

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF MAINLAND CHINESE  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOWARDS  
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

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A dissertation submitted to Auckland University of Technology  
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of International Hospitality Management (MIHM)**

**2014**

**School of Hospitality and Tourism**

## **Abstract**

Globalisation and advancement of education internationally has led to a rising number of international students, and this has highlighted the education market as a significant area of research. Previous literature has focused on teaching and learning experiences and little has been done on the importance of international students' perceptions of a country that may influence their choice of education destination. International students play an increasingly significant role in New Zealand. International education contributed \$2.5 billion dollars to the New Zealand economy in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013). Mainland Chinese are the predominant nationality, comprising 30.7% of the total number of international students (Ministry of Education, 2013). This research aims to provide insights into the perceptions of Chinese students towards Auckland, their experiences on arrival and whether Auckland met their expectations of the 'real' New Zealand experience. An interpretive paradigm was adopted to enable the study to discover the opinions and experiences of Chinese students who were staying in Auckland. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and selection of participants was done through snowball sampling. Data was analysed through thematic analysis by identifying and developing themes within the data (Gray, 2009). The study findings indicated that all the participants had similar positive perceptions of Auckland, New Zealand. Upon arriving in Auckland, some participants agreed that, contrary to their expectations, Auckland is a developed city yet it is still beautiful. Their perceptions are influenced by place of residency, safety concerns, service issues and transportation matters. However, some participants felt that there was still much more to explore because they had not stayed in Auckland long enough to ascertain whether what they had experienced was in line with their initial perceptions. The study results are useful and can enhance the initiation of strategies to improve factors like place of residency, safety, service efficiency, and advertisements to create realistic expectations and attract more international students and tourists. Results on some aspects are specific and require the adoption of strategies in the specific areas of concern to improve the experiences of both international students and tourists.

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### **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Heike Schänzel and Professor Mark Orams; you have been tremendous mentors for me. I would like to thank you for encouraging my research and for allowing me to grow as a research scientist. Your advice on my research has been priceless. Without your advice, patience and support, the dissertation would not be presentable.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to teachers in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at AUT, especially to Mr. Warren Goodsir and Mr. David Williamson for the advice and help provided for my dissertation. Many thanks and much gratitude go to Ms Marlene Lu and Ms Karen Dai from the AUT Chinese Centre for their patience and assisting with the search for volunteers to participate in this research. Also, I thank Mrs Sue Beguely for her patience and time in proofreading my work.

Then, a special thanks to my family. Words cannot express how grateful I am to you, my parents, for all the sacrifices you have made on my behalf. Your support for me was what has sustained me thus far.

I would also like to thank all of my friends who supported me emotionally, and encouraged me to strive towards my goal. Especially, I would like to express appreciation to Joshua, who was always by my side and supported me in the moments when there was no one to answer my queries.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to the participants who volunteered to be part of this research. Without your participation and the information you gave, this dissertation would not be able to provide useful advice for future research.

This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24 February 2014, AUTEK reference number 13/358.



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

With an increasing number of international students around the globe, the education market has been a significant area of research. Past research has often focused on international study experiences such as teaching and learning (Glover, 2011), and international students' stress with English language (Tananuraksakul & Hall, 2011). The literature fails to investigate the importance of an international student's perception of a country that may influence their choice of education destination. In recent news, Auckland was ranked in eighteenth place by London-based Quacquarelli Symonds in its annual Best Student Cities (Tan, 2013). The annual Best Student Cities are evaluated in terms of the quality of education, the mix of students, living quality, employment activity and affordability. Then they are compared with 98 other cities to see how attractive each city is for domestic and international students (Tan, 2013). This survey showed that Auckland has attracted many students from around the globe. Research on the education market was explored in Australia and the United Kingdom (Glover, 2011; Johnson, 2008; Tarry, 2011; Waters & Brooks, 2010; Zhou & Todman, 2009). This dissertation focuses on Auckland, New Zealand and it aims to explore the perceptions of mainland Chinese international students towards Auckland.

### **1.2. Background to the study**

Studying overseas is now a trend which has led to a rapid increase of international students globally (Nguyen, 2013). The United States of America (US), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Canada and New Zealand are the countries which have well-developed higher education and were targeted by international students over two decades (Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010; Tham, Mahmod, & Alavi, 2013; Wenhua & Zhe, 2013). The importance of international students is well documented as they are considered an important source of income for the country (Andrade, 2006; McFadden, Maahs-Fladung, & Mallett, 2012; Selvarajah, 2006; Waters & Brooks, 2010), as well as generating large amounts of revenue for communities and cities, speeding the development of property and encouraging trade (Martens & Starke, 2008; Sawir, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2009). The number of international students coming into New Zealand for their education rose by six percent in 2009, contributing two billion dollars to the New Zealand economy every year since 2009 (Trolley & Joyce, 2010).

Export education became New Zealand's fourth major export earner for the country (Li & Li, 2008; Merwood, 2007) and, in 2013, the revenue generated from export education reached NZ\$2.5 billion (New Zealand Education, 2013). China is currently the primary source country of international students globally (Bodycott, 2009; Sawir et al., 2009). There were approximately 17,165 Chinese international students studying in New Zealand in all education sectors in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013).

New Zealand is mostly perceived as a country that has natural beauty and scenery (Fountain, Espiner, & Xie, 2010). It is also renowned for activities such as whale watching or bungee jumping (Ministry of Education, 2008). These may be reasons why tourists come to visit New Zealand, especially for the natural habitat. Chinese students may choose New Zealand as their education destination because of the impression that the country is a green, clean, welcoming, honest and safe place to study (Collins, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Other reasons, such as New Zealand providing an English-speaking environment and the experience of 'Western' culture may also partly attract students from the East Asian countries, such as the Chinese (Bodycott, 2009). Thus at this point, the destination image of New Zealand may be part of the reason why Chinese students choose Auckland as their education destination.

Due to an increase of international students coming into New Zealand, Auckland CBD has been slowly transformed into a student area since most of the universities and private education institutions are located around Auckland city (Friesen, 2009). In order to accommodate the large number of students, facilities and accommodation were built and, in the process, the Auckland city was slowly *studentified* (Collins, 2010). The term *studentification* will be discussed later in Chapter 2. The large number of Chinese students has impacted Auckland, creating more Asian grocery stores and restaurants. Due to the large number of Asians, a process referred to as the 'Asianisation of downtown Auckland' began to be perceived (Collins, 2006). Hence, Chinese students who wished to experience Western culture may not be able to experience it due to the influence of a large Asian population as well as other ethnicities such as Pasifika, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African. Table 1 shows the number of ethnic groups in Auckland.

Table 1

*Ethnic groups in Auckland*

<b>Ethnic groups in Auckland</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2013</b>
European	700,158	789,306
Māori	137,301	142,770
Pacific Peoples (Pasifika)	177,948	194,958
Asian	234,279	307,233
Middle Eastern/Latin American/ African	18,558	29,945
Other Ethnicity		
New Zealander	99,474	14,904
Other Ethnicity	651	735
Total people, Other Ethnicity	100,110	15,639
Total people stated	1,239,054	1,331,427
Not Elsewhere included	65,907	84,123
Total people, Auckland	1,304,958	1,415,550

*Note.* Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2013b

Therefore, with the mix of different ethnicities and cultures in Auckland, Chinese students may not be able to experience authentic Western culture. As for Chinese students who came to New Zealand because of the impression that the country was a clean and green country (Collins, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004), they are not able to experience such an environment in Auckland because of the development in the city.

### **1.3. Research methods**

This study aims to explore Chinese students' pre- and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland. This research aim is divided into three objectives:

Firstly, to explore the possible reasons for the rising number of international students coming into New Zealand. Secondly, it seeks to understand more about the destination image of New

Zealand and, lastly, to learn how studentification can affect the city. Each aspect of these factors will be explored, and the relationship between these factors will be discussed. Four main issues that arise in relation to Chinese students' perceptions of Auckland and which this dissertation will address include,

- the lack of research regarding the perception of Auckland,
- the lack of research into Chinese students' experiences in Auckland,
- how studentification has impacted Auckland, and
- how realistic is the destination image of New Zealand?

In order to explain and better understand how the Chinese students' perceptions can differ, these research questions were used:

1. What were the perceptions of Chinese students before they arrived in New Zealand to study in Auckland?
2. What have their experiences been while studying in Auckland?
3. How do their perceptions differ from (or are consistent with) their pre-arrival expectations?
4. Is destination image as portrayed by New Zealand representing the right image of Auckland in China?

An interpretive paradigm is adopted in this research because this study aims to discover the opinions, experiences and views of Chinese students who are studying in Auckland. Interpretive research is appropriate for this study as interpretive research lies within the hermeneutical and phenomenological traditions (Morehouse, 2012). According to Morehouse (2012), phenomenology is defined as an effort to understand an experience as lived.

The data collection method of semi-structured interviews was chosen to collect data from eight participants. These participants were all first-year Chinese international students at AUT, and they were recruited from the AUT Chinese committee and through a personal contact network. Selection was aided by *snowball sampling*, where selection started off with 'a small number of participants, who, in turn, identify others in the population' (Gray, 2009, p. 153). However, the students had to meet the criteria in order to participate in this study which were being a first-year international student, on their first-time stay in Auckland and who have resided in Auckland for less than a year. The data were analysed using thematic analysis by identifying and

developing themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In Chapter 3, more in-depth detail on methodology will be discussed.

#### **1.4. Dissertation outline**

The dissertation includes six chapters, consisting of an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. The first chapter includes the background study about this research as well as the research design that will be used and an overview of chapters included in this research.

Chapter 2 includes the literature review and this chapter will cover a number of important factors about this research. Definitions of international students, perceptions, experiences, destination image and studentification are given in this chapter. The importance of the Asian education market in New Zealand is also included as this section discusses the contribution to the economy by the education market.

Chapter 3 presents and discusses the methodology used in the research and gives more in-depth information about the research design (as mentioned above). Semi-structured interviews were adopted for data collection and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the collected data. Data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews from eight Chinese international students at AUT. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data and key themes about their perceptions and experiences in Auckland.

Chapter 5 discusses and explains the findings with the help of the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2.

The last chapter is the conclusion, where the whole research will be concluded with a short summary, including the significance of the study and its limitations. Recommendations for future research are also mentioned to improve the study and findings for this research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This section of the study gives a summary of past studies and other secondary sources reviewed in order to obtain context in which to undertake this research. It helps to relate the proposed project to existing knowledge in this area as well as form the basis for further studies. It starts by describing international students as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This section also reviews studies conducted by various researchers in relation to international students in New Zealand, their reason for overseas studies and the destination image of New Zealand. The work of Andrade (2006); Bodycott (2009); Campbell and Li, (2008); Deumert, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, and Sawir, (2005); Latif, Bhatti, Maitlo, and Nazar, (2012) among other researchers is reviewed. Reasons why students choose to study abroad will be identified by the literature review. Thereafter, this section discusses New Zealand as an education destination. The literature review reveals the importance of international students to New Zealand and how the government helps to bring in more international students. The current trend of Chinese students traveling to study in a foreign country is also discussed. The last section of the literature review shows why New Zealand is considered an education destination, moving to the discussion of the destination image of New Zealand and how it is created. The experiences and adjustment challenges of Chinese students in New Zealand are also revealed. The last section depicts the major transformation of Auckland as a result of studentification and how that changes the perceptions of Chinese students in New Zealand.

### **2.2. International students**

Andrade (2006) defined an international student as an individual enrolled in an institution of higher education, where this individual holds a temporary student visa and is a non-native English speaker. According to UNESCO (2009), international students are referred to as students that leave their country of origin and go to another country with the objective of studying. This is a widely accepted definition of international students (Gardiner & King, 2013). However, every country has its own definition of international students. In New Zealand, an international student is defined as an individual, who is enrolled by a provider and, in relation to the provider, is a foreign student as defined in section 159 of the Education Act (New Zealand Qualification Authority, 2013). International students are foreign individuals who have moved to other

countries for the purpose of studying. For the last few decades, the number of international students has been increasing steadily, for example between 2000 and 2006, the number of students travelling for education purposes rose from 1.9 to 2.9 million (Bashir, 2007; OECD, 2008). In 2013, approximately 2.5 million students were enrolled outside their country of origin (OECD, 2013). Studies have shown that the market for international students will continue to grow and will reach 7.6 million in 2025 (Arambewela, Hall, & Zuhair, 2006; Kim, 2010; Tham et al., 2013). Other than the US, UK, Canada and Australia, New Zealand is among several nations that have experienced a swift increase in international student numbers in recent years (Abbott & Ali, 2009).

### **2.3.Factors contributing to students choosing to study abroad**

Many students have chosen to study in foreign countries in recent years (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007) and there are several factors that have contributed to the students' choice of host country. Studies have demonstrated that there are numerous factors that influence international students' decisions in selecting a foreign study destination (Gatfield & Hyde, 2005; Reay, David, & Ball, 2005; Shanka, Quintal, & Taylor, 2006; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). Included among them are the 'push' and 'pull' factors (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012), knowledge and awareness of study destination, the availability of the courses, influence, and cultural perspective among others (Choi et al., 2007).

#### **2.3.1. Push and pull factors**

There are various push and pull factors that have been identified in the research on what influences international students in choosing their study destination. It is noted that some of the push factors include the lack of access to local education institutions, perceptions of better quality of education overseas, availability of technology-based programmes overseas, good academic reputation, campus safety, and education costs (Andrade, 2006; Tham et al., 2013). The desire to experience another culture and parental influence are also motivating push factors for students to travel overseas for education (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012). Pull factors include the commonality of the language, the opportunity to improve a second language – especially English – the geographic location of the host country, the institution's academic reputation, the range of available courses and the staff's qualifications and credentials (Andrade, 2006; Cubillo, Sánchez, & Cerviño, 2006; Marriott, Plessis, & Pu, 2010; Shanka et al., 2006).

According to Andrade (2006) and Li and Li (2008), many international students consider their safety first when choosing an education destination. Students will choose an institution where they are guaranteed safety and are free from any form of discrimination. This can be determined by looking at the status of the host nation in addition to the local environment surrounding the education institution (Sawir et al., 2009). Even though studies have shown that international students will choose a study destination that is free from discrimination, integration characteristics – such as valuing cultural diversity and racial security – are not considered an important influencing issue when it comes to a student's decision on international tertiary education (Gray, Fam, & Llanes, 2003). The reputation of an education institution is also assessed by looking at the quality of education delivered, the living condition of foreign students, the cultural environment and its reputation in international education markets (Li & Li, 2008). The reputation of an institution is important for students because the university's or institution's qualifications are directly related to a student's career chances (Abbott & Ali, 2009). Students are also attracted by study destinations that give them opportunities to develop their career by allowing them to work in the host country (Sugahara, Boland, & Cilloni, 2008). The geographical proximity of the host country has always been a major factor considered by international students. For example areas which are easily accessible due to their geographical proximity and infrastructure are attractive to international students (Choi et al., 2007).

### **2.3.2. Knowledge and awareness of study destination**

Tham et al. (2013) have shown that the image of a country, city or institution influences international students in choosing their study destination. There are numerous aspects that relate to the awareness of the study destination such as safety, international experience, university environment, cultural activities, facilities, the visa application process, quality of life and immigration prospects (Chung, Holdsworth, Li, & Fam, 2009; Cubillo et al., 2006; Gatfield & Hyde, 2005; Li & Bray, 2007; Marriott et al., 2010). An institution's reputation in education is built on its relationship with and service delivery to international students rather than on its facilities and its students. Bodycott (2009) has acknowledged that student satisfaction is a major factor affecting a student's decision to choose a study destination and an institution.

Many students have also been influenced to choose a study destination due to the attractiveness of the cultural activities in the area. Cultural activities in some countries have contributed to



many students choosing them as their study destination due to the desire to learn these cultures. Studies have shown that many Chinese students have chosen Western countries as their study destination due to their desire to learn English as their second language (Bodycott, 2009) and to experience high quality Western-style education (Butcher, McGrath, & Stock, 2008).

### **2.3.3. Availability of university courses**

The availability of a student's desired course in a given institution is a major factor for students when selecting an education institution (Kim, Kwon, & Cho, 2011). Institutions that have many varieties of courses for students to choose from are usually selected as a study destination by international students (Bashir, 2007). Some students with a desire to pursue a certain course usually select a school that has a good reputation in offering the course and this will influence his or her decision in choosing the study destination. Bashir (2007) has noted that the availability of a course or programme is also dependent on the qualification requirement. Students usually choose a study destination that recognises his or her academic qualifications from their country of origin. Fernandez (2010) has indicated that many countries today have established grade-matching criteria to enable the comparison of foreign student qualifications with those in the host country.

### **2.3.4. Influential factors**

Sugahara et al. (2008) have stated that influence and recommendations from friends, family members and society as a whole play a significant role in influencing students when choosing a study destination. Studies have shown that personal recommendations and suggestions, or word-of-mouth referrals by former alumni of foreign institutions, are main influencers (Reay et al., 2005). Family members – especially parents and relatives – also influence them extensively by providing ideas, suggestions and information on *their* preferred study institutions. Friends are also likely to influence a student in making a choice of study destination. It has been noted that many students want to study together with their friends hence they are likely to choose institutions where they can join their friends (Butcher et al., 2008).

### **2.3.5. Motivation of students towards education**

Students are usually motivated to study abroad due to their academic performance, gender, parental involvement, ethnic group, and financial constraints. Cubillo et al. (2006) have shown

that students in a specific part of the world are motivated to study abroad by different factors. For example, international students are influenced by their family or friends to study abroad (Gatfield & Hyde, 2005; Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012) or by their racial background (Chung et al., 2009; Reay et al., 2005). Chinese parents are investing more in educating their children abroad for long-term social and economic benefits (Bodycott, 2009). Conventional Chinese culture and family expectations motivate many Chinese students to study abroad. The traditional idea of education in China is that a better education creates more fortune and happiness in the long term (Marriott et al., 2010) and this can be achieved only by studying abroad (Cubillo et al., 2006). Bodycott (2009) and Davey (2005) also stated that a Chinese graduate holding a foreign degree is perceived by family and society to be more employable and have better skills in their home country. Therefore studying internationally has become a trend in China (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

#### **2.3.6. Cost of living in host countries**

Other than the cost of education in the host country, the cost of living influences a student's choice of education destination (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012). When assessing the cost of international education, students usually consider the day-to-day living expenses, accommodation and transport expenses in the host country (Shanka et al., 2006). Students are usually attracted to study in countries with a low cost of living and low tuition fees. The cost of living in some host countries depends on a number of aspects such as the inflation rate, exchange rates, and economic activities among many others (Chung et al., 2009).

#### **2.4. New Zealand as an education destination**

Many students around the world are willing to pursue their studies abroad (Martens & Starke, 2008). According to Marriott et al. (2010), studying in a foreign country has become trendy for many young people around the world and New Zealand has emerged as one of the most popular choices as an education destination. New Zealand has experienced a considerable increase in export education since 1989 after amendments were made to the Education Act (Marriott et al., 2010). International education in New Zealand began in the early 1950s. International students arrived through the Commonwealth's Colombo Plan, where students from different countries travelled to study in New Zealand (Butcher et al., 2008). The Colombo Plan was part of New

Zealand's foreign aid policy, deliberately directed towards the poorer countries of Asia (Campbell & Li, 2008; Martens & Starke, 2008).

New Zealand has been viewed as one of the main education destinations worldwide, receiving students from different parts of the world especially from Europe, North America, Asia, South America and Australia. One of the main reasons why New Zealand is being viewed as a good education destination by international students is that the students get good value for their money (Cao & Zhang, 2012; Martens & Starke, 2008). According to a survey by Ward and Masgoret (2004), 36% of all international students agreed that New Zealand education is good value for money while 22% disagreed, and 41% were not sure. The respondents to the survey indicated that New Zealand has relatively lenient entry requirements and the low value of the New Zealand dollar (compared to Australia and UK) are factors which contribute to New Zealand being an attractive education destination.

New Zealand was also described as a green, clean, welcoming, honest and safe place to study (Collins, 2006; Fountain et al., 2010; Martens & Starke, 2008). Other reasons, such as New Zealand providing an English-speaking environment, also attracts students from Asian countries, especially Chinese students (Friesen, 2009; Martens & Starke, 2008). New Zealand also provides students with an opportunity to experience Western culture, which may be another reason why Chinese students come to New Zealand (Butcher et al., 2008). According to Martin (2012, p. 9), Western culture can be defined as 'cultures that have adopted cultural values, beliefs and traditions that are related with Western Europe.' Thus, students who see the value in learning about and adopting such cultures may choose New Zealand as their education destination. Also, having the potential opportunity to stay and work in New Zealand after graduating is a factor in students choosing New Zealand as their education destination (Deumert et al., 2005; Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

#### **2.4.1. The importance of international students to New Zealand**

Studies have shown that international students play a significant financial role in educational institutions and in the country as well (Abbott & Ali, 2009; Andrade, 2006). Waters (2006) claimed that international students are often viewed as a cash-cow, which means that they are considered as a steady source of overseas income by the host country and the education institution. Many countries often use international students as a way to expand educational

opportunities, extend their international focus and grow their global reputations (He & Banham, 2011; Wright & Schartner, 2013). For example, Marshall (2005) indicated that universities in the UK are seeking to increase the enrolment of international students to boost university revenues and also to remain competitive in the education market. It has also been shown that international students can bring in large amounts of revenue which benefits communities and cities, speeds up the development of property markets and encourages trade (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Martens & Starke, 2008; Sawir et al., 2009). New Zealand has benefited from the large growth in the number of international students; international education is now regarded as the fourth major export earner for the country contributing NZ\$2.5 billion to the economy (New Zealand Education, 2013) and revenue earned from providing international education is distributed throughout the economy (Li & Li, 2008; Marriott et al., 2010; Sawir et al., 2009).

The benefits of international students to the host country are realised in three ways: direct, indirect and induced benefit. According to New Zealand Education (2013), the direct benefits from international students are realised in the form of fees income, substance expenditure by the students, and the spending of friends and relatives. Indirect benefits are realised through business services, logistics and utility services, while induced benefits are realised on clothing, food and beverages, recreation and household goods expenditure (Gatfield & Hyde, 2005).

The fees paid by the international student are beneficial to the government and educational institutions. The institutions benefit from the income by meeting higher education costs. Fees paid by international students are usually higher than those charged to the local students and, therefore, many education institutions encourage international students. The higher fees enable universities and other education institutions to expand their infrastructure and make educational developments (He & Banham, 2011). Li et al. (2010) have also stated that universities receiving large numbers of international students retain a diverse range of subjects. In New Zealand, the income generated by exporting education services is among the top five of New Zealand's trade services (Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007). International students also provide thousands of jobs to the local citizens of New Zealand (Li & Li, 2008). Martens & Starke (2008) have also stated that international students contribute to the domestic economy through accommodation, living expenses and travel expenses. Increased spending in the country contributes to economic development hence the growth of the nation (Davey, 2005).

Sawir et al. (2009) have pointed out that when relatives and friends of foreign students visit, they also increase expenditure in the host country contributing to economic development. Foreign students together with their relatives and friends who visit the country also promote the tourism industry and other businesses in the locality (Gardiner & King, 2013; Ryan & Zhang, 2007). Studies have shown that international students generate considerable revenue in the local communities and cities, and have also accelerated the expansion of property markets, especially in Auckland and encourage other trade in the area (Sawir et al., 2009; Smith & Rae, 2006). The tourism industry targets international students as their main source of income (Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010; Gardiner & King, 2013; Glover, 2011). Many of the visiting students are regular visitors of tourist attractions in the country as well as being interested by cultural activities. International students have also been beneficial to New Zealand by promoting the relationship of the country with other countries. According to the Education Review Office (2012), international students not only contribute revenue to the country but also improve the relationship between New Zealand and other countries. The growth of international relationships has enabled the country to benefit from international trade, and trade fairs with other countries (Ho, Li, Cooper, & Holmes, 2007).

#### **2.4.2. The Asian education market in New Zealand**

Knight (2006) and Martens and Starke (2008) have stated that almost half of the international students around the world come from Asian countries and two-thirds of these students are looking for education in English language education destinations. Asian students make up the largest international student population in Australian and New Zealand universities (Latif et al., 2012). China, along with Japan and the Republic of Korea, have become very important markets for international students coming to learn English and to gain tertiary education in New Zealand (Abbott & Ali, 2009; Butcher et al., 2008; Simpson & Tan, 2009). According to Bodycott (2009), China is the largest source of international students globally. Chinese students are the largest group of foreign students in New Zealand (Marriott et al., 2010; Martens & Starke, 2008) (refer to Appendix 1), and they play a significant role in the education export industry (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). The main reason associated with the rapid increase in the number of Chinese students in New Zealand is the removal in 1998 of the quota of Chinese students coming into New Zealand (Smith & Rae, 2006).

Since China introduced an open-door policy in 1978, the country has experienced rapid economic growth and interaction between the Chinese and the outside world has grown drastically (Ryan & Zhang, 2007; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). There has been an increase in the number of Chinese students travelling abroad in search of new cultural experiences and for education purposes. Another factor that has influenced the increase of international students from China is the strong belief in China that providing a child with education is preparing them for a brighter future (Li & Bray, 2007; Marriott et al., 2010). Thus, many parents are investing heavily in education for their children to the extent of taking them abroad for quality education. The fast economic development in China has made it affordable for many Chinese students to study abroad (Bodycott, 2009; Ryan & Zhang, 2007).

Between 1989 and 1999, the government of New Zealand had set new quotas restricting Chinese students from studying in New Zealand (Smith & Rae, 2006). However, these quotas were lifted in 1999, and New Zealand was chosen by China as a preferred education destination. From then on, there has been a considerable growth in the number of students from China studying in New Zealand and Chinese students have become the biggest group of foreign students studying in New Zealand (Campbell & Li, 2008; Li & Li, 2008).

#### **2.4.3. Chinese international students coming to New Zealand**

Records show that the total number of international students from China coming to New Zealand for education purpose was 25,970 in 2004, however, this number decreased to 18,359 in 2006 (Sawir et al., 2009). The cause of the decline is associated with the effects of global and local trends. This includes terrorist attacks in the Southeast Asia region, an overvalued dollar, increased competition from other Western countries, new competitors from countries like Singapore, and negative reports about Chinese students in the New Zealand press (Simpson & Tan, 2009). An example would be the kidnap and murder case of a Chinese international student reported by *The New Zealand Herald*, (Bull, 2007).

The competition for Chinese students has also increased, especially from educational institutes in Australia, United Kingdom and Canada (Ministry of Education, 2008). New competitors have also entered the international education market, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong (Martens & Starke, 2008). These new entrants have a geographical advantage compared to New Zealand, which is located farther away from the Southeast Asian region, and the Chinese

students studying in Singapore, Malaysia or Hong Kong face fewer adjustment problems as these countries have a similar culture. New Zealand is considered a Western culture (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Martens & Starke, 2008; Simpson & Tan, 2009). As a result of the cultural differences New Zealand presents, many students prefer to study in these other countries. Presently, non-English speaking European countries such as France and Germany have also increased competition in the education market breaking the traditional markets dominated by the English-speaking countries of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Shanka et al., 2006). This has contributed to a decline in the numbers of Asian students in New Zealand. China also increased its provision of tertiary education, hence many students have enrolled in local colleges and universities reducing the number of students going to New Zealand to look for tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2008). New Zealand has also received negative publicity from the experiences of international students especially Asian students (Campbell & Li, 2008; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). There was a string of unconstructive press reports concerning rumoured anti-Asian bias in New Zealand where Asians were being racially discriminated against (Simpson & Tan, 2009). The racism against Asian students in New Zealand is associated with the negative portrayal of Asians in movies and television programmes perceiving them to be violent and second class citizens (Latif et al., 2012).

The decline in numbers of Chinese students in New Zealand is also associated with the exchange rate prevailing in the mid-2000s. The New Zealand dollar strengthened against the US dollar, and this increased the cost of education in the country and prices of commodities (Martens & Starke, 2008; McClure, 2007). This made New Zealand education more costly, and many Asian students could not afford it. However, studies have shown that students from the US were more affected by the unfavorable exchange rate than those from China (Abbott & Ali, 2009).

The decline in the numbers of Chinese students in New Zealand can also be related to the lack of government support (Merwood, 2007; Sawir et al., 2009). The New Zealand government has not supported international students in their studies. International students have to provide for their tuition and accommodation fees without any government subsidies. This may increase the burden for international students in the host nation as a result of the high cost of living, and this has reduced the number of international students in the country (Sherry et al., 2010). The lack of government support led to a lack of understanding of the needs of international students and

contributed to an unfavorable learning and social environment. There are also perceived problems with the visa process for Asian students (Campbell & Li, 2008; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Despite the removal of quotas to restrict Chinese students from studying in New Zealand, it is still difficult for Chinese students to acquire a visa to study here. For example, Chinese students have to meet the school criteria (such as overall grades) in order to obtain a student visa. Students from Asian countries have to undergo a longer process to acquire a visa to study in New Zealand until they have completed their course (Simpson & Tan, 2009). However, despite the notable decrease of Asian students in New Zealand education institutes, there is still a considerable number of Asian students who prefer New Zealand as an education destination (Collins, 2006).

#### **2.4.4. Participation of government in recruiting international students**

In some countries governments have implemented policies that encourage international students (Abbott & Ali, 2009). These government measures have played a major role in attracting international students to the host country. The initiatives include introducing reforms in immigration policies, education acts and other laws relating to the interaction of the host country with the outside world. Other measures taken by governments have included reforms on visa requirements and monitoring the quality of education in universities and colleges (Abbott & Ali, 2009; Martens & Starke, 2008). The New Zealand government has gone the extra mile in attracting international students by helping to summarise relevant information and facilitating visa procedures for foreign countries seeking to join their institutions (Lewis, 2005; Martens & Starke, 2008).

The New Zealand government has also lowered entry barriers and removed limitations for international students seeking an education in the country (Martens & Starke, 2008; Ryan & Zhang, 2007). For example, students studying English language and spending less than a year in New Zealand do not require a visa. Foreign students are also allowed to work and earn as they continue with their studies (Martens & Starke, 2008). The New Zealand government works closely with providers of education in New Zealand. The mandatory *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* was introduced by the government to improve the living standards of foreign students and provide for the possibility of appeal to the International Education Appeal Authority in case of breaches of the code (Lewis, 2005; Martens & Starke,



2008). The organisation also helps in providing accommodation facilities to foreign students and assists in other welfare facilities of the students (Butcher & McGrath, 2004).

According to Lewis (2005), Martens and Starke (2008) and Sawir et al. (2009), the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* covers the pastoral care, accommodation and provision of information to foreign students studying in New Zealand. It also sets out the minimum standards for advice and care and provides examples of procedures – for example, how to properly handle complaints – to education institutions that enrol international students.

In order to attract more Chinese students to study in New Zealand, the government of New Zealand and the Ministry of Education are adopting particular methods including easier visa applications, government scholarships, and the Open Work Visa policy (Marriott et al., 2010). The New Zealand government also signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with China in the middle of 2008, and this FTA will not only act as an international agreement between New Zealand and China, it will also help to increase New Zealand's reputation in China which could lead to more Chinese students studying in New Zealand (Marriott et al., 2010; Ministry of Education, 2008).

#### **2.4.5. The perception of New Zealand as an education destination**

Perception is defined in this study as a process where there is an interaction in time between the dynamic mind and dynamic world (Hockema, 2004). Generally, it can be defined as the image built by an individual's conscious mind towards something. According to Butko (2010), an individual's perception changes every minute and every second as these perceptions are built by our brains from sensations. According to Zakia (2013, p. 361), perception is described as a 'psychological process that includes sensation, memory and thought, and results in meaning, such as recognition, identification, and understanding.' Many international students have shown a positive perception of New Zealand as an education destination. With respect to this study, perceptions most likely to arise from a destination image constructed and actively promoted by New Zealand, which is known for its natural beauty and scenery (Ministry of Education, 2008). This positive perception is generated and reinforced by New Zealand campaigns to promote itself in the international community. These campaigns include the *100% Pure New Zealand* campaign launched in 2009 and a more recent campaign with the title *100% Middle-earth* launched in 2012 (Reis, 2012; Tourism New Zealand, 2013). Martínez and Alvarez (2010) have

claimed that the destination image of a place can be influenced by perceptions of the products of the country, including tourism products. Promoting New Zealand as 100% Middle-earth has increased tourists' awareness that New Zealand is a nature-based, green place to visit (Tourism New Zealand, 2013).

Another positive perception of New Zealand as a desired education destination held by Chinese international students is the good reputation of its institutes of higher learning, especially Auckland University (Ho et al., 2007). Ho et al. (2007) have shown that New Zealand colleges have produced some of the best graduates in many professional fields which has resulted in an increasing number of Chinese international students wanting to study there. Low admission requirements for international students have also created a positive perception in the minds of Chinese students to study in New Zealand (Butcher et al., 2008; Chung et al., 2009; Martens & Starke, 2008). The government has also eased the process of admission by making reforms on visa issuance (New Zealand Qualification Authority, 2013). This has been attracting many Chinese students to choose New Zealand as their education destination.

#### **2.4.6. Experiences of international students in Auckland**

Experience is defined as the actual living through an event (Erich, 2003). It has also been described as a many-sided phenomenon where one makes sense of one's experience of cultural, cognitive, subconscious and personal interactions (Fox, 2008). New Zealand is known for its natural and green habitat, as well as being a safe and honest country to visit despite the negative report from media (Martens & Starke, 2008; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). According to Bodycott (2009), this is one of the reasons why Chinese students like to study in New Zealand. In this research, experiences are linked to Chinese students being able to have exposure to Western culture, as well as having a peaceful environment to study (McClure, 2007).

According to Campbell and Li (2008), learning a new culture is one of the most desired experiences of Chinese students in choosing New Zealand as their education destination. Studies have shown that the desire to learn and understand Western culture influences Chinese students to study in an English-speaking country (Chung et al., 2009) as English has become a common language globally (Butcher et al., 2008). Chinese international students usually learn a new culture through interaction with domestic students and other foreign students enrolled in respective colleges (Smith & Rae, 2006). In order to accomplish intercultural learning, it is

necessary for international students and domestic students to interact in educational activities (Kuh, Carini, & Zhao, 2005). Chinese students in New Zealand also appreciate the many tourist attractions. The country is considered a major tourist destination in the world due to its natural environment, which includes beaches, mountains, and its unique flora and fauna (Jowett & Biggs, 2009).

#### **2.4.7. Adjustment challenges faced by Chinese international students in New Zealand**

The idea that international students face transition and adjustment difficulties when engaging in international education is not new. From the outset researchers have shown that international students face many changes when they engage in international education and may have difficulty adjusting in a wide variety of areas. The main challenges faced by Asian students studying in New Zealand cited by many researchers include academic stress, cultural differences and language challenges (Cao & Zhang, 2012; Sawir et al., 2009). According to Chung et al. (2009), Asian international students face different and greater adjustment difficulties than domestic students studying in New Zealand who are more academically engaged. In general, Asians have difficulties with English language and culture, and experience anxiety, stress, loneliness and homesickness, and have less social support than domestic students (Campbell & Li, 2008; Li & Li, 2008).

English language proficiency has been rated as one of the most common difficulties facing most international students studying in New Zealand (Campbell & Li, 2008; Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Sawir et al., 2009). Research has shown that Chinese international students have difficulty adjusting to various accents, understanding class lectures and often require extra time to read their textbooks (Andrade, 2006; Campbell & Li, 2008). Most of them are unable to show their knowledge in various areas of study due to a limited vocabulary. Zhang & Mi (2010) also mentioned that an inadequate level of English is one of the barriers to international students' success. Forbes-Mewett, Ramia, Marginson, and Nyland (2012) stated that English language difficulties are manifested in insufficient knowledge of local contextual references, listening and oral communication, poor vocabulary and a struggle to fulfill the requirements for their academic writing. Sometimes Chinese students find it difficult to participate in group discussions because of their level of English skill (Campbell & Li, 2008). At times, Chinese international students with lower self-esteem receive a look of 'discomfort' from the local students due to their accents

and pronunciation (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Guilfoyle (2006) and Ippolito (2007) have stated that students who have language difficulties are often isolated from the locals and domestic students and this can be a great frustration for other international students.

Another area of concern for Chinese international students in New Zealand is academic performance. The study by Selvarajah (2006) indicated that academic adjustment problems for most Chinese international students tend to focus on language issues. Most Chinese students fail to meet academic standards in New Zealand during their adjustment stage due to lack of English proficiency. Among the other academic issues cited by Chinese foreign students were differences in the academic system (Skyrme, 2007; Zhou & Todman, 2009). It is reported that learning habits and skills will have an influence on academic performance (Li et al., 2010). The academic system in New Zealand is different from that of China, as a Western concept of learning is practiced here. This means that questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating and persuading are used (Major, 2005). Chinese international students are also reported to have difficulty in adjusting to independent learning and less guidance and supervision from instructors (Li et al., 2010). Thus for Chinese international students to learn and get used to Western education, they have to adjust their way of learning. However, Andrade (2006) stated that appropriate support and programming is necessary to assist international students to adapt to life in a new country and educational system.

Chinese international students in New Zealand face difficulties as they try to adapt socially. Due to their poor level of English, they are not able to adequately express themselves to other students or lecturers, Chinese international students apparently receive less social support (Campbell & Li, 2008). Parents and friends are not close by and visiting them is difficult and infrequent, so this avenue of support is either non-existent or insufficient. A lack of social communication can result in these students feeling even more lonely and homesick compared to domestic students (Cao & Zhang, 2012; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). According to Zhou and Todman (2009), loneliness is one of the four types of problems faced by international students. It is considered to be a severe problem amongst international students. However loneliness for international students can be resolved and interactions with host nationals play an important role (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Trice, 2004). Regular communication with Chinese international

students can help them cope with their needs and cultural adaptation more quickly (Campbell & Li, 2008; Li et al., 2010). It has been said that Chinese international students have limited chances to engage with New Zealand domestic students and also with the host communities (Butcher et al., 2008). According to the study by Sawir et al. (2009) and Zhang and Brunton (2007), making friends with the local students was not easy because of the language barrier and this may cause negative experiences for Chinese students in New Zealand.

## **2.5. Destination image of New Zealand**

For many years, New Zealand has been a major tourist destination. In a recent article New Zealand was ranked eighth in *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014: Top 10 Regions* (Lonely Planet, 2013). New Zealand is a major tourist destination because of the destination image. Destination image is defined as the total beliefs, ideas, and impressions an individual has towards a destination (Martínez & Alvarez, 2010; Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008). The creation of a positive image of the attractions of a given destination is very important because it influences people's decision to travel and visit the defined destination (Garrod, 2008; Pan, 2011; Ryan & Aicken, 2010). According to Farahani, Mohamed, and Som (2011), and MacKay and Couldwell (2004), photographs are vital to effectively construct and communicate images of a destination. Thus in tourism marketing beautiful images of the destination are used to attract tourists to visit. Information sources such as brochures and cultural factors play a significant role in creating the destination image of a place. The other aspect that influences the destination image of a place is the concept of culture (Beerli & Martín, 2004). In-depth understanding of cultural values and breakdowns based on cultures are necessary in creating a positive destination image (Choi et al., 2007).

New Zealand, as a tourist and education destination, has a reputation for its natural beauty and cultural activities (Fountain et al., 2010). According to the Ministry of Education (2008), New Zealand is mostly perceived as a country that has natural and scenic beauty. . Activities, such as whale watching or bungee jumping demonstrate distinctive tourist attractions in New Zealand. They are often marketed to individuals and small-group travellers through television commercials, brochures, and online advertisements (Sparks & Pan, 2009). According to Govers et al. (2007), images in brochures, media reporting and motion pictures project a flood of information. Thus tourists may learn about the popular activities in New Zealand from brochures

or official New Zealand tourism websites. Tourism New Zealand, the official tourism promotion agency for the country, promotes New Zealand worldwide as a tourist destination. Campaign activities include a NZ\$7 million promotion in China, focused on Shanghai, and the creation of a New Zealand tourism level for Google Earth, the first country to obtain such a facility (Hembry, 2007). Other than active campaign activities by Tourism New Zealand, movies have also helped in promoting the image of New Zealand. According to Farahani et al. (2011), playing short movies can assist in showing the characteristics of a place. In order to receive more Chinese international students and tourists, New Zealand is making the following efforts to improve its destination image.

### **2.5.1. Perfecting the willingness to travel**

Studies reveal that most tourists agree on the importance of creating positive destination images, which would increase their intention and motivation to travel to that destination (Ryan & Aicken, 2010). The importance of creating a pre-visit image of a destination is influenced by sub-regional culture, which can be treated as a general theory applied to different countries and cultures.

Based on the fact that tourists generally have an inadequate knowledge of tourist destinations they have not previously visited, images provide useful information of a destination (Farahani et al., 2011; Govers et al., 2007). A destination's strong, positive, and recognisable images create a greater probability of that destination being chosen by tourists. Deumert et al. (2005) have shown that New Zealand's current destination image is vague when compared to Australia's. This has also been stated in a study by Gardiner and King (2013). This is due to the limited amount of information about New Zealand that is available to Chinese tourists and students. The more information provided by a destination and made available to tourists, the stronger the impression travellers have of that destination. Positive imagery portrayed to tourists complements a willingness to travel (Govers et al., 2007).

Currently, New Zealand has invested a lot of resources in an effort to create a positive image in China to attract both tourists and students to travel to the country. For example the campaign activities in Shanghai (Hembry, 2007). It is recommended that New Zealand engage in a variety of advertising in various places to reach a wider coverage in the region. The most positive images about New Zealand have contributed to an increasing interest and willingness to visit.

### **2.5.2. Use of different marketing channels to create different images**

Although tourists from China will search for information using many channels before visiting a destination, each individual has their own preferred information channel. Based on the findings from various studies, Chinese international students and tourists indicate that they trust the destination's official website, newspapers, and travel books as their information source (Chung et al., 2009). In addition, some Chinese tourists prefer word-of-mouth information from colleagues, friends, or relatives who have previously visited a destination (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Lo, 2012). As stated by Beerli and Martín (2004), a visit to the destination will influence their personal experience and thus influence the perceived image. Chinese tourists prefer word-of-mouth information from friends or relatives because they can get more accurate information on the particular destination that their friends or relatives had visited. Newspapers are the most used channels in disseminating information about New Zealand in China. New Zealand's key features, such as Maori culture, blue sky and beautiful scenery, are the features that New Zealand focuses on for its promotion (Fountain et al., 2010). Information on the geography, culture, history and political environment of New Zealand is usually presented on TV in the form of market-consumer related reports, as well as news and documentary programmes (Knight, 2006).

Word of mouth has also played a considerable role in presenting New Zealand's image in China as a tourist destination. Many Chinese have been visiting New Zealand for the past decade, especially after 1999 where New Zealand was granted Approved Destination Status (ADS) (Long, 2012); most of them were students and family or relatives of students studying in New Zealand as well as tourists. These individuals have helped to create a positive image of New Zealand with other people in China, hence increasing their desire to either visit or study in New Zealand. Apart from the word-of-mouth information, travel books and the official Internet websites have improved New Zealand's image in the international community. New Zealand's tourism board provides up-to-date tourist information on its websites, covering several aspects of New Zealand that improve its image (Tourism New Zealand, 2014).

### **2.5.3. Focus on its natural habitat**

According to Tourism New Zealand (2013), New Zealand's image is largely built on its natural setting and its beauty. This is also New Zealand's biggest competitive advantage. Many international students and tourists visiting the country are greatly impressed by New Zealand's

natural environment and how it is maintained. Many people consider New Zealand to have a clean, green, fresh, natural, beautiful landscape, as well as having friendly people, and low population numbers (Collins, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). The reason this presents a great positive image of New Zealand to the Chinese is that most Chinese live in highly populated urban areas and have difficulty finding any open space free from contamination (Jiang & Ashley, 2000). Chinese visit New Zealand to enjoy things they do not experience in their hometown. Another layer of meaning has consistently emerged, which is the threat of environmental destruction, and deepened social alienation caused by urbanisation and industrialisation in China (Sherry et al., 2010). With natural beauty and environmental quality, New Zealand provides a more competitive and distinctive image as compared to other destinations around the world.

#### **2.5.4. Promotion of Chinese culture increases cultural familiarity**

A good image of New Zealand has been created through the favourable impressions of Chinese tourists and students (Jun & Gentry, 2005). This has been achieved through the provision of good Chinese cuisine and trained Chinese-speaking guides for the visitors, which helps increase the level of cultural familiarity (Knight, 2006). This does apply not only to Chinese visitors, but also to all tourists in New Zealand. Studies have depicted that a destination image will become more attractive if tourists become more culturally familiar with the destination through food, language and other activities (Ryan & Mo, 2002). Therefore, provision of Chinese language signs in accommodation, attractions, information brochures and restaurants may result in Chinese tourists having an increased sense of safety and adaptation within the destination, which ultimately enhances a positive image about the destination. In hotels with a large number of Chinese visitors, a Chinese version of the information about hotel facilities and services is made available. These are helpful for Chinese tourists, along with Chinese-speaking staff working in the reception area for enquiries and problem-solving and, as a result, New Zealand has become a good destination for Chinese tourists (Marriott et al., 2010).

#### **2.6. Urban transformation of Auckland**

In the last twenty years, Auckland has experienced a significant change in the composition of the city (Friesen, 2009; Larner, Molloy, & Goodrum, 2007). These changes range from economic to demographic changes resulting from new relocation flows, and remarkable physical changes in the environment (Murphy, 2003). International education export and the migration of students



have had a remarkable effect on Auckland, with fast-growing, multi-ethnic communities, and large numbers of Asian youths further nurturing new prototypes of consumption (Ryan & Cave, 2005). There is a large number of international students in Auckland because universities such as University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology, along with other private institutions, are all located within the central area of Auckland (Collins, 2010; Friesen, 2009). These universities are expanding their campuses in order to enrol more international and domestic students and also to increase their international profiles. Collins (2010) has asserted the view that changes in the physical environment of Auckland often link the internationalisation of education with what is bluntly viewed as studentification.

### **2.6.1. Studentification**

According to Collins (2010), studentification is a term used to describe the distinct social, economic, cultural, and physical transformations within university towns. The transformation is usually connected with the seasonal in-migration of higher education students, especially international students. Hubbard (2009) has stated that the process of studentification brings changes to residential landscapes through conversion and new building developments, and changing local retail and leisure facilities to provide services to students and their distinctive lifestyles. Studies have shown that Auckland is a city that has been transformed because of being inhabited by students (Collins, 2010). Auckland has transformed into an urban city with Chinese stores located in most parts of the city. It is also common to see large numbers of Asians walking down the streets of Auckland. The studentification experienced in Auckland may affect the experiences and perceptions of Chinese students in New Zealand because they might have expected to live in a rural area, where natural surroundings can be seen and experienced. However, the facilities provided in Auckland contrast with these expectations as Chinese students experience a highly urbanised and Asian-dominated inner city environment (Davey, 2005).

According to Simpson and Tan (2009), Chinese students chose New Zealand because they wanted to experience a Western culture. However Auckland may no longer provide such an experience due to the influence of the large number of Asian people. For a long time it has been well-known in the outside world that New Zealand is considered a green and scenic country; it is likely that some Chinese students chose New Zealand as their education destination because of

this. These students come to New Zealand to complete their education, and at the same time experience the green and natural habitat (Ministry of Education, 2008). Nonetheless, the students may not be able to experience such an environment around Auckland as it has been changing to meet the demands of international tourists and students with more accommodation and facilities (Collins, 2010).

### **2.6.2. Major transformation of Auckland**

New Zealand is one of the most popular education destinations in the world, as well as a tourist hub, and has experienced drastic development in the last two decades (Friesen, 2009; Larner et al., 2007). The development brought about by an increase in the population of visitors to the country has led to a massive transformation of cities and towns (Kuruwita, 2010). According to Collins (2010), the transformation of Auckland into an urban city is largely associated with the increased number of international students. The region has some big universities that admit a large number of international students, hence the high population in the region (Friesen, 2009; New Zealand Education, 2013). The increasing number of students and visitors has contributed to a number of changes as discussed in this section.

#### **2.6.2.1. Demographic changes**

Auckland's demographics have changed considerably. The city and its population have been increasing drastically since the 1990s (Friesen, 2009). The population consists of people from different cultures around the world. According to Statistics New Zealand (2003), the population was 963,111 and in 2013, the population reached 1,415,550 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013a). The change in demography has engendered many modifications to the lifestyle and social setting in the region (Simpson & Tan, 2009). For example, the mix of ethnicities in Auckland may have affected the traditional Western culture that the Chinese international students wish to experience.

#### **2.6.2.2. Development of infrastructure**

The increasing population in the region has resulted in the increased development of infrastructure in Auckland. According to Bashir (2007), the development is mainly through the construction of large buildings to provide accommodation services to the growing population. The buildings also house many businesses set up in the region targeting the large number of students. According to Collins (2010), the universities or other private institutions have not been

able to accommodate the rising number of international students, thus big developers such as Conrad Properties Limited have been constructing more buildings to accommodate these students (Orsman, 2005). Companies are also setting up industries in the region targeting the big market of students.

Traffic congestion occurs in Auckland as well because, according to Jakob, Craig, and Fisher (2006), Auckland public transport has been infamously underfunded and is not dependable. Thus, this results in many of the people who live in Auckland purchasing a vehicle to travel around. Another reason given for the traffic congestion is due to the large population in Auckland. With the rise in private vehicles, roads in Auckland have also been developed due to the increased number of travel activities in the city (Collins, 2010; Martens & Starke, 2008).

The environment in the city has also been polluted due to the increased number of industrial activities, vehicles and construction activities in the region. New Zealand was known for its pure environment with natural beauty (Ministry of Education, 2008), but today it has been affected with air pollution, water pollution, and destruction of natural resources to create room for construction (Plessis, Chen, & Toh, 2012).

Other developments include the provision of electricity, water, and sanitation to the developed properties. According to Collins (2010), technology has also improved in the region, such as the availability of the Internet since students are main users. Cao and Zhang (2012) have stated that most of the students use social networking sites to communicate with their relatives and friends hence the high use of Internet in the region. Internet connection companies have improved their infrastructure in the area to provide good, reliable internet to the growing community. More shopping malls have been built also to accommodate the needs of the large number of international students (Ryan and Mo, 2002).

### **2.6.2.3. Cultural changes**

Different students and visitors in the region have brought many changes to the cultural setting of the region. There has been the development of cross-cultural practices in the region. For example, the number of Chinese visitors and students have increased, and this has resulted in the adoption of Chinese culture in the region (McClure, 2007). The elements of culture that have changed include language, food, festivals, dances, and other traditions (Friesen, 2009). Research has shown that there are many different cultures practiced in the region since students from

similar cultural communities exercise their culture, for example, the Lantern Festival in Auckland (McClure, 2007). Therefore the accumulation of Chinese visitors and students in the region has spread Chinese culture to New Zealanders; this has resulted in a rising number of Chinese restaurants and business in Auckland. Hence, this will affect Chinese international students who wish to learn and experience about the Western culture.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

From the review of the literature above, it is evident that the number of international students is increasing. This study describes factors which contribute to increasing numbers of international students travelling to study overseas. Benefits for international students in New Zealand, both direct and indirect, are revealed in the literature. Chinese students comprise the largest number of international students in New Zealand. As shown in the study, Chinese students are attracted by a good destination image of New Zealand. The higher number of international students in New Zealand has transformed Auckland CBD, which hosts the largest number of international students. There have been notable demographic changes: Auckland's population has been increasing drastically, and the natural setting of the city is changing. Infrastructure development has also increased as have technology developments. The transformation of Auckland might have changed the perception of Chinese with respect to seeking education in New Zealand. The study suits qualitative research methodology through gaining insights into different perceptions of Auckland by Chinese students before and after they arrive from China. The study unearths thoughts and feelings, and perceptions of the study participants which are analysed to draw a conclusion on the study subject. Qualitative methodology also allows the researcher to form close ties with the research participants and develop a good understanding of their thoughts, experiences and perceptions. The literature review helps in forming the basis of the study, as well as designing the research questions.

## **Chapter 3: Research Method**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter examines how this study was undertaken and explains the methodology used. A qualitative research paradigm was used to explore Chinese students' pre-arrival and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland. Data was gathered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The previous chapter developed the foundation in the literature for the study. This chapter begins by explaining the research paradigm, including the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. It covers the data collection method, sample size, sampling techniques and the interview process, including recruitment and the procedure used. It also includes the method of data analysis and the ethics considerations associated with this project.

### **3.2. Research paradigm**

According to Jennings (2010), research refers to an activity that collects information on a particular phenomenon using both scientific rigour and academic expertise. Research can also be defined as a practice or process through which we can expand our knowledge or discover answers to our questions (Matthews & Ross, 2010). A paradigm refers to a fundamental set of beliefs that directs the action, with respect to a disciplined inquiry (Jennings, 2010). It can also be defined as a way of viewing the world and a set of interconnected assumptions about the world, which offers a conceptual and philosophical framework (Lichtman, 2013).

Numerous important elements make the interpretative approach the most appropriate method to study the topic of Chinese students' perceptions of Auckland. Qualitative methodology may be based on the interpretive social sciences paradigm. Qualitative methodology collects data as text-based units that represent the social context, reality, and attributes of a tourism phenomenon under investigation (Jennings, 2010). This methodology may be inductive in its nature (Jennings, 2010). Qualitative research begins in real-world settings where empirical materials relating to aspects of tourism are collected or modified. Qualitative research is always subjective in nature because it depends on the texts and discourses of the study participants (Dawson, 2006). Further, it engages a small number of study participants in the study process by collecting in-depth data, sometimes known as 'thick descriptions' (Jennings, 2010). At times qualitative research includes a small number of study participants; however, it does not assume that it is representative of the

larger population. Through qualitative research, a researcher can highlight in-depth and comprehensive snapshots of the study participants (Dawson, 2006).

A qualitative researcher often conducts interviews, where the study participants tell their stories and are not required to follow a preset format or set of questions (Lichtman, 2013). In some cases, qualitative research means avoiding or downplaying mechanical and statistical techniques (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Qualitative research starts with a set of assumptions and uses theoretical and interpretive frameworks to inform the investigation of the research problems (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher wants to understand Chinese students' pre-arrival and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland. The researcher encouraged the students to explain their feelings and thoughts on this topic.

### **3.2.1. Ontological perspective**

For this study, an inductive approach was adopted as the ontological perspective for the research. Under this model, the world is viewed as having many realities (Creswell, 2013). According to Poli and Seibt (2010), ontology is primarily concerned with the state of being. It deals with the way reality, objects, and events are perceived and interpreted (Lichtman, 2013). Given that the primary aim of this study was to gain an understanding into the different perceptions of Chinese students in Auckland prior to and after arriving from China, an inductive, interpretive approach was the most suitable. The feelings, thoughts and, most importantly, perceptions of the study subjects are relative constructs and, as a result, an interpretive paradigm was used. Ontological issues are issues that directly relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics. When a researcher conducts qualitative research, the researcher embraces the concept of multiple realities. Different researchers adopt different realities with respect to the same subjects being studied. Evidence of multiple realities includes using the authentic words of various individuals and providing different perspectives (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.2.2. Epistemological perspective**

Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge (Gray, 2009; Opie & Sikes, 2004). A subjective epistemology deals with the interrelationship between the research and the study's subjects (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2008). A researcher should develop close relationships with the study subjects to allow him or her to reason inductively as the study progresses. To have an enhanced understanding of the students' perceptions, it was necessary to approach the

Chinese students to investigate their view. A subjectivist researcher is in a better position to intermingle with the study participants and attempt to induce major aspects of his or her research that may offer insights into the views and perceptions of the subjects in the study (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Closeness to the research process permits the researcher to have an outline of the entire process and get a better understanding of the data which helps in making inductions. A good understanding of the data, and the research process was key to ensuring that the study was credible and enhanced the reliability of the information collected (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Consequently, in the present study, the use of an interpretive was more appropriate in learning the perceptions, as well as experiences, of Chinese students with respect to Auckland.

### **3.2.3. Axiological perspective**

Axiology is a division of philosophy that is associated with values and judgments (Lichtman, 2013). An axiological assumption states that researchers bring values to the research, but qualitative researchers may also ensure that their values are known in the study. In a qualitative study, the researchers admit the value-laden nature of data collected from the field (Creswell, 2013). Methodology is characterised as emerging and fashioned by an inquirer's experience in data collection and analysis.

### **3.3. Data collection technique**

Interviewing is the most important method in qualitative research to obtain information (Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Lichtman, 2013; Roulston, 2010). An interview is defined as a data collection technique that generally facilitates direct communication between two individuals. The communication can either be face-to-face or occur at a distance via the internet or telephone (Brown & Durrheim, 2009). An interview permits the interviewer to extract information, opinions, and feelings from the interviewee through asking questions and through interactive dialogue (Matthews & Ross, 2010). A researcher makes use of the interview to get insight into the opinions of people or groups, to gather information about technical expertise and practices, to gather life narratives and oral histories, and comprehend movement and organisational ideologies (Scott & Garner, 2013). Interviewing as a practice has become so culturally universal that according to Silverman (2013), we live in an 'interview society', whereby interviews perform a significant role in how people visualise their lives (Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Interviews are primarily recognised as 'negotiated conversational

accomplishments', whereby both the interviewee and the interviewer actively engage in joint construction of the interviewee's stories and subjectivity (Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Garton & Copland, 2010). An interview can be regarded as a conversation with a reason (Lichtman, 2013). The purpose of interviewing is to collect information from the study participants on the topic under investigation. The goal of interviewing may be to know what the interviewee feels or thinks about a number of things. The goal may also be to explore the shared meanings of individuals who live or work together (Lichtman, 2013).

The objectives of undertaking an interview are to understand the opinions, ideas, meanings, and perspectives of the study participants, who are the actors in the scenario being investigated (Scott & Garner, 2013). A semi-structured interview follows a set of questions or topics for every interview. However, questions or topics may be introduced in different ways, or in a different order, in the manner appropriate for each interview. This permits the participants to respond to the questions or discuss the topics in their own style using their own words (Matthews & Ross, 2010). When undertaking an interview it is important, for a number of reasons, for the researcher to audio record the interaction. Firstly, the researcher can carry the recording of the event to work later. Secondly, the researcher can work with the raw data as he or she begins the process of analysis (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Data is defined as a collection of facts or other information like values or opinions that can be analysed and from which inferences can be drawn (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Given the significance of interviews in qualitative research, the data for this study was acquired using semi-structured interviews as this was the best and most effective way to gather information about the perception and experiences of Auckland from the study participants. The researcher felt strongly that using face-to-face interviews would provide the best means of understanding the Chinese students' perceptions and experiences. Interviews are efficient in delivering data on the social world by encouraging participants to speak about their lives (Opie & Sikes, 2004; Silverman, 2013). For semi-structured interviews, there is information the researcher seeks to obtain, and this is obtained directly through a set of questions. However, these questions can change either in terms of order or in terms of wording. The general structure of the semi-structured interview is the same for all study participants; nevertheless, the interviewer can adjust the questions based on the situation (Lichtman, 2013). In the present



investigation, interviews permitted the Chinese students to share freely their emotions, thoughts and experiences. Opie and Sikes (2004) have observed that interviews encourage participants to build up their own feelings, insights, ideas, attitudes, or expectations. Interviews also allow the respondent to communicate his or her thoughts and do so with improved richness.

Using interviews as a data collection technique is also appropriate because study participants may not be fluent in the language of the country where they are studying (Gray, 2009). For instance, some students from China may experience difficulty in expressing themselves using English, particularly those students who are in Auckland, to complete their English studies. Using an interview technique benefits the researcher more because either Mandarin Chinese or English could be used to conduct the interview depending on the interviewee's preference. Interviewees could also choose to mix the two (English and Mandarin Chinese) if they felt comfortable doing so. In addition, using both languages could allow the interviewees to give better descriptions. Other advantages associated with the use of semi-structured interviews are that they promote two-way communication, produce a large volume of information, and are more sensitive, flexible and reliable (Gray, 2009). As a result, it was determined that the data collection technique most appropriate for this study was the open-ended, semi-structured interview and in two languages.

### **3.4. Sampling: Sample size**

Sample size refers to the number of units or subjects selected from the general population (Sarantakos, 2005). For qualitative research, there are no rules with regard to sample size (Andrade, 2009; Lichtman, 2013). Most qualitative studies make use of small sample sizes and collect in-depth information (Silverman, 2013). One rule of thumb for sample sizes in qualitative studies is to investigate not only a few individuals or sites, but to gather comprehensive information about every individual or site studied. The intention of qualitative research is to expound on the specifics rather than generalise the information (Dawson, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

In terms of sample size, this study used eight international Chinese students, four males and four females (Table 2). The purpose of having an equal number of males and females was because the style of communication for each gender is different (Ahmad, 2014), as well as personality and social behavior (Hyde, 2014). Personality may include temperament, emotion, impulsivity, and

interests while social behaviors may include helping behaviour, aggression, sexuality and leadership (Hyde, 2014).

Table 2

*Sample characteristics*

<b>Pseudonym Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Region of China</b>	<b>Month/Years in New Zealand</b>
Anne	Female	25	Beijing	7 month
Bob	Male	26	Fujian	11 month
Chuck	Male	34	Guangzhou	11 month
Doris	Female	26	Beijing	7 month
Eve	Female	28	Beijing	Less than a month
Frank	Male	23	Huangshan	Less than a month
George	Male	30	Yangzhou	Less than a month
Helen	Female	24	Shenyang	7 month

The students were interviewed using open-ended questions to explore the motivating factors that led them to choose New Zealand as their preferred study destination, their experiences of the country, and their pre-arrival and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland. Students who had lived in Auckland for no more than a year were selected for the interviews because they are still relatively new to Auckland. It was assumed that those students who have lived in Auckland for more than one year were more likely to have adapted to this environment. The ages of those who were considered for interviews ranged between 18 and 40 years. The reason for the older age range is because some Chinese students may have only started their post-graduate studies after working for a few years. Other reasons may be that the Chinese students may want to improve their knowledge and understand the present society or industry's needs. Each interview took between 20 to 40 minutes, and the interviews were audio recorded. As already noted, recording makes it possible for the researcher to manage and retrieve the acquired data (Marshall &

Rossman, 2006). According to Dawson (2006), a researcher should offer participants something in return as they give up their valuable time to assist in the research. Thus, every interviewee was rewarded with a \$20 Countdown gift voucher in exchange for his or her participation in the study.

### **3.4.1. Sampling methods**

Three sampling methods were used in this study: purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research usually focuses on a relatively small sample size, deliberately selected to allow investigation, as well as an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. Under purposive sampling, participants are selected to be included in the study because they are rich in information and offer important insights into the issue under investigation (Gray, 2009). For this study, the researcher has selected participants who were in their first year in their respective programmes, believing that these participants could elucidate the issues from different viewpoints and would help in making the data more rich and complete. Through purposive sampling, the researcher selects cases that will best facilitate the in-depth exploration of the study questions (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The researcher also used convenience sampling by selecting participants based on their proximity and the ease with which she could access them (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The Chinese students that were introduced by the AUT Chinese Committee were asked to assent to take part in the study as interviewees. Convenience sampling is one of the most valuable techniques for collecting preliminary information about the research question in a quick and less costly manner (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Finally, a snowballing technique was used, where the researcher relied on the participants who were already recruited through purposive and convenience sampling to identify additional participants who wished to participate in the study (Jennings, 2010). The majority of the initial participants were asked if they knew any other person who would wish to participate in the study.

### **3.5. Interview process**

This section explains the recruitment process followed by the researcher. It also covers the interview procedures done by the researcher.

### **3.5.1. Recruitment**

After approval was gained from the Ethics Committee, an appointment was made with the director of the AUT Chinese Centre. The nature of the research was explained to the director plus the fact that eight volunteer participants were needed to collect the necessary data. With the permission of the AUT Chinese Centre director, the researcher waited in the AUT Chinese Centre for about a week and managed to gather six volunteers with the help of the AUT Chinese Committee. Two other participants were introduced by one of the volunteers found in the AUT Chinese Centre. All participants who were selected were given individual letters of informed consent, which they signed before the interviews were conducted. The researcher explained the letter of consent to the participant, with emphasis on the fact that participating in this study was voluntary, and any person was at liberty to stop during the interview. Participants were also informed that voice recording would take place in the interviews, that they could also refuse to respond any of the questions, and that all of them would remain anonymous to others.

### **3.5.2. Procedure**

With the consent of the individual participants, the interviews were audio recorded. Audio recording the interview allowed the researcher to concentrate on what the participants said and also maintain eye contact with them. According to Dawson (2006), keeping eye contact with the interviewees would show that interviewer was interested in what the interviewees had to say. Recording the whole interview also provides a complete record of the interview for analysis, which gives the researcher plenty of useful quotations for the results section (Dawson, 2006). Interviews were carried out in both English and Mandarin Chinese, depending on an interviewee's preference. The recordings and study notes were safely kept following the completion of the study and subsequently destroyed. When every participant had agreed to be interviewed, an appropriate location was selected. Five of the interviews were conducted in the school library study room and three were conducted in the post-graduate meeting room in the Hospitality and Tourism building which are public areas that allow for privacy and a safe environment for both the researcher and participants.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

All interviews were transcribed in both English and Mandarin Chinese. Interviews conducted in Mandarin Chinese were transcribed in Mandarin Chinese then later translated by the researcher

when all the necessary themes had been written out. Thematic analysis was then used, a method that is widely employed by researchers undertaking qualitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By using this method of analysis, the researcher analysed the data for particular themes, aggregating information into large clusters of ideas, and providing details that supported the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Dawson, 2006). The use of thematic analysis not only organises the data and provides details, but at times goes further by interpreting the different aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, thematic analysis made it possible to generate more information by thematically analysing the data collected during the interview.

### **3.6.1. Thematic analysis: Procedure**

#### **Phase one: Transcription of verbal data**

Since the process entailed working with data collected from the interviews, the initial step involved transcribing the data into written form in order to enable the researcher to conduct a thematic analysis. The data transcribed into written form were all in Mandarin Chinese; however two interviews that were conducted in English were transcribed directly into English. The value of transcription has been underscored by Bird (2005), who posits that transcription should ideally be seen as a cardinal stage of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology. The interpretative act is an essential component of transcription and denotes the act of creating meanings as the transcription is done, rather than mechanically jotting down spoken sounds on paper (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

#### **Phase two: Data familiarisation**

Once the data had been transcribed, it was necessary to become familiar with the data. It is worth noting that familiarisation with the data before commencing the thematic analysis process is of paramount importance, whether data was collected with the aid of research assistants or by the individual who is performing the data analysis (Parker, 2004). Familiarisation entails repeated reading of the data, while at the same time searching for meanings or patterns (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). The researcher read through the data set several times before commencing the coding process. This ensures that the researcher can easily identify emerging patterns.

### **Phase three: Generating initial codes**

Once the researcher had become familiar with the data, initial codes were produced from the transcribed data in Chinese. Coding is vital since it enables the researcher to identify semantic or latent content that relates to the research topic. The coding process needs to be formulated in line with the key terminologies identified in the research objective and which were formulated in the research questions. In this study, the main focus was to explain and better understand perceptions of Chinese international students studying in Auckland. In this regard, the four main research questions were analysed.

Based on the research questions, the coding process focused on the key words such as *perception*, *experience*, *expectations* and *destination image* as words that needed to be coded. However, some other key words were also being produced like *safety*, *service*, *transportation*, *scenery* and *location*. Coding, essentially, forms part of the thematic analysis process, since the process of coding involves organising a set of data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005).

Since the coding process was going to be done manually, the researcher wrote notes on the text to be analysed using colour pens or highlighters. Having identified the codes in the research questions, the main task for the researcher then involved matching the codes with data extracts in Chinese that illustrated those codes (Matthews & Ross, 2010). An important point to consider in this phase is to code as many potential themes or patterns as can be identified by the researcher.

### **Phase four: Theme searching**

All the coded data are collated to form an extensive list of various codes collated across the researcher's data set. The aim of the fourth phase is to re-focus the identified codes along broader themes, and to connect the codes to certain overarching themes that reflect the research questions. If the researcher identifies codes which do not seem to match any potential theme, then a theme called 'miscellaneous' is created where such codes are placed (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). In order for the researcher to have a comprehensive understanding of the significance of each theme, each candidate theme, sub-themes and extracts of data that were coded in relation to such themes must be collected. However, as the transcripts were transcribed into Chinese, themes that were found in the Chinese transcript were then picked out and translated into English.

### **Phase five: Theme review**

Once the main themes were identified, the researcher refined them to understand which themes could be merged. According to Scott and Garner (2013), two themes that initially appear to be separate might form one when closely scrutinised. Further, they contend that while data from the same theme should be seen to cohere in a meaningful way (internal homogeneity), different themes should exhibit clear and identifiable variations (external heterogeneity).

### **Phase six: Defining and naming themes**

This phase entailed identifying the importance of every theme and mapping it to the aspect of data that it represented. The process involved going back to the data which were collated to extract each theme. The collated data were then organised in a coherent fashion to produce an internally consistent account that served to accompany the narrative (Reicher, 2005). This phase should not be confined to paraphrasing only the data content; instead, the researcher should take note of interesting facts about them and why the researcher believes the facts to be interesting and worth analysing (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

### **Phase seven: Report production**

The researcher then finalised the thematic analysis process by writing a report. The themes that were chosen were then translated into English in the written report as they were all done in Mandarin Chinese before. According to Kelle (2004), a thematic analysis write-up is primarily intended to convey the complicated story of data collection in a simplified and interesting way that serves to convince readers of the validity of the analytical process. Therefore, a write-up should provide a coherent, concise, non-repetitive and logical account of the narrative revealed by the data both within and across the themes (Kelle, 2004).

### **3.7. Ethical consideration**

The ethics of this study were approved by AUT's Ethics Committee (AUTEC) before approaching the AUT Chinese Centre to meet first year Chinese students and conduct interviews. Participants were asked to sign a consent form before the interviews were conducted. They were further reminded of their rights and assured that the information collected would be kept securely during all stages of the study. The consent forms outlined the study's purpose, procedures, volunteers' rights to withdraw from the study at any time, protection of participants' privacy, participants' right to refuse to respond to any of the study questions, and the general benefits of this research (Creswell, 2013).

All participants were assured that they would remain anonymous and no identifying information would be included in the study report unless express permission was obtained from the person concerned. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed how this study was conducted and provided an explanation of the methodology used. A qualitative research approach was adopted in exploring Chinese students' pre-arrival and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland. Eight students – four males and four females – were interviewed using face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted in a quiet, private space. No major problems were observed during the interviews, and the participants appeared at ease and comfortable. Six out of the eight interviews were transcribed into Mandarin Chinese, while the other two were transcribed into English. The researcher analysed the transcript in Mandarin Chinese, after drawing out the themes and quotations, and it was then translated into English. The steps involved in conducting a thematic analysis were written out to show how the researcher conducted the thematic analysis from the data collected. In the following chapter, the researcher presents the findings and provides some discussions around the findings.

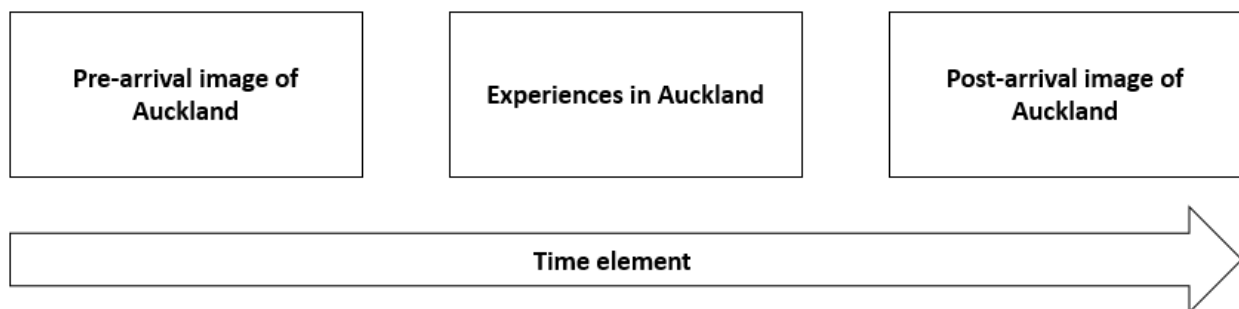


## Chapter 4: Results

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the results from the interviews with the participants in the context of this current study. To achieve the main aim of discovering why international students have selected Auckland, New Zealand as their destination of choice to study in, this research project employed a qualitative research methodology based within interpretivist research.

This section will present the results as they reflect findings regarding the four major research questions, based within a thematic analysis that has allowed the researcher to develop a structure and presentation focusing on perceptions of Auckland prior to arrival, how these differ or are similar to their perceptions having experienced the city since they have arrived and whether the destination image portrayed by the tourism industry in New Zealand (as shown in Figure 1) was a key reason for their choice. Thematic analysis is presented using quotations from the interviews and discussion based on these responses. This chapter provides a brief summary of the major themes to emerge, helping the reader to gain knowledge of the results that emanated from this current study.



*Figure 1.* Framework of the pre- and post-arrival perceptions and experiences of Chinese international students in Auckland.

### 4.2. Time element

The term *time element* in this study describes the perceptions and experiences of the participants through a period of time. It started with understanding the participants' perceptions of Auckland prior to their arrival, and their experiences after arriving and living in Auckland. As perceptions and experiences may change over time, this study will focus on the possible changes in perceptions and experiences of the participants prior to and after their arrival in Auckland.

### **4.3. Pre-arrival image of Auckland**

Before the participants first came to New Zealand, they all had similar perceptions of Auckland. The majority of them had positive perceptions of Auckland as this was the first time they had been here. For example, Chuck stated that, ‘Auckland is a City of Sails, so there should be a lot of boats and lots of winds. I also think that the weather is really fine here and the people are really nice.’ Anne also has similar perception to Chuck; she stated, ‘I felt that Auckland, New Zealand is a well-civilise[d] country, so the people there should be really civilized.’

Apart from similar perceptions of the society in Auckland the participants also shared the same perceptions about New Zealand’s environment. New Zealand has always been known for its scenery, especially after promotion from Tourism New Zealand and movies. All the participants agreed that New Zealand is a beautiful, scenic and clean country. For example, Eve mentioned her pre-arrival perception of New Zealand, ‘I do not know a lot about New Zealand, but in China, when you mention about New Zealand, very naturally the pictures of natural scenery and relaxation will flow in our mind.’ Eve elaborated more on the term ‘relaxation’ by stating that the country is, ‘a very relaxed and slow-paced country.’

Bob also mentioned that New Zealand is a ‘relaxed place to be.’ George also stated that, ‘New Zealand is a place where the air is fresher and there [is much] beautiful scenery. I also think that New Zealand is rather simple with not as many things to do as compared to China.’ Frank elaborated more by stating that relaxation can also mean, ‘having more freedom to choose the kind of lifestyle you want.’

All the participants agreed that New Zealand is a beautiful country because of the scenery, the fresh air and the slow, relaxed lifestyles the locals have. However, the perceptions of New Zealand are also being transferred to Auckland. For example, Anne stated, ‘I felt that the environment in Auckland, New Zealand is good, the air is so much fresher here and this is really good for one’s health.’ Frank also supported Anne’s view by saying, ‘the environment is really good.’ Helen also shared her perception of Auckland,

I felt that the population in Auckland would not be similar with Shenyang, so it means that the place would not be so crowded and probably not many traffic jam[s]. Next, the environment would be really good, therefore the air will be fresher and cleaner.

However, Doris did not mention the green environment in Auckland; instead she said,

New Zealand is separated into two island[s], known as the North and South Island. I felt that the South Island is more famous for its scenery, greenery, natural environment, mountain and things. As for North Island, I felt that they are more developed, especially Auckland. It is the biggest city in New Zealand. I felt that Auckland should be the most developed and modern city, with tall buildings and advance[d] public transportation, almost similar to New York and Beijing.

Hence, other aspects of Auckland, apart from just the natural environment, were being perceived prior to their arrival i.e., the clean air and the relaxed lifestyle were also constructs in their perception.

#### **4.4. Experiences in Auckland**

##### **4.4.1. Place of residency**

Perceptions played an important role affecting the individual's experiences in the country following arrival. However, being located in the North Island, Auckland has its own natural habitat. Thus location plays an important role in terms of meeting the participant's perceptions. For example, Frank did not live in the city but he is having a positive experience of Auckland. He stated,

I felt that there are actually more positive experiences than negative because currently I am not living in the city. I lived outside Auckland CBD, and it is a quiet residential area. Lifestyle here is still slow-pace[d] and the residents there have good exercise habits.

Living outside the city will allow Frank to experience the kind of perceptions he had before arriving. Doris, who used to live on the North Shore and has recently moved into Auckland CBD, stated that,

I felt that Auckland is quite crowded, I am not sure about other places in New Zealand as I [have] never been to other places, but the city is more crowded than the rural areas. When I [stayed on the] North Shore last time, you did not see many people around other than in the mall.

Place of residence now appears as an important factor because participants who used to, or are currently living outside of Auckland's CBD, have more positive experiences and similar perceptions to their original, pre-arrival perceptions. For example, Anne stated that,

I felt that North Shore's environment is actually similar to what I had perceived of New Zealand before: [a] beautiful, natural and green environment and it is a scarcely populated area. It is really nice there, it is quiet and people [lead] a slow lifestyle.

Bob, who has recently moved out of the Auckland CBD and lives on the North Shore also stated that,

I got to live closer to nature after I moved to [the] North Shore this year, and this has given me similar perceptions [to those] I perceived before I arrived. At this point, I feel that Auckland actually has different areas where you can see and experience nature.

Thus, living outside Auckland CBD city allowed the participants to experience a more idealistic New Zealand, where they can see the natural environment and lead a slow and quiet lifestyle. This shows that place of residence will also affect their experience in Auckland.

#### **4.4.2. Safety issues in Auckland**

There are many reasons given by participants as to why they chose Auckland as their education destination. Some of the participants were introduced to Auckland by their education consultant in China, while others may have learnt about Auckland from their friends or relatives who are staying here. For example, Helen stated the reason she chose Auckland over cities in other countries was because some of her relatives lived here. She said,

I have relatives staying here, in fact it was my cousin and his family. And for a girl like me to live outside in a foreign country, my family will be concerned about my safety. So having my cousin and his family here will help to lessen my family worries over me as they know if I need help I can always go to my cousin.

Doris also explained that her decision to study in Auckland was made because of word of mouth from relatives, she stated, 'I do think about safety before coming to Auckland, my relatives have been here and they told me that it is all right here so I came.' Safety issues have always been a major concern, and safety is an important factor when it comes to decision-making for international students. For example, George stated, 'I felt that New Zealand in general is quite safe as compared to USA, where it is quite messy there and there are cases like shootings happening in school. So it makes me feel that they are quite violent.'

New Zealand, according to Anne, has always been known for, 'the milk powder, sheep wool, scenery, stable politics and safe country.' Thus it is not surprising for these participants to share the same perception on safety issues in Auckland. However, there are still crimes happening around Auckland. Some of the participants, such as Eve, were given some advice on safety issues before they arrived in Auckland. Eve stated that,

Before I arrived in Auckland people advised me that it is better not to go out during the night, especially when you are alone. This is because the homeless will usually come out at around 1800 or 1900. And for a girl, especially when you are in a foreign country, going out alone will be more dangerous. Next thing to be noted is that there are many

drunk people around and they might do some dangerous things. So it is advisable not to go out during the night.

The homeless people along Queen Street have also affected Anne concerning safety issues. She mentioned,

It is really hard to believe that you can see homeless sitting at the side of [the] walking path, eating, smoking and begging you for money and this is happening in Queen Street, a city! Although sometimes you see police patrolling around the city or street, I still do not feel safe.

Other than homeless people, excessive drinking in public is also another concern for some participants, especially the male participants. Chuck always had a positive image of Auckland but he stated,

I think that the people in Auckland City are quite nice, but there can be some exceptions. Once I left home early before dawn and I can see really drunk people on the street, they were not rude [and did not] harm me but I just felt that they were not behaving in a proper manner. They were yelling and at times asking for coins.

Bob also stated, 'I do not really feel safe sometimes when I see drunk people.' It might be due to the improper behavior of the drunks, such as yelling and begging for money that makes Bob feel uneasy and unsafe. Another participant, Frank who lived outside the city also had concerns over the issue of excessive drinking in public. He stated,

I do not usually stay out late in the city as I heard from rumours that there are often some activities that are not really safe happening in the city during the night, for example, alcoholism. People drink excessively to get themselves drunk.

Other than the problem of drunken people behaving improperly in public, Frank also stated, 'there is also [a] theft problem in the city, especially with people who live in city apartments; they might be at risk of facing theft or robbers stealing their things.' It seems that Auckland has developed a reputation for crime happening during the night, not only to international students but also to the locals living in Auckland. As Frank mentioned, 'I heard from my homestay parents that their area is much safer compared to Auckland City because everyone knows each other in the residential area, which they referred to as a "mature" residential area.'

However, this is not the case for some other residential areas that are outside the city. Helen, who is also living outside the city, stated that,

I am not sure if I can say overall if Auckland, New Zealand is safe but the area I am staying is not really safe. There is one ASB Bank there but I do not go there because I heard that there are people who have been robbed before over there.

Helen then continued to share her safety issues regarding Auckland city, she stated,

The park that is called Albert Park, located in the city, is not safe. It has been reported on the news before in robbery cases. I have a friend that also told me that they'd rather walk around the park than to cut across it because it is not safe.

Anne also shared a story concerning safety issues in Auckland city; the story comes from her friends:

I am not sure if this is harassment, but I do not feel safe. I never had this situation before but my friend did. She told me that a man with a darker skin-tone follow[ed] her after she left her group of friends. That man walked to her, touched her face and started saying

some sexual things to her. There's another time when another friend of mine met this European man, he told her that he just arrived in Auckland to be a lecturer. So my friend, trying to [be] helpful, offered him assistance if he had any question[s], and she gave him her number. That night she received a text from him and [he] asked her if she wanted to have sexual intercourse with him.

To almost all the female participants, sexual harassment and being stalked by a stranger is the main concern when it comes to safety as their friends have told them about their incidents. For example, Doris also shared that, 'my friend told me that there was once, she was on her way home after a karaoke session and she was being harassed halfway home.'

It seems that when night falls Auckland City is not seen as a safe place by the female participants in this study because of past incidents that have happened to others. The cases of being stalked and experiencing sexual harassment have caused the female participants to avoid going out at night. Anne said, 'I always remember what I told myself, and that is to go home before the sky turns dark.' Helen also shared the same point of view, saying that, 'normally I will go home before the sky turns dark because I am afraid.' Doris also mentioned that, 'I will not go out during the night.'

The role of word-of-mouth testimony regarding safety issues has been important for the participants. As Helen stated, 'We normally read from news or from friends about any criminal activities, and from there we will think of ways to prevent it before it is too late.'

It seems that there are gender differences with respect to perceptions of safety. For the male participants, drunk people on the street is their main concern when it comes to safety. The female participants' concern for their safety focuses on sexual harassment and stalkers. However, it has been agreed by both genders that racial discrimination can also be a safety concern in Auckland. Bob explained the possible reasons:

I had experienced before that the local people may dislike the Chinese. Maybe because the local people always felt that the Chinese take most of the opportunities, such as job opportunities from them. Based on my own opinion, most of the Chinese people who



came here are really hard-working and we do not mind working long hours with low pay. So in a way it forces the locals to lose their job opportunities. But I've heard before that the local people are kind of lazy.

Given this as a possible reason for racial discrimination against the Chinese, the participants are also very concerned and sensitive when something happens to one of their own ethnicity. For example Doris stated that, apart from sexual harassment and stalking issues, the reason she will not go out during the night is because she heard that, 'there are some Chinese [who] got robbed during the night in Auckland.' Hence, participants not only fear for their safety, but also fear that racial discrimination may eventuate in violence and cause physical injuries.

#### **4.4.3. Services provided in Auckland**

Racial discrimination may be a safety issue for the participants, but it is also a concern when it comes to service. Anne shared her experience in the supermarket:

As an immigrant country, the service staff should be able to provide you [with] feelings such as fairness, and especially [a] comfortable feeling. But when we went to shop for groceries, those service staff [with] a darker skin-tone will smile to their customers who are all Westerners. When it comes to Asians, I felt that I am being treated differently. I am not sure where they are from, but they are just darker in skin-tone. Their service is really cold and impatient. For example, if you are not sure about the self-checkout machine and you ask them for assistance, they give you the kind of tone where you feel [that] an adult is scolding a child. It gives you the feeling that they are harsh.

Chuck also shared his experience on service during his first day in Auckland, 'the first day when I arrived in Auckland, I was in the airport looking for a transport to the city. I asked this lady in the window and her service was not nice to me at all.'

This has also happened to Anne:

In most of the post offices here, there is another service provided which is Kiwibank. Once I was there to fill in a form. I am not able to find anyone to help me with the form,

[but] there was a counter there but it did not state [whether] it is meant for post office customers or Kiwibank customers. I went to ask the staff at that counter and I was told by the staff that everything is written on the form and I need to go [and] read it again by myself.

Service is part of building a good experience for international students and tourists. It plays a really important role in the tourism industry. Eve explained why service is important: ‘Actually, there is one reason why I like to travel and it is because the service provided in a foreign country is better.’

Frank also gives a possible explanation to why service provided in a foreign country is better. He stated that,

In China, when you ask the service staff a question, at the beginning they might not be rude or bothered against you. But if you ask too many questions, they will feel that you are very troublesome. For example, I went to the library to apply [for] a library card, and asked the staff what is the fastest way to find a book I want. The staff took the initiative to bring you there. But if this happens in China, they will probably just tell you the directions to your book and you really need to concentrate on what they told you because they might ignore you after that.

Thus service provided in Auckland will affect the experiences the participants have. In general every participant agreed that service is generally all right; however the work efficiency is much slower as compared to China. This has deeply affected the experiences for the participants. For example, George answered really quickly after asking him regarding the work efficiency in Auckland. He replied, ‘Very slow!’ Helen also reacted similarly to George, stating that, ‘it is really slow and inefficient.’

Every participant shared the same experience with the bank. Helen recalled a time when she went to the bank: ‘I went to the bank to apply for a bank card and account, only to realise that I

need to reserve a time with them in order to do so.’ Eve also referred to the same issue when, she stated that, ‘everything here needs to get a reservation time, even applying for a bank card.’

However, Eve gave a possible explanation as to why a reservation is needed: ‘Maybe because during the time we apply for an account, there are many new students so there are a lot of people applying for an account and bank card.’ However, Frank disagreed:

In China, if you are applying [for] a card or probably dealing with other matters, there is really no need to reserve a time with them, but over here, there are many services that require you to reserve a time with them.

Other than the need to place a reservation with the bank, the process of getting a solution of solving a problem is hectic. George shared his experience:

There was a problem regarding transferring money. I had already given them a call about three or four times raising this issue, but until now they are not able to solve the problem for me. They said that they will solve it today but until now the problem is still there.

Anne also shared her experience with the hectic process of getting her problem solved, she stated,

I applied for the Countdown Supermarket card, called ‘OneCard’ a month ago, and until now I still haven’t received it. After I moved out from my homestay house, I changed my address and informed them, but after four attempt[s], I still did not receive the card. They just told me that it went missing.

According to Anne, she also mentioned that the process to apply for her AT Hop card was another hectic process she encountered. She recalled:

I [wanted] to change my purple card to an AT card. If such cases happen in China, you just pass them the card, transfer the amount to the new card and done, easy as that. But over here, everything seems so complicated. You need to register online, and then create an account, and apply [for] your card online. I repeated the steps for almost five to six times at a friend's house. After that I just received an email that told me my registration was successful, but it did not inform me if my application for the card was successful. It wasn't until I went to [the] AT station in AUT to ask [that I] found out that my application was unsuccessful. He offered to help us apply but at the end it was done wrongly; he did not apologise or anything, probably it seems normal for them. But after some hectic process, I received my card before I flew back home.

Although work efficiency may be seen as a negative aspect for all the participants when talking about service, the majority of the participants came to the conclusion that the service provided in Auckland is still generally all right. Eve concluded: 'I felt that most of the time when it comes to their services, it is still all right.' Bob on the other hand was very happy with the service here and stated, 'I feel that the service provided here is great!'

Helen recalled her experience of good service when she first took a bus in Auckland:

It left me a deep impression on [me] the first time I took a bus. As I was visiting a new place and I was not sure where to alight, I asked the bus driver and [he] said to me, 'OK, why not sit behind me so that when we arrive at the stop I will inform you.' This is why it left me a deep impression because they are nice and enthusiastic!

Hence, even though service efficiency may not have been up to participants' standards in general the services provided were still acceptable.

#### **4.4.4. Transportation in Auckland**

To some participants, the service provided by drivers in Auckland is excellent, as well as the public transportation. For example, Helen compared the public transportation in Auckland to that in her home country,

Compared with the ones in Shenyang, it is a lot better. The public bus[es] here are newer and they have [a] timetable at the bus stop to show you the estimated arrival time for the next bus. In Shenyang, you do not know when it will come.

George also shared his positive experience of the public transportation in Auckland. He stated, 'It is not bad and quite convenient. Every 3–4 minutes there is always a new round of bus[es] coming. So it is very convenient to travel from home and back home again after school.'

However not all participants shared the same positive point when it came to public transportation in Auckland. Some participants were surprised with the transportation while some were not. For example, Frank said, 'everyone knows that the bus[es] do not come very quickly like the ones back in China, and they [are] not punctual.' He then continued to share one of his experiences when he missed a bus, 'I had waited for about half an hour for a bus before, that was the longest waiting time for me so far.' Chuck also supported Frank's comment and he stated that, 'I think that the public transport here is not as efficient as I thought it should be. Back in China, there will always be a new round of bus[es] coming in every 2–3 minutes.' Helen also stated that, 'even though they have the timetable to show the estimated time for the next bus, most of the time they are always late.' The experiences of waiting for the bus were negative for some of the participants, and this will impact their stay in Auckland, especially participants who were living outside the city. Anne also shared her opinion on the problems with the public transportation in Auckland:

I [would] like to add some point [about] inconvenience when it comes to public bus[es]. Firstly, they do not announce their stop, so I find it really hard to travel because I always have to check on Google map to see where I am supposed to stop. Secondly, we did not

know that there's a stop button in the bus where you inform the driver you [would] like to alight and lastly, we did not know that we have to raise our hand out to signal for the bus to stop at the bus stop. As a foreigner, everything here is new to us!

To some participants who were here for the first time, Auckland would be a whole new environment for them, and some of them would find it hard to work out how to move around in Auckland. This resulted in bad experiences for some of the participants. However, Helen, whose cousin was also staying in Auckland, was positive about the transportation here, especially after her first bus ride, and did not face any problems like Anne. Helen explained:

Someone told and taught me this if not I am not sure how to purchase a ticket. I have no knowledge that I have to press the stop button to inform the bus driver that I would like to alight here.

Helen also shared a similar experience to Anne, she said,

I felt that the public transportation here [is] different, for example, there are not many metro in Auckland. Unlike in my hometown, metro is available almost everywhere. Next is regarding about bus, the bus here is different from ours. They do not announce or show their stop, so it is inconvenient because if they do not announce or show their stop name, we do not know where we are.

Anne felt that announcing the name of the stop should be standard because Auckland is one of the biggest tourist destinations. Similarly public transportation should be made convenient and accessible to most of the locations for tourists who wish to travel around Auckland to see some of the beautiful scenery. However this was not the case for the majority of the participants. For example, Chuck stated, 'the routes to the destination you want to go [to] may not be covered by the bus. You may need to walk a long way even after you took a bus.'

Anne also mentioned the problem with the bus routes in Auckland:

Auckland, New Zealand is a tourist destination, [and] travelling should be made easy and accessible to most places. But it is not, there are places where taking a bus will not bring you there, so without a car you are not able to go to the places where you can see natural scenery.

Doris shared the same thought as Chuck and Anne, saying that, ‘the public bus or any form of public transportation here may not be able to bring you to some places, especially to the places where you can view the beautiful natural scenery.’

Eve also expressed her concern on the matter of bus routes: ‘If you want to travel to places, you cannot just rely on the bus. The reason may be because that places [are] not that advance[d] yet or basically there is no transportation made available there.’

Helen, who had always been optimistic when it came to public transportation, had concerns about the bus routes too:

I always think that New Zealand is a developed country thus public transportation should be really common and [provide easy access] to different parts of Auckland. But I realised that they are not really developed. Taking public transport may bring us to our destination but there are some places where [the] public bus will not be able to take you.

Therefore the lack of accessibility to certain locations via public transportation may result in negative experiences for participants who wish to travel out of the city to view some of the natural habitat in Auckland. This has also led to another problem which is the rising number of private cars in the city. As Chuck stated, ‘people prefer to use their own cars to travel here.’

Also, due to the reason that public transportation may not be able to bring tourists or visitors to the some locations in Auckland, visitors such as international students will tend to purchase a car. For example, Doris stated, ‘I think it is more convenient to have [y]our own private car, then

you can go anywhere you want.’ Helen also explained that, ‘Auckland is quite big, thus without a car is quite inconvenient sometimes when the place you want to go is not accessible by public transport.’

However, the case of getting a private car does not apply to every participant, For example, Anne stated, ‘I [would] only purchase a car if I moved out of the city.’ Eve also remarked that, ‘if I would really like to stay in Auckland, then I will purchase a car.’ Therefore, purchasing a car can be a big decision for some of the participants in this study.

#### **4.5. Post-arrival image of Auckland**

For some of the participants in this study, Auckland may be a city but still it is a beautiful and modern city to live in. For example, Eve compared her experiences in England and Auckland:

When I was in England, I lived in [a] rural area because my school was not located in the centre of the place. So it was about an hour away from London if you took a train. But over here in Auckland, I felt that it is quite modern and convenient in terms of daily lives. The weather is also good every day here and the natural scenery is better compared with the ones in China. For example, I can still take pictures of blue sky on Queen Street.

Eve comes from Beijing where the air pollution is adversely affecting the environment; being able to experience beautiful weather with clear blue skies makes for a beautiful natural environment for her. Chuck also agreed with Eve, he stated that he ‘love[d] the environment here. It is very clean and the views are really great.’

Helen shared her view on Auckland after arriving; she stated that, ‘I did not put too much hope on seeing beautiful, natural scenery in the city; I believed that even if there [had been some], it would have been destroyed. However the city does have [its] unique view and scenery.’

However, not all participants shared the same view as Helen, Eve and Chuck. As mentioned before, the participants’ perceptions of Auckland before arriving were quite similar, and included natural scenery and a green environment. Thus some of the participants might have brought these



perceptions with them to Auckland, and may have been surprised by that environment. For example, Anne and Bob were not excited after they arrived in Auckland. Anne stated,

Now that I am staying in Auckland, I felt that Auckland city is not really well developed, and it is similar to Hong Kong, Beijing or Shanghai, really crowded. The city also does not really have a natural environment. As I have been to Switzerland before, I find that [that] city merges perfectly with the natural environment, but over here it's just filled with tall buildings and no nature. Also, there are so many Chinese in the city!

Doris also mentioned in the interview who she thought she would be mixing with after arriving in Auckland, but to her surprise, 'I felt that I would be mixing with more Westerners here, but there are quite a number of Chinese people.'

Helen shared the same view when it comes to the Asian population in Auckland and stated,

There are not many Westerners around; instead I felt that the environment was filled with the 'Asian presence'. In Queen Street, I can see more Asians than Westerners. Once I took a picture and [sent] it to my family. Surprisingly, my aunt asked me why there were so many Chinese around.

Bob also elaborated on his dislikes after arriving in Auckland, especially the lack of nature in the city and also the number of Asians:

Actually when I first arrived here, I was not feeling really good about it because I saw too many Chinese here. It gives me the feeling that I am not in a foreign country, rather I am in Chinatown. I was hoping I could live in a country where there are more Westerners around, this way it will give me the right feeling that I am staying in a foreign country. I do not really experience nature in the city and it is too crowded.

Some participants, like Chuck, knew that there would be Chinese in Auckland. However he was surprised with the sheer number of Chinese: 'I knew there would be Chinese but I never thought there be so many of them!' He then added that, 'Auckland is not that "Western" a country.' Hence, the huge Chinese population in Auckland has indirectly influenced the experiences of the participants. Other than the Chinese population, the lack of nature has also caused some of the participants' experiences to be negative.

#### **4.6. The realistic view of Auckland**

Although the participants shared their views on transportation, service and environment during their stay in Auckland, some of the participants felt that there was still much more to explore but their stay in Auckland had not been long enough to conclude if their pre-arrival perceptions were similar with what they have experienced to date. For example, Eve stated, 'as I [have] just arrived here, I hang around in the school most of the time, so to me at the moment everything seems OK.' Frank also shared that, 'I am not really sure yet because I have not been to other places in New Zealand, I was only here for about 3–4 weeks.'

However, the majority of the participants shared the idea of how the people in China might view Auckland. The environment in this case is the biggest factor. Eve stated that when someone mentioned New Zealand in China, they will perceive New Zealand as 'a beautiful place with beautiful scenery.' Frank also gave a simple description of how the people in China perceived New Zealand as 'windswept pastures of cows and sheep.'

Apart from the environment, New Zealand is also well known for its products. Helen stated, 'New Zealand is a famous travel destination. Next it [would] be their products like milk powder, sheep wool, sheep blanket[s] and things.'

Frank gave an explanation as to why the locals in China would perceive New Zealand as a nature destination. He explained: 'the commercial in China shows that New Zealand is a tourist destination and that New Zealand is the earth's last piece of pure land.' Chuck also gave another possible reason why the locals in China have such perceptions: 'There is government promotion in China regarding New Zealand.'

The majority of the participants agreed that the people in China may not have an exact idea of what Auckland is like and how different the reality is compared to New Zealand itself. Eva explained,

Actually we do not really have a lot of knowledge and understanding towards New Zealand, especially the people in China who have not been here. For example, I told my colleague for the first time that I am resigning and will be traveling to Auckland. They answered that it is really beautiful there and also things about feeding the sheep and such. For them, the first impression given will be the natural scenery.

George also shared the same opinion when he stated, ‘Actually not many people know about Auckland. A lot of them thought that Auckland is the capital of New Zealand, they might not be aware [of what] Auckland is like.’ Similarly, Frank gave an example of how his friends perceived Auckland: ‘I informed my friends that I am going to Auckland, and the first thing that [popped up] in their mind [was] the great natural environment.’

Therefore for some participants, the image of Auckland was being portrayed incorrectly to the people in China. Anne stated,

In my opinion, I felt that New Zealand is creating an image, but it is using one image to portray the whole of New Zealand. I find that they use the image of [the] South Island to portray both South and North Island. Thus I felt that New Zealand is portraying the wrong image to the people in China.

Chuck shared the same thought as Anne, saying,

The people in China might have the general image of New Zealand, but I do not think they are aware of the image of Auckland. Therefore I felt that the image of New Zealand

is being portrayed correctly but the city of Auckland needs to be promoted so that people will know the right image of Auckland.

Eve gave a possible explanation as to why nature is used to portray New Zealand: 'I guess probably because their selling point is not about shopping where there are international brands in the street[s] of Auckland city.' George also shared his opinion to why New Zealand promoted their natural habitat: 'New Zealand is located quite far away from China, so in order to attract people to come over and travel, New Zealand has to make use of the advantages they have, which is the natural habitat.' However, Eve also agreed that New Zealand is not portraying the right image to the people in China while George found that it is leading people to the wrong impression of Auckland.

Helen shared her opinion regarding the image being portrayed by New Zealand,

I think that the people in China will perceive Auckland similarly [to how] New Zealand [is portrayed] as they have never been here. So in [other words], generally to them Auckland and New Zealand are the same, it is not like Auckland is a state and New Zealand is a country. So when you mention Auckland, automatically the image of natural scenery appear[s]. When I sent them the image of Auckland city and they were all quite surprised.

Doris then shared her view regarding international students coming to New Zealand:

I definitely think that some of the Chinese students [who] come over to New Zealand for study [come] partly because of the natural scenery and greenery. This is because in China, the way we perceive New Zealand is the good quality of food and the beautiful, natural and green habitat.

Therefore, for the people in China, it is not really known what Auckland is like. Some of the Chinese might not even be aware of the actual location of Auckland. It is advisable for New Zealand to promote the image of Auckland to the people in China so that there will be no misconception. This is quite critical because some of the international students who travel to Auckland for their education might have chosen Auckland because of the natural habitat that was promoted by Tourism New Zealand.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results have shown that, prior to arriving, the majority of participants had a positive perception of the country, revolving around factors such as the natural beauty of the country, its excellent safety record, its multicultural nature and the educational excellence achieved by its institutions. The experiences of the participants since they have been studying in Auckland have been mixed. Certain participants have felt that Auckland in practice reflects the perceptions that they had previously, but others have had negative experiences, especially regarding safety issues, the treatment by others in society and the lack of natural beauty experienced in Auckland due to its large size as a major city in the country.

The safety issue and the lack of natural beauty were perhaps the most frequent differences stated by the participants in their comparison between expectations and real-life experiences. Other participants that had ventured to live outside the city argued that the natural beauty does exist, just not in the city of Auckland. Finally, through the responses of the participants, the destination image as portrayed by the country of New Zealand was part of the reason why students from this study chose to study in Auckland. There were other mitigating factors as well, including the reputation of the educational institutions in the city. However, there were also key factors that influenced the decision such as the natural beauty of New Zealand and the multicultural nature of the destination, along with safety records that persuaded Chinese students to select Auckland as their primary choice.

The range of opinions that were received during the study helped to identify that these research questions were very subjective and that in a research sample population this small (eight participants), it was not surprising to receive a range of opinions that could not necessarily be generalised. Despite this, the results did provide some key findings, especially regarding the cultivation of certain expectations prior to arrival based on the destination image of New Zealand

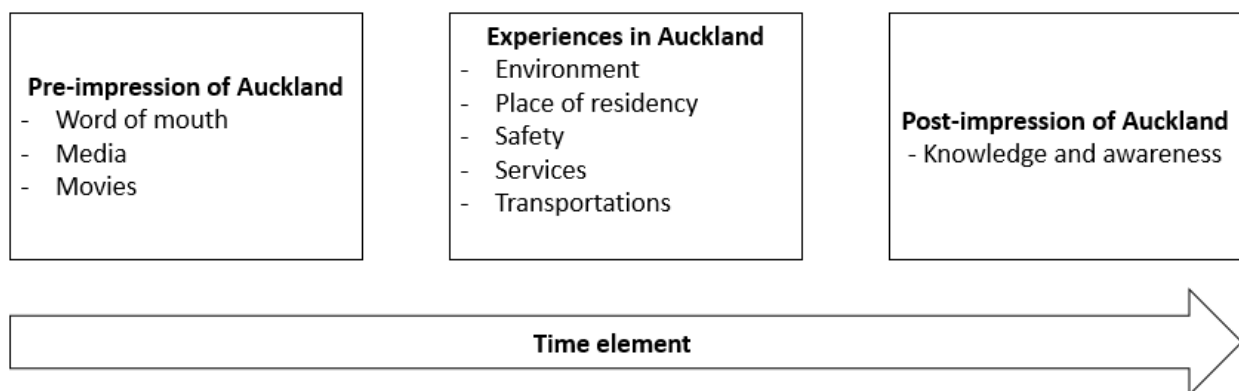
that has been designed specifically by the New Zealand tourism authority. The participants also stressed that regardless of their current thinking and attitude about Auckland and the country overall, change was needed in terms of the destination image to help present a more realistic image of Auckland and how this differs from the wider perception of New Zealand and the more rural South Island in particular.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an assessment of the findings within the wider context of the empirical literature. Chapter Four found five key themes from the study regarding the perceptions of Chinese international students. These five themes were the environment, place of residence, safety, services and transportation. Using the findings from the interviews, combined with the results of the literature review in Chapter Two, this chapter provides a detailed assessment and discussion of the findings and how they have led to certain conclusions regarding the perceptions of Chinese international students in terms of their experiences in Auckland, New Zealand.

### 5.2. Framework of pre- and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland



*Figure 2.* Framework of Chinese international students' pre- and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland.

The results have produced a new framework of the pre- and post-arrival perceptions of Auckland based on the emerging themes from the data collected (Figure 2). It is important to note how the impression of Auckland was constructed in the minds of the Chinese international students, before moving on to their experiences during their stay in Auckland. Lastly, there is some discussion on the possible perception of Auckland by the locals in China; this is being stated to show the importance of providing knowledge and awareness of how Auckland is perceived as compared to the whole of New Zealand.

### **5.3. Impression of Auckland**

New Zealand has always had a good reputation for its natural beauty and scenery (Fountain et al., 2010; Reis, 2012). Such an impression may be built up from the marketing campaign by Tourism New Zealand, for example the *100% Pure New Zealand* campaign in 1999 (Reis, 2012). This campaign had successfully constructed the natural image of New Zealand across the world and has begun to attract a large number of international tourists and students to travel to New Zealand. It is believed that other than promoting New Zealand, word of mouth and media also play a significant role in constructing a positive image of New Zealand.

#### **5.3.1. Word-of-mouth**

Impressions of what Auckland might look like can be built up from word of mouth from family or friends who have been to New Zealand or who are currently living in the country. According to Govers et al. (2007), opinions of friends or relatives play a role in forming an image of a destination. Therefore, by hearing from friends or relatives, the impression and image of what New Zealand is like is being constructed: that New Zealand is a beautiful, clean and green country (Collins, 2006; Martens & Starke, 2008). In this study, the focus is on Chinese international students and, according to Lam and Hsu (2006) and Lo (2012), Chinese tourists prefer word-of-mouth information from friends, relatives and colleagues. In this study, some of the participants have friends or relatives living in Auckland who have shared their information about Auckland with the participants. This may have influenced the participants' perceptions of Auckland and helped construct the image of Auckland and New Zealand as a green, natural country (Martens & Starke, 2008).

#### **5.3.2. Media**

The media plays an important role in building up the perceptions and impressions of a destination. Many tourists refer to newspapers, magazines, brochures, television commercials and documentaries when deciding on their travel destination (Farahani et al., 2011). According to Govers et al. (2007), images in brochures, media reporting and motion pictures project a flood of information. This is especially true of motion pictures: Pan (2011) found that television commercials help promote specific destinations. They not only help promote the destination, but also aid in constructing the perception that New Zealand is a pure, clean and green country with magnificent landscapes (Pan, 2011). The participants in this study also made use of media to



help build up a perception of Auckland prior to their arrival. The majority of the participants stated that they went on the Internet and watched images of New Zealand. This shows that perceptions of Auckland may be constructed after seeing images of New Zealand as a whole. Farahani et al. (2011) stated that photographs are vital to construct and communicate effective images of a destination. Hence, photographs that show the magnificent landscape and natural environment construct an image of Auckland, and New Zealand as a natural country.

### **5.3.3. Movies**

Movies such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* have also influenced impressions and perceptions of New Zealand. These movies which were filmed in New Zealand have helped to promote the country and they are the means whereby some people learn about the green and natural habitat of New Zealand (Collins, 2006). According to Farahani et al. (2011), playing a short movie can help present the characteristics of a place. Some participants stated that people in China know about New Zealand only by watching the movie. In the movie, many scenes were taken in rural areas where buildings could not be seen. Rather, the movie showed the natural side of New Zealand. Therefore, these movies that were shot in some parts of New Zealand have directly helped to promote the image of the country to the people in China and across the world.

## **5.4. Experiences in Auckland**

### **5.4.1. Environmental factors**

The concept of environment can be addressed in a number of ways. The literature review helped to identify that international students, when referring to the environment, can mean the natural environment, but also the physical and social environment that exists in a specific destination. For example, the work by Sawir et al. (2009) stressed that students often looked at the overall environment before making a decision to study there. Li and Li (2008) also argued that the cultural environment, such as experiencing Western culture was one that was crucial to the decisions taken by international students when choosing where to study for their degree. This viewpoint is also supported by Tham et al. (2013) whose work stressed that a number of variables impacted upon the decision by an international student to study in a certain location.

#### **5.4.1.1. Pre-arrival perceptions of Auckland**

For most Chinese international students, their impression of New Zealand is that the country is a natural, clean and green country (Collins, 2006). The destination image of Auckland (and New

Zealand) was viewed very positively by students in the study when discussing their overall perceptions of the country prior to their arrival. It is believed that the perception that New Zealand as a clean, green, fresh, natural country with beautiful landscape (Collins, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004) was constructed from the active promotion of New Zealand in China. For example, Hembry (2007) reported that a NZ\$7 million campaign to promote New Zealand focused its promotion in Shanghai. Further, Google has created a New Zealand tourism level for Google Earth. As mentioned before, movies have also directly played a part in constructing the perceptions of New Zealand. Hence, the perception that Auckland is situated in a pure and clean country has been created in the mind of everyone in China, including the participants in this study. The Ministry of Education (2008) has also stated that many international students have developed positive perceptions of New Zealand because of the destination image constructed through the active promotions by Tourism New Zealand. New Zealand is also seen as a safe country in which to study (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). This is one of the pull factors for international students when deciding on their education location. According to Deumert et al. (2005) and Li and Li (2008), international students tend to consider their safety first when choosing an education destination. Tham et al. (2013) have also stressed that campus safety is seen as a pull factor for international students when choosing their education destination. The findings in this study support the viewpoint of Tham et al. (2013) regarding campus safety, as some of the participants referred to factors in the US such as gun violence in schools. With New Zealand's good reputation for safety, the majority of the participants have chosen to study here rather than in countries like the US.

New Zealand is seen as a country with a Western culture by many Asian countries. This is also a pull factor for international students who wish to experience Western culture and live in an English-speaking country when learning the English language (Andrade, 2009). A study by Simpson and Tan (2009) states that Chinese international students come to New Zealand for their degrees because New Zealand is able to provide them with an experience of Western culture and the English-speaking environment they hope to participate in. Bodycott (2009) has also stressed that many Chinese students have chosen Western countries as their study destination due to their desire to learn English as their second language. The findings in the previous chapter also support the perspective of earlier studies that Western culture and an English-speaking

environment are two of the driving factors that make Chinese international students, such as the participants in this study, come over here for their degree.

#### **5.4.1.2. Post-arrival perceptions of Auckland**

New Zealand always appears in the minds of people across the world as a clean, pure, and green country especially after the campaign *100% Pure New Zealand* was launched in 1999 (Farahani et al., 2011). However, this image may not be true of Auckland since the city has been studentified. According to Collins (2010), studentification is a term used to describe the distinct social, economic, cultural, and physical transformations within university towns. This means that studentification brings changes to residential landscapes through conversions, new-build developments, and changing local retail and leisure facilities to provide services to students and their distinctive lifestyles (Hubbard, 2009). Some of the participants in this study were disappointed after they arrived in Auckland. Their disappointment with Auckland was due to the lack of natural surroundings and also because of the large number of Asians in the city.

As mentioned before, New Zealand is seen as a Western country that is able to provide Chinese international students with an English-speaking environment, especially for students who came here specifically to learn English (Bodycott, 2009). With the large numbers of Asians living in the city, some participants felt that they were not in an environment which corresponded to their original perceptions and were disappointed. For some of them, they were not able to practice their English language in this environment because they tended to mix with their own community where Mandarin Chinese is spoken. Some of the participants had imagined themselves mixing with the locals in New Zealand; however, this has not happened. Other than the large number of Asians in the city, the numbers of different ethnicities (Table 1) has also influenced the kind of Western culture the Chinese international students had wished to experience.

Some participants, having arrived in Auckland, found the lack of nature in the city was a great disappointment. However, the lack of nature depends greatly on location. Although Auckland city may have been studentified (Collins, 2010), some of the participants believe that there are still places in Auckland that will fulfil their original perceptions prior to their arrival. This is especially true for participants living outside of the city. What follows is a discussion of the

importance of the place of residence in terms of improving the experiences of Chinese international students for whom the experience of a clean and natural New Zealand is important.

#### **5.4.2. Place of residency**

According to Martens and Starke (2008), one of the reasons why Chinese international students chose New Zealand as their education destination was because it is geographically nearer to Asia. Hence, location is seen as one important aspect to look at when it comes to a student's decision to choose an overseas education destination. However, this view does not fully support the findings from this study. Instead, the findings showed other factors were at work when it comes to providing them with a better experience of New Zealand.

Prior to their arrival in Auckland, the participants had never thought that the place they would be staying in would influence their experiences of the country. When discussing their perceptions of New Zealand, the majority of the participants perceived the country as a clean, pure and green country (Ministry of Education, 2013). However some of the participants in this study were disappointed with their surroundings. Some of the participants were living in the city where they experienced the same kind of lifestyle and environments they knew back in China. But some participants who lived outside of the city shared that their perceptions of New Zealand since their arrival were still similar to those prior to arrival.

There has been no research done specifically on place of residence, and this is an important factor for international students, especially for those who came to study in New Zealand because of what they have perceived (such as the natural surroundings) prior to their arrival. It is important to take note that the city of Auckland has been studentified (Collins, 2010), and that many of the possible natural areas have been changed by constructing accommodation and facilities to meet the demands of the increasing number of international students (Hubbard, 2009). According to Ministry of Education (2013), approximately 56% of all international students are in Auckland, the highest percentage of all New Zealand's regions. A possible reason given for the large number of international students is because the city of Auckland has two of the biggest universities as well as other private institutions. Hence, the difference between the city and locations outside of the city is that there are not many international students around outside of the city and, most importantly, the chance to experience living close to nature rather than being surrounded by infrastructure.

### **5.4.3. Safety**

Safety has been rated as the number one issue to consider when international students choose their education destination (Andrade, 2006). Cubillo et al. (2006) and Marriott et al. (2010) have also stated on the basis of their research that living conditions and safety are two of the important factors that international students will consider when making their decision to choose an education destination. New Zealand not only has a reputation for its clean, green and natural country (Fountain et al., 2010), but it also has a good reputation for its low crime rate. Zhang and Brunton (2007) have indicated that Chinese international students felt safe in their environment while studying in New Zealand. Hence, when it comes to choosing a safe country to study, Chinese international students may put New Zealand on their list to consider.

#### **5.4.3.1. Safety concerns prior to arrival in Auckland**

Some of the participants shared their views on the safety concerns they had prior to their arrival in Auckland. They stated that, when compared to the US, New Zealand is considered a safe country in which to study. As examples the participants pointed to the shooting incidents that have occurred in the US and that these events influenced their decision. This finding is in line with earlier studies like Martens and Starke (2008).

It was stated earlier that word of mouth from family and friends will also influence the image of a destination for international students (Govers et al., 2007). In this study, some of the participants have friends or relatives living in the country or who have travelled here for a holiday, and these people share their views with prospective students. For participants who do have friends or relatives living in Auckland they feel much safer, especially female participants.

It has been mentioned that international students tend to choose countries where they are guaranteed safety and free from any form of discrimination (Li & Li, 2008). In this case, participants do consider safety as one of the factors when choosing their education destination; however racial discrimination were never thought before during their decision-making on their study destination.

#### **5.4.3.2. Safety concerns after arriving in Auckland**

Zhang and Brunton (2007) found that Chinese international students felt safe in the environment of New Zealand. In general, the participants in this study supported this point. However this does not hold true when it turns dark. In this case, the male and female participants shared concerns

about different safety issues that they or their friends have encountered during the night hours in Auckland.

The studies on safety issues did not fully explore the dangers arising from drunkenness, sexual harassment and stalking, all issues faced by international students in Auckland. For the male participants, their safety concerns related to drunk people on the street, especially in the city. They feared these people might behave improperly and hurt others. According to Birak, Higgs, and Terry (2011) and Higgs, Stafford, Attwood, Walker, and Terry (2008), when drunkenness occurs, this will cause the individual to behave in an inappropriate way which may cause danger to others. For example, they may fight on the street which may result in hurting others without knowing or caring that innocent people were involved. This has caused male participants to be worried that when they stay out in the city during the night, especially on the weekend, partygoers will be drinking excessively.

However, female participants were seriously concerned when they found out that their friends had been sexually harassed and stalked. Sexual harassment is defined differently in each country (Sudoma & Riennerth, 2012). In New Zealand, sexual harassment is defined as ‘unwelcoming or offensive sexual behavior that is repetitive or significant enough to have a dangerous effect on an individual’ (Human Rights Commission, 2010; Poulston, 2008, p. 232). While stalking, also defined as harassment under the Harassment Act 1997, refers to executing ‘specific acts’ which have occurred on at least two single occasions within a 12-month period, and these acts include following an individual and engaging in behaviour that makes someone fear for his or her safety (Civil Justice, 2014). It is not known whether such cases involving international students are being reported, hence it is important that in-depth studies on such incidents be carried out in the future, especially for Chinese female international students. Chinese international students tend to isolate themselves due to low self-esteem when needing to communicate in English (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Thus, it is possible that Chinese international students who have experienced such incidents may not have reported them to the police. Instead they have shared this horrifying experience with their friends and family which has a negative effect on New Zealand’s reputation for being a safe country. For the female participants that were already here, hearing from their friends about such encounters will help

them to some extent avoid such experiences. Therefore, their way of preventing such incidents from happening to them is to go home before the sky turns dark.

The existence of racial discrimination may not have occurred to the participants but they consider this as another threat to their safety. Some participants shared some incidents where Chinese (did not mention if it is a student or tourist) were being robbed during the night. This increased participants' concern that such a threat may be dangerous, especially as a Chinese. Hence an argument made by Gray et al. (2003) that racial security is not considered an important factor when deciding an education destination is not supported by the findings from this research.

#### **5.4.4. Services**

No information was shared by the participants in this study regarding service issues prior to their arrival. However, they have stated that since New Zealand was considered one of the top tourist destinations in China, the services provided in New Zealand should be welcoming.

The results from this study have shown that, generally, the services provided in Auckland were up to standard. However, service efficiency was disappointing and surprising for the participants. A possible reason for this may be the different lifestyle between China and New Zealand. Hofstede (n.d.) has postulated that China is a masculine society, which means that many Chinese are willing to sacrifice their leisure time or family and prioritise their work. So it is understandable that Chinese tend to live a fast-paced lifestyle and efficiency is considered an important factor in service excellence. Also, according to Reisinger and Crotts (2010), many people tend to expect similar products and product delivery across the world. Hence, it is not surprising that some of the participants in this study were not satisfied with the service efficiency in New Zealand.

The example given by the participants regarding service efficiency was bank services in Auckland. Given that Chinese banks are able to provide a fast service when opening a bank account, the participants were surprised that an appointment had to be made in order to open a bank account in New Zealand. Participants also stated that the process of applying for a bank card or an AT Hop card (bus card) was a hectic process for them. Therefore, service inefficiencies may have given them a negative experience during their stay in Auckland.

As mentioned before, research that has been done with regard to international students has not investigated the aspect of service efficiency, or otherwise, that international students experience. It would be useful if future studies focused on services provided in New Zealand, especially with respect to international students. According to Martens and Starke (2008), international students contribute to the domestic economy through accommodation, living expenses and travel expenses. And since international students also spend their holidays within New Zealand (Ryan & Zhang, 2007), improving service efficiency would better meet the needs of Chinese international students.

Racial discrimination also occurred to some participants as an explanation when it comes to poor service. According to Latif et al. (2012), Asian students in New Zealand are associated with the negative portrayal of Asians by the media, perceiving them to be violent and second class citizens. Hence, they may be treated in another manner and this was consistent with what the participants had experienced. This produced unhappy experiences for some participants in this study as they felt that they had been treated unfairly. This shows that the argument made by Gray et al. (2003) – that valuing cultural diversity is not considered an important influencing issue for students deciding on their education destination – does not support the findings from this research.

#### **5.4.5. Transportation**

Previous research has not focused on the transportation issues in Auckland that international students face. According to Choi et al. (2007), areas which are easily accessible due to geographical proximity and infrastructure are attractive to international students. Prior to arriving in Auckland, the participants in this study had not considered transportation issues. However, the view of one participant was that, given that New Zealand presents itself as a tourist destination, transportation should be really convenient and new.

After arriving in Auckland, the majority of the participants were in agreement with the view expressed by Jakob et al. (2006) that the public transport in Auckland is not dependable. Participants stated that the public bus, for instance, did not always arrive at the time published in the bus timetable. However, most of the participants were chiefly concerned about the inaccessibility of some locations by public transport. This finding was supported by Mattingly and Morrissey (2014); they found that the lack of easily accessible public transport in some rural



areas made it necessary for people to purchase a car in order to access particular locations. Participants also indicated that in order to travel to some locations based on their own time frame, having a car of their own made travelling more convenient.

A rise in ownership of private cars will result in more traffic congestion in Auckland. According to Collins (2006), Auckland is facing traffic congestion already. Ryan and Mo (2002) also mentioned in their study that Auckland is often perceived as a busy place with a reputation for traffic jams. Therefore, if the number of private cars in Auckland continues to rise, it will result in even worse traffic congestion as well as air pollution. Any increase in pollution, such as air pollution, apart from being unpleasant, will threaten New Zealand's image as a natural environment (Plessis et al., 2012).

### **5.5. Post impression of Auckland**

The majority of the participants were quite surprised with the environment and surroundings in Auckland; the participants were disappointed with the lack of nature and the numbers of Asians that can be seen on Queen Street. Hence, promoting knowledge and awareness of Auckland would benefit international students and tourists who come to Auckland hoping to experience and witness nature and Western culture.

#### **5.5.1. Knowledge and awareness of Auckland**

Apart from its scenery and natural environment, New Zealand is also well known for its outdoor recreational activities such as skydiving, bungee jumping, trekking and many more (Reis, 2012). According to some of the participants in this study, New Zealand is also renowned for its agricultural products such as sheep, wool and milk powder. When participants mentioned New Zealand to their friends or family, the perception of a green, clean and pure environment is automatic. However, when Auckland is mentioned, the perceptions of Auckland were similar to the whole of New Zealand. For this reason, some participants in this study were disappointed with the environment in Auckland. They might have thought that Auckland would be similar to the picture of New Zealand that has always been advertised: a green and clean environment (Collins, 2006). Even though Auckland has an official website of its own to promote the city ([www.aucklandnz.com](http://www.aucklandnz.com)), it is very common for people to enter the official website of Tourism New Zealand to learn more about the country. Some of the participants in this study have admitted that they had no knowledge of Auckland prior to their arrival. The majority of the

participants said that even though Auckland is more well-known in China than Wellington, people in China may not have an accurate impression of what Auckland looks like. Auckland may be more popular with students because of the two renowned universities where most of the international students will come and study (Friesen, 2009). Therefore it is important for New Zealand to promote the image of Auckland specifically since some international students or tourists may travel to Auckland expressly to experience the scenery and natural environment. Certainly, most Chinese travelers come to New Zealand in the hope of seeing and experiencing the natural beauty of New Zealand (Fountain et al., 2010).

Maori culture is something that international students and tourists look forward to experiencing. However, despite the interesting history of the Maori, it is not being fully advertised. At least, this is what the participants in this study found. Also, according to Fountain et al. (2010), Chinese tourists who travel to New Zealand do not have much interest in the Maori culture due to the lack of knowledge about it prior to arrival in the country. It is only after they have arrived in Auckland that they learn about the Maori heritage. As mentioned before, Auckland has the highest percentage of international students due to the two renowned universities and a number of private institutions in the city (Friesen, 2009). It is unavoidable that Auckland may not be able to provide the experience of the kind of Western culture that international students seek. Especially for Chinese international students, who are here for Western culture as well as the hope of living in an English-speaking environment (Andrade, 2006). With the large number of Chinese international students in New Zealand, it is inevitable that the Chinese students will mix with their community. Some of the participants in this study shared their disappointment when asked about their experience in Auckland; one of the reasons for such disappointment was because of the number of Asians that can be seen in the city. It would also be advisable for Auckland to promote an image of itself to international students with respect to the population mix in the city, and all the various ethnicities. This would allow international students who wish to experience a Western culture or to live in an English-speaking environment to know that the city of Auckland is more cosmopolitan in environment and culture.

## **5.6. Time element**

The time element shown in this study includes the phase where participants were still in China and after arriving and living in Auckland. It has been noted by Erlich (2003) that experiences

will change over time, and perceptions of individuals change also (Butko, 2010). Therefore, in this study, the perceptions of the participants of Auckland prior to their arrival included the magnificent natural environment and landscapes; however after arriving in Auckland, some participants were quite disappointed with their environment. Hence, while their experiences were being affected due to the lack of nature, other factors such as safety, services and transportation have also influenced their experience of living in Auckland. But some participants' experiences changed from negative to positive once they moved and lived outside the city. Those participants who were already experiencing the positive perceptions and experiences after arriving in Auckland were still very optimistic in their overall perception and experience because the participants were living outside the city. These participants were able to live close to the natural environment but, at the same time, also experience an urban lifestyle when they travelled into the city to attend school. The balance of experiencing both natural and city lifestyles made these participants' experiences and perceptions positive. Some participants mentioned that of the duration of their stay is too short to conclude if their current perceptions were similar to their pre-arrival perceptions, therefore their perceptions and experiences may change again over a period of time. However, some participants who have stayed longer have learned to adapt to the lifestyle of the locals and hence have positive experiences and perceptions of Auckland.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the discussion in this chapter has outlined that there are specific perceptions that can change over time when tourists or international students visit a location in a different country. The study focused on the four central questions throughout the work: discovering the perceptions of Chinese students before they arrived in New Zealand to study in Auckland, the nature of their experience while studying in Auckland, how their perceptions differ from (or are consistent with) their pre-arrival expectations and if New Zealand is portraying the right image of the country to the people in China.

The discussion has outlined that, when aligning the perceptions of Chinese international students to what was found in the literature, there is evidence to suggest that the results of this study are in line with the findings of earlier studies. However the perceptions and experiences of some participants changed after arrival in Auckland. After a period of time, some participants' perceptions and experiences turned from negative to positive. One key finding that emerged from the results was the importance of a student's place of residence within the Auckland area. There

has been no research done on the importance of place of residence and how it may influence a student's experience and perceptions.

The issue of safety was also found to be key, both in the literature and by the participants in this study. However, there were no studies that specifically addressed the safety concerns of international students. In this case, the findings have shown that male participants' safety concerns were more about alcoholism while female participants' safety concerns were regarding sexual harassment and stalking. Hence, the perceptions of students differed greatly from their experiences in terms of safety in Auckland. This means that destination images of the country and city promulgated by the tourism sector were perhaps misleading. Other key findings included the misleading representation of location and the environment for the students in this study, with particular reference to the natural environment of New Zealand.

The final key finding is the importance of improving service efficiency in New Zealand. The participants in this study shared that the services provided in Auckland were generally acceptable. However, they found that service efficiency was not up to their accustomed standard. The majority of the participants used their experiences with banks as the example of slow services and inefficiency. Inefficiency in service in New Zealand may be explained by living a different kind of lifestyle.

Problems with inaccessibility of some locations outside the city by public transport were also raised. This was in line with results from earlier studies. However, the issue of transportation and its impact on Chinese international students and tourists should be studied further, especially since Chinese students are the largest group entering New Zealand for education or leisure purposes.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

With the rapid increase in the numbers of international students coming to New Zealand for their education, it is important to understand and explore what are some of the pull factors that have made international students want to come. Last year Chinese international students were the largest group among all international students, with approximately 17,165 of them in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2013). The purpose of this research was to investigate and explore if New Zealand is portraying a realistic image to Chinese international students who choose to study here and arrive hoping to experience the natural environment. The research questions addressed in the study are stated below:

1. What were Chinese students' perceptions of Auckland before they arrived in New Zealand to study in Auckland?
2. What have been their experiences while studying in Auckland?
3. How do their post-arrival perceptions differ from (or are consistent with) their pre-arrival expectations?
4. Is the destination image promoted by New Zealand portraying the right image of Auckland?

### **6.2. RQ1: What were Chinese students' perceptions of Auckland before they arrived in New Zealand to study in Auckland?**

New Zealand has always been perceived across the world as a green and natural country (Reis, 2012). The participants shared the same perceptions. Some of the other driving factors for international students choosing to study in New Zealand included New Zealand being a safe country (Zhang & Brunton, 2007), providing an English-speaking environment and practising Western culture (Simpson & Tan, 2009). However, these perceptions did not last for long after they had arrived in Auckland.

### **6.3. RQ2: What have been their experiences while studying in Auckland?**

Key findings such as place of residency, safety concerns and service issues emerged from the interviews; these were discussed in Chapter 5. These key findings were important factors that have influenced the participants' experiences in Auckland. The importance of place of residency was stressed as some participants stated their pre-arrival perceptions of Auckland were similar to

their post-arrival perceptions after they had moved from the inner city to the North Shore. The researcher also found that participants who were having positive experiences were living outside the city; however transportation issues were not positive for these participants. The issue of safety also concerned the participants – especially the female participants – after hearing of incidents that had happened to their friends. Even though the participants knew New Zealand is a safe country, terrifying incidents still occurred to international students after arriving here. This has produced concerns for the female participants who are more vulnerable. Lastly, participants did not consider service issues before their arrival in Auckland. The majority of the participants had similar experiences with the service efficiency in the bank, and also some issues of racial bias during the provision of some services. Although the participants may have had some negative experiences during their stay in Auckland, overall their experiences and perceptions were still positive.

#### **6.4. RQ3: How do their post-arrival perceptions differ from (or are consistent with) their pre-arrival expectations?**

All the participants shared their perceptions prior to their arrival in Auckland that the country is a clean and green country; however some participants were surprised with the environment after arriving. Their perceptions of environmental factors were not similar to the perceptions they had before arrival. However, not all participants agreed, especially those who were living outside the CBD area of Auckland. The results have shown that participants who were living outside the city were more positive with their experiences and stated that their perceptions are consistent with their pre-arrival expectations. Nonetheless, some participants have also stated that the duration of their stay was too short to conclude any overall perceptions and experiences of Auckland, but at the moment the overall perception and experiences were still positive.

#### **6.5. RQ4: Is the destination image promoted by New Zealand portraying the right image of Auckland?**

In this research, the researcher focused on understanding the image of Auckland from the perspective of the people in China by exploring the opinions of the participants. The findings from the results in Chapter 4 suggested that most Chinese, or at least the close friends of the participants, do not have a basic impression of Auckland. Rather, they perceive Auckland in line with what New Zealand has always portrayed itself to be, a clean, green and natural country

(Collins, 2006; Reis, 2012). Some participants also suggested that some people in China may not even know that Wellington is the capital of New Zealand; hence it is important for New Zealand to promote themselves more to the Chinese people. Instead of focusing on promoting nature, it would be important for Tourism New Zealand to promote the culture as well as the image of Auckland city. This may help to give people a general idea of what Auckland city is like.

## **6.6. Significance of the study**

This study specifically focused on the pre- and post-arrival perceptions of Chinese students as well as their experiences in Auckland. The findings from this study could be useful to the Ministry of Education, Tourism New Zealand and tertiary education administrators. The findings of this research provided insights about the perceptions and experiences of Chinese students. The findings suggested that their perceptions were generally similar but that this varied depending upon the place of residency. The findings also suggested that safety issues were one of the participants' main concerns especially for female participants. The female participants were not aware of incidents involving sexual harassment and stalking because they had not heard about it before they arrived. Male participants on the other hand were more concerned about the excessive use of alcohol and they reported that they did not feel safe when individuals or groups were drunk. They were afraid that the drunks would behave inappropriately and cause violence. Another finding was that services provided in Auckland should be improved in terms of efficiency. Lastly, the findings also suggested that the image of Auckland may have been perceived unrealistically. Participants shared that people in China probably perceived Auckland as a green and natural destination, just as portrayed for New Zealand as a whole.

This key finding will help Auckland to create a more authentic image for international students and tourists, especially for international students who wish to experience living in a green, natural environment. Creating and promoting the image of Auckland city would allow international students to be more aware of Auckland's environment. Key findings on safety issues could also help the New Zealand police to be aware that such incidents are happening to international students, and they could raise awareness and provide any counselling or workshops to prevent such occurrences for international students. In addition, universities could also assist in providing counselling services or workshops for international students to raise awareness of these behaviours. The findings relating to service efficiency would allow related industries to

make improvements. This particular finding would also be useful for future international students in terms of their preparation for and overall experience in Auckland.

## **6.7. Limitations**

This research aimed to study Chinese international students' perceptions of Auckland prior to and after their arrival. However, the semi-structured interviews could not take place when the students were still in China. I believe that interviewing these students in their home country would have provided a more precise picture of their pre-arrival perceptions of Auckland. In the context of their home country their emotions and thoughts would not be affected by their current, post-arrival experiences.

The second limitation this study faced was the short length of time the students stayed in Auckland. Some of the students who volunteered to participate in the interviews were here for only a month or two; this affected the researcher with respect to getting more exact information from the participants as they had not explored around. Some questions that were asked during the interviews could not be answered as participants indicated that they had not explored outside of Auckland city.

The third limitation is related to racial issues. The researcher observed during the interviews that the participants were careful with their answers when it came to mentioning certain negative experiences. When they shared about their negative experiences they were careful not mention the ethnicity of the people who had either caused or been involved with those negative experiences. Also the researcher noticed that the participants occasionally contradicted themselves. For example, they began by sharing their bad experiences but, at the end, construed their experiences as positive. It is likely that these participants were trying to avoid mentioning negative things about the country as they are still currently living and studying here.

The fourth limitation was the differences in understanding Mandarin Chinese. The interviews were mostly conducted in Mandarin Chinese as most of the participants had chosen that language for the interview. However, the level of understanding Mandarin Chinese varied; the participants in the study were able to converse well but the researcher was not always able to understand fully some of the sentences or terms used. Sometimes a participant stopped the interview for a moment to explain in detail so that the researcher understood their meaning. As the interviews were recorded, the researcher was able to listen to the recorded interview again.



The fifth limitation encountered was the process of transcribing the interviews and analysing the data. Interviews that were conducted in Mandarin Chinese were being transcribed in the same language, and the researcher had to analyse the data in two different languages. As some of the terms used in Mandarin Chinese had no equivalent in English, it took quite some time for the researcher to bring the pieces in together with the transcribed English interview.

The sixth limitation for this study was the small number of participants due to the small scale of the dissertation. The researcher had decided to study eight participants, four males and four females. This also resulted in one further limitation: eight participants from China do not represent everyone in their home country.

## **6.8. Recommendations: Future research**

This research has explored Chinese students' pre- and post-arrival perceptions and experiences of Auckland. Several key findings were noted: the importance of the place of residency, the concern about sexual harassment and stalking that was raised by female participants, and problems relating to alcohol and drunkenness which were raised by male participants. It was also noted that service efficiency plays an important role in improving the experience of Auckland for Chinese students.

Hence, the research has revealed gaps and that could be explored more in the future. In this research, only Chinese students were involved. This research could be extended to other international students from different ethnic groups. Studies should be conducted on the importance of the place of residency as it has a huge influence on the experiences of international students regarding their environment. More research could be done on the different types of safety concerns that are being raised by international students of different genders. It is also suggested that future studies could be done regarding the service efficiency in Auckland, or even New Zealand, as this is an important element in the tourism and education market. Lastly, as the research were done in short timeframe, it is suggested that a longitudinal study on international students' perceptions and experiences should be carry out in future as perception and experience may change when individual has adapted to the environment.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1A: Numbers of international students in New Zealand

Country of Citizenship	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	%
China incl. territory of Hong Kong	18,090	13,372	12,999	13,553	14,922	16,831	17,165	18,766	
India	2,028	3,176	5,093	6,110	7,936	7,676	6,969	9,909	
Japan	6,220	5,595	5,564	5,421	5,271	5,655	5,766	5,734	
South Korea	10,499	9,810	9,416	9,375	8,059	6,463	5,504	4,995	
Thailand	1,927	1,771	2,018	2,359	2,183	2,069	2,192	2,409	
Saudi Arabia	740	1,215	2,434	2,374	2,812	2,519	1,971	1,772	
Germany	1,442	1,397	1,681	1,839	1,869	1,655	1,478	1,505	
Brazil	1,080	1,052	1,350	1,532	1,756	1,528	1,355	1,304	
Malaysia	1,611	1,792	1,834	2,026	1,942	1,683	1,378	1,255	
Vietnam	707	684	885	1,258	1,455	1,553	1,342	1,239	
USA	1,604	1,536	1,539	1,618	1,461	1,287	1,158	1,108	
Philippines	249	378	311	366	610	788	561	965	
France (incl. Tahiti, New Caledonia, French Polynesia)	579	495	724	838	837	915	873	863	
Fiji	760	672	833	867	812	673	631	742	
Taiwan	1,303	1,014	857	960	856	764	710	623	
Russia	487	539	536	539	635	607	579	552	
Sri Lanka	92	113	161	210	295	500	519	543	
Switzerland	725	609	630	624	621	534	473	532	
United Kingdom	469	433	486	407	393	373	424	492	
Indonesia	326	299	377	322	326	381	412	450	
Chile	257	281	261	323	359	391	340	435	
Colombia	72	141	168	230	292	467	243	263	
Singapore	171	160	172	180	178	203	231	248	
Nepal	20	35	44	51	143	186	193	229	
Tonga	357	168	164	555	547	171	193	225	
Canada	300	315	347	307	261	238	198	194	
Papua New Guinea	70	78	65	62	104	126	156	164	
Norway	123	97	110	117	119	146	145	162	
Cambodia	152	137	116	152	147	143	133	149	
South Africa	116	152	206	179	120	127	105	140	



Oman	176	191	199	177	171	158	145	137
Italy	95	96	80	86	102	103	131	119
Bangladesh	37	34	50	76	95	90	83	116
Spain	28	63	118	117	128	171	101	114
Kuwait	5	6	9	37	109	178	151	113
Mexico	52	92	67	84	99	110	79	113
<b>All other countries</b>	2,019	2,122	2,073	2,381	2,285	2,201	1,877	1,741
<b>Total number of IFP students</b>	<b>54,988</b>	<b>50,120</b>	<b>53,977</b>	<b>57,712</b>	<b>60,310</b>	<b>59,663</b>	<b>55,964</b>	<b>60,420</b>

Source from Ministry of Education (2014)

## **Appendix B: Interview questions (English)**

1. Can you tell me more about yourself? When did you arrive in Auckland?  
(Example, age, region, date of arrival in Auckland)
2. Can you share with me why you chose Auckland as your education destination?  
(Word-of-mouth, family members are staying here, explore new culture/Western culture, environment, university reputation etc)
3. Can you please reflect, what were your perceptions towards Auckland before arriving here?  
(Environment: green, nature, scenic, population etc. Can you elaborate more?)
4. Now that you have arrived here, how is your experience of Auckland?  
(Can you elaborate more? What are some experiences you enjoy about Auckland? Is there anything you do not enjoy about Auckland?)
5. Can you tell me more about your perceptions towards Auckland now? Can you reflect on any changes in your perceptions towards Auckland since your arrival?  
(Can you elaborate more?)
6. Can you reflect on the image that Auckland, New Zealand is giving to the people from China? Do you consider it a correct impression?  
(Why is that so?)
7. Is there anything else you like to add about your perceptions of Auckland?

## Appendix C: Interview questions (Mandarin Chinese)

1. 你能告诉我更多关于你自己？你什么时候在奥克兰到达？  
（例如，年龄，地区，抵达奥克兰的日期）
2. 你可以和我一起分享你为什么选择奥克兰来读书呢？  
（口口相传的，家庭成员住在这里，探索新的文化/西方文化，环境，大学声誉等）
3. 能否请你思考，你对奥克兰来到此地之前的感觉是什么？  
（环境：绿色，自然，风景，人口等/你能详细一些吗？）
4. 现在你已经到了，你对奥克兰有什么经验？  
（你能详细点吗？有什么经验，你享受有关奥克兰？有什么你不喜欢关于奥克兰？
5. 你能告诉我更多关于你对奥克兰的看法吗？你可以反省对奥克兰，你到来前的看法和现在有什么变化？  
（你能详细一些吗？）
6. 你可以反映奥克兰，新西兰的图像给中国人是什么样的？你是否认为这是一个正确的印象？  
（为什么会这样呢？）
7. 有没有你喜欢的添加有关您的奥克兰的看法什么吗？

# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

4 February 2014

**Project Title**

Why study in Auckland? The perceptions of mainland Chinese international students towards Auckland, New Zealand

**An Invitation**

My name is Zhong Xueling, Alice, and I am a Master of International Hospitality Management student at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). I am conducting a research project for my Masters degree. This research explores how Chinese students perceive New Zealand before and after their arrival in Auckland. I will be conducting interviews in order to collect the thoughts, experiences and feelings of people. By doing so, I am searching for potential participants to participate in this interview. This participation is voluntarily and you may choose to withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection. Interviews can be conducted in English or Mandarin Chinese.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to explore the perceptions of Chinese international students towards Auckland, New Zealand and whether destination image portrayed by New Zealand is one of the reasons why Chinese students chose Auckland to complete their education.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified either by your friends or the AUT Chinese Committee and I would like to invite you to participate and be part in this research if you meet the following requirements:

1. It is your first time in New Zealand.
2. You are currently living in New Zealand, but you have lived here for less than a year.
3. You are an international student from China.
4. You are not a Permanent Resident of New Zealand.

You are being invited to participate because you have met all the above criteria. This research will like to explore the perception of Chinese international students towards Auckland, and with your participation, you will be able to provide me with all the necessary information to achieve the aim of this research. You will be asked to sign the Consent Form once you have understood the process of your participation. After signing the Consent Form, an arrangement will be made for an interview which will take place at AUT City Campus, either in Post-graduate meeting room or AUT School library study room.

**What will happen in this research?**

You are involved in this research as an information sharer. A one-to-one interview will occur, and you will be asked a number of questions about your pre-arrival and post-arrival perceptions towards

Auckland, New Zealand. This interview will take about 30-45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. The interview will take place in either the Post-graduate meeting room or AUT library study room. A consent form is provided and needs to be signed by you to prove your understanding of this research. You are entitled to a \$20 Countdown voucher as a token for your time to participate in this research.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

It is not anticipated that there will be discomforts and risks faced by you; however if you find that questions are sensitive, you may choose not to answer or withdraw from the research. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

If you really feel any discomfort or perceive any risk during the interview, you may choose to withdraw from this interview and research. Any information provided by you will then be destroyed once you have chosen to withdraw.

**What are the benefits?**

As an information sharer, you play an important role by sharing your thoughts and experiences of Auckland. Understanding these factors will allow New Zealand's educational sector to better portray the correct image to Chinese international students. This may benefit you and also future Chinese international students.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Pseudonyms will be given to you in this research. All information provided during the interview will not be shared with anyone else, and all information is confidential and will only be used for this research. Your privacy will be the first priority.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost you will have to give is your **time**. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will have one week to consider this invitation.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Please note that your participation in this research is voluntary. You may participate in this research by emailing me via [alicezxl@gmail.com](mailto:alicezxl@gmail.com). Before the actual interview, you will be given a consent form to sign; this consent form will act as an agreement of participation, and the interview will be audio recorded.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Research findings will be included in the Master's dissertation and will be available through the AUT library. A summary of the data collected will be sent to you via email.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Heike Schänzel, [hschanze@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hschanze@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6923.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Zhong Xueling, Alice, [alicezxl@gmail.com](mailto:alicezxl@gmail.com)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Dr. Heike Annette Schänzel, [hschanze@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hschanze@aut.ac.nz)

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *type the reference number*.

# 参与者信息表



日期信息表制作:

2013 年 11 月 19 日

标题:

为何在奥克兰留学? 中国大陆留学生对新西兰奥克兰的看法。

邀请函

我叫钟雪玲, Alice。我是奥克兰理工大学国际酒店管理专业的硕士生。我现在正在做一项有关毕业论文的调研。本次调研将探讨中国学生在奥克兰留学前后对新西兰的看法。我会对大家想法、经历和感受进行采访。面试可以用英语或普通话进行。

调研目标:

本次调研目标是探讨中国留学生对新西兰奥克兰的看法, 以及探讨新西兰塑造的旅游目的地形象是否是中国学生选择在奥克兰留学的原因之一。

我是如何被确定的, 为什么我被邀请参加这项研究?

您确定是由你的朋友介绍, 或您是在 AUT 中国委员会, 我想邀请你参加并参与这项研究, 如果你满足以下要求:

1. 这是你第一次在新西兰。
2. 您现居住在新西兰; 居住时间低于 1 年
3. 您是一个来自中国的国际学生。
4. 您不是来自中国的新西兰永久居民。

您被邀请参加是因为您已经满足以上所有标准。这项研究将想探索中国的国际学生对奥克兰的感知, 并与您的参与, 您将能够为我提供所有必要的信息至实现本研究的目的。一旦你了解你的参与过程, 您会被要求签署同意书。在签署同意书后, 安排将面试将发生在奥城校区进行, 是在研究生的会议室或 AUT 学校图书馆自习室进行。

### **将在本研究中发生什么呢？**

您参与这项研究作为信息分享者。将出现一个一比一的采访，您会被问了一些关于他们抵达前和到达的看法对新西兰的奥克兰后的问题。这次采访将需要大约 30-45 分钟，将音频录制。一份同意书提供，需要由您签署证明这个研究的理解。您有权\$ 20 Countdown 优惠券，作为自己的时间来参加本次研究的酬谢。

### **什么不适和风险？**

没有预料到会出现不适和所面临的风险你，但如果您发现问题是敏感的，您可以选择不回答，或从研究撤出。您在这个研究参与是自愿。

### **如何将这些不适和风险得到缓解？**

如果您真的觉得在接受采访时的不适或任何风险，您可以选择从这次采访和研究撤出。一旦您选择退出，您所提供的每一个信息将被销毁。

### **有什么好处？**

作为一个信息共享者，您可以通过共享奥克兰他们的想法和经验发挥了重要作用。了解这些因素能让新西兰更好地描绘正确的图像给中国留学生。这对您和中国未来的国际学生有利。

### **如何将我的隐私受到保护？**

在本研究化名名称将给予您。在面试过程中提供的所有信息不会与任何人共享，而所有的信息都是保密的，只能用于这项研究。您的隐私将成为首要任务。

### **参与这项研究的成本是多少？**

您的唯一成本是您的时间。面试需时约 30-45 分钟。

### **我有什么机会去考虑这个邀请吗？**

您将有一周的时间考虑这个邀请。

### **我怎么同意参与这项研究？**

请注意，您参加本研究是自愿。您可以透过 [alicezxl@gmail.com](mailto:alicezxl@gmail.com) 发送电子邮件给我参与这项研究。实际面试前，你将获得一份同意书签署;本同意书将作为参与的协议，采访将会被录音。

### **调查结果反馈：**

调研结果将出现在硕士学位毕业论文中，您可以在奥克兰理工大学图书馆查阅到。如果需要，只可通过邮件将收集的数据发给参与者。

如果我对这项研究有些关注，我该怎么办？

任何有关本项目的性质问题应在第一时间通知到项目主管，Heike Schänzel 博士，[hschanze@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hschanze@aut.ac.nz)，9219999 分机 6923。



有关研究的行为问题应通知 AUTECH 的执行秘书，Kate O'Connor，ethics@aut.ac.nz，9219999 转 6038。

我该向谁联系有关这项研究的详细信息？

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Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTECH Reference number *type the reference number*.