, in order to prove the above assumptions. This section involved the research approach, the entire procedure, and the data collection process as well as the comprehensive data analysis process of this study. The thematic analysis was applied for data analysis in this research.

Moreover, this section also involved the ethical considerations and research limitations for audiences to gain a better understanding of the results, while simultaneously helping other researchers to define their work better regarding the same research area in the future.

Research Approach:

This research belongs to interpretive philosophy. That is, the main purpose of this research was to obtain a relatively reliable conclusion based on the five research objectives above through data analysis, instead of calculating rigorous scientific results through repeated experiments and a large amount of authentic and accurate data. Moreover, the acculturation attitude of immigrants was an extremely complicated psychological process as numerous factors could have a huge impact on it. Even though much research has contributed useful findings regarding this topic, there was still a lack of deep investigation on this particular research question. This meant simple answers and numerical data from surveys or questionnaires were not strong enough to answer and interpret this research question, so comprehensive ideologies and thoughtful perceptions of participants were required to ascertain the research objectives. Therefore, qualitative research methods were applied to this research as its methodology.

Interviewing was one of the most common qualitative methods in most researches. Most research from the literature review section utilized interviews as their methodology. Ten interviews were planned to conduct in person. However, due to the restriction of the current pandemic, a large amount of formal in-depth face to face interviews could not be executed. It was harder to find available participants than as usual, thus, only five high-quality semi-structured interviews were conducted online.

Data collection

The study participants:

In the context of the research topic, 'Factors that Affect the Acculturation of Chinese Employees in Irish Workplaces', participants must be Chinese people who have also been working in Ireland for a while. Therefore, all participants were selected from a common chat group online that included a large number of Chinese immigrants who reside and work in Ireland. The study was advertised in this chat group so that people could volunteer to take part. Then the researcher has been rigorously chosen participants from all volunteers by communicating with each of them previously.

To enhance the accuracy and reliability of the data, all participants have been working in Ireland for over five years. The longer period of work would not only reflect participants' process of acculturation in the workplace better but also would reduce the impact of unstable variables on the research results due to the short period of work. For example, the nervous feeling in the new working environment which is unrelated to culture. Additionally, as a result of the ongoing global pandemic, it is more difficult than

usual to find available participants who also meet all the standards. Thus, only five participants were selected for this research. Even though a small sample size of five would be quite typical of qualitative research, the planned sample size was ten. The smaller size of the sample might involve special case on a particular participant which have a possibility to lead unreliable findings. Due to the small size of this sample, it is vital to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data, as well as avoiding unusual cases that might happen in some industries, so participants were selected from completely different industries. The researcher has categorized the main industries of volunteers, then five participants were selected from each main industry who have also meet other requirements. Participants were between 25 and 40 years old, three participants are female, and two participants are male. They were working in design, business, IT, accounting and sale industries separately. Furthermore, the five selected participants were all born in China and grew up in a traditional Chinese family with different backgrounds from the previous conversations, in order to exclude unnecessary and unrelated variables in special instances that couldn't reflect acculturation. For example, Irish born Chinese are born with resonance with the host country, so there is no conflict between original and host cultures which is meaningless for this research. This was not related to particular criteria that were used to selected participants, but it was helpful for this particular research to gain reliable findings.

Instruments and procedures:

To gain better insight into the level of possible factors that affect the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with five selected participants. They were all notified in advance and agreed to participate in this interview through previous communication in the chat group right after they had been selected. After they have agreed in the chat and before the actual interviews started, all participants had received an official email package with a consent form, an information sheet and interview questions. (These three statements were included in the appendices) This email package was to ensure that all participants understood and agreed with the topic and process of the interview and the detailed information about the use of their data. All participants required to sign these statements and send them back to the researcher. Due to the restrictions of the ongoing pandemic, no face-to-face formal interviews could be conducted. Simultaneously, all participants were unwilling to show their faces which was communicated in the previous chat; thus, the semi-structured interviews were conducted through voice calls on Wechat (a Chinese chat application). The main reason for choosing Wechat was that this application has no limitations among regions. It allows unlimited video and voice calls as long as the device connects to the internet.

Moreover, all interviews were conducted in a quiet room indoors, and there were no other irrelevant individuals nearby. The interview time was decided by the participants, mostly between 5 pm and 8 pm after work. The duration of the interviews was between 15 minutes and 20 minutes. Because participants have read the interview questions previously so that they all had made sufficient preparations for the interviews, so each interview only lasted approximately 15 minutes which was much shorter than expected. Another Chinese application called "Xun Fei Ting Jian" was used to record and generate transcriptions for each interview with the participants' consent for further data analysis. The transcription was automatically generated by "Xun Fei Ting Jian". The researcher has reviewed and checked transcriptions back against recordings for accuracy. There were two devices used for the interviews. One mobile phone was used for the voice call while the other mobile phone documented the interviews using "Xun Fei Ting Jian".

Data Analysis Procedure:

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) has been applied for data analysis in this research. Thematic analysis is very suitable for qualitative research because it helps researchers to define similar insights and key characteristics from a large amount of literal data provided by participants, thereby facilitating the collection of clear and organized results. Simultaneously, thematic analysis is a highly flexible analysis method due to its theoretical freedom and technological simplicity. Therefore, this method is especially useful for junior researchers or students with limited research conditions. The

thematic analysis also allows researchers to make appropriate modifications and applications according to their specific topic and requirement, in order to achieve integrated and reliable research conclusions. (Lorelli S. Nowell, 2017) (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

All five interviews have been recorded through “Xun Fei Ting Jian” and have been turned into transcriptions in separate word documents for data analysis. Initially, the researcher reviewed all transcriptions to ensure that all data collected was corresponding with the record. Moreover, all transcribed interviews were coded to classify essential themes and determine patterns. The researcher reorganized and labeled data relevant to the research question so that codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data for further analysis. Then important themes emerged from these codes in order to achieve the research objectives. Each theme has been summarized and analyzed meaningfully to strengthen the comprehension of the participants' distinct perceptions regarding the research question.

Findings:

Six essential themes emerged in the analysis of the coded data regarding the factors that affect the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces as followed: Identification with both host and heritage culture at work; High self-differentiation in Irish workplaces; High Self-efficacy in Irish workplaces; Satisfactory environment of Irish workplaces; Harmfulness of racism or workplaces discrimination in Irish workplaces and Importance of language skills in Irish workplaces.

The themes are demonstrated using the main excerpts from the interviews of the five participants. For participants' privacy and confidentiality, all their identifiable information will be replaced by "xxx" in the selected excerpts.

Theme 1: Identification with both host and heritage culture at work.

This is the key theme that other themes might need to be analyzed with, to obtain the final discussion of this research. This theme corresponds with the acculturation attitude, and it was illustrated with the following examples.

From the collected data, most of the data illustrated that Chinese employees were having identification with both host and heritage culture at work. From the perspective of attitude towards social activities related to work, most participants had an integration attitude, no matter what their intention was. Some participants thought that communicate and socialize with local colleagues is vital while working in Ireland. For example: "The main thing is if you want to progress in work, I find it better to deal with colleagues and talk with them like a friend." _ Participant 3. "I only attend important and unavoidable business parties such as the business Christmas party annually." _ Participant 1.

While other participants purely enjoyed social activities with their colleagues. For example: "I'm really into social events among colleagues, going out and having some drinks." _ Participant 3. "I enjoy attending parties with my colleagues because I am a cheerful person and love parties. My Chinese friends do not like partying, so I always go out with my Irish friends and colleagues." _ Participant 2. "The company often has social events I used to take part in as long as I had nothing important. That's why my relationship with my colleagues became closer." _ Participant 5.

However, fewer participants had a separation attitude in their workplaces due to low self-confidence and poor English skill. For example: "I do not attend business parties very often. When I talk with them, I am not confident enough, because English is not my first language." "because I live in Ireland and I work here, so I have to adapt to their cultures." _ Participant four.

Regardless of their attitude choices in socializing with colleagues and participating in business activities, whether passively or actively, all participants have not chosen to forget or abandon their heritage culture. For example: "I do think communicating with Chinese friends is more intimate because our deepest concepts and values are usually similar as we have the same culture." _ Participant 2. "I have Chinese friends too." _ Participant 3. "It's easier to get together with the Chinese because we have the same food and culture." _ Participant 5. "I normally mix with the people from my own cultures, because I feel more comfortable socializing with people from my own culture." _ Participant 1.

Simultaneously, most of the participants believe that there was no big conflict between socializing with people of the same culture and socializing with people of the host culture. They were compatible, due to the diverse features of Irish workplaces, for example: "I mean, even though I and my Chinese friends are closer, I still love going out with Irish friends." _ Participant 2. "I have friends from both sides." _ Participant 3. "I don't choose my friends with specific requirements. Hanging out with friends with different cultures gives you different feelings that is all." _ Participant 2. "I always bring traditional Chinese food to the office to share them with my colleagues. I think that is the way to make me feel happy and proud of my own culture as well as showing my colleagues another culture as well." _ Participant 1. "Ireland is a multi-cultural society. The company will hold some activities during the Chinese New Year which I always attend. These activities make people from other countries understand Chinese culture better." _ Participant 5.

According to Berry Model, therefore, the attitude of marginalization and assimilation has not been adopted by any participants. Most of the participants have adopted integration, that is they were having identification with both cultures. Only a few participants have adopted a separation attitude. This theme indicated that Chinese employees in the workplace are more inclined to the two moderate choices rather than the extreme acculturation attitudes, such as marginalization. This might imply that extreme acculturation attitudes were not desirable in the workplace. Have identification with both cultures to absorb the advantages of both heritage and host cultures better in order to make continuous progress at work. For example: "As for myself, I will combine the two culture's benefits together because the Chinese people work very hard. And they have very highly efficient when they're doing the job. And Irish people, they focus on the teamwork. So, I will combine these." _ Participant 4.

Theme 2: High self-differentiation in Irish workplaces

This theme corresponded with the level of self - differentiation. Self-differentiation indicated that individuals speak their minds with thoughtful conviction even though others might disapprove of it. (Karen, 2019). According to the data, the level of self-differentiation has represented in two perspectives. The first is whether the participants were confident to express their ideas at work. The second is whether participants were confident to overcome obstacles at work.

Most participants were extremely confident to express their own ideas as well as communicate with their Irish colleagues. For example: "my workplace has a friendly environment, so I feel comfortable in expressing myself."; "If I felt that the particular task is difficult. I would mention it to my boss and teammates before-hand, to prevent affecting original plans." _ Participant 1. "I feel super confident to communicate with them and I feel confident that I can overcome the obstacles by myself, too." _ Participant 2. "I think I communicate well with others." "I personally treat obstacles as challenges. And it is a great experience for yourself to show your working ability. I am not really saying I am confident all the time but I'm not afraid of meeting obstacles." _ Participant 3. "I always feel confident when I contact my Irish colleagues. I don't think there's any big difference between us at work."; "We can communicate more with each other and understand each other's ideas. Then, we can solve the problem better." _ Participant 5

And only few participants were less confident to interact with others in their workplaces. For example: "I'm afraid that I cannot understand what they are talking about. I am not confident to speak out for myself because English is not my first language."; "So, if I meet obstacles, I will try to solve them by myself first." _ Participant 4.

Furthermore, the factors that determine the level of self-confidence or self-differentiation were unclear, and this study has not delved into this point which was unrelated to the research question. However, some participants pointed out that the level of self-differentiation could be improved as the environment changes. Some participants believed that since they have been working in Ireland, their self-confidence has gradually increased due to the impact of the host culture. For example: "I used to be very shy but while I have been working in Ireland, the atmosphere of my company is really comfortable, so I want to express my ideas with strong confidence." _ Participant 1. "I feel more confident and have gained a higher self-awareness."; "I am more open-minded to receive other cultures and stand for my own culture." _ Participant 2. "I leaned from Irish colleagues, if you want something or have something in your mind, speak out." _ Participant 3.

Overall, this theme indicated that most Chinese employees were having high self-differentiation. And even if high self-differentiation of some Chinese employees were not innate, Irish culture could encourage Chinese employees to become more confident at a different level in the workplace, thereby, increasing their level of self-differentiation as well.

Theme 3: High Self-efficacy in Irish workplaces

According to the data, all participants had quite high self – efficacy in their workplaces. This finding was obtained because all participants had the ability to exert control over their own executive capability as well as always push themselves towards business goals. For example: “I normally have similar tasks. I know that I could finish them well.” “I always try to finish my work before the deadline and I always try to improve my performance every time.” _ Participant 1. “I feel confident about my skills and knowledge regarding my work.” “I always work super hard and I don’t know why. It may be because of the high-pressured environment in China when I was a student, so I always keep working, even at the weekend.” _ Participant 2. “I can do my job well. Based on my educational background and relevant experience I can finish work well. I can see myself continually growing and developing my skills and knowledge to become valuable to the company in the coming years.” _ Participant 4. “I always push myself towards my work objective because I have a responsibility to do my job well. There is a new project I have not done before. But I delivered well with my colleagues eventually.” _ Participant 5.

In addition, according to that most participants have mentioned “work hard” several times. As well as this example: “In my culture, we always work really hard.” _ Participant 2. These evidences might imply that most Chinese employees were always with high self-efficacy due to their heritage culture, and their high self-efficacy led them to work hard in workplaces in order to achieve their goals. However, the pattern between high self-efficacy and acculturation attitude needed to be analyzed with other themes.

Overall, the result of this theme indicated that all participants were having quite high self-efficacy in Irish workplaces, but the correlation between this factor and acculturation attitude needs to be analyzed with theme one.

Theme 4: Satisfactory environment of Irish workplaces

According to the coded data, all participants enjoyed working in Irish due to the following characteristics of Irish workplaces: less competition, comfortable, flexible, less pressure, fair and relax. Thus, they were all satisfied with their Irish workplaces, in comparison to workplaces in their original country. Refer to: “I feel it is quite flexible and less competitive while working in Irish companies because the working environment is friendly and comfortable. Basically, working in Ireland is less pressure compared with my home country.” _ Participant 1. “I feel it is really fair and relaxed while working in Ireland.” _ Participant 2. “I think what I found working in Ireland, was international experiences.” _ Participant 3. “The work is very relaxed because here is not like China. You don’t need to work after work finishes. You don’t need to work at home.” _ Participant 4. “Irish people are always friendly like Chinese people, so I am comfortable with the environment.” “Very comfortable, less pressure.” _ Participant 5.

Moreover, participants not only satisfied with their work because of the above advantages but also because the Irish workplace is a very diverse place, including many employees from different countries across the world. As well as local employees are friendly in general. Therefore, participants were willing to interact with colleagues in the company to improve their performance. For example: “My boss and colleagues are really nice to me too.” _ Participant 1. “My team is the best and they can help me get through any difficulties.” _ Participant 2. “There are always so many international companies here and some of the foreign companies have set up their headquarters in Ireland, so you have a lot of opportunities working with different people from different countries.” _ Participant 3. These evidences indicated that a satisfactory working environment could allow most Chinese employees to have a positive emotion towards the organization, which was corresponding to the affective workgroup commitment mentioned by Saissy (2009) in literature reviews.

Overall, most Chinese employees satisfied with their Irish workplaces due to well, friendly and diverse working environment. However, the pattern of affective workgroup commitment relates to acculturation attitude still needed to be further analyzed in combination with other themes.

Theme 5: Importance of language skills in Irish workplaces

According to the coded data from interviews, all five participants believed that language barriers impact on both life and workplaces on different levels. However, participants had different opinions on language barriers. Some of the participants considered language as an obstacle in workplaces, for example: “Even though I understood the meaning of English words, in the beginning, it was hard to understand the actual meaning behind the sentence sometimes.” _ Participant 1. “Maybe some Chinese employees have a language barrier so that they could fit in the company well.” ___ Participant 5

Part of the participants considered language as a required skill that is vital to foreign employees in workplaces so that some participants have been changed jobs for improving their English in order to gain better work experiences. For example: “What I always say to myself and my friend is, if you want to do better in your job, you have to learn better English, especially writing and speaking skills. These will help you express what you think, help you explain what you have to do and improve the connection with your colleagues and your customers.” _ Participant 3. “I used to have part-time jobs at the beginning of my residence in Ireland because I wanted to improve my English and gain some life experiences in this unfamiliar environment.” _ Participant 1. “I have changed my job several times. At the beginning, I could only find some part-time jobs or internships related to my course because my English was not as good as native English speakers. But after I gained some experiences I wanted to work in a bigger company.” _ Participant 2.

Although all participants consistently agreed that English is indispensable as a skill and poor English would affect their work, surprisingly, most participants believed that language barriers have not affected their acculturation process into organizations at work due to the diversity and tolerance of Irish workplaces. For example: “I think the Irish are really nice. Even if your English isn’t perfect, Irish people will still be nice and try their best to understand you.” _ Participant 2. “If you like immigrants rather than local people, you won’t have a good language. You won’t know how western people typically talk to one another when they do business. But in general, I don’t think this is the problem. If you look in any of the big companies now and you look at the bosses, they don’t have to be local people to work in big companies. Irish companies are very international.” _ Participant 3. “The purpose of our communication is to hope that the other side can understand our ideas, so we will be competent for the job.” _ Participant 5.

Therefore, through the analysis of the above examples, the language was a tool that could be learned and applied, and the ultimate goal was to help Chinese employees to communicate with colleagues better without barriers, in order to achieve effective work performance. Even if the English level of Chinese employees was not as good as native English speakers, most Chinese employees could still cooperate well with colleagues in Irish workplaces. Therefore, language barriers do not have an impact on acculturation attitudes as great as mentioned in literature reviews such as Ni (2019). Overall, for Chinese employees, overcoming the language barrier was more like a subsidiary skill or an additional task in Irish workplaces rather than an essential factor that would affect their acculturation attitude.

Theme 6: Harmfulness of racism or workplaces discrimination in Irish workplaces

According to the coded data, racism or workplace discrimination has not occurred in Irish companies often. None of the participants have experienced workplace discrimination or racism, which indicated that Irish workplaces were relatively fair to all employees, but few participants had experienced discrimination several times in their normal life. For example: “But I have been through this in society a few times. In normal life, if those experiences don’t hurt me physically, I will ignore them, because I don’t think that affects me too much.” _ Participant 1

Most participants had quite neutral and rigorous opinions on racism or workplace discrimination. They have considered these issues as unethical behaviors in the workplace that would disrupt the order and

balance of the working environment. They indicated that the organization was responsible to make corresponding policies and regulations for these types of incidents for remaining the harmony of workplaces. For example: “They are talking about Black Lives Matter nowadays. My own opinion is that discrimination has existed all the time and all over the place. What you really can do is just change your mind to look at it from different angles and make yourself stronger.” _ Participant 3. “I think that discrimination or racism in the workplace is unprofessional behavior. It wouldn’t bother me, but it makes me feel like this work isn’t the right environment.” _ Participant 1. “I think that is a bad sign in the office that would cause some unnecessary conflicts and break the harmony of the workplace.” _ Participant 2. “I think this is very bad because this will influence the work.” _ Participant 4. “Workplace discrimination is illegal. The legislation is in place to protect people from discrimination and victimization. By way of good practice, employers should have clear policies in place to ensure unwanted conduct does not happen.” _ Participant 5.

Overall, most Chinese employees had toward neutral attitude to work discrimination or racism and have not risen these issues to the level of the severity between countries. They have just considered that these harmful incidents should not appear in the workplace, and the organizations had the main responsibility to avoid them happening. Furthermore, although there was no evidence to directly indicate whether work discrimination would affect the acculturation attitude, through in-depth analysis of coded data, Chinese employees’ calm and mild attitude towards discrimination as well as the fairness and harmonious of Irish workplaces could imply that racism and work discrimination might not cause huge impact on Chinese employees or prevent them from acculturating into workplaces in Ireland. Therefore, work discrimination or racism might not be considered as an important factor that would affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies.

Limitations and strengths:

The main limitation of this research was the research sample size and the process of data collection in methodology. Due to the restrictions of the current pandemic, it was more difficult than usual to find participants and conduct interviews in person. Even though the literal data which has been used for analysis was enough to acquire the final discussion and addressed the research questions, due to the limited data form the small sample, some sub research objectives could only be partially achieved in this research. Certain patterns between some tested factors and Chinese employees’ acculturation attitude in Irish workplace couldn’t be identified due to the limited data. And also, other instruments were required to conduct both interviews and data collection online than as planned previously. Additionally, the author was a junior researcher with limited research experiences and capabilities.

In contrast, this methodology had few strengths as well. In comparison to quantitative research methods. Qualitative research method used in this research that provided more detailed useful data content for in-depth analysis and allowed the use of small sample which was more appropriate to address this research question. Even though the actual sample size was less than as planned, it still has met the typical standard in general researches.

Overall, this research has chosen the appropriate research methods to address the research questions proposed at the beginning among different research methods. Thus, most research objectives have been achieved based on the collected data. However, due to the limitations illustrated above, there was lack of some evidences to rigorous supported the findings completely. Therefore, the researcher could avoid these limitations in order to conduct a better research in the future.

Ethical Consideration:

The ethical considerations involved in this research are relatively less than research that includes particularly sensitive and controversial topics. In the context of globalization, acculturations are no longer a minority social phenomenon. All participants agreed to participate in this interview and accepted answering all questions involved. Additionally, the consent form and information sheet contained

detailed instructions on the privacy of the participants and the use of the data they had provided, as well as all precautions regarding the interview. All participants have received and signed these two agreements in advance. (Consent form and information sheet are attached in the appendixes).

Discussion:

The aim of this study was to identify the root factors that would affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. According to the analysis of six main themes which emerged from the coded data of the authentic interviews, the key findings indicated that most Chinese employees had identification of both heritage and host cultures at work, as well as they were having affective workgroup commitment to their Irish workplaces; meanwhile, most Chinese employees were with high self-differentiation and high self-efficacy at work, however, external objective factors such as language barriers and work discrimination had less impact on most Chinese employees in their Irish companies. The five sub research objectives based on literature reviews could be achieved by analyzing the overall key findings in order to address the research question.

Sub research objective 1: To investigate whether self- differentiation affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Theme two indicated that most participants had high self – differentiation, so that they were confident to express themselves at work, and fewer participants had low self – differentiation based on the examples. And according to theme one, most participants were having an integration acculturation attitude, and fewer participants had separation acculturation attitudes in their workplaces. Therefore, integration acculturation attitude associated with high self-differentiation of Chinese employees at work. This finding corresponded with the results of Johnson (2017). In his study, individuals who had high differentiation of self had a tolerant attitude towards cultural harmony (Johnson, 2017).

Furthermore, the high level of self-differentiation allowed Chinese employees to express their unique perceptions and make their own contributions to the work, instead of blindly following the other colleagues in workplaces. In this process of expressing themselves, they have unknowingly chosen to interact with their Irish colleagues, rather than chosen to be an obscure independent individual at work. That means that they have accepted different perceptions from different cultures and identified with both heritage and host culture. Therefore, through the summary and analysis of data, it illustrated the above finding that Chinese employees with a high level of self-differentiation would choose integration attitude in general. This was not an absolute pattern but there was a necessary connection between them, so high self-differentiation was a very vital factor that would affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies.

Sub research objective 2: To investigate whether self-efficacy affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Theme three indicated that all the participants had high self-efficacy in workplaces due to the characteristic of their heritage culture. However, according to the findings in theme one, none of the participants have chosen integration attitude in workplaces. Thus, it pointed out that acculturation attitude might be associated with the level of self-efficacy, however, the pattern between them was not clear enough. Therefore, this finding wasn't completely corresponding to Saissy (2009) study in the literature reviews, that the marginalization and separation attitude was associated with low self-efficacy and vice versa (Saissy Magnet de, 2009).

Through further in-depth analysis of the data, the level of self-efficacy wasn't having an impact as great as the level of self-differentiation on Chinese employees' acculturation attitude in Irish workplaces. Some of the participants who with high self-efficacy have chosen separation acculturation attitude based on the above examples. Part of the reason was that even though, they have high self-efficacy which made them working hard and performing effectively towards their business objectives at work, this would not lead them to choose acculturation attitude, because they could still choose to work by themselves rather than participating into teamwork. And also due to the lack of low self-efficacy examples in the data, the pattern between the level of self-efficacy and the Chinese employees' acculturation attitude needed further investigation. Therefore, sub research objective two has not been achieved completely that is, this could be a research direction in the future.

Sub research objective 3: To ascertain whether affective workgroup commitment affect acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

According to themes one and four, it indicated that all participants had affective workgroup commitment to their organization due to the satisfaction of their workplaces which lead most participants to choose integration attitude in workplaces, but the positive impact of affective workgroup commitment on acculturation attitude hasn't applied on all participant. Thus, affective workgroup commitment could be considered as a factor that would affect Chinese employees' acculturation attitude in Irish workplaces, however, the rigorous correlation pattern between them was not found in this research. Furthermore, in the literature reviews, Ying (2013) only indicated that affective workgroup commitment might drive immigrants to adapt to the integration or assimilation attitude in workplaces. The final findings in her study were that Chinese employees who had integration or assimilation attitudes would have a high affective workgroup commitment in the organization. (Ying Lua, 2013). Therefore, the findings in this research found from themes one and four was corresponding to the findings in the study of Ying (2013). Thus, Chinese employees who had integration acculturation attitude would have high affective workgroup commitment in Irish companies, but on the opposite, Chinese employees who had high affective workgroup commitment would not always choose the integration attitude.

Moreover, in the analysis of data, affective workgroup commitment was more like a result of the level of Chinese employees' satisfaction with their workplaces. The higher satisfaction of their workplaces, the higher affective workgroup commitment which leads them more likely to identify with host cultures in order to adopt an integration attitude at work. However, the lack of opposite examples, the certain pattern between affective workgroup commitment and acculturation attitude needed to execute a further investigation.

Sub research objective 4: To ascertain whether external factors such as Language and discrimination affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

According to the analysis of both theme five and six, it indicated that most Chinese employees believed that objective factors such as language barriers and work discrimination would affect their work in different perspectives, such as from the perspective of communication with colleagues, however, none of these perspectives included acculturation attitude in workplaces. Most Chinese employees wouldn't choose separation or marginalization acculturation attitude only because of language barriers or work discrimination.

Moreover, in the context of literature reviews, Ni (2019) found that language barriers and racism stopped some of her participants acculturating into the host country. (Ni, 2019). Both Johnson (2017) and King (2008) proved that racist experiences had an impact on immigrants' orientation to integrate into host countries in their research as well. (Johnson, 2017) (King-O'Riain, 2008). Thus, the findings in theme five and six weren't fully in line with these findings in the literature reviews. According to the analysis of data, the major reason of this was that Irish companies have become multicultural places due to the globalization trend in today's world, there were many employees from other different countries in Ireland besides China, thus, language barriers and work discrimination weren't only existed in Chinese employees. while a certain phenomenon begins to occur in general, the public gradually accepts this phenomenon, and don't think of it as a special case anymore. Therefore, language barriers and work discrimination didn't have an impact on Chinese employees as huge as in the previous findings.

Overall, objective factors such as language barriers and work discrimination would have very little impact on Chinese employees' acculturation attitude in Irish companies.

Sub research objective 5: To investigate whether the factors related to sense of self would have a deeper impact on the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces more than the external factors.

According to the above findings, objective factors such as language barriers and workplace discrimination obviously had less impact on most Chinese employees' acculturation attitudes in workplaces than factors related to sense of self such as self-differentiation and self-efficacy. This result also corresponds with the Johnson (2017) findings – “highly differentiated individuals were generally more capable of remaining authentic to other cultures and not allowing external, anxiety-provoking

factors such as racial stereotypes and experiences of discriminations to influence their views of cultural harmony.”

Overall, according to the six themes that arose from the coded, most sub research objectives have been achieved. Self-differentiation is the most essential factor that affects the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces among all tested factors in this research. Chinese employees with high self-differentiation generally adopt the integration or assimilation attitude in Irish companies which were in line with the findings in Johnson (2017). Objective factors impact Chinese immigrants’ acculturation attitude in the society according to some research in the literature reviews section such as in the study of Ni (2019), Johnson (2017) and King (2008), etc. However, objective factors such as workplace discrimination and language barriers do not have a direct correlation with the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees at work in the findings from this research. Self-efficacy and affective workgroup commitment affect Chinese employees’ acculturation attitude in Irish workplaces, but the exact pattern between these two factors and acculturation attitude requires further research and examination. Thus, this might be a future research direction in order to help Chinese employees acculturating into Irish workplaces more smoothly.

From the in-depth analysis of both the data and these findings, Chinese employees were more likely influenced by the factors related to sense of self or emotional oriented than external objective factors. Most Chinese employees had very calm and mild attitude towards these objective factors, they could always self-decompose negative external influences caused by these objective factors such as workplace discrimination. Thus, the subjective factors were the root factors that would affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, in the context of multicultural workplaces in Ireland, Chinese people have become one of the biggest immigrant groups in Ireland. (our health service, 2019). Thus, the initial research question has been proposed – the factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies. Many researchers have investigated the factors of acculturation attitudes. However, most research had been aimed at Chinese immigrants in host society rather than workplaces, so this research was necessary in order to fill in the blanks in this research topic.

According to the literature reviews, all previous research had only focused on one certain factor. However, regarding the comprehensive analysis of all the literature, the factors that affect acculturation can be divided into two categories; one is related to self of sense and is emotion-oriented, and the other one is external objective factors. Therefore, based on this discovery, this research has given rise to several specific sub-research objectives which were derived from the research question and literature reviews for the further development of the research.

Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews as the qualitative research method were conducted for this research. To achieved more reliable results, although the size of the participants was small, they were all ordinary Chinese employees who worked in Ireland and were selected from different industries and classes. At the end, this research utilized the thematic analysis method to analyze collected data in order to gain the final findings of this research.

In conclusion, They found that immigrants with high self-differentiation, self-efficacy and affective workgroup commitment adapted the integration or assimilation attitude. (Johnson, 2017). (Ying Lua*, 2013). (Saissy Magnet de, 2009). However, the current findings indicate that only the pattern between self-differentiation and acculturation attitude was the same as previous research. The other two factors did not always have a positive impact on acculturation attitudes for Chinese employees in the Irish workplace. In addition to this, most of the previous research which stated that language barriers and discrimination would cause immigrants to choose separation or marginalization attitudes. (NiJun, 2019). (King-O'Riain, 2008). However, the current findings also found that besides this pattern, external factors such as language barriers and discrimination did not directly affect the acculturation attitudes of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces.

Overall, based on rigorous research, the factors and the patterns that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese immigrants are different in host societies and workplaces. As well as the factors related to sense of self or emotional orientation would have a huge impact on Chinese employees' acculturation attitude in Irish workplaces. The findings could help Irish companies in facilitating the harmony of their organizations by strengthening the level of self-differentiation of Chinese employees in these workplaces. However, these findings only apply to Chinese employees in Ireland. Other variables, such as the diversity and kindness of Irish workplaces which was indicated by the participants might unintentionally influence findings. Regrettably, other variables cannot remain the same throughout the research and this research also contains many limitations.

Thus, this research topic was worth being investigated more by other researchers in the future. The pattern between self-efficacy or affective workgroup commitment and Chinese employees' acculturation attitude in Irish workplaces could be an interesting and meaningful research question to investigate in the future. Identify the certain patterns might promote the acculturation process of Chinese employees into their workplaces in order to facilitate a higher level of harmony of Irish workplaces.

In addition, to investigate the reason why factors related to sense of self or emotional orientation have a larger impact on Chinese employees in Irish companies would also be an interesting research question. However, this one seems more complicated than the above research objective, it might need thoughtful research proposal and design, thus, senior researchers could conduct deeper research on this topic.

Appendices and References:

Appendix A – Interview questions:

Interview Question:

1. How long have you been working in Ireland?
2. How did you find the experience of moving to a different culture then and now?
3. Have you ever changed your job in Ireland? why? Why not?
4. If you have changed your job, what specific jobs have you did?
5. How do you feel about working in Ireland?
6. How are your social lives and activities related to work? For example, do you attend to business parties often?
7. Do you mainly mix with people from your own cultures or other cultures? Why? Why not?
8. Do you think there are any physical and psychological changes on you due to the interaction between two cultures at work? (acculturation)
9. Do they think there are obstacles in your workplace? Why? Why not?
10. What do you think that some Chinese employees couldn't fit in their company in Ireland?
11. Have you ever been through any form of discrimination in the workplace, if did, how did those affect you?
12. What do you think about discrimination or racism in the workplace?
13. How do you manage two different cultures in the workplace? Could you describe a related experience?
14. Do you always feel confident when you contact with your Irish colleagues and clients? Why? Why not? Could you describe a related experience?
15. Do you always feel confident when you meet an obstacle in the workplace? Why? Why not? Could you describe a related experience?
16. Do you always believe that you have the ability to execute excellent work performance even before it starts? Why? Why not? Could you describe a related experience?
17. Do you always push yourself towards your work objective? Why? Why not? Could you describe a related experience?

Appendix B – Declaration form:

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: _____ YEBIN LIU _____

Student Number: ___X18199992_____

Degree for which thesis is submitted: ___Master _____

Title of Thesis: ___The factors that affect the acculturation attitude of Chinese

employees in Irish companies_____

Date: ___18/08/2020_____

Material submitted for award

- A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.
- B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online
open access repository NORMA.
- D. *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been
used in any other submission for an academic award.
Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis
formed part of a submission for the award of

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been
used in any other submission for an academic award.

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Appendix C – Consent form:

The factors affecting the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies

Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering questions about my personal perceptions, social lifestyles and my work experiences.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in interviewer's laptop until December 2020 after the exam board confirms the results of interviewer's dissertation. These recordings can only be accessed and viewed by the interviewer.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher Name: YEBIN LIU *Degrees:* Master
Affiliations: National College of Ireland *Contact details:* x18199992@student.ncirl.ie

Please type your name below to provide your signature, and return this form to the researcher by email, in order to indicate your consent to take part in this study.

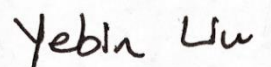
Signature of research participant:

 Signature of participant

_____30/06/2020_____
 Date

Signature of researcher:

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study



Appendix D – Information Sheet:

The factors affecting the acculturation attitude of Chinese employees in Irish companies

Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. You can ask me questions by sending me an email, if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT?

My name is YEBIN LIU and I am doing master's degree of International Business in National College of Ireland. My research aims to investigate what factors affect the acculturation of Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. Acculturation is the process of an individual's physical and psychological changes caused by the interaction between different cultures. To investigate this, I am asking Chinese employees in Irish workplaces to take part in a semi-structured interview, in order to develop my research. The entire interview will only be used in the research. Additionally, the interview will only include questions that relate to the topic.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

The interview will include questions in relation to work experiences, social lifestyles, capability of dealing with business affairs and interpersonal relationships, work discrimination or racism and personal perceptions.

The interview will take place online through WeChat voice call (Chinese Application). Due to the unsteady internet quality, voice call is the best option in this case. Consequently, there will not be location limits. The duration of participation will be approximately 40 to 50 minutes.

The entire interview will be recorded through Voice Memos (iPhone's own application) and retained on the researcher's laptop until December 2020. The interview data will be transcribed for analysis. The data from the interview will only be used in the development of the research.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been invited to the participation because you are above 18 years old and have met the standards of my research topic – Chinese employees in Irish workplaces. You were born in China and have been working in Ireland for more than five years. There are no other restraints and standards.

Furthermore, you have been selected through our common Chinese migrant's internet group (On a Chinese chat Application) in Ireland. To avoid bias in the results, I did not choose acquaintances who were particularly close to me in the group. You are selected only because we are in a common chat group as well as you have met the standard and agreed to participate in the interview.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Your participation in this is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse, postpone and cancel the participation at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Taking part in this study involves completing one, short interview. Participants can decline to answer any particular question or decline participation at any time. As such, there is minimal risk associated with taking part in this study. There are no direct benefits, but you will contribute to research that aims to understand the experiences of Chinese people in Ireland. The results of this research may inform practices to improve experiences of other Chinese employees in their workplaces.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Your participation and the entire interview will be only between you and me. I will make sure that the entire interview is confidential by implementing the interview in a private place without any other individuals except me. Any personal information collected, such as your name, age, gender and contact details will be stored securely by the researcher and will not be provided to anyone else. All interview data will be stored under an ID code, separate from your name or any other identifying information. While some quotes from interviews may be used in the write up of the findings, any identifying information will be redacted from these quotes, and your name or any other information that could identify you will not be included in the dissertation.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

The entire interview and signed consent forms will be recorded through iPhone's own application – Video Memos. The data will be retained in two copies and stored securely on two different laptops. The data will only be used in the research and only I can access the data until December 2020 and until after my degree has been conferred. This particular declaration is also included in the consent form to make sure your personal information is safe during the development of this research. Under freedom of information legalization, you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

Your data will be used for developing the research. The result of the research will be presented in my dissertation, which will be submitted to National College of Ireland and stored in their library.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Name: YEBIN LIU

Affiliation: National College of Ireland

Contact Detail: x18199992@student.ncirl.ie

Supervisor's name: Dr Caoimhe Hannigan

Supervisor's email: caoimhe.hannigan@ncirl.ie

THANK YOU

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