Parenting Information Accessed through Social Media: An Interpretative Study Focusing on

Chinese New Immigrants

By

Yang Zhang

Submitted to the Faculty of Extension

University of Alberta

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Communication and Technology

August 30, 2013

Table of Contents

Abstract

This research project aims to interpret the situation of parenting information accessed through social media by mainland Chinese new immigrant parents. And it also explores the positive and negative determinants influencing their social media use when they access parenting information in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Under the theoretical framework of Sociocultural Tradition, this project identifies determinants under both social contexts and cultural context in Canada. Through 10 semi-structured face-to-face interviews, rich data in regards to this topic is collected and analyzed. Three approaches accessing parenting information through social media by the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents are identified based on the data collected. First, the participants in this research project access parenting information through social media video talks with their parents who are still residents in mainland China. Secondly, the participants in this research project access parenting information through direct conversation with the "friends" on the social media community they are in. Thirdly, the participants in this research project access parenting information by browsing the information shared by the other social media users. Exposed to information in a wider and broader variety, these parents are more likely to identify their parenting information needs through the information shared by the other users through social media. A process of judging, filtering, and verifying the obtained information through social media is identified as a crucial process confirmed by all the participants.

Introduction

Canada is a country with a long history of recruiting immigrants. As the number of immigrants increased, settlement services, aiming at fulfilling the goal of making Canada a welcoming place, have emerged and gradually developed into a service system facilitated by ethnic communities, non-profit organizations, immigration-focused government departments and other organizations. These service providers strive to meet the new immigrants' needs, from basic life essentials to social connection and participation, by providing various forms of information and resources (Caidi & Allard, 2005, p. 302). Recently, social media draws attention of both researchers and the general public as a new media form. There is no denying that social media becomes a new information resource. Social media has been already adopted by some of the above service providers as a new tool to achieve their service goal of meeting immigrants' needs. Having a better understanding of the situation about new immigrants accessing information and resources through social media, therefore, is a research topic of both socio-cultural and academic meaningfulness.

This research study aims to interpret the situations related to mainland Chinese new immigrant parents' accessing parenting information through social media. Four research questions intrigued the researcher when this research project was designed:

1. Are the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents in Edmonton accessing parenting information through social media?

2. If the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents do access parenting information through social media, how much are they depending on the social media to obtain the parenting information they need?

3. If the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents do not access parenting information through social media, are they obtaining parenting information through a communication channel at all?

4. If the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents access parenting information through communication channels other than social media, what communication channel(s) is (are) they adopting?

More importantly, the exploration of the reason(s) and impetus underlying the current situation of this research topic will be a final and ideal goal for this research project.

According to Creswell (2013), this study is a phenomenological study, which "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 76). Under the Canadian context, having a better understanding of the phenomenon of the mainland Chinese new immigrants' accessing parenting information is socially, culturally and academically meaningful.

It is well-known that Canada is a multicultural country in which people who have emigrated from many different countries seek a new home within the Canadian cultural fabric. "Social inclusion" (Omidvar, 2001) is not only a vision, but also a stipulation by Canadian policies of multiculturalism. Information accessing has been identified as an important and influential factor of social inclusion (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Making sure that new immigrants can access information through effective and efficient channels is an important aspect of making them feel socially included in Canada. Understanding the situation of information accessing will be the first step to make the social inclusion realized. Otherwise, multiculturalism is built on nothing solid.

Because of its influence and its uniqueness, the mainland Chinese community is adopted as the focus of this research project from many tiles on the multicultural wall within the Canadian context.

As the mainland Chinese community enlarges in Canada, the mainland Chinese new immigrants' social inclusion becomes an important part of the multicultural Canadian context. According to the statistics of Citizenship and Immigration of Canada [CIC] (2011), among all the permanent residents in Canada, the number of emigrants from mainland China remained in the first place from 2002 throughout 2009, and stayed at the second place in 2010 and 2011. There is no denying that the Chinese community has been an influential immigrant community, due to its size. Having a better understanding of various perspectives of this continuously growing population, including what channels parents in this community are using to access information that influences their parenting style, is not only beneficial for the mainland China community in Canada itself, but also necessary in order to better meet this large population's information needs.

Similar to the new immigrants of other communities, the mainland Chinese new immigrants face language barriers, low-income disadvantages and acculturating difficulties. Nevertheless, some of them face unique challenges that cannot be generalized by research studies focusing on the general immigrant population or on the new immigrants of other communities. For example, many mainland Chinese new immigrants, especially the younger ones born in 1978 or later, are the "only child" of their parents because of the one-child policy in mainland China. Therefore, few of them have experiences of dealing with the relationship between siblings, which they can use to relate to parenting dilemmas. At the same time, due to the geographic distance and time difference, it is difficult for these new immigrant parents to

obtain parenting information from their parents, who are likely still residents in mainland China. Even though they can contact the parents through social media or long-distance phone calls, they still face the fact that their parents are not able to provide any practical or useful parenting suggestions fitting in the Canadian multicultural context. The above realities may force the new immigrant parents to more strongly depend on other communication channels to access parenting information. In Chinese culture, grandparents are very important parenting information resources, and grandparents play an important role in educating grandchildren. These new immigrant parents confront the reality that their parents are not able to help while their cultural sense requires these new immigrant parents to enhance the bond among the generations. This uniqueness, among many others, might be an effective independent variable in this research project, and it might also be where the cultural meaningfulness of this research project is embedded.

The reason why the topic of assessing parenting information is adopted in this research project is that the need of parenting information is the only need that straddles across two stages of newcomers' settlement, as discussed below. In other words, the situation of new immigrants' parenting information accessing is an advantageous approach to reflect the whole image of information assessing throughout the newcomers' settlement process. In *Social Inclusion of Newcomers to Canada: An Information Problem?* (2005), Caidi and Allard specify that there are two stages regarding newcomer's settlement:

> Early after arriving in the host country, a newcomer will be likely to have pressing needs
> for information that will contribute to his/her survival. As the immigrant becomes
> accustomed to the adopted country, finds his/her place in society, and contributes
> economically and socially to its welfare, different needs may arise such as the need for

belonging more fully and becoming an active citizen (e.g., political participation, civic

duties, and cultural celebrations). (p. 304)

Parenting information needs are an essential part of immigrants' life in the first stage

pertaining to survival of the whole family, and also a crucial part in the second stage pertaining

to acculturation and belonging. Parenting information needs mirror the needs in both of these

two stages. Therefore, researching how the parenting information needs are met is an effective

and efficient way to present the whole image of information need fulfillment in these two stages

of new immigrants' settlement.

Since the "Tiger Mum" became the cover figure of *Time Magazine* (2011), it seems that

the Chinese parenting style has become a hot issue in North America. The parenting style that

"Tiger Mum" adopts is a very traditional Chinese way in which many Chinese new immigrant

parents were brought up. The reality is, according to Su and Hynie (2010), "recent immigrant

Chinese are immersed in Chinese culture prior to their migration and deeply influenced by

Chinese culture (p. 948)". This deep immersion in very traditional and historically grounded

Chinese culture affects the parenting style in the immigrant families both consciously and

subconsciously. On the other hand, social media is the antithesis of tradition – a modern

development in society that Chinese new immigrant parents may or may not use. Having a close

watch on the conflict or fusion between the traditional parenting and new communication

channels is not only something socio-culturally appealing, but also academically worth exploring.

There are many research studies focusing on the relationship between mass media and

immigrant parenting; some studies endeavor to explore the role the Internet plays in the process

of acculturation and integration. However, it would be premature to draw the conclusion that

social media functions the same as mass media or the Internet does to influence immigrants'

parenting. This is not only because many perspectives regarding social media are waiting for

more research studies, but also because, with the increased use of new communication

technology, the process of acculturation might be experiencing some changes as well. Both the

change of media form and the changes the new media form may bring in regards to accessing

parenting information are the two academic focuses of this research project.

In summary, the researcher believes that a good understanding of the above perspectives

is a good start to build up a better communication channel on this topic inside the mainland

Chinese community, and between the service providers and the mainland Chinese immigrants;

once the unique parenting information needs of this community are identified, it will be a good

start to improve the information services provided by the immigrant-focused non-profit

organizations and government departments. Hopefully, the feeling of inclusion of the mainland

Chinese new immigrant parents will be increased when their parenting information needs are

better met.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This research project is conducted in the theoretical framework of symbolic

interactionism of sociocultural tradition (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 365).

Sociocultural tradition focuses on the intertwined relationship between and among

individuals, society and communication. The proposition of this tradition is that there is a tight

connection between society and communication. As Craig and Muller (2007) summarized, "the

society would be impossible without communication", while "communication would be

impossible or severely limited… in absence of society and a common culture" (p. 365). In spite

of agreeing on the above proposition, the theories of sociocultural tradition apply fundamentally

different approaches to explore various facets of the said research focus. The approaches this tradition adopts, in summary, are macro-social and micro-social (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 365).

Sociocultural tradition takes the research studies on both society and culture as its foundation; therefore, it provides a proper framework for an intercultural communication research studies like this research project focusing on parenting information accessed through social media by mainland China new immigrant parents. Focusing at the level of the individual participant, this research study explores how the social and cultural circumstances decide or influence the individual's adoption and use of a particular communication channel to fulfill a particular communication goal. Through these individual's experiences, the relationship between communication and society and the culture imbedded in the experiences is presented as a group experience with the same or similar essence. From the point of view of Baldwin (2006), this social behavior (accessing parenting information through social media) is also a cultural behavior to "achieve or maintain a positive social identity" through an individual strategic choice since "a situation is 'cultural' when the context activates group-based identities and categorization" (p. 18).

Symbolic interactionism adopts a micro-social approach to view communication, and the relationship between communication and the society. By means of this approach, "individuals' action and creativity become more apparent. Individuals make strategic choices in response to their particular social circumstances" (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 365). In this case, exploring the choices individuals make and the social circumstances they are responding to when they are making particular choices becomes one of the major research topics for theories of micro-social theoretical approach.

George Herbert Mead sets up an appropriate framework for intercultural communication research studies. His research results, as an important part in symbolic interactionism communication theory, focus on how communication shapes individual identities, making both individuality and social community possible (Craig & Muller, 2007). From Mead's point of view, "basic to human social organization is that of communication involving participation in the others" (p. 253). In other words, the foundation of our society is the communication through taking the others' roles or attitudes. To reach the goal of taking others' roles or attitudes, the importance of a "linking role" cannot be ignored. A linking role – a society member, who is familiar with members in different communities – is s an important role to "address the problem of cross-community communication" (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 367).

Intercultural communication is an important element in Canadian social circumstances since Canada not only is a multicultural country but also is playing an importance role in the process of globalization. Having a better and deeper understanding about each tile on its multicultural wall and each party on the globalization stage is a practical strategy under Canadian circumstances. This process starts with communication through "taking the others' roles or attitudes". Accordingly, this research project is an attempt to improve the intercultural communication on a particular topic with an attitude and a purpose of "taking the others' roles or attitudes" through taking advantage of the linking role – the researcher who has a similar personal experience to the participants' and who is able to facilitate this communication process with the due personal professional background and research interest.

Literature Review

The research studies relating to this particular research topic are shown in Figure 1 below. As shown in this chart, research studies within the social sciences provide an in-depth

description about the social and cultural circumstances deciding and influencing the media which

new immigrants adopt and use. Many research studies interpret and analyse the media use

situation of new immigrants, which can be categorized into three groups: media use for

information, media use for communication and media use for participation. The concept of

"communication" here is a narrow one, which means "vocal or text conversation between or

among individuals, groups, and organizations". The "participation" here is defined as "political

and civic participation" (Weiskopf & Kissau, 2008, p. 95). According to Weiskopf and Kissau

(2008), through these three media use approaches, the integration of the new immigrants is

completed. As Weiskopf and Kissau (2008) define this process, parenting information accessing
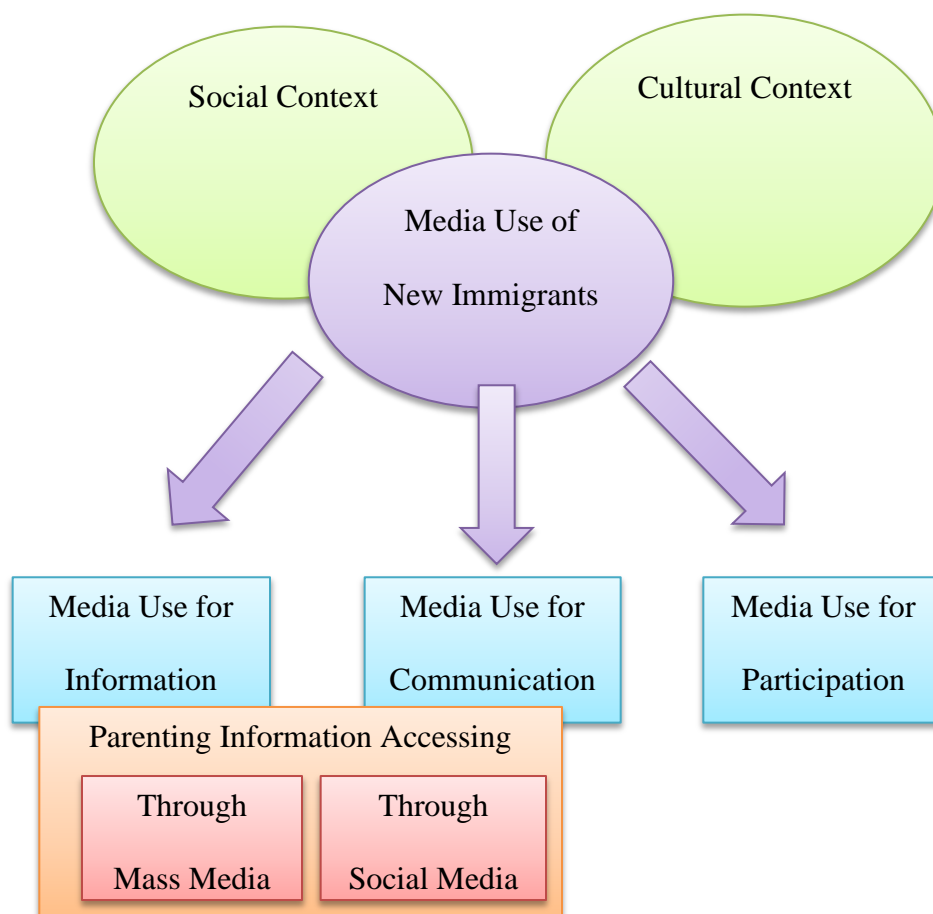
Figure 1. Structure of the research literature. This figure illustrates the structure of the current available literatures

relating to the research topic of mainland Chinese new immigrants' accessing parenting information through social media.

involves media use for obtaining information and media use for conducting communication. Some research studies focus on exploring the role which mass media play during the process of new immigrants' integration, including research topics relating to new immigrants' accessing parenting information through mass media. However, there are few studies which explore new immigrants' social media use relating to accessing parenting information. Many researchers in the social sciences make efforts to present a whole image of the social and cultural circumstances where new immigrants are involved. Their research efforts provide valuable resources about background and determinants of new immigrants' media use. One important conclusion these research studies draw is that the individual's social network, including strong and weak relationships existing between individuals and their relatives, friends and acquaintances, is an important factor promoting a sense of belonging, especially for new immigrants settling in a new society (Ray & Preston, 2009; Ray & Rose, 2000; Hagan, 1998; Henning & Lieberg, 1996; Fisher, 1982).

What new immigrants are facing is that they have to develop their own social network in the new residing place, as well as retain their "old" social network. The needs of reaching these two goals at the same time decide the communication channels and communication tools they adopt. For a long period of time, the research studies described this situation as "isolated". The new immigrants are not only isolated physically in their neighbourhood in urban area (Ray & Preston, 2009), but also digitally isolated in a way (Weiskopf & Kissau, 2008). The digital isolation is embraced as "digital divide" in many research studies, which can be prone to a wrong interpretation as "mere access and usage possibilities of the Internet" (Weiskopf & Kissau, 2008, p. 96). However, one can easily find that new immigrants do not face limited access to the Internet in many cities in Canada, including Edmonton. According to the statistics from Statistics

Canada, in 2009, 80% of Canadians aged 16 and older, or 21.7 million people, used the Internet

for personal reasons. In Edmonton, accessing the Internet is not a difficult thing, even for new

immigrants. The free Wi-Fi service, Edmonton Wireless, covers the whole downtown area and

all the Edmonton City attractions and recreation facilities. The Edmonton Public Library,

together with many restaurants and coffee shops throughout the city, provides free Wi-Fi service.

One can easily draw a conclusion, based on the facts described above, that "digital divide" is not

equal to limited access to the Internet. Therefore, the focus on "digital divide" should be, instead

of the issue of Internet use, how and why the technology is used and which gratifications are

obtained (Hwang & He, 1999). On this basis, social inclusion/exclusion theory is developed. In

this theory, "technology intelligence" is embraced as a key factor to increase social inclusion

through information accessing (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Therefore, the determinants relating to

"technology intelligence" are explored in this research project, such as educational level and

computer skill level.

    While the social inclusion/exclusion theory puts an emphasis on enhancing the new

immigrants' feeling of belonging through providing new immigrants with more accessible

information, Ray and Preston conducted a series of research studies focusing on the physical

neighbourhood environment which new immigrants are living in. For a long period of time, both

federal-level and provincial-level governments have been promoting social inclusion of recent

immigrants by conducting a policy of residential segregation. Ray and Preston (2009) draw a

conclusion that "social inclusion cannot necessarily be imputed from the degree of residential

segregation of recent immigrants" (p. 241). In another word, the new immigrants are not

included in their physical neighbourhood as the governments planed. Therefore, Ray and

Preston (2009) emphasise the importance of "examining who immigrants know and with whom

they interact" (p. 241). The conclusion drawn by these two researchers provides two hints for the design of interview questions of this research study: first, does the reality of isolation in a physical neighbourhood encourage the new immigrants to depend on social media more? Secondly, the same question should be explored in this research project: who immigrants know and with whom they interact on social media?

A key concept in digital isolation theory and social inclusion/exclusion theory is the social context of the hosting countries. In recent years, the feature "transnationalism" of new immigrants' social activities has drawn scholars' attention. Lin, Song, and Ball-Rokeach conducted a research study, attempting to examine the transnational life of the new immigrants. In the said research, "transnationalism" is a concept which "has generated new insights into international migrants' ongoing ties with their communities of origin as well as their diasporic communities" (Lin, Song, & Ball-Rokeach, 2010, p. 205). Through analyzing the qualitative data they collected, these researchers presented a more detailed picture of new immigrants' social communication activities. Instead of exploring whether the new immigrants are included by the society in the hosting country, these researchers switched the focus to the reality that the new immigrants "have to 'imagine' and belong to a community that is no longer 'either-or' but 'in between' the homeland and the host land" when new immigrant groups conduct transnational practices. In other words, the immigrants are "keeping feet in both worlds" (Levitt, 2003, p.927). On the basis of the research results of transnationalism, the features of new immigrant's communication needs are academically summarized. Associating these communication need features to the features of social media is a good start to evaluate to what extent social media is able to fulfill the new immigrants' communication needs, which can be an important determinant making new immigrants decide to adopt social media as a communication tool.

The research studies on social context reveal the common points and similarities about the media use situation of new immigrants, while the research studies on Chinese immigrants' parenting style identify some unique determinants which may influence the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents' media use. These studies identify "authoritarian parenting" as a key word for Chinese new parents, and identify gender, life stress, social support and cultural norms as significant elements influencing their parenting style.

According to Chen, Chen and Zheng (2010), "the Chinese immigrant mothers' parenting practices reflected the indigenous concept of "jiaoyang" in the Chinese culture (with jiao meaning education, teaching and training, yang meaning rearing, and jiaoyang implying education and rearing) (p. 1). This cultural concept of jiaoyang is the core of Chinese-style parenting, and promotes the adoption of an authoritarian parenting style, which combines high levels of parental warmth and control (Chen, Chen, & Zheng, 2012). Cheah, Leung, Tahseen, & Schultz (2009) draw the conclusion that the Chinese immigrant mothers of preschoolers prefer the authoritative parenting style.

However, Cheng, Dai, Zhu, Xie, & Chen (2011) claim that "using the concepts of authoritarian style or authoritative style to describe Chinese parenting can be misleading…as such concepts are embedded in a European-American cultural tradition that the Chinese do not necessarily share" (p. 588). The parenting core concepts the Chinese people share are traditional cultural values of moral education, such as "Ren" (human-heartedness) and "Chih" (everyone can be educated) (Klein, 2008).

No matter whether the mainland Chinese new immigrant parents would like to change their parenting style, the research literature reveals that the parenting environment changes in hosting countries lead to a change to the new immigrants' parenting style. One research study

shows that "authoritarian parenting increased with stress and traditional parenting beliefs and decreased with social support" (Su, & Hynie, 2011). Leinonen, Solantaus, and Punamaki (2003) list stresses which influence parenting quality, including but not restricted to: daily hassles, economic hardship, unemployment, and work-related stress. Starting a new life in a new environment, new immigrants cannot avoid stressful experiences. Dealing with these stressful experiences becomes a part of the parenting practice when the new immigrants come to Canada with their child(ren).

Qin (2008) identifies gender as an influential factor to stress in new immigrant families through a 5-year longitudinal research and finds that "fathers were more likely than mothers to transfer stress and dissatisfaction to their children" (p. 478). Qin's research results indicate that fathers may adopt different communication channels to obtain parenting information since their parenting information needs may be different from the mothers, even though both of them come from the same cultural background and face the same acculturation difficulties.

Social supports, according to Su and Hynie (2013), are helpful to alleviate the negative influences that stress causes in parenting practice. Social supports are defined by Gottlieb (1983) as "verbal and non-verbal information or advice, tangible aid, or action that is proffered by social intimates or inferred by their presence and has beneficial emotional or behavioral effects on the recipients (p. 28)".

However, no research studies could be located that identified how new immigrants search for the social supports when they identify a need of dealing with their life stress, including parenting stress. Also, there are no studies that explore what role media plays when new immigrants seek social supports. Therefore, exploring whether social media plays a role in alleviating new immigrants' stress by providing social support in some way and how effectively

these social supports are facilitated by social media is an important respect of this research study relating to new immigrant parents' accessing parenting information.

Compared to rich data and a large number of research studies that explore the unique Chinese new immigrant parenting style, few studies directly connect their unique parenting information needs to their media use. Most of the research studies generally focus more on the media use for acculturation and integration process in which parenting information accessing plays an important role. All of these research studies reveal that the new immigrants use both ethnic media and media in the new hosting places. For new immigrants, the media they use fulfill a "dual function": on one hand, "preserving their original identity and ties to the former homeland"; on the other hand, "addressing new challenges of social and cultural integration" (Elias, 2011, p. 72). This media use practice, which involves both homeland and host countries, complies with the findings of transnationalism, which was discussed earlier in this section.

Weiskopf (2008) summarized the role of mass media in integration processes as "supporting social homogenization" (p. 98). By providing information in a large scale, mass media facilitates a shared media reception experience as well as a harmonized media transmission to create an inclusive public sphere. This functioning mechanism is not able to disseminate information according to the uniqueness of the new immigrants' needs, and more importantly, it is difficult to facilitate different media functions across different migrating integration phases.

The Internet, as a new media platform, is not only able to fulfill the same function as mass media does but also is potentially playing a new role of integration due to its information capacity, communication capacity, and its capacity to enable an in-depth participation. As Skop and Adams (2009) find, for new immigrants, "the Internet is utilised for overcoming separation

on an intra-and-inter-national scales, for creating a variety of trans-boundary networks and for constructing a sense of identity in virtual place" (p. 127).

Social media, performing on the Internet, is used to "obtain information, as well as maintain social contacts" (Komito, 2011, p. 1081). Social media is a new medium form which "allows users to communicate with each other, rather than, like television, encouraging passive reception in a kind of 'parallel play'" (Benkler, 2006, p. 360). Judging from medium initiative and design and medium control, social media also facilitates the advantages of being a communication channel because it can function as both a media for immigrants and a media by immigrants (Caspi & Elias, 2011). Based on the research study conducted by Caspi and Elias (2011), social media adopting immigrants' languages or with combination of immigrants' languages, is a media form oriented towards representing and serving the immigrants. This is not only because of the user-generated nature of social media, but also because of the varieties of information social media is able to facilitate: voice, video, text and pictures. The richness of information forms makes social media a multi-media, which is able to "maintain a low level mutual awareness and supports a dispersed community of affinity" (Komito, 2011, p. 1075).

At the same time, social media can also be utilized as an information accessing tool. According to Shirky (2008), information sharing is one of the basic functions social media facilitates. Social media realizes real-time information sharing among users, which leads to a "collective intelligence in action" (Howe, 2008, p. 46). On social media, information can be accessed by user either through a direct conversation with the other users, or through being exposed to information shared by the other users. The long-tail model of information sharing on social media is regarded as an advantage for accessing information (Shirky, 2008). However, researchers like Keen (2007) are worried that the information shared through social media by

amateurs is killing our culture. It seems that social media is a double-edged sword as an information accessing tool.

Based on the research literature revealing the nature of social media, several open questions are designed in this research project in order to explore what the features of social media the participants are taking advantage of to realize their goal of communication and parenting information accessing, and to explore whether they have any strategy to maximize the advantage of social media and to avoid the disadvantages.

Assarsson (2011) suggests that parenting can be described as a life-long learning process and "the media take on the form of a 'cubiculum' for parenting, where the viewers take part in the conceptualisation, positioning, performance and evaluation" (p. 89). Sanders and Prinz (2008) listed the following advantages of mass media as a population level strategy of strengthening parenting skills: potential wide reach, capacity to reach target audience, video-based modeling value, normative information about child development, and potential for normalizing assistance for parenting. Ironically, in research studies Lam and Warriner conducted, mass media was not adopted by new immigrant parents for "learning how to parent", but for "regular contact with relatives overseas" (p. 205), "maintaining children's fluency in the home language" and "access to different viewpoints" (p. 206). The gap between the planned use of communication tools and the practical use of the communication tools is so remarkable because of the nature of mass media-media for the public, if not for all. The above research studies view communication and society from a macro view, neglecting the uniqueness of the communication needs of minority community members.

The literature reveals few research studies that focus on the social media use and integration parenting. However, Palmen and Kouri (2012) draw a clear realm for the possible

research topics, which provides the main exploratory fields relating to the parents' activities and

behaviours on social media and the Internet for this research project:

1) The availabilities and usefulness of web-based support to parents

2) How parents' socioeconomic status affects the use of web-based support

3) Why and how parents look for information on the Internet

4) What parents think about the reliability of the information available on the Internet

5) The contents and topics of the discussions in online support groups (p. 191)

Methodology

This research project is "phenomenological research", i.e., according to Creswell (2013),

a research study with "data collection procedure that involves typically interviewing individuals

who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 79). Semi-structured in-person interviews were

adopted as a data collection approach to fulfill the richness of data. The structured parts of the

interview were designed to collect demographic information which may be independent

variables in this research project, for example, age, education level and living period in Canada.

The aim of the unstructured part of the interview was to collect more in-depth information

concerning participants' behaviors of accessing parenting information through social media,

participants' opinions on social media use and the reasons for their behaviours. All of the data

gathering processes were approved by the University of Alberta Ethics Board.

Definitions

The definition for "social media" in this project is web-based and mobile-based

technologies or applications which enable interactive discourses and conversations in form of

vocal or text, in simplified Chinese (the official written language in mainland China), in

Mandarin (the official spoken language in mainland China), or in English, between or among

organizations, communities (either virtual or physical), and individuals. The social media in this project includes both the dominant Chinese personal communication platforms, such as Tencent QQ, various virtual forums on the Internet, Sina Weibo, and the prevalent social media in North America such as Facebook, Twitter, various on-line forums and blog website, and Google+. The inclusion of as many social media as possible is helpful to find out the varieties of social media being used to access parenting information.

The definition of "parenting information" in this research project covers two categories: one is related to meeting the basic needs of the kids, including food, clothing, housing, health care, etc.; the other one is related to acculturation, which is a unique process associated with new immigrants, e.g., accessing information about how to help their children adapt to the new environment, bilingual education at home, etc.

Bracketing out Personal Experience

As Creswell (2013) suggests, a researcher conducting phenomenological research should bracket out his or her personal experience relating to the research topic as a part of the research process because "interpretations of the data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic" (van Manen, 1990, p. 113).

I immigrated to Canada with my husband and my daughter in 2009. I have been using the Internet every day since I came to Canada. I log on social media (QQ and Facebook) every time when I am using a desktop computer or a laptop. I log on Wechat, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn on my cell phone all the time, and I log on Tencent Weibo and QQ on my iTouch as long as there is a Wi-Fi service available. I can describe myself as a heavy social media user. However, I do not actively share parenting information in any way on social media. I was never consulted by the others on social media regarding topics related to parenting. I have never

attended any discussion about any parenting topic. I heavily depend on my mom in China to be my backbone when I have any question about parenting. I participated in a wonderful program named "No One is Perfect" facilitated by the Assist Community Service Center which met almost all my needs of parenting information here in Canada, and I benefited a lot from the strategy of "1,2, 3 parenting" which originated from a book with the same title. Although I do help a lot of friends in my real life by providing parenting information and suggestions, I do not do it on social media because: firstly, I do not have enough time to type pages and pages of information on social media; secondly, I am not confident that the information will be interpreted well through the texts on social media.

Samples and Sampling

The actual sample size for this research project is 10 – five fathers and five mothers who were interviewed individually. Because this research project is exploratory, and because in-depth interviews were chosen as the data gathering method, the sample size for the project was small.

The target population of this research study is "mainland Chinese new immigrant parents": those who are landed emigrant parents from mainland China living in Canada for no more than five years, whose situation falls in any of the following five categories: 1) they immigrated to Canada accompanied by their child(ren) younger than 18 years of age and they do not have any other child born or adopted in Canada; 2) they immigrated to Canada accompanied by their child(ren) younger than 18 years of age and they had another child or other children born in Canada; 3) they immigrated to Canada accompanied by their child(ren) younger than 18 years of age and they had another child or other children adopted in Canada; 4) their first child was born in Canada after they immigrated to Canada; 5) they adopted their first child in Canada after they immigrated to Canada.

The reason why the participants have to be emigrants from mainland China is that this research project aims to find out whether the "one child policy" influences parents' decisions and actions regarding accessing parenting information through social media. Since gender might be identified as an important variable for new immigrant parents' accessing parenting information through social media, the participants for this research study included 5 men and 5 women respectively. The immigrants from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were excluded in this research study because there is no "one child policy" carried out in these areas.

Since all the participants have to be parents who have at least one child younger than 18 years old, the age group for the participants was set as 20 to 56. In mainland China, the legal marriage age for the females is 20, and for the males is 22, and it is illegal to have a child before getting married. As a result, the youngest emigrant parent from mainland China cannot be younger than 20. Therefore, the age of 20 was set up as the starting point of the participants' age group. The age of 56 was set for the maximum point because CIC sets 49 years of age as the maximum for an immigration applicant. After five years' residency in Canada, 56-years-old parents are still regarded as a newcomer to Canada.

The sampling process adopted in this research project was judgment sampling. The sampling process started with contacting the Assist Community Service Centre, which is a non-profit organization aiming to provide settlement services to the new immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam. The researcher contacted the executive director of Assist Community Services Center to obtain permission to contact the settlement practitioners in the said organization. After obtaining an assurance that there is no other agency ethics approval required from the director, the researcher contacted three settlement practitioners and asked them to distribute the initial contact letter (Appendix A) to their clients who had emigrated from

mainland China. All of these settlement practitioners distributed the initial contact letters that described the project and invited those who were interested in participating to contact the researcher directly through email or phone calls to obtain more detailed information about the study. There were eighteen potential participants who contacted the researcher and ten of them were confirmed as final participants of this research project. The final participants were selected to represent groups of the target population with a variety of demographic characteristics. The selection of final participants also tended to represent examples of different parenting situations since this research project tries to include as many situations as possible in order to explore how the parenting status (immigrating with kids, new parents after immigration, and experienced parents with new kid after immigration) affects the parenting information access through social media.

There were two participants in age group of 20-30, five participants in age group of 30-40, and three participants in age group of 40-50. All participants immigrated to Canada accompanied with their children, but three participants had their second child born in Canada. Among the participants, there were three males and one female who were the only one child in their own family back in China, which provided rich data to identify the unique parenting information needs influenced by the one-child policy.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

To confirm their participation, the participants were requested to sign an informative consent form (Appendix B), which provides more detailed information about this study. Then interviews were arranged and conducted. Before the interview or during the interview whenever it was necessary, the researcher explained the essential concept of this research to the interviewees.

The ten individual interviews ranged from one hour to one hour thirty minutes in duration. The locations of the interviews were decided by the interviewees in order to enable the interviewees to present their own situations and opinions as naturally as they could in a comfortable familiar environment of their choice, such as their home or their office. The interviews were recorded by a digital recorder. After the interviews, the collected data was transcribed into text for further analysis. During the process of transcription, each participant was assigned a pseudonym, so all name-specific identification was erased from the data being analyzed.

During the interviews, the interviewees were free to talk either in English or in Chinese, whichever language they preferred for fluency of expression. Taking the newcomer's English proficiency into consideration, the researcher sometimes elaborated or explained questions in Mandarin, which is the official spoken language in mainland China.

When the interviews conducted in Mandarin were transcribed, the texts remained in Chinese to make sure there was no meaning deformation, omission or addition due to translation. Original Chinese text was also helpful to understand what the interviewer meant within the context. English translation based on the researcher's best knowledge to the original text was provided as supportive statements in the "Findings" section of this research report.

Following the steps Auerbach and Silverstein suggest (2003), the researcher analysed the data using the following steps.

First, the printed transcripts were read through with the study's research questions in mind. The transcript parts relating to those research questions were selected and cut off the hard copy of the transcripts. The "significant statements" (Creswell, 2012, p. 83; Merrigan, Huston & Johnston, 2012) describing and illustrating the participants' social media use were underlined.

Secondly, the selected transcripts were read carefully again. Underlined statements and comments which were repeatedly used to express similar ideas by different individual interviewees were highlighted and grouped. The similar ideas which were repeatedly illustrated and supported by these highlighted statements and comments were organized into themes. For each theme, a code was assigned. The code and themes are listed below:

Code 1-Age

Code 2-Language

Code 3-Internet Use

Code 4-Parenting Information Needs

Code 5-Time and Stress

Code 6- Acquaintances

Code 7-Reference and Starting Point

Code 8- Sharing Parenting Information through Social Media

Code 9- Meeting Parenting Information Needs

Code 10- Acculturation and Participation

Thirdly, the interviewees' quotations which illustrated or supported the themes were put under the corresponding code label(s). Some quotations may illustrate or support several themes, so they were photocopied and put under different code labels correspondingly. The quotations which best represented or summarized the corresponding theme were stapled together with the code label. Then the code labels were regrouped into three categories: Code 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 were under Category 1 (Social media use for communication purposes); Code 4, 7, 8, 9 were under Category 2 (Social media use for obtaining parenting information); Code 10 was under Category

3 (social media use to enhance participation in Canadian society). These categories were set up

according to theoretical framework in regards to immigrants' media use developed by Weiskopf

and Kissau (2008).

Data under each category was analysed separately. Every theme was analysed following

the same "facts-method-determinants" procedure:

1) What facts of social media use did the participant describe?

2) In what particular way the social media was used by the participants?

3) What are the determinants that influenced the participants' social media use?

Challenges

A researcher having background experiences similar to the ones of interviewees can pose

challenges. The major concern is that the researcher may have a bias during the process of data

collection and analysis. As Van Manen (1990) summarises, bracketing personal experiences

may be difficult for the researcher to implement because interpretations of the data always

incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic. In order to bracket the

researcher's personal experiences in this study, the researcher thoroughly described her personal

experience at the beginning of the methodology section of this paper, as Creswell (2013)

suggests. In addition, this researcher very consciously and deliberately self-acknowledged and

set aside her own views regarding parenting and parenting information accessing during both the

interviews and the data analysis.

However, the researcher's personal experience as a new emigrant parent from mainland

China was also an advantage in terms of overcoming the language barriers and setting a friendly

two-way communication atmosphere for the interviewees. The researcher's similar cultural

background to the interviewees' also made the latter feel more at ease talking about their life and experiences.

Language barriers of new immigrants were another main challenge in this research project. In order to make sure the questions were understood correctly, the researcher had to keep explaining and elaborating the questions to the interviewees whose English was not very fluent. As well, the interviewer had to request the interviewees to clarify their replies and/or double check their replies in order to confirm the mutual understanding so that little could be lost in the brain-storm-like translation. The researcher's mother language is Mandarin, which was a helpful factor to maintain a smooth flow during the interviews. The interviewees were encouraged to complete the interviews in English, especially the structured part of the interview. However, they were allowed to explain their opinions in Mandarin if they felt difficult fully expressing themselves or finding appropriate words, expressions or special terms to describe their emotions. Several participants preferred sharing their experiences in Mandarin even though their English proficiency was sufficient enough to express themselves. They preferred speaking Mandarin because they felt more confident to express themselves in their mother language.

As a young person in her late twenties coming from the same community and the same cultural background, the researcher also faced a challenge of cultural pressure when a senior participant was interviewed. Chinese culture puts a high value on respecting both the wisdom and the authority of the elderly. Whenever the researcher sensed that the senior participants were feeling uncomfortable or even offended when they were challenged or questioned, the researcher avoided correcting them or probing persistently for answers. A strategy of delaying follow-up questions and asking questions in an indirect way was adopted.

Findings

All the participants in this study were identified as social media users because they had at least one social media account and had developed an individual network with at least one social media account. All the participants accessed parenting information in some way through social media, but reasons and motivation varied due to the context. All the participants realized that social media were tools with advantages over other forms of media in some way, but they also had a general idea about the risks of using social media.

The most frequently used social media among the participants are QQ, Wechat, Sina Weibo, Facebook, and MSN; some of the participants also accessed some virtual forums in Chinese language. QQ is a social media tool launched by Tencent Holdings Limit in February 1999, which combines functions of instant messenger, video talk, group formation, blog, document management, gaming and virtual community. Wechat is a recently launched application by the same company, which is designed especially for smart cell phone users and is featured with a function of walkie-talkie. It also enables group sharing of photos and video clips. Sina Weibo is the first mini blog in China. In Chinese, "wei" means "small", and "bo" is a similar sound to "blog", and also means "wide" and "broad", especially when it refers to one's knowledge. It is a social media tool similar to Twitter, allowing a volume of up to 140 characters per shared piece of information posted, reposted or saved.

In this section, the findings are presented in three parts, which follow the three categories set up when the data was analysed. The first part focuses on the participants' social media use for communication purposes. The second part presents the picture of the participants' accessing parenting information through social media. The last part provides findings about the participants' social media use relating to their participation in Canadian society.

Social Media Use for Communication Purposes

Internet use

All the participants claimed that they accessed the Internet after they immigrated to

Canada, and they also claimed that they used the Internet every day to fulfill their needs of

information seeking, education, employment, parenting, professional development, and

entertainment. Search engines are the most frequently mentioned featured function they use on

the Internet. The time they spent on the Internet varies depending on the devices they use to go

online. The devices most frequently used were laptops and smart cell phones. Many participants

only counted the time they spent on their desktop or laptop as their "online time", even without

noticing that their smart cell phones keep them online for 24 hours a day. The conversation listed

below happened several times during interviews with different interviewees:

> Interviewer: How long do you stay online every day?
> Participant: About one hour.
> Interviewer: What devices do you use to go online?
> Participant: My laptop and cell phone.
> Interviewer: So your cell phone is online for 24 hours a day?
> Participant: Yes.

Language

All the participants shared the experience that they had been using both Chinese and

English social media after they came to Canada. Comparatively speaking, they used Chinese

social media more. One major reason for them to choose Chinese social media was that they

were more fluent in Chinese, and they may face language barriers when they use English social

media. Even though some of them were very proficient at English, which could be demonstrated

by their IELTS Test results or Benchmark Test results, they still preferred using the Chinese

social media because they did not feel confident enough to use English social media. The

following two interview dialogue exchanges illustrate this point:

Interviewer: Why do not you use Facebook?
Participant: It is because of the language [proficiency]. I just feel Chinese makes me
                more comfortable.

It is necessary to provide some background information in regards to the use of Facebook.

In mainland China, Facebook is not accessible because Chinese government blocked Facebook

in 2009. Most of the participants did not register a Facebook account until they immigrated to

Canada. Therefore, they use Facebook in English version. The participants' interactions with the

other Facebook users were mainly in English, which was shown in the later discussion, because

there are few users of Chinese-version Facebook in Canada.

or

Interviewer: Why did you choose QQ?
Participant: Because most of the users in QQ are Chinese. They use Chinese [language],
                so I can understand better.

The participants tended to communicate with others in a language which they are more

fluent at and/or they feel more comfortable with. An absence of language challenges assured the

participants of smooth communication flow with fewer communication barriers.

On the other hand, the comments of several participants indicated that low language

proficiency may lead to a stronger intention to use social media to conduct social communication,

especially social media in Chinese language. The participants with a lower English proficiency

felt socially isolated due to his or her language proficiency. The participants' comments

indicated that they can easily get a sense of social belonging and confidence in social activities

when they communicated within the virtual social media community with others from the same

cultural background in a common mother tongue. The confidence in language proficiency

brought confidence in social interaction with the others on social media. The social isolation

brought by low language proficiency led to a kind of social alienation, which presented

barricades when participants seek to expand their social relationship networks. The desire to

expand one's social networking for purposes of communication and information seeking pushed

the participants forward towards stronger inclination to turn to social media to fulfill these needs.

One of the participants said that:

> I feel that my social circle is limited, especially after I came to Canada. Language is a big problem [for expanding my social circle]. Many people who can help you [on social media] are the ones who you do not know [in the real life]… going to social media is my habit now and I do not think I am going to give it up even my language proficiency is increased.

Acquaintances

All participants shared a common need to keep their Chinese social media active after

they came to Canada because they need to keep in contact with their acquaintances back in China.

And most of their contacts within their families, schools, and former working places are on the

Chinese social media. This finding complies with the findings of transnationalism that new

immigrants use communication both of their home country and their host community (Lin, Song,

& Ball-Rokeach, 2010). The participants in this study said:

> I use Chinese ones because I use them before I came to Canada. Now I am using them to connect myself with families and friends in China. It is hard to call them because of the time difference, and now social media is a good way to communicate with them;

> I prefer to use QQ because I used it in China. I am used to using it; I have a circle of friends there;

> QQ is basically for the contacts in China;

> [the contacts in my QQ are] family, friends in China and Chinese friends here [in Canada].

In some cases, immigrating to Canada became an incentive for the participants to start

using social media because social media has an advantage over the other communication

methods with cost and efficiency. One of the participants stated that:

Actually, when I was in America in 2007 and in Britain in 2009, when I was away from my family and my friends, I learned how to use it [QQ]. I used to use it to contact them. So this is the third time I am away from my friends, so I just picked it up… the advantage of it is that it is free".

And another participant stated that:

Before I came to Canada, some of my friends said that they would like to keep contact with me. Since they only used QQ, I had no choice but to use it. So I registered an account and put all of them [friends back in China] in my friend list.

Most of the participants made good use of the functions of instant messaging and video talk to contact their friends and families in China. Several participants explained that "it is not convenient to call my mom because of the time differences". It was an interesting finding that in order to keep this contact, many participants' parents started to learn how to use social media in their fifties, sixties or even seventies. Some parents of the participants even seek certain "technical support" from younger relatives in their families:

My mom does video talk [with me] sometimes, but she does not know how to do it very well… She is at her seventies now… She needs help from my nephew, so we will call her first and arrange like this 'Mom, we are going to do video talk this Saturday, you have to remind my nephew to go over to your house to help you'".

Another participant shared that "I have an MSN account, and I used it only for video talk with my father…He only knows how to use MSN, so we use MSN to do it".

On the same note, developing new social relationships in Canada also encouraged participants in this study to start using English social media. Many of them started using Facebook after they started to study or do professional work in Canada. Some of them started an account in LinkedIn for developing their professional network in Canada since they had known some coworkers and professionals in their professional fields with a LinkedIn account. As they said, "Facebook is basically for the friends and classmates I got to know here [in Canada]."

Interestingly, however, participants said that they seldom referred or recommended Chinese social media to their new social relationships even though there are English versions for these Chinese social media. It is probably because social media like Facebook are really dominant in North America, but more precisely, it is because of the social context around the participants. Their new acquaintances here in Canada are already users of Facebook, so the newcomers had to "join in" the existing circle instead of adding new acquaintances to their old circle by "introducing the home country media to their new Canadian acquaintances". As one of the participants described:

> The friends and classmates I know in Canada come from different countries, and they all use Facebook, so I have no choice but to use it.

Another finding was that participants less frequently added new friends to their Chinese social media friend list after they came to Canada, even though these new acquaintances are also users of the same social media. Most of the participants expressed the view that they would like to share telephone numbers, email addresses, or they would like to arrange a face-to-face meeting instead contacting each other via social media to develop their relationship. In an interview, the participant shared:

> Interviewer: After you came to Canada, are there many situations where you added your new friends in real life to your social media friend list?
> Participant: Not really. In China, this situation is more often.
> Interviewer: Why not? Why do not you become virtual friends?
> Participant: I do not know whether they use QQ or not…. [long-time thinking]…Sometimes we just exchanged emails and telephone numbers; we did not use QQ.
> Interviewer: Have you ever offered to do that?
> Participant: No. We meet friends now and then, from time to time. But we do not use QQ.

It is notable that all participants admitted that almost all of their friends on social media were their acquaintances in real life, which supports the findings of Benkler (2006) that there is a

"thickening of pre-existing relations with friends, family, and neighbors" (p. 357). Compared with the male participants, female participants were more cautious about managing strangers in their social media. All the female participants claimed that they felt more reluctant to add strangers to their friends list, as they shared, "I will not add any strangers to my friend list", unless "they are friends of my friends". Sometimes, these female participants adhered to an even higher requirement: they only added new friends if "they let me know whose friends they are, and my friends will let me know that one of his friends is going to send me a request to become my friend".

  In contrast, the male participants were not that strict or particular. Three out of five male participants claimed that they would accept a stranger's request to become friends, and they would try to communicate with these strangers until they could decide whether or not they would like to continue to strengthen and transfer the relationship with the strangers into a virtual friendship. One of the male participants indicated that he would accept a stranger's request because he has a business that requires a large social network even though he does not like to be social with these strangers that much. This might be a deeper indication that females are more cautious with strangers in the real life. However, many participants, both male and female, shared that when they first started using social media, they were prone to adding strangers to their social media friend list more frequently and more "carelessly". As time goes by, they "thickened" the relationship with the acquaintances in their real life, and they decreased the ratio of the on-line strangers or "purely virtual friends" in their virtual social media community gradually. Now on their friend list, "almost all the friends are those who are also friends in the real life".

Age

Age did not appear to be a negative element influencing the participants' social media use. Participants in various age groups used social media with the same intensity to fulfill their communication needs. However, younger participants between the age of 20 and 40 accessed social media through their mobile devices more frequently, while the participants over 40 used devices such as a desktop or a laptop more frequently. All participants in the age group of 20 to 30 downloaded social media applications to their smart cell phones and/or other mobile devices such as iTouch and iPad. The different choices of social media tools were a reflection of users' technology proficiency to some extent. A participant at her forties implied this in the interview:

Interviewer: [my friends in China] they use social media more proficiently than I do. Sometimes I read their message and find that "this message is sent from my iPhone QQ".

Participant: Do you have QQ on your iPhone? [her iPhone is right on the desk beside her hand]

Interviewer: No. I haven't got my brain to start torturing it yet. [Laughing].

Though the factor of age did not appear to influence the participants' use of social media negatively, the collected data showed that those participants in their forties had a social media communication gap with their own teenaged children. When asked whether they knew much about their kids' social media use, all three participants who are over 40 lapsed into a silence of concentrated thinking and then professed ignorance. Even though they were able to say a few general words about their kids' social media use, they admitted that they felt social media became a kind of negative factor in their relationship with their kids. A father of a 16-year-old daughter, who was very eloquent and knowledgeable, did not even know what social media his daughter was using, but he only noticed that his daughter was "typing on her cell phone all the time". He also regarded social media as "a hazard for the parents when they are educating and guiding their children". A mother of a 16-year-old daughter felt the situation was not that bad

"since she [her daughter] is still sharing something about her friends on her social media" and

she believes "it is really good that they talk about it (social media risks) on their social study

class". A mother of an 18-year-old son found that:

> It [social media] takes him away from me… [because] he spent a lot of time facing his
> computer and talking with his friends all day.

> Although she "tried to like what he likes", but still, the situation was that "he seldom

talks to me, even though we agreed that we would practice English together".

> The above situations arise not because these parents were not proficient at new

technologies since all of them were social media users themselves. The factor of age may play an

important role in two ways. Firstly, most of the parents believe social media is something not

meant for their age or not meant for their generation. The father quoted above commented further

that "it [social media] is the stuff belonging to their generation, not mine. I have nothing to do

with it". Secondly, they believe that their authority accumulated by time and reinforced with

their age should lie in real life and that this authority should not be influenced by the social

media. That is why they do not think they need to be a part of their kids' virtual circle or that

they need to play any role in that circle. However, all of them realized, to some extent, that they

should get more involved and do something to change the current situation. They all

acknowledged this social media communication gap with their teenaged children, and agreed that

this gap will force them to start using social media more frequently to find something in common

with their teenaged children. A conversation in the interview with a mother in her forties

typically illustrated the above findings:

Interviewer: Does your daughter use any social media?
Participant: She uses Facebook and QQ.
Interviewer: Are you her "friends" on QQ?
Participant: [silence for several seconds] No.
Interviewer: Does her using social media make you use social media more?

Participant: [silence for several seconds] [she did not answer questions directly] She sometimes
                    shows me stuff on her social media. She shows her classmates' pictures on her
                    social media…She came to show me her classmates in Sichuan when the
                    earthquake happened in Sichuan Province.
[after several questions about privacy issue about social media use]
Interviewer: What do you think about the teenager's using social media?
Participant: It is an inevitable outcome of information era. If you do not use it, you are
                    out[dated].
Interviewer: Do you think you are out[dated]?
Participant: I think I am okay.
Interviewer: Why do you think you are okay?
Participant: At least, I know what she is using and I know what she is talking about.
Interviewer: One day, if your daughter says "I do not want to talk to you about this. You are
                     not using it anyways", are you going to use social media more?
Participant: [emphasized] definitely yes.

Time and Stress

The literature reveals that new Chinese immigrants are confronting a stress-intensive

environment in Canada, especially at the early stage of their settlement. Su and Hynie (2013)

provide a very detailed description about the immigrants' stresses:

Many recent immigrants find only low-paying, demanding jobs that are not

commensurate with their skills and education, and they work extremely long hours,

dividing their time between working full-time and trying to obtain educational credentials

that are recognized in their new home. Additionally, many immigrants lack social support

and have poor interpersonal networks in their new home. (p. 947)

The responses from the participants in this study indicated that they were no exception.

Below are the stresses which were most frequently picked up from the interview transcripts:

1) their studies, both for improving their English proficiency and for helping them bridge

their professional credential to a professional job under Canadian circumstances.

2) their employment, especially when they finish their language studies and are about to

prepare for future employment opportunities;

3) their being unfamiliar with systems, customs, and rules.

4) cultural shock, which is the exact words a participant used during the interview.

5) their parents in China because they "do not want to make them [their parents in China]worried,… and I do not tell them anything bad."

6) their kids' education and future, which is the primary focus for their parenting. All the participants shared that this was the core part of their parenting priority as early as their kids become of schooling age, or even earlier than that – when the kids are no more than three to four years old. At the same time, they would like to set a good example for their children to show their children that a person should work diligently to pursue their goal in their life.

These stresses became a factor forcing and pushing them to strain their nerves to settle down as soon as possible by "always trying hard to learn English" and "finding a professional job as soon as I can". Therefore, they have less time available to access and communicate with others on social media. A mother emphasized "I do not have that much time" when she was asked why she would not like to try some new functions on the social media. Another mother commented that:

> For the moms who posted her son's stories, I was questioning about that. Is she neglecting her son? Because since my daughter was born, I was so devoted to her; I do not have much time for myself. I was questioning where she found the time to do that?

Another father shared that:

> I would like to spend more time on my professional development, not on talking to the people [on social media]…I do not want to keep many contacts on my social media since I will not contact them anyways.

A mom had the same thinking and she shared:

> I really do not have much time [to use social media], I spend all my limited time learning English. I either practice my listening, or doing several paragraph reading practice as long as spare time is available.

Therefore, limited time caused by the life stress after immigrating to Canada to some extent keeps the newcomer parents away from their contacts on social media. However, there was no evidence showing that as time goes by, they will increase their social media use after they settle down. The time length spent on social media really depends on individual personal situations, but not on the residence period in Canada. Most of the participants' schedules are flexible enough for them to arrange their time on social media, but they are passive rather than active communicators on social media. As one participant remarked:

> I only check my Facebook to read someone's message to me and when I check my emails found out they [classmates in the participants' ESL class] always say they cannot find me again…I do not know whether I am going to use social media more frequently after I settle down…I hope I can [do that by then].

Social Media Use for Obtaining Parenting Information

Sharing parenting information through social media

When asked whether they shared their parenting experiences with others, almost all the participants explained that they seldom do that, and if they did, they did not do it regularly and they did not do it through social media. The reasons they gave for this lack of sharing are described below.

Firstly, they do not think they are confident enough to do so because they do not believe that they are good enough to provide their own personal experience for others as a valuable reference. Several participants expressed the view that "I do not think I am a good parent, and I am afraid that my experience may mislead the others and cause negative effects on their kids". In a Chinese cultural norm, this phenomenon is very reasonable due to the custom of remaining humble and not showing off. Some participants also believed that they were not as good at parenting as their spouses are, with mostly male participants holding this opinion. As a consequence, they were reluctant to share their parenting experiences with others when they

believed that they were not as good as their spouses, let alone other parents. Many male

participants admitted that "I am not as good as my wife [as a parent]" and "my wife has put more

efforts in terms of the education to my kids".

Secondly, sharing parenting experiences sometimes can be regarded as a show-off

practice on their Chinese social media, and could be viewed very negatively by those "friends"

who are living in China. A participant, who is a father used to sharing his parenting experiences

through QQ, shared a story:

> My experience to them, at least in my mind, will become a show-off. I do not like to
> appear a show-off person. So I do not like to share. I did not notice that at first until one
> day a former colleague of mine said you are making us feel jealous of you. I said why.
> [She said] You are showing us something our children will never get. I said I am sorry
> about that, but I did not do it on purpose. I did not intend to hurt your feelings of living in
> China. It is simply something my daughter is enjoying. When she is happy, I am happy.
> But from then on, I become more careful.

Another participant shared some similar experiences. She is more cautious when she is

sharing her parenting experiences by "choosing the word more carefully" and "avoiding hurting

their feelings". This "hurt" can be difficult to comprehend for those who do not come from the

same community and cultural background. The main origin is that parents in mainland China are

suffering a huge pressure due to the intensive competition in China. When the population is big,

and the opportunities are limited, they are forced to push their kids hard to be excellent. At the

same time, in this process, they are suffering the same pressure to succeed, if not more, to what

their kids are suffering. Therefore, when a more relaxing life style is shown or implied in

someone's parenting experiences, these shared experiences can be regarded as a show-off.

Thirdly, the understanding of the risks on social media, especially the risks of privacy-

intrusive events, stopped some participants from sharing their parenting experiences, which may

reveal private information or identity information. One father shared that:

I wrote something before. But when I found some strangers are reading my articles. I do not write it any more. [Recently] I [only] posted some pictures…and I wrote several comments.

However, the fact that they hesitate about and in most cases refrain from sharing parenting experiences through posting does not mean that they would not like to share parenting information in all cases. When asked whether they would like to answer questions related to parenting experience from members in their virtual communities, or whether they would like to reply when there is a discussion in regards to parenting in their virtual communities, all the participants said yes. There is evidence showing that when they had a positive experience when search for parenting information, they are more likely to help each other in their virtual communities. One mom explained that "[I did this] Because I got help from them" after she shared a story about how she got help from her Facebook friends when her son had a rash on his skin. Another mom had her own philosophy of doing so, which went that "if I do not reply, they will get an answer anyways, but if I reply, maybe they will get a better answer".

However, most of the time, the information they shared and provided were facts, not advice or suggestions. A father confirmed that:

[the information we shared are] Facts. Most of the time, I give facts like what is happening at what place and at what time.

A mom said she may give her own opinions or ideas but she always told them that "this is what I think [emphasis on "think"], and these are the facts I got from somewhere".

Reference and Starting Point

When participants were acquiring parenting information, they very carefully considered all facts received. In all cases, they processed this information by evaluating every aspect of it and filtering the questionable parts of it, and they always verified the information by further online searches or by contacting the service or product providers directly. For all the participants,

the process of evaluating, filtering and verifying the parenting information accessed through social media was essential.

The filtering or judging standards vary from parent to parent, but the most frequently two labels mentioned by the participants are "interesting" or "useful" . The researcher confirmed that there was a process of judgement because many participants actually used words like "good" or "bad" when they were asked what kind of information they would like to pay attention to. They further explained "good" or "bad" as "whether [or not] it will intrigue me" or "whether [or not] I will feel it useful". A filtering process happens soon after the judgement about the quality of the information obtained, and it is hard to separate it from judgement process. This process does exist and it functions differently. A participant's comments support it perfectly:

> I will focus on those 'good information', and filter out 'bad parts'…you know, social media is like a hot pot. Everything is there, and you get what you want.

In his comments, a judgement process is identified since he identified "good" or "bad " information based on his needs. Immediately following that judgement, he filters out "bad" parts, and focuses on the "good part" only. The simile of "hot pot" is a supportive statements from this father participant for the filtering process since when Chinese people have hot pot, they put everything in the same pot, and people pick (filter) what they want to have with their chopsticks.

Participants claimed that during the process of verification, they relied heavily on traditional information releasing channels such as printed flyers and brochures. However, the participants in the age group of 20 to 30 and 30 to 40 held the common opinion that they relied on the official website of an organization when they needed to filter the relevant information. Some participants' responses also showed that they would also check information among their friends in their virtual community first, and then used search engines and official websites to nail down all the details and complete the information search process.

Meeting parenting information needs

There are two modes of information accessing through social media. One is that the user accesses a variety of information available on social media without a specific information need, and the other is that the user searches for information with a specific information need.

This research found that when the participants had particular information needs in their mind, they adopted a point-to-point communication method or a point-to-mass communication method on their social media if they choose social media as their information accessing tool.

One common practice shared by many participants was to have a video talk through social media with their parents. The information they obtained through video talk from their parents were mainly about the daily routine of taking care of their children or about their children's education and career decisions. Two interview transcripts below support this finding.

Interviewer: Do you talk about parenting when you have a video talk with your parents?
Participant: Yes, I do. Usually, we talk about what food is good for my son, and how to cook the food. My parents teach me how.

and

Interviewer: If you have some difficulties in parenting, are you going to talk about them with your friends on social media?
Participant: No. I will talk to my father. His suggestions are very good. For example, when I did not know what major my daughter should choose in her university, I talked about it with my father.
Interviewer: But how can your father know about the education system and majors in Canada?
Participant: My father has a good understanding on majors. The core parts are similar [to the ones in Canada].
Interviewer: What way do you use to talk to him, then?
Participant: Call him or have a video talk on MSN. I only have him on my MSN [contact list] because he does not know how to use QQ.

Another common practice shared by the participants was to have a direct conversation with the other members in their social media community, including their "friends" on the social

media, whom they trust and communicate with often in regards to parenting. They may also choose to send a general request to a certain group of people with similar interests and experiences, such as Mom Group on QQ. They do so only because they "can get answers right away", and "all of them reply to me actively", which means they will have a better chance to get the information they need. A mother shared her experiences of using both general request and direct conversation to access parenting information through Edmonton Chinese Online Community, an online virtual community facilitating instant messaging and BBS function:

> When we just came to Canada, I hoped I can find a play buddy for my son. I posted an ad on Edmonton Chinese Online Community. There were many people replying my posts. Among them, a mom exchanged her contact with me and we still keep in touch now. When daycare asked for snow pants in winter, which I do not know where I can buy, and when I do not know what medicine I should buy for my son who was sick, I contacted her and ask her for the information.

All participants in this study confirmed that they identified new parenting information needs when they browsed information shared by the other social media users without any specific parenting information needs in their mind. Many participants did not regard information access in this way as information accessed through social media because in their mind, "accessing information" means "finding information they need". The dialogue below during the interview with a father supports this finding.

> Interviewer: Do you access parenting information through social media after you immigrated to Canada?
> Participant: No. Not really.
> Interviewer: Then, how did you obtain the parenting information you need?
> Participant: I always go to some online forums about parenting. There are many sections in these forums, like art class, piano class and so on. I just go directly to the topic section when I need the information.
> Interviewer: So if you need some parenting information, you will go to these forums directly, or you will Goolge it first?
> Participant: No. [I did not Google it]. I just found out someone is talking about something [I may need] on the forums, and then I will start paying more attention on this information [which was found]… For example, on the [online] forum, I saw there was someone saying that One Hundred Voice

> was a good program. I just started to search information about this program. I did not know about this program before. Now, I have registered my daughter [in this program].

Parenting information needs

There was no evidence showing that methods of accessing parenting information changed because of the changes of parenting information needs. The participants listed all kinds of changes of parenting information needs after they immigrated to Canada, including changes of their kids' age, the cultural environment in Canada, and parenting philosophy. However, most of the participants adhered to the same parenting information accessing methods on social media regardless of these changes.

The status of being the only child due to One Child policy in mainland China is a unique feature of mainland Chinese new immigrant parents who were born in 1979 or later. The data collected in this research study showed that the participants with this feature had unique parenting information needs. According to the data collected in this research study, their unique parenting information needs were illustrated by the following statements:

1. It is not easy for me to decide to have the second child. I do not know how I can split my love and give a share of it to another child. I feel unfair for my son.

2. Yeah. I am the only one. I do not have any brothers or sisters. I do not know how to handle the complexity between brothers and sisters. So when I have two boys, I have no idea how to help them to get along with each other. I do not know because I do not have the experience. That is something bad.

3. Because there is no one growing up together with me, I form comparatively isolated living habits during my growing process. These habits lead to the fact that it does not matter whether I have friends around me or not. Being not connecting to other people leads to difficulty finding problems [about my parenting].

4. I do not know [whether being the only child influence my parenting] because I do not have any friends who are not the only child in their home… They [my parents] have their parents to rely on, but I have nobody [to rely on]…To them [my parents], growing [of a child] is not a big deal. But to me, child is our life.

These statements show that these participants are not confident in their parenting especially when the dealing with the relationship between siblings is involved. The reason for the lack of confidence, shown from these comments, is that there are few experiences available from their parents and their friends that can be regarded as a reference for them.

However, the data did not illustrate that the said participants preferred relying on social media to obtain parenting information. Instead, they would like to be involved in more social activities relating to parenting in the real life such as community activities planned for kids and parents, and parenting workshops in the physical community. One of these participants expected to enrich his parenting experience and insisted that:

> [The best way of accessing parenting information] is community activities because both children and adults can observe the others and experience something by themselves, so I can find out some problems [of my parenting] which I cannot find out when we are staying at home.

Social Media Use to Enhance Participation in Canadian Society

Participants were also asked whether they used social media to assist with their integration into the fabric of Canadian society, their participation within various groups and organizations. This question drew negative responses from all ten respondents, who said that they did not discuss participation in Canadian society with their children, nor did they expect social media to play a part in this process. When asked whether they talked about acculturation challenges and how to help their kids integrate into Canada's mainstream society, none of the participants claimed that they did so or they intended to do so. Most of them claimed that "there was no discussion about that [participation in Canadian society] on social media", and they shared that:

> We do talk about that [participation in Canadian society] when we are meeting at someone's house. The adults will talk about it when our kids are playing together.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The data gathered through the individual interviews show that the participants do access parenting information through social media, and the participants prefer accessing parenting information through social media in Chinese language.

First, the participants obtain parenting information from their parents through video talks via social media. The main social media the participants use for video talks are Tencent QQ and MSN (Chinese version). The parenting information obtained in this way is mainly relating to the daily routines of taking care of the child(ren), such as food recipes and physical development, especially when the immigrant parents have child(ren) younger than school age . They also ask for the suggestions from their parents back in China when a "big" decision about their child(ren)'s education and career is going to be made, such as which major is a better choice in the university and which employer will provide better professional development. The reason why they choose social media to obtain this information is that social media is cheaper than long-distance phone calls, and social media can realize a real-time face-to-face communication.

Some participants have video talks with their parents in China through social media even though they commented that the parenting information provided by their parents is often not practical or usable in Canada. They prefer doing video talks in order to keep the bond between their parents and their child(ren). Social media helps these participants overcome the geographic distances and time differences to have a virtual "family get-together" regularly. For many participants, obtaining parenting information from their parents in China, no matter how much they rely on this information, is a sign of keeping the family bond among generations.

Secondly, the participants actively access parenting information by directly contacting their "friends" on virtual social media communities especially niche virtual social media communities of Chinese immigrant parents or social media communities of local parents in Edmonton. All the participants sense that the parenting environment in Canada is different from that in China; therefore, they do not rely on their "friends" who are in China to provide parenting suggestions or information to them on social media. All the participants who obtain parenting information in this way either join a social media community of local Chinese immigrant parents on Tencent QQ and Sina Weibo, or start an account of mainstream social media in North America, such as Facebook and Twitter. The data collected shows that the young participants (in the age group of 20 to 30) prefer accessing parenting information by directly contacting their "friends" on social media. The said participants are more comfortable to communicate through social media because they started using social media when the social media came into being, and they usually adopt social media as a communication tool and information collecting tool in almost all respects of their daily life. These participants trust that their "friends" on the virtual community are always willing to help, and usually they get help from their "friends" right away. At the same time, they provide parenting information and suggestions to the others in their virtual social media community. They would like to help first the ones who helped them, before helping the others. Most of the information they accessed through this approach is about "where" and "what" relating to life's essential needs and basic social activity needs. For example, "where can I buy snow pants for my son" or "what can I do with my children during this weekend".

The participants in the age group of 30-40 and the age group over 40 do not prefer actively seeking parenting information directly in their social media community. There are two main reasons: first, they are more comfortable to access parenting information via a face-to-face

conversation or via phone calls with an acquaintance; secondly, they would rather trust the

information released by an authority. When they identify an information need for parenting, they

usually go to the website of the organization or go directly to the organization to obtain the

information they need. The participants over the age of 30 are also reluctant to share their

parenting information through social media. The main reason for not sharing is that they would

not like to be regarded as showing off their life in Canada to their "friends" in their social media

community, because their acquaintances in China may envy them.

Thirdly, the participants obtain parenting information through information shared by

other social media users. All the participants commented that social media enabled them to be

exposed to larger amounts of parenting information. They are able to obtain parenting

information when they browse the parenting information which the other social media users

shared. Sometimes, they even identify new parenting information needs which they did not

realize before by reading posts from the other social media users. However, this approach may

be very time-consuming due to the large amount of information on social media. Most

participants browse the posts randomly and irregularly and archive the ones they feel helpful or

useful. Some participants subscribe to a parenting channel on their social media to collect

parenting information more efficiently. However, on social media, the information is not

organized in a certain way even though the information is gathered in the same channel. "Hot pot"

might be a perfect simile to interpret this situation. Everything is displayed and listed. There

might be tags and labels for the information, but these tags and labels are provided by the users

on social media, and they do not have to be in a certain organized way. Therefore, subscribing to

a parenting channel does not help improve the efficiency of accessing parenting information. On

the other hand, while social media features with its large information capacity, the information

redundancy is a by-product. The participants do not take this approach as the main parenting

information accessing tool because the redundancy of information leads to a low efficiency of

information collection. Nevertheless, all the participants like to spend some time browsing the

parenting information shared by the other social media users because they also use social media

as a tool to conduct social activities. They share, comment, or forward the parenting information

shared by the other users to realize social interconnectivity and to show that they are caring for

their friends.

The data from this study presents a picture of how much the participants rely on the

parenting information they obtain from social media. The answer is not too much. Most of the

participants take the information they access from social media as a reference or as a starting

point of further information seeking. All participants in this research study judge, filter and

verify the information which they obtain from social media. None of them use the information

from social media directly. The participants list several approaches to verify the information

obtained through social media, including using search engines to gather more information to

make a decision, accessing the website of the authority, talking with friends in the real life who

also live in Canada and have a similar experience, printed media such as brochures and flyers,

and the product or service providers directly through emails or phone calls.

All the participants prefer accessing parenting information through social media in

Chinese language even when they have sufficient English language proficiency to be a user on

social media in English language. One main reason is the participants feel more confident when

they read and write their mother tongue. The second reason is that the participants feel the

information shared by the parents from the other communities does not meet their needs,

especially when the information they seek is relating to the education of their children. The

participants believe the parents from China value the children's education more, and have

specific and unique requirements about their children's education. In their minds, these

requirements are not valued as much by the parents from the other communities.

Overall, when the participants access parenting information through social media, social

media plays a role of strengthening the connection to the family members in China, enlarging

information availability, enhancing an interactive way of accessing parenting information among

the users, and meeting their unique parenting information needs. However, the participants

always verify the parenting information they accessed through social media with the assistance

of other communication channels.

Limitations of the Research

The limited number of participants in this exploratory study is the main limitation of this

research study. In this research project, all the participants are immigrants falling into

"independent skilled worker" immigration category. To meet the criteria of this immigration

category, all the applicants are required to have a certain level of English proficiency, Bachelor

or Higher degree, and professional working experience when they applied for immigration to

Canada. Even though their spouses, who are some interviewees in this research project, may not

have a high English proficiency, they are required to have a post-secondary or higher educational

level to help the main applicant meet the requirement of this immigration stream. Therefore, the

influence to accessing parenting information through social media caused by educational level

and language proficiency may not be outstanding.

Another limitation of the research is that the researcher discovered that many participants

confuse social media with mass media. During the interviews, this confusion always led to a

need of explaining these two concepts thoroughly. When asked whether they knew about what

social media is, many participants listed examples such as "newspapers, radio, and magazines" or "all printed materials for publication". This confusion happened only when the interview was conducted in English. The reason for this confusion lies in the fact that the participants translated "social" into "anything relating to the society". In sense of Chinese language, this translation is similar to "public, commonly shared, and publish to the public". Although "social" can also be translated into "anything relating to social activity, or anyone becoming active among interpersonal activities", this translation was seldom adopted by the participants as their first choice. The misinterpreted "social media" as "public media, or media for the society" emerged almost like instinctive reaction at their first thought. When the interview was conducted in Chinese, the interviewer translated "social media" into "she jiao mei ti", which in Chinese means media for social interpersonal relationship. This translation avoided the interviewees' confusion.

Directions for Future Research

Several future research directions can be considered based on this research study. The first direction is how the government could best develop a strategy combining both printed media and social media to better deliver service information in regards to parenting information to the newcomer parents to fulfill their parenting needs. The second research direction might be to investigate how the parents' social media use and their child(ren)'s social media use influence each other. The third possible area of inquiry is how newcomer parents can better guide their kids' internet and social media use when the parents do not have sufficient language proficiency and when the kids have much better social media proficiency than their parents.

References

Assarsson, L. (2011). 'How to be good': Media representations of Parenting. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, *43* (1), 78-92.

Auerbach, C.F., & Silverstein, L.B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Baldwin, J. R. (2006). *Redefining culture: Perspectives across the disciplines*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Caidi, N., & Allard, D. (2005). Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: An information problem?. *Library & Information Science Research 27* (3), 302-324.

Caspi, D., & Elias, N. (2011). Don't patronize me: Media by- and media-for minorities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34* (1), 62-82.

Chen, J. Chen, T. & Zheng X. (2012). Parenting styles and practices among Chinese immigrant mothers with young children. *Early Child Development and Care, 182* (1), 1-21.

Cheng, L., Dai, Y., Zhu, Z., Xie, X. &, Chen, L. (2011). Development and validation of a parenting assessment tool for Chinese parents. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 38* (4), 588-594. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01263.x.

Cheah, C.S.I., Leung, C.Y.Y., Tahseen, M. & Schultz, D. (2009). Authoritative parenting among immigrant Chinese mothers of preschoolers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*, 311-320.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2011). Canada – permanent residents by source country. *Facts and figures 2011 – immigration overview: permanent and temporary residents*. Retrieved from

http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2011/permanent/10.asp.

Craig, R. T., & Muller H. L. (2007) *Theorizing communication: Readings across traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Elias, N. (2011). Russian-speaking immigrants and their media: Still together? *Israel Affairs, 17* (1). 72-88.

Fisher, C. (1982). *To dwell among friends: Personal networks in town and city*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Gottlieb, B.H. (1983). *Social support strategies*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Hagan, J. M. (1998). Social networks, gender, and immigration incorporation: Resources and constraints. *American Sociological Review, 63* (1), 55-67.

Howe, J. (2008). *Crowdsourcing*. New York, NY: Crown Business.

Henning, C. & Lieberg, M. (1996). Strong ties or weak ties? Neighbourhood networks in a new perspective. *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, *13* (3), 3-26.

Hwang, B., & He, Z. (1999). Media uses and acculturation among Chinese immigrants in the USA: A use and gratifications approach. *Gazette, 61* (1), 5-22.

Lam, W., & Warriner, D. (2012). Transnationalism and literacy: Investigating the mobility of people, languages, texts, and practices in contexts of migration. *Reading Research Quarterly, 47* (2). 191-215.

Leinonen, J.A., Solantaus, T.S., & Punamaki, R.L. (2002). Social support and the quality of parenting under economic pressure and workload in Finland: The role of family structure and parent gender. *Family Psychology, 17* (3), 409-418.

Levitt, P. (1988). Social remittances: Migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion. *International Migration Review, 32* (4), 926-948.

Lin, W., Song, H. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (2010). Localizing the global: Exploring the transnational ties that bind in new immigrant communities. *Journal of Communication*, *60* (2010), 205-299. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01480.x

Merrigan, G., Huston, C., & Johnston, R. (2012). *Communication Research Methods*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Keen, A. (2007). *The cult of the amateur: How today's internet is killing our culture*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Klein, A. (2008). From Mao to Memphis: Chinese Immigrant Fathers' involvement with Their Children's Education. *The School Community Journal. 18* (2), 91-117.

Komito, L. (2011). Social media and migration: Virtual community 2.0. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 62* (6). 1075-1086.

Omidvar, R. (2001). *Social inclusion: A new vision of immigrant settlement in Canada*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Omidvar, R. & Richmond, T. (2003). *Immigrant and Social Inclusion in Canada.* Toronto: Laidlaw Foundation.

Palmen, M. & Kouri, P. (2012). Maternity clinic going online: Mothers' experiences of social media and online health information for parental support in Finland. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare, 5* (3), 190-198.

Paul, A.M. (2011, January 31). Tiger Moms: Is tough parenting really the answer? *Time Magazine*, 177 (4). Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2043477,00.html.

Qin, D.B. (2008). Gender process of adaption: Understanding parent-child relations in Chinese

immigrant families. *Sex Roles 2009*(60), 467-481. doi: 10.1007/11199-008-9485-4

Ray, B. & Preston, V. (2009). Are immigrants socially isolated? An assessment of neighbours

and neighbouring in Canadian cities. *Int. Migration & Integration, 10*. 217-244. doi: 10.

1007/s12134-009-0104-1.

Ray, B. & Rose, D. (2000). Cities of the everyday: Sociao-spatial perspectives on gender,

difference, and diversity. In T. Bunting & P. Filion (Eds.), *Canadian cities in transition,*

the twenty-first century (pp.502-524). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Sanders, M. R., & Prinz, R. J. (2008). Using the mass media as a population level strategy to

strengthen parenting skills. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 37* (3),

609-621.

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New

York, NY: The Penguin Press.

Skop, E. & Adams, P. C. (2009). Creating and inhabiting virtual places: Indian immigrants in

cyberspace. *National Identities, 11* (2). 127-147.

Statistics Canada. (2009). *Canadian Internet Use Survey*. Retrieved from

http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100510/dq100510a-eng.htm.

Su, C., & Hynie, M. (2011). Effects of life stress, social support and cultural norms on parenting

styles among mainland Chinese, European Canadian, and Chinese Canadian immigrant

mothers. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42*(6), 944-962. doi: 10.

1177/0022022110381124

Tencent Holding Limit. (2012). Progress of QQ. Retrieved on

http://im.qq.com/culture/progress.shtml .

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON: The University of West Ontario.

Weiskopf, I. & Kissau, K. (2008). Internet and the integration of immigrants in Germany and Iseral: Characteristics and potentials. *German Policy Studies, 4* (4). 95-124.

Appendix A

Letter of Initial Contact

Parenting Information Accessed through Social Media: An Interpretative Study Focusing on Chinese New Immigrants

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project about parenting information accessed through social media by landed new emigrant parents from mainland China. I am completing this project as part of my master's degree in Communications and Technology at University of Alberta. I immigrated to canada as a skilled worker together with my husband and my daughter in 2009. Because of my personal experience, I am very interested in this research topic. If you immigrated to Canada with your child(ren) who is (are) not older than 16 and have been living in Canada less than five years, **OR** if you have your first child born or adopted in Canada after you immigrated to Canada and have been living in Canada less than five years, I would like to interview you face to face regarding your experiences of accessing parenting information in Canada. I hope you can share with me whether you access parenting information through social media (e.g. Tencent QQ and Facebook), how you access parenting information through these media, and why you choose to obtain parenting information in this way.

Since I am a student, I am not able to offer you any financial incentive for your participation in my project. However, your participation will provide valuable information on this topic, and will be very helpful for the other parents in a similar situation. In addition, the

findings in my research may be evidence for the settlement service providers to facilitate a better settlement service for the other newly-landed parents.

There will be two parts in my interview with you. The total duration of the interview will be 60 to 90 minutes, and you will decide where we are going to have this interview. In the first part, I will ask you some basic questions about your background and your parenting experience. In the second part, I will ask you to share more about your opinions on the topic of parenting information accessing. All the questions will be carefully explained if you do not completely understand. Mandarin is my mother language, so you can feel free to use Mandarin to explain your idea when you feel any difficulty talking about it in English. When I am interviewing you, your spouse and your child(ren) will be absent, and your answers to my questions will not be reviewed or verified by them. Our conversation will be audio-recorded by a digital recorder, transcribed, and analyzed. Your identity will remain confidential during the whole process of this study. More details will inform your decision about whether to participate in the study or not. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to sign a letter a letter of informed consent.

I sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation to be a participant of my study. You can contact me at the phone number or email listed below.

Sincerely,

Yang Zhang (Principal Investigator)
Graduate Student
University of Alberta
EMAIL: ynzhang@ualberta.ca
PHONE NUMBER: 780.238.8911

Dr. Ann Curry (Supervisor)
Professor, Graduate Program in Communications and Technology, University of Alberta
EMAIL: ann.curry@ualberta.ca
PHONE NUMBER: 780.248.1110

Appendix B

**COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

Enterprise Square
10230 Jasper Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 4P6

INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Parenting Information Accessed through Social Media: An Interpretative Study Focusing on Chinese New Immigrants

Research Investigator: **Supervisor:**
Yang Zhang   Dr. Ann Curry
Graduate Program in Communications & Technology   Graduate Program in Communications &
Technology
Faculty of Extension   Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta   University of Alberta
Enterprise Square   Room 2-365, Enterprise Square
10230 Jasper Avenue NW   10230 Jasper Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB, T5J 4P6   Edmonton, AB, T5J 4P6
ynzhang@ualberta.ca   ann.curry@ualberta.ca
780-238-8911   780-248-1110

Background

I appreciate your interest in my project study about the practice of Chinese new immigrant parents' obtaining parenting information through social media. You are being asked to be in this study because you are a landed emigrant parent from mainland China and have been living in Canada less than five years, and you either immigrated to Canada together with your child(ren) (younger than 16), or you have your first child born or adopted in Canada. I landed in Canada from mainland China as a skilled worker with my husband and my daughter three years ago, and my personal experience made me become interested in this topic. I am only a student, so I am not able to pay you for your participation. However, your participation in this study will provide very valuable resources on this topic. Thanks to your settlement practitioner, a letter of invitation about my study was given to you and my contact information was passed onto you. The results of this research will be only used in my project report for my master's degree in Communication and Technology, and will not be used in any commercialized way.

Purpose

In this research, I would like to find out:

- whether the new emigrant parents from mainland China access parenting information
- If they do, whether they obtain this information through social media; why they choose social media as a way of accessing parenting information or why they do not use social media to obtain parenting information

- If they do not, what are the reasons stopping them from getting the parenting information

Your participation in my study will be helpful for the other parents in similar situations by providing valuable experiences, and will be also helpful for the settlement service providers to provide a better service in the future. Also, it is a good opportunity to give Canadian society more knowledge about our culture, especially our parenting style.

Study Procedures

The overall length of my study will be 4 to 8 months. Individual interviews with 10 participants (five men and five women) like you will be the first stage of my research. The total duration of the interview will be 60 to 90 minutes, and you will decide where we are going to have this interview. There will be two parts in my interview with you. In the first part, I will ask you some basic questions about your background and your parenting experience. In the second part, I will ask you to share more about your opinions on the topic of accessing parenting information through social media. All of the questions will be carefully explained if you do not completely understand. Mandarin is my mother language, so you can feel free to use Mandarin to explain your idea when you feel any difficulty talking about it in English. When I am interviewing you, your spouse and child(ren) will be absent, and your answers to my question will not be reviewed or verified by them.

Our conversations will be audio-recorded by a digital recorder, and then will be transcribed (typed and printed out) for analysis. After I print out our conversations, I will return a copy for your review. You need to read it carefully and make sure everything we talked was put on the copy correctly. Please be noticed that you will be given a copy of your records after this review. After your review of this transcript, our conversations will be analyzed, and this analysis will be a very important part in my final project report.

Benefits

You will not financially benefit from taking part in this study. However, you may have the opportunity to learn about parenting information available on social media.

I hope that the information I get from the interview with you will be helpful for better understanding the current parenting situations of the new immigrant parents from mainland China. I also believe that the findings in this research will be a good start for the settlement service providers to make their settlement service better, therefore, the new immigrant parents in similar situations will benefit in the future.

There will not be any cost from you during or after your participation in my study, and you will not get money, coupon, or any other form of compensation from participation in this study.

Risk

Please notice that you may have to talk about some parenting experience that may make you feel unhappy, uncomfortable or upset. For example, you may need to talk about trying an unfamiliar parenting method or your stress when you cannot find useful parenting information. Because your children cannot be present when we are on the interview, you need to schedule with your spouse or contact a baby sitter when the interview time is settled, so that you will be worry-free during the interview.

Voluntary Participation

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. The participation is completely voluntary. During the interview, you can pause, stop or give up our interview without giving any reason. Even if you agree to be in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw my study. You can contact me and give me a notice of withdraw (either oral or written) within four weeks after the interview is completed. If you withdraw, the collected data will not be used for analysis and will not be included in my project report. All the data from you will be completely deleted, and the printed copy will be shredded on a safe electric shredder. Your withdrawal will not cause any direct or indirect blame or negative comments about you during or after my study.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

The data collected from you will be analyzed and used in my final project report for my master's degree. There is no plan to use your data in the future after my study is over. All the data collected will be saved in a digital file with an access password in a memory stick (USB). I am the only person who knows this password; therefore, I am the only person who can access the data. This memory stick will be locked in my supervisor's office during and after my research. The data will be kept in this secure place for 5 years following completion of my project study. There will not be any data stored in my personal computers and devices, or any computers at my working place or other public locations (e.g. public libraries). The Research Ethics Board of University of Alberta always has the right to review my study data, so the data may be accessed by the Research Ethics Board of University of Alberta during my research and within the five years after my study is completed. My supervisor will be the only one who evaluates my project report and accesses the analysis based on your data.

In the whole process of my study, your identity information will be wiped out and you will not be identified based on the information I collected from you (date of birth, education levels, and so on). Your identification will be kept protected in my final project, even though it may be presented or published.

Your data will be completely destroyed when the five-year limit for keeping your data is over. All the files in the memory stick will be completely deleted, and the memory stick will be also physically destroyed (broken by a hammer).

You have the right to ask for a printed copy of a report of research findings if you are interested in finding out my study results. You can contact me after September 2013 by emailing me or calling me to request a copy.

Further Information

  If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by calling me at 780-238-8911 or emailing me at ynzhang@ualberta.ca.

  The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

  I have read the details of the consent form and understand the background, the purpose, study procedures, and terms of participation in this study.

  Print Name of Participant: _____

  Signature of Participant: _____

  Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview Question Script

Thank you very much for participating in my study. Today we are going to talk about your

experience of obtaining parenting information in Canada. Can we start the interview right now?

I. Demographic Questions

- First, could you please briefly talk about when and how you immigrated to Canada?
- Which age group were you in when you first arrived in Canada /get your first/second child born or adopted in Canada?
- What was your professional background and educational level when you came to Canada? Did you continue your education after you came to Canada? When your child was born or adopted in Canada, were you studying or working?
- How do you evaluate your English proficiency when you arrived in Canada/when you have your first kid born or adopted in Canada?
- Are you the only child in your family because of one-child policy in mainland China?

-Parenting status

- How old are your children? (What is the age gap between them?)
- How do you describe your parenting style, traditional or more free-style? Did you adopt the same parenting style for all of your kids?
- Did you adopt the same parenting style and strategies after you came to Canada? If not, what are the differences?

-Social media use situation

- How often do you go online after you came to Canada/you have your first kid born in Canada? What devices do usually you use (computer or mobile devices)?
- Do you know what social media is? (the definition will be elaborated in a plain language after the participant answers this question) Are you a user of any social media? Why do you choose this/these social media?
- Could you please describe how you started using social media?

II. Ten Key Questions-Accessing Parenting Information through Social Media - Users

- When you first arrived in Canada/have your first child born or adopted in Canada, what kind of parenting information did you need? Was it difficult to get the information you need?
- As the kid grows up/you live in Canada longer, do you feel your need for parenting information changed? What do you feel is the most important change? Do you change your way finding parenting information when you notice this change or these changes?

- Comparing to parenting information needs in China, do you feel the parenting information needs are different in Canada? Do you think these changes influence how you obtain parenting information?
- Do you pay any attention to parenting information when you are using social media?
- Do you have any story that you successfully solve some parenting problems or getting valuable information through social media?
- Do you have any story that you find social media is not a good way to get parenting information?
- Have you shared your parenting information through social media or have you helped any other social media users by sharing your experience through social media or answering their questions?
- What advantages and disadvantages do you think for obtaining parenting information through social media?
- What social media do you feel is the best one for getting parenting information for parents emigrated from mainland China? Why?
- Comparing the other methods, do you think social media is a better way for a newcomer parent from mainland China in terms of accessing parenting information in Canada? If not, what do you think is the best way for them to get parenting information?

II. Eight Key Questions-accessing parenting information through social media- Non-Users

- When you first arrived in Canada/have your first child born or adopted in Canada, what parenting information did you need? Was it difficult to get the information you need?
- As the kid grows up/you live in Canada longer, do you feel your need for parenting information changed? What do you feel is the most important change? Do you change your way finding parenting information when you notice this change or these changes?
- Comparing to parenting information needs in China, do you feel the parenting information needs are different in Canada? How did you deal with it?
- Do you know any person around you using social media to get parenting information? Did he or she share some information getting from social with you? Did you feel more interested in social media after his or her sharing?
- You said you do not use social media to get parenting information, could you please let me know why?
- You said you use social media, but you do not pay attention to parenting information on social media. Could you let me know why?
- What do you think will make you start using social media to find parenting information you need?
- Even though you are not a social media user, do you think do you think others people's use of social media, perhaps your child's use, will influence your parenting in any way?

III. Questions for the users who are the only child in his/her family because one-child

policy in China

- Do you feel that being the only child in your family influences your parenting needs in any way?
- If yes, does these needs change in any way after you came to Canada?
- Are any of these needs or changes you talked influencing the method of your accessing parenting information?