

**South East Asian Female Doctoral Students’
Sojourning Experience in New Zealand:
A Process of Gaining by Losing**

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Abstract

International doctoral students make immense contributions to their host country's universities. They bring with them economic benefits, boost universities' ranking via research, create cultural diversity, and to a certain extent, strengthen diplomatic ties between countries. Given that doctoral study takes considerable years to complete, an understanding of their everyday living overseas is essential to the stakeholders. Everyday living, which represents daily occupations such as cooking, shopping, childminding and commuting, is an integral part of international doctoral students' experience and an under-researched area. This occupational science-based study employed Straussian grounded theory methodology to fill in the existing knowledge gap and address the following research question: How do international female doctoral students from South East Asia manage everyday living in New Zealand? Data collection using in-depth interviews and participant observation methods was undertaken with 23 South East Asian international female participants who lived, or had lived, in one of the metropolitan cities in North Island, New Zealand, while undertaking their doctoral degree. The use of constant comparison, theoretical sampling, memoing, and theoretical sensitivity—as the core elements of grounded theory—and going through an iterative process of data collection and analysis led to the generation of a substantive theory of Gaining by Losing. The substantive theory encompasses three categories, each with two subcategories: Choosing to be Student Sojourners comprised Exploring Opportunities and Making Sacrifices; Meeting Challenges subsumed Encountering Difficulties and Making Adjustments, and Returning Transformed included Living With The Choice and Experiencing Changes. Findings from the study signified that temporary relocation to a new country and living in an expensive urban area elicited occupational and lifestyle changes. To sustain their living, participants adopted a minimal lifestyle and enacted two important strategies—pulling in and pulling back, which resulted in negative and positive consequences. The findings of this study enhance knowledge concerning this area of research and provide information for universities to better accommodate the needs of this specific group of student sojourners. Supporting students to have rewarding educational experiences in New Zealand is a governmental aspiration and a sustainability initiative for universities to stay competitive. Therefore, it is recommended that future research be conducted to examine further and evaluate the resources, assistance, and support provided to international female doctoral students in terms of managing their everyday living to ensure their gains far outweigh their losses.

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I am grateful for this opportunity to complete a doctorate, although it took me some time to find my way back into the academic world. Being a South East Asian woman, I am honoured to be doing a study that contributes to the understanding of how female student sojourners who originated from the similar region managed their everyday lives while in New Zealand. It has always been my intention to bring into view the everyday living aspects which are often overshadowed by the academic matters. My enormous thanks to my primary supervisor who has opened the door of opportunity for me to conduct this study in the field of occupational science.

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*To all the females who step beyond the comfort zone to strive for success,
the courage in doing so is the greatest achievement.*

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Abbreviations and Glossary

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	AUT Ethics Committee
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
GT	Grounded Theory
MESDs	Major English-Speaking Destinations
MOHO	Model of Human Occupation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBSA	Purpose-Built Student Accommodation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SEA	South East Asia(n)
SGT	Straussian Grounded Theory
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UN SDGs	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
WHO	World Health Organization
<i>Halal</i>	In reference to food, <i>halal</i> refers to dietary standard that complies with the law prescribed in the <i>Al Quran</i> (Muslim scripture)
<i>Koha</i>	A Māori word for a gift or token
<i>Opor</i>	An Indonesian dish of chicken cooked in coconut milk
<i>Ringgit</i>	Malaysian currency

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.

Student name: Faridah Che Arr

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Date: 30 October 2020

Prologue

Studying in higher education is often challenging for a woman, let alone studying for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in a foreign land away from the comfort of one's home. For me, this study has been a life's dream waiting to come true. I have longed to expand my knowledge in view of completing my tertiary education. I also strongly believe that learning is a continuing process; my life-long endeavour. Despite numerous attempts to start my PhD, I kept stumbling as I met with life's challenges. When I was younger and eager to pursue my studies, a life's trial came to me unexpectedly as my child who was announced healthy on her arrival day was later diagnosed with heart illness. Hospital became my second home and the need to care for a baby with heart defects forced me to leave my job.

I had just completed my master's degree in 2005 when my husband broke the news that our family was relocating abroad as he was offered an opportunity to pursue his PhD study in New Zealand. I was enthusiastic about finally experiencing the wonderful stories of New Zealand's people, sheep, kiwi, and more which had been described to me by friends and family members. It was like a door of opportunity for me to gain new experiences abroad and get on with my PhD study. Unexpectedly, the door did not immediately open itself to me. In fact, it remained tightly shut for years. My husband's PhD did not begin well due to a change in supervision and the closing down of his faculty department. Perseverance, persistence, luck, and prayers pushed us through the hurdles and, after years of anxiety and uncertainty, his PhD became a humble family achievement.

The roller coaster journey of a PhD study while in a faraway land has therefore made me wonder what it is like for a woman to be in the same boat as my husband. A new living environment, changing routine in their daily lives, and issues back home were just some of the challenges that have impacted those who have gone through a similar journey. Their stories of success and survival are invaluable as they offer insights to the experiences of PhD women living abroad and how they managed their daily occupations as female doctoral students from South East Asia.

Chapter One

Introduction

It is beyond a doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience.

—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

Background of the Study

This thesis explores how 23 international female students from South East Asia (SEA) undertaking doctoral studies in New Zealand managed everyday living. In this study, the term everyday living represents the activities (also known as occupations) that female doctoral students performed on a daily basis. These activities include cooking, shopping, and commuting. The term everyday living is interchangeably used with other terms such as everyday occupations, everyday lives, everyday activities, daily living, daily chores, daily tasks, and daily doings; and reflects an occupational science perspective.

The context of the participants' daily doings was influenced by international education trends. International students increasingly cross borders to study and live away from their home countries. Across the world, the internationally mobile student population reportedly increased from around 2.1 million in 2000 to 5.3 million in 2017 and is forecast by International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) to reach 8 million by 2025 (ICEF, 2019; Research New Zealand, 2018). The United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Canada are four major English-speaking destinations (MESDs) for international students; whereas New Zealand has only recently emerged as a new host country for a growing number of international students (Industry Insight, 2018).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2018) identified international students as “those who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study” (p. 225). International students in New Zealand are defined as those who are not a New Zealand and/or Australian citizen residing in New Zealand, New Zealand permanent resident, or a holder of a residence class visa (Universities New Zealand, 2019).

As international doctoral students, they are generally described as students who live in another country outside their native country for the duration of time it takes them to complete and gain their overseas credentials (Moore & Popadiuk, 2011). The length of their stay varies but for postgraduate studies it can take four years, sometimes more, particularly for a doctoral study. In New Zealand, Asian students comprise the majority of the international students (Martens & Starke, 2008). They are mainly from China (32.0%) and India (16.0%), followed by other parts of Asia including South East Asia (Education New Zealand, 2018a).

South East Asian International Students in New Zealand

South East Asia consists of 11 countries which include Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, East Timor, and Indonesia. Many of these countries have strong bilateral ties with New Zealand and students from this region form a portion of Asian international students studying in the country (McMillan, 2016). Compared to other Asians, South East Asian (SEA) international students belong to the minority group who come from diverse backgrounds, religions, and cultures (Ramia et al., 2013).

The arrival of South East Asian international students in New Zealand dates back to the 1950s when New Zealand first hosted scholars from the region under the Colombo Plan (Tarling, 2004). The Colombo Plan was a sponsored educational-aid programme by the New Zealand government that enabled students from countries like Malaysia (formerly Malaya), Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar (formerly Burma) to come and study in New Zealand (Collins, 2012). The aid programme policy ended in 1975 when New Zealand changed the aid into trade by becoming an education exporter and increasingly moving towards internationalisation (Bennett, 1998; Butcher, 2010).

Nowadays, international South East Asian students mostly study in New Zealand either by being funded by their own government or by being sponsored to study in New Zealand through several types of New Zealand government and university scholarships which, among others, include New Zealand Development Scholarships, New Zealand ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Scholar Awards, and New Zealand International Doctoral Scholarships. Besides these two avenues, some come as private, self-funding international students or students on exchange programmes.

Context of the Study: New Zealand in Profile

New Zealand is a region situated in the south-western Pacific Ocean and comprises two main islands: the North Island and the South Island. At present, the population in New Zealand is estimated to be over 5 million (Satherley, 2020) and the population is projected to surpass 7 million by the end of 2068 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). The official languages are English, Māori, and New Zealand Sign Language. English is widely utilised across the country and has attracted many international students who view New Zealand as one of the English-speaking countries that offer world-class education (McPherson, 2016; Tapaleao, 2012). With eight main publicly-funded universities located in Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, and Dunedin, as well as numerous polytechnics offering vocational and technical education, there are many options available for international students at tertiary level.

At present, international students pursuing a doctoral programme in New Zealand are typically offered a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) package containing the following benefits:

- pay similar fees as domestic students
- can work full-time
- are eligible for a three-year post-study work visa after graduating
- partners are entitled to an open work visa
- children can be enrolled as domestic students in state schools (Education New Zealand, 2016)

Furthermore, health in New Zealand is generally commendable with public health users being able to access low cost or free medical services; and everyone in New Zealand is eligible for free accident cover (Bassett, 1993). However, non-accident related services are generally reserved for domestic students whereas international students (e.g., self-funded) and foreigners may be charged for health services if they are not covered by health insurance. These incentives make New Zealand an attractive option for overseas PhD study (Education New Zealand, 2019a). Recently, an OECD (2019a) education report for New Zealand indicated that almost half of New Zealand's doctoral candidates were international students.

Although New Zealand is an international student destination (Universities New Zealand, 2019), it is also associated with costly daily living expenses and is regarded as being among one of the most expensive Western countries (Thornber, 2019). The costly daily living expenses are indicated in the prices of food, transport fares, and fuel or petrol costs (Consumer, 2019; Taunton, 2020). The high cost of food, maintenance of personal transport, and petrol price is what makes New Zealand an expensive country. However, these factors are compensated with facilities such as relatively efficient public transport.

Another indicator of the country's high living expense is housing. Housing has remained a major problem in New Zealand because the number of houses available to live in has not kept pace with rising demand, particularly with the influx of immigrants (Davidson, 2020; Larson, 2020). Efforts to increase affordable housing are currently being made through projects such as Kiwi Build and Urban Growth Development; yet these initiatives have made little impact on the current housing crisis (OECD, 2019b). In relation to this situation, rental homes have become expensive, particularly in high-density areas (Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Iles, 2018; Jennings, 2019; Suckling, 2015; Walters, 2020). This housing issue indicates that accommodation for international students in New Zealand is difficult to secure.

Research Focus – Area of Interest

This research focusses on people's everyday living; in particular, the everyday living of South East Asian female doctoral students. As previously mentioned, everyday living is interchangeably used with other terms such as everyday lives and daily activities. Managing everyday living constitutes managing the customary tasks that make up daily life, including everyday common, familiar practices and mundane routines such as studying, cooking, managing finances and budgeting, doing grocery shopping, sending children to childcare, and catching a bus. As indicated earlier, international female doctoral students' lives are not solely about handling academic responsibilities but entail managing other non-academic matters such as the everyday living demands that are certainly an important aspect of their everyday lives.

Moving home temporarily to take up a PhD study causes the female doctoral student to face changes in their daily living activities. Their everyday activities, once considered ordinary and possible, do not seem to be the same anymore. Even a simple everyday task like cooking can become a more complex proposition. They are unable to visit the

stores usually frequented back home to do their grocery shopping or get the ingredients they need because they are not sold in New Zealand.

These doctoral students may suddenly find themselves in a situation where they do not have the convenience, normalcy, regularity, and familiarity they used to have. They may also find their previous everyday activities, routines, and practices do not work out as before. They may have to perform them differently or give up doing them altogether. There is also a possibility of having to conduct activities which are not previously or routinely done by themselves.

With the different everyday occurrences taking place, new ways of doing things will have to be established. The changes need to be tackled; otherwise, they would cause chaos and hardship that are detrimental to their health and well-being. Naturally, they will want to bring back some stability for themselves and ensure a comfortable standard of everyday living for their family members that may have also come along. For this purpose, they need to have strategies. Moreover, for many South East Asian females, cultural and societal expectations often have an influence on their daily lives. For instance, women in Asian families play a major role in looking after the family, raising children and carrying out varieties of house chores. They are expected to perform these duties on top of their role as a doctoral student.

Living in New Zealand, these women will also experience differences in cultural and societal systems. Asian women are usually subjected to particular customs and conduct in their own country. They are expected to behave in certain ways, and their life may be governed by the family's influence. Going from a less-liberal to a more liberal society in New Zealand, where women do things and act differently from the norms the Asian women are used to, brings new experiences and exposures for them. They have to learn to make their way in the existing society and adjust how they present themselves and perform their tasks.

These are among the expectations and responsibilities that they have to fulfil and balance. Managing daily living for female doctoral students from South East Asia, therefore, refers to how they see, define, interpret and also respond to their everyday interactions and situations. The focus of this study is on the strategies that South East Asian female doctoral students execute to deal with the exigencies of managing their daily living, while simultaneously looking after themselves and caring for their family, in pursuit of achieving their academic goal.

To gain insights into these issues, this study adopted a grounded theory methodology as outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015). In this study, I refer to this version of grounded theory as Straussian Grounded Theory (SGT). Grounded theory was chosen because the methodology fits well with the research question: **How do international South East Asian female doctoral students manage everyday living in New Zealand?** Grounded theory has as its purpose to seek out the underlying social processes shaping the interaction and behaviour of people, and to explain how they respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions.

This methodology is thus aptly suitable for explaining the process of managing everyday living among South East Asian female doctoral students. The theory generated from the study offers explanations as to causes, conditions, contexts, and consequences of the processes occurring in the daily living of the 23 international female doctoral students who participated in this study. It helps to explicate how this particular group of students interpreted and interacted with the different challenges they encountered in their everyday living and the reasons behind their actions (Strauss, 1987).

Rationale and Significance of the Study

International education has become one of New Zealand's lucrative export industries. It was estimated to be worth NZ\$5.1 billion in 2018, making it one of the top four export income-earning ventures for the country (Hipkins, 2018; ICEF 2018). New Zealand is seeing a growing population of international students enrolling at its tertiary institutions. Between 1999 and 2018, the number of international students at New Zealand universities increased from 11,740 to 60,810 (Edmunds, 2020). In 2017, 125,392 international students were reportedly studying in the country, including 4,807 PhD students (Education New Zealand, 2018b; Universities New Zealand, 2017). New Zealand aims to increase this number and is targeting 20,000 postgraduate students at Masters and PhD levels in the near future (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Given that international education is a major contributor to the country's economy, New Zealand has a duty to ensure the welfare, safety, and well-being of international students. To cater for these requirements, the New Zealand government has introduced an Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice and is the first country to implement it (Education New Zealand, 2017). The code of practice contains guidelines for education institution providers with international students (New Zealand Legislation, 2016) and supports the Government to take suitable steps that protect and

enhance New Zealand's reputation as an international higher education host country. The goal is to ensure that international students have stress-free and positive experiences that support their educational achievement (New Zealand Immigration, 2018).

Pastoral care is provided for both international students who are 18 years old and younger, as well as older students in higher learning institutions (New Zealand Immigration, 2019; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016). International doctoral students (often accompanied by family) mostly rely on the university's support through the international students' office and their own efforts to meet their living needs such as dealing with immigration, opening a bank account, budgeting, or finding accommodation. Such everyday living activities are central to international students' lives and support their health and well-being, in addition to their capacity to successfully attain their educational goals.

However, when South East Asian female doctoral students move to New Zealand to take up their study, they leave their own home, known environment, stable routine, as well as familiar social supports to enter a foreign city in a foreign culture. The disruptions to their everyday living pose a challenge for them; yet, knowledge about the process and strategies international students employ to manage their living is very much lacking, thus requiring an in-depth investigation (McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

Further complicating this lack of knowledge, international students are often clustered together in research studies, making it difficult to comprehend what is going on in the daily lives of particular groups of international students, based on their academic pursuits, ethnicity, and gender background (Njeru, 2006). Leonard (1997) pointed out that there are relatively few studies about women and higher education, and even fewer studies on international female doctoral students.

Being an under-represented group of research participants may deprive them of receiving the support, assistance, and services that they need. The dearth of knowledge and empirical data regarding international female doctoral students has prompted this research study, which is an enabler and a platform for female international doctoral students to describe how they experience and manage their everyday living as student sojourners. In doing so, this study accentuates the dimension of their lives which is beyond the academic realm.

The arrival of international students is generally welcomed by universities because they are a source of revenue and contribute to the diversity of student populations (McPherson, 2016). Many universities recognise the importance of including international students into the diversity of their student population but may not sufficiently understand their daily living in the host country. Addressing this lack of understanding is vital because universities can be more aware of and solve the plights faced by part of their international student population. Noting that doctoral students are in the smaller category of student population compared to undergraduates, this study is even more essential for unearthing the everyday living of international doctoral students and ensuring their voice is heard.

This study is timely and justified to investigate the impact living abroad has on female doctoral students' strategies for managing their daily lives while in a different country. The strategies they use to overcome their day-to-day challenges are important to understand if their academic and personal or family well-being is to be maintained. How they cope with their living abroad and what strategies they apply to ensure their well-being is invaluable information for higher learning institutions receiving greater numbers of international students and working towards meeting their needs.

Personal Background to the Study

I started this chapter with a prologue that gives some insights as to my motivation to undertake this study. The impetus stems from my personal experience of coming to New Zealand in 2006 as the wife of a doctoral student and mother to a young child. I was interested in understanding how everyday living forms a large part of doctoral students' PhD journey, yet has gone unnoticed and is almost invisible. Even though international students doing higher education widely exists in many learning institutions and countries, I realised less is known about their everyday living experiences. My early exploration of this matter confirmed that very little attention had been given to this aspect of living abroad, as evidenced by the lack of literature in this area.

Relocating to a new country, even on a temporary basis, often causes the ordinary daily living activities for many international doctoral students to change and, at times, become more challenging than usual. The difficulties and challenges are real with consequences for health and well-being. For this reason, I was curious and eager to research how their everyday living is being managed when there are other responsibilities and expectations to juggle. Previously, I had a professional career as an educator for adult learners in university, which drives my interest. Moreover, being a

female who originated from the same region, it became my deep enthusiasm to bring out the concealed part of the PhD journey by exploring what goes on in the everyday living of international female doctoral students from South East Asia while in New Zealand.

Since I aimed to gather an in-depth knowledge in the researched area, I opted to conduct this study using a qualitative approach. The nature of qualitative research appealed to me as I was keen to investigate the meaning people attach to their lives and actions beyond the use of questionnaires or a controlled experimental setting.

Theoretical Foundation of the Study

Symbolic interactionism constitutes the theoretical foundation of this study and is strongly linked to SGT, which focusses on social interaction and social processes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss, 1987). Symbolic interactionism is a social theoretical perspective that studies human behaviour and social roles. It examines how humans cope with situations and take actions based on how they define their situations through social interactions that they experience in their natural everyday setting (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism assumes that symbolic meanings influence the effect of stimuli upon human behaviour. These meanings are constructed from societal interactions, whereby human behaviour is an active process of making sense of one's social and physical surroundings. This making sense process can be considered a form of problem-solving and is an example of inter-individual interaction (Meltzer et al., 2015).

As part of this process, people strive to align their actions with those of others (Blumer, 1969), by considering each other's acts, interpreting them, and reorganising their own behaviour. Symbolic interactionism has a strong focus on the relationships between individuals and the world around them, creating the meaning that individuals associate with their activities and those of other people located within their environments over time (Flick, 2018a).

This study intends to bring forward the words and actions of the international SEA female doctoral students whose lives are complex, with multiple roles and perspectives. The idea is to explain what goes on in their everyday living rather than accepting what should be going on in it (McCallin, 2003). Ultimately, the participants'

experiences are best known by their own narration and explanation of what occurs in their daily lives.

Lastly, this study incorporates an occupational perspective, which is “a way of looking at or thinking about human doing” (Njelesani et al., 2014, p.233). This perspective emphasises that there is a mutual relationship between a person’s environment and occupation (Yerxa et al., 1990). Given this notion, the current study attempts to explore the causes of actions, the consequences of actions, and patterns of action and interaction between and among actors (Charon, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The interest is particularly on the pattern of action-interaction strategies of the study participants to the phenomenon of living in a foreign country while studying for a PhD.

Aim and Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research study is to develop a theoretical understanding that explains how South East Asian female doctoral students manage their everyday living while sojourning in New Zealand. The study focusses on the non-academic part of the lives of international students, which is missing or has been scarcely explored in previous research studies. Based on the literature I reviewed, I found that previous studies on international students, including doctoral students, primarily covered academic, psychological, and intercultural aspects but not the everyday occupations such as cooking, shopping, and socialising. This area of study had not been the central concern for many of the previous studies, nor had it been explored beyond the surface level. Hence, my study addressed this gap and has the following purposes:

- to provide a platform for hearing the voices of female international doctoral students from South East Asia with the intent of guiding future sojourners who plan to undertake a PhD study in New Zealand;
- to offer another dimension to limited existing local studies (Kim, 2014; Nayar, 2009) on how different categories of people (apart from immigrants) are managing their living in a new country;
- to contribute substantial knowledge explaining international postgraduate students’ actual everyday living to postgraduate administrators, international student advisors, PhD supervisors, university alumni, and other related organisations and individuals interested in and working with international PhD sojourners, so that they are better informed and equipped to assist international postgraduate students who are living temporarily and studying in New Zealand.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter One has introduced the background of the study, providing an overview of South East Asian international students coming to New Zealand, and presented the context of the study. Included in this chapter is the rationale and significance of the study as well as my personal background and motivation for undertaking this study. This chapter clarifies the research focus, states the research questions, and highlights the aims and purpose of the research study.

In Chapter Two, the literature search strategy is presented, and the literature informing this study is reviewed. Chapter Three presents the research design of the study, which incorporates the methodology of grounded theory. This is followed by Chapter Four which describes the application of the core elements of grounded theory methods and explains the manner in which the research was conducted.

Chapters Five to Seven comprise the empirical findings of the study, which are discussed with supporting data. Chapter Five provides an overview of the core category, **Gaining by Losing**. Also, in the chapter, the category **Choosing to be Student Sojourners** with two subcategories is illustrated. Chapter Six presents the category of **Meeting Challenges** with another two subcategories. Chapter Seven focusses on the category of **Returning Transformed**, accompanied by two categories and subcategories.

Chapter Eight is the final chapter. It summarises the theory, and the significant findings generated in the study are critiqued through literature. Subsequently, this chapter discusses the implications of the study, its limitations and strengths, as well as recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with some personal reflections regarding the research project.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

A good literature review does not include all of the author's research. It is selective, only presenting in discussion work that is relevant to the research itself. (Hart, 2018, p. 34)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the position of a literature review in grounded theory and the approach to literature taken in the study. In this chapter, I review past literature on relevant topics related to the subject area being researched, including national and international literature. This section intends to delineate the present knowledge about challenges faced by international students, particularly international female doctoral students. Included in this section is the search process for the literature accessed to inform the study.

The Position of Literature Review in Grounded Theory

In grounded theory, how and when researchers should begin reviewing existing literature is an on-going debate (Dunne, 2011). In Glaser and Strauss' (1967) original work, researchers were advised to abstain from engaging with the literature before data collection and analysis. The rationale underpinning this stance was that conducting a literature review beforehand could cause assumptions and invoke preconceptions from the researchers.

Accordingly, Glaser (1992) maintained that researchers should venture into their field of study with a blank slate without any literature background, and to delay literature review until the emergence of theoretical concepts. Glaser's stance on being utterly free of knowledge when entering their field of study received strong criticisms (Goulding, 2002). Grounded theory researchers critiquing Glaser's view agreed with the idea that the researchers' wealth of knowledge, gained from their life experience or profession, and reviewing the literature is useful in enhancing data, provided that the knowledge guides the research instead of imposing concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Morgan, 2020).

Strauss, in his later works with Corbin, adopted a different stance about conducting the literature review (Ramalho et al., 2015). Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and later, Corbin and Strauss (2008, 2015) acknowledged that researchers naturally brought in

their life experiences and professional background to the research they were conducting. As such, this knowledge improved theoretical sensitivity and stimulated research questions that provided a focus for theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz et al., 2018).

Next, Corbin and Strauss (2015) proposed that researchers review part of the existing literature within the relevant study field at the beginning of the study. The reason a thorough literature review at this early stage is not recommended is that the literature is continuously updated to reflect findings obtained during the generation of theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Urquhart & Fernández, 2013). This advice is relevant for inexperienced rather than experienced grounded theory researchers who are more sensitive to recurring concepts within their field of study. As a precaution from forcing concepts onto data, rather than ensuring that the concepts emerge from their research, some techniques are suggested. These techniques include practising reflexivity and participating in a presupposition interview so that researchers can acknowledge biases and avoid tainting data analysis with prior knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Giles et al., 2013; McGhee et al., 2007).

Irrespective of this theoretical debate, a literature review is a requirement in the confirmation of candidature research proposal as stipulated by the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) postgraduate department and its ethics committee. Fulfilling this requirement and taking Corbin and Strauss's (2015) methodological approach, I conducted a preliminary review of the literature before data collection to establish the gap in the existing knowledge base. In addition, I reviewed some literature as preliminary findings emerged from initial data collection to guide further data gathering. In Chapter Eight, the overall research findings in the literature were revisited following theory construction to contextualise the empirical findings around relevant literature connected to the substantive theory.

Literature Search Method

The relevant literature at the beginning of this study was searched using AUT's electronic databases such as Scopus, Eric, Emerald, EbscoHost, and ProQuest, along with Google Scholar. Searches for peer-reviewed journal articles were confined to articles in English and were extensively conducted by different periods (e.g., 1990-1999, 2000-2020). Many search terms or keywords were considered, such as "international students," "doctoral students," "female students," "challenges and coping strategies," "everyday living," and "health and well-being"; all in various combinations.

The reference lists in journal articles, books (including book chapters), and theses were hand searched for affiliated literature. Several relevant reports and newspaper articles were also gathered through general online search engines such as Google.

In reviewing past literature, I discovered that there was a paucity of studies directly concerned with the occupational lives of international students who lived temporarily abroad. However, insights could be gleaned about aspects of their experience, including studying overseas and the challenges female doctoral students face. These perspectives are presented in the first part of the chapter, followed by an overview of occupational science and the specific ideas drawn from that body of knowledge relating to the relationship of the things people do to their sense of being, belonging, and becoming; and how human occupation influences health.

Studying Overseas

Annually, more than 4.5 million international students study overseas (GoinGlobal, 2018). Accordingly, studying overseas is a growing trend influenced by both push and pull factors (Eder et al., 2010). The terms *push* and *pull* factors are widely cited within immigration studies to indicate the driving factors of immigration (Gilmartin, 2008; Lindsay et al., 2019; Lynn & Lee, 2013; Parkins, 2010; Schumann et al., 2019; Van Hear et al., 2018; Walton-Roberts, 2015). Economy, culture, environment, and politics are among the main push and pull factors that induced people to immigrate permanently (Kontuly et al., 1995).

Push factors are conditions related to the person's country of origin that press people to leave their homes. Some examples of push factors are the scarcity of jobs, and grave conditions like famine, drought, war, and political fear. The opposite side of push are pull factors which are determinants belonging to the host country for attracting people to emigrate. A few examples include job opportunities, better lifestyle, political and religious freedom, optimum healthcare, and security (Krishnakumar & Indumathi, 2014).

Tying in the idea of studying overseas, push factors occur within the source country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) and are often recognised as limitations within the country, which influence the decision to undertake higher education abroad. Conversely, pull factors refer to factors in the host country that entice international students to study abroad and, possibly, motivate them to work or continue studying and living in the host

country (Kim et al., 2011). This combination of push-pull factors consistently steered the global pattern of international students studying overseas.

Research indicates that economic, social, and academic factors in the home country are among the push factors that initiate a student's choice to study overseas (Eder et al., 2010; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Nafari et al., 2017). Firstly, based on the economic motive, studying overseas is associated with the desire to raise the graduate's future income, contribute to the economic development of their home country, and attain a higher social status. Higher education outside of the home country also provides international students with unique opportunities, such as discovering new fields of knowledge, which creates an optimistic view of education (Moreira & Gomes, 2019). Secondly, an added value to studying overseas includes social reasons like travelling, going on adventures, and establishing new friendships (Chen, 2017; Parkins, 2010). Thirdly, the lack of access to facilities that could benefit a particular field of study at local universities in the home country typically prompt undergraduates to seek studies overseas (Diaz & Krauss, 1996).

Similarly, aspiring postgraduate students are pushed to study abroad by academic factors in their home countries such as lack of support for academics, expertise, or even non-availability of doctoral programmes at higher institutions. In some Asian countries, the push factors are also attributed to individuals' lack of access to a higher level of education or academic experts to supervise them (Johnson, 2020; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Pull factors are the opposite of push factors as they are what can be achieved from or offered by the host country. For the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), aspects like the university's ranking and reputation form pull factors for international students to study in these countries (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012; Soutar & Turner, 2002). Added to this merit, is the belief of faring better with a recognised overseas qualification, which is often an attractive feature of a host country (Barnett et al., 2016). With competition from countries that value international students forecast to increase (Shanka et al., 2006), universities are competing to attract students by cementing themselves as the leaders in advancing knowledge and international university rankings (Musselin, 2018). Newly emerging education providers in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia, which used to send

students overseas, are also recruiting international students to study in these countries (Ahmad et al., 2016; Chadee & Naidoo, 2009; Wei, 2013).

While academic considerations remain a priority for the decision to study overseas, it is no longer the sole attraction. Other attractions include better learning packages or lower education fees, opportunities to be internationally employed, and the possibility of permanent migration (Morrish & Lee, 2011; Page, 2018; Sison & Brennan, 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2010). The attractiveness of a country in terms of its scenery or tourism-and-adventure related learning programmes are also among the pull factors for international students to seek higher education abroad (Glover, 2011; Michael et al., 2003).

International students also take into consideration core matters such as safety and favourable immigration policies that are supportive and international-student friendly (Morrish & Lee, 2011). For example, a recent American study by Van Horne et al. (2018) discovered a number of international students reporting a low level of social satisfaction due to feeling unwelcomed. Problems such as safety, visa approval, and an unwelcoming attitude in the USA after the 9/11 attack pushed away international students from the country, which used to be a primary choice for study destination (Ejiofo, 2010).

Having examined the push-pull factors related to studying overseas, the next section will focus on the challenges faced by students abroad.

Challenges of Studying Overseas Among International Students

Numerous studies of international students have reported a similar outcome in that students were frequently found to experience a variety of challenges while studying overseas (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Gebhard, 2012; Hunley, 2010; Khanal & Gaulee, 2019; Sherry et al., 2010). Although domestic students might also experience similar difficulties, comparative studies between the two groups of students revealed the effects of the adversities were significantly more profound for the international students (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Henning et al., 2012; Ramsay et al., 1999). For instance, upon entering university, both local and international students had to find their way in their new educational or living environment. Still, many international students had additional challenges due to being in a new country.

Factors causing challenges among students studying overseas are well documented. Past studies, which have been predominantly quantitative (Brown, 1998; Marginson et al., 2010; Misra et al., 2003; Oei & Notowidjojo, 1990; Ryan & Twibell, 2000; Wilson, 1996), have identified new environment, language, social relationship, and cultural differences as multiple challenges that affect international students. Undoubtedly, academic adjustment to the new educational system and practical learning skills may be barriers for some international students to gain academic success (Li et al., 2002; Skyrme, 2007). However, English language proficiency is the primary challenge for non-English speaking students when they come to study in an English-speaking country (Andrade, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Lack of fluency in using the language can disadvantage them from establishing rapport with their domestic friends who might otherwise be their source of academic, social, and psychological support.

Studies in New Zealand report that half of the international students had difficulties making friends with the local students, despite their wish to do so (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Among these international students, 35% did not have any New Zealand friends, and one in four had no interactions with New Zealanders in social settings (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). In New Zealand, South East Asian students expressed regret over not having a strong connection with local, domestic students (Vaccarino & Dresler-Hawke, 2011). The students wished that they had more realistic opportunities to engage with the local New Zealanders during their sojourning journey (Butcher & McGrath, 2004).

While attending universities abroad, international students are inevitably exposed to a culture and society that very often operates differently from their home country (Zhou et al., 2008). Tensions arise from having to adapt to the unfamiliar cultural setting and new social norms and regulations in the country where they are studying (Benson, 2013; Presbitero, 2016; Ward et al., 2001). This lack of familiarity, awareness, and knowledge of the host country's culture, combined with the loss of one's own cultures, causes anxiety, stress, and confusion in international students (Furnham, 2010; Wang et al., 2015).

The collective impact of these unsettling experiences from contact with an unfamiliar and different culture has been described by scholars (Bochner, 2003; Winkelman, 1994) as culture shock. The on-going process of dealing with unfamiliarity and making various adjustments causes international students to suffer from culture fatigue. The international students are often left feeling exhausted from the attempts they make to cope and adapt to their unaccustomed surroundings. Upon returning home, international

students may likely find themselves facing a reverse culture shock (McGrath, 1998; Robinson-Pant, 2009; Young, 2014). Having adapted to their host's culture, the students discovered that their home culture was different from the time before studying abroad, thus necessitating them to re-adapt and re-adjust to their home culture (Adler, 1981). Gaw's (2000) study provided an additional interesting finding. Some studies showed that Asian international students returnees from Western countries commonly experienced reverse culture shock upon returning home. However, the author's study reported that Asian-Americans who lived or studied outside of the country also found re-entry a challenge, indicating that reverse culture shock is a universal phenomenon.

In addition to these shared challenges, the racial differences among international students created observable differences. For instance, Caucasian international students from Europe studying in the USA reported experiencing less acculturative stress and prejudice than non-Caucasian students during their studies (Yeh & Inose, 2003). This difference is seen in other studies within the USA which showed that students from the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Africa were the most discriminated ethnic groups in the country (Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). The flux of these challenges impacted on the international students' psychological adjustments and created feelings of loneliness, depression, alienation, and isolation among the international students (Li et al., 2014; Mori, 2000; Sawir et al., 2008, 2009; Tseng & Newton, 2002).

Challenges Affecting International Female Doctoral Students

While international female doctoral students undoubtedly experience many of these challenges encountered by international students, their challenges also vary from other categories of students. Firstly, doing a doctoral study has its own related obstacles to overcome. Unlike undergraduate or other postgraduate studies, a PhD is a mostly independent research study that takes a longer time to complete (Denholm & Denholm, 2012; Morton & Thornley, 2001). The nature of the PhD's rigorous academic work and duration, coupled with time and financial constraints, research difficulties, and supervision issues, can hinder progress, cause stress, and affect doctoral students' health and well-being (Gonzalez-Ocampo & Castello, 2019; Teschers, 2014).

The personal narrative of a Malaysian female doctoral student who studied at Victoria University of Wellington offers a brief insight into what it is like (for a South East Asian female student migrant) to relocate to New Zealand. In sharing her doctoral journey, Azizah (2014) accepted that starting a new life in New Zealand is a daunting

task. Immigration, weather, food, culture, religion, and language, to name a few, were among her challenges; and, being a female with a family, the route to obtaining a doctoral degree was not simple or merely an academic matter. Many female international students like Azizah come to New Zealand with dreams and expectations, along with fears and concerns (Butcher & McGrath, 2004). The health and well-being of international female doctoral students are not only affected by academic but also non-academic challenges.

Among the many challenges they experience, loneliness and social isolation are the most prominent for female doctoral students at different stages of their studies (Janta et al., 2014). Loneliness arises from the lack of communication with peers and faculty; whereas social isolation is the result of being in the unfamiliar and stressful environment of the doctoral programme (Lovitts, 2001). Turner and Thompson (1993) noted that women belonging to the minority group were more likely to experience a lack of professional socialisation compared to majority women who had more apprenticeship, mentorship, and support networks from their faculty department. International female doctoral students, who are mostly in the minority group, are thus predisposed to loneliness and social isolation, especially at the beginning of their studies abroad. Being in a new environment and away from home exposed them to feeling vulnerable (Sawir et al., 2008).

Moreover, language barriers and cultural issues may impel them to rely more on co-nationals instead of forming friendships and establishing networks with the host nationals and other international students (Brown, 2008, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008). Loneliness and isolation are shown to impact doctoral students' psychological health and well-being with effects on academic studies (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). They are, in fact, among the attrition factors that cause doctoral students to drop out of doctoral programmes (Ali & Kohun, 2006, 2007).

Past literature (Churchill & Sanders, 2007; Leonard, 2001; Moyer et al., 1999; Schmidt & Umans, 2014) revealed that while both female and male doctoral students might undergo similar trials in doing a PhD, the impacts were more significant on the former. For instance, compared to males, female international students have been shown to experience more stress, and because of that, Alloh et al. (2018) called for more support to be provided for them. Findings indicated that male doctoral students complete the doctoral degree at a slightly faster pace than women although, the discipline, for instance, science fields, could be the contributing factor behind earlier completion

(Mastekaasa, 2005). Recently, it was estimated that about 50% of international doctoral students in USA universities withdrew from their doctoral degree programme (Laufer & Gorup, 2019). The same attrition rate was also reported in earlier literature on students discontinuing their doctoral degrees in other countries (Carter et al., 2013; Lovitts, 2001; McAlpine & Norton, 2006). Failure to complete or succeed in the doctoral programme often has damaging financial, emotional, and social implications (Carter et al., 2013).

While numerous factors contributed to this unfavourable outcome, more critical in this context is that research has shown that women are more susceptible to leaving the university without their degrees (Lovitts, 2001). This susceptibility is more prominent in older doctoral women (e.g., 40 years old and above), who mostly already had a family of their own. They were shown to finish later and had a higher tendency to drop out compared to women starting a PhD at a younger age (e.g., 26 years old) (Groenvynck et al., 2013; Nerad & Cerny, 1999; Wright & Cochrane, 2000). Further, the profile of female doctoral students is increasingly non-traditional, including women aged 30-years-old above, married, and with dependents (Martinez et al., 2013; Offerman, 2011). They are often expected to assume multiple life roles outside of the academic world, such as being a daughter, mother, or spouse. They are also expected to put their family's needs before those of their study (Baker, 2012; Haynes et al., 2012; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017).

These additional roles suggest more complex occupational demands than for single women. Female doctoral students with family were found to take up additional roles to take care of household responsibilities such as shopping, looking after children, and generating money for extra expenses. Even though their husbands are supportive, while these women were studying, they might not share these tasks or have the skills to do so efficiently (Aitchison & Mowbray, 2013; Bireda, 2015). The dilemma of fulfilling their roles and expectations has also been reported in other studies (Brown & Watson, 2010; Brus, 2006; Wall, 2008), thus supporting the fact that female doctoral students have difficulties meeting the demands of the university and personal life.

Extending the occupational perspective, juggling academic pursuits with personal lives and responsibilities is a work-life balance struggle for many of the female graduates. There were repercussions on people connected to them, their well-being, and their academic endeavour. Female doctoral graduates may devote hours to their academic work, and those who over-extend, with a workaholic attitude, create an imbalance in their lives. While they focus on their studies, the family may be neglected (Brown &

Watson, 2010). Inability to provide proper attention and adequate time for children and spouses left both feeling lonely, unloved, isolated, and emotionally abandoned (Matuska, 2010).

Spouses of female doctoral students who take over child-rearing may also feel resentful about doing it alone, and the situation worsens if family interactions lessen and communication among them breaks down (Carter et al., 2013). As such, lacking family understanding and juggling multiple roles and responsibilities exposes female graduates to poor physical and mental well-being. The female postgraduate students experience exhaustion (Denholm, 2006) and mixed feelings of guilt and being disconnected, doubtful, stressed, and demotivated (Rockison-Szapkiw et al., 2017) due to role overload and time pressure (Zuzanek, 1998). These represent just some of the challenges in maintaining a work-life balance.

This body of evidence supports the idea that everyday living is an area of research that is required to understand the situations South East Asian female international doctoral students encounter as well as the strategies they adopt and adapt to survive, thrive, succeed, and maintain healthful well-being while living abroad. When temporarily moving to another country, the female doctoral students are suddenly faced with unfamiliar situations and events happening to and around them. While there are studies about international students, they have mostly focussed on academic and other matters related to language, intercultural adjustment, and communication rather than everyday living. These findings show that a gap currently exists in the literature for occupational studies on international students and particularly international female doctoral students. Both gender and occupation are equally important subjects, but they are often taken for granted in everyday life (Wicks & Whiteford, 2005).

To further elucidate the occupational perspective taken in the study, an overview of the discipline of occupational science is provided next.

Occupational Science

As a discipline, occupational science is recognised as the science of everyday living; a basic and applied science devoted to the complexities of human occupation (Wright-St Clair & Hocking, 2019). The basic science in this discipline lies in the contribution of building knowledge about the occupational nature of being human (Hocking, 2009; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015; Wright-St Clair & Hocking, 2019). Looking back to the history of occupational science, the discipline was founded by a renowned occupational

scientist, Elizabeth J. Yerxa, with a team of academics in the 1980s to support and inform the clinical practices underpinning occupational therapy (Molineux & Whiteford, 2011; Yerxa, 1998).

While the original purpose of this discipline remains true, occupational science has transformed to become a standalone academic discipline that is separate from occupational therapy (Hocking & Wright-St Clair, 2011). Occupational science now encompasses broad research interests across disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and beyond (Molineux, 2010; Molineux & Whiteford, 2011; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). This shows that occupational science has evolved as a traditional science to incorporate inter-disciplinary fields since its establishment within the esteemed University of Southern California (Clark & Lawlor, 2009; Rudman et al., 2008).

Occupational science consists of three prominent ideas. Firstly, people are viewed as occupational beings (Wilcock, 2003) whose innate nature is to engage in occupations (Molineux, 2010). Occupational scientists hold that “to be human is to be occupational” (Johnson & Dickie, 2019, p. 3), which also implies humans act on the environment (Yerxa et al., 1990). From that perspective, people are understood to have both the capacity and the need to participate in occupation, to “orchestrate daily occupations in the environment over the lifespan” (Yerxa et al., 1990, p. 6). Occupation is considered so central to human existence that some have claimed that it is through what they do that people express their humanity; a view that complements perspectives taken by historians, economists, psychologists, spiritualists, and politicians (Hocking & Wright-St Clair, 2011).

Secondly, the relationship between occupation and health is significant to everyday living. That is, people’s occupations can support or undermine their health and well-being; alternatively, their state of health can allow or inhibit participation in occupation (Wilcock, 1993; Yerxa, 1998). This interrelationship is seen in the idea that everyday occupations hold meaning in people’s lives and, conversely, that people’s engagement in meaningful occupations impacts their health and well-being.

Thirdly, occupation is best considered in the context (e.g., environment) where the occupation is taking place. It is essential to acknowledge that context and occupation are inseparable from the person experiencing and engaging in daily life (Johnson & Dickie,

2019). Contextual factors such as the weather, and prevailing culture, religion, beliefs and practices, the economy, space, resources, and the natural environment shape the things people do (Yerxa et al., 1989).

In addition, occupational science is an area that seeks to understand the reasons people do things and their experience of doing them. Occupational science is concerned with how well-being relates to people's patterns of occupation, including lack of participation. Clark and Lawlor (2009) stated that this study area focusses on the impact that participation in occupation has for individuals, communities, and the world in which they exist. Occupational science provides a means of exploring human engagement within their occupations, in particular, how meaning and everyday occupation is interwoven in defining whom an individual is becoming (Hasselkus, 2011).

The qualitative approach that predominates in occupational science accepts that there are multiple truths or realities about occupations and the occupational nature of humans. This form of understanding is underpinned by the assumption that people experience their own subjective, contextual reality. Meaning does not exist outside the perception and experience of an individual. Meaning is also socially constituted in people's experiences, and their meanings are created through interactions. Lastly, meaning is derived from a person's efforts to make sense out of their experience of day-to-day situations (Hasselkus, 2011).

Understanding Occupation

The term *occupation* is commonly known to most people as paid employment (Wicks & Whiteford, 2005; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). In occupational science, human occupations refer to all activities in which individuals participate in their everyday lives. These activities reside within the domains of work, self-care, leisure, rest and play, which Wilcock (2001) summarised as "all the things that people do" (p. 413) and the American Occupational Therapy Association (1995) termed "the ordinary and familiar things that people do every day" (p. 1015). Essentially, occupation is what people do in their social-cultural context to occupy themselves (Creek, 2010). These types of occupations range from taking care of themselves (self-care) and enjoying life (leisure/recreation), to contributing to their communities (productivity) (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, [CAOT], 1997).

According to Johnson and Dickie (2019), occupations are defined based on the idea that they have practical or symbolic significance; are self-directed; and organised into patterns, routines, and roles. Individuals engage in an occupation according to their needs, preferences, skills, and beliefs. Through engagement, people derive a sense of efficacy that helps them discover spiritual meaning and develop their identity. This view is held by Wilcock and Hocking (2015), who reiterated that occupations are what people do throughout their lives and what they do is connected to their health and survival.

In occupational science, occupations have been discussed concerning four prominent components of human existence: doing, being, belonging, and becoming (Hitch et al., 2014). The following section focusses on doing, which is the actual participation in an occupation, alongside being, belonging, and becoming which are the aspects of human experience achieved through doing.

Doing

Wilcock (1991), a prominent professor in occupational science, captured the profound implications of doing in the following statement: *We are what we do*. Doing is fundamental to survival, as participation in occupations includes seeking or accessing essentials such as food, shelter, and a safe environment. Doing occurs not just individually but also with others, for the benefit of the community, or familial support that is important for survival, health, and well-being (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

What people do is shaped by their personal preferences and dependent on their specific situations, which may create enablers or barriers to the occupations that they need, wish, and are obliged to do. When there is a lack of or restricted opportunities, people can experience limitations in their doing, and this will negatively impact their health and well-being.

Having the ability to do things that people need or want to do, brings positive impacts on their health and well-being. Hocking (2019) asserted that occupation benefits health when people are engaged in productive occupations that they perceive as important and valuable. Doing is interconnected with meaning since what people do contains meaning. The act of doing infuses people's lives with meaning, as it enables them to understand better who they are by developing their self-identity. Being deprived of doing these occupations will significantly impact people's lives because this leads to a diminished sense of identity and role loss, which affects health and well-being (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Doing can be transformative. In doing things, people are bringing themselves into being and becoming the person they are at that moment or who they intend to be. This transformation occurs mostly when people move out of their comfort zone. Doing has a powerful impact on changing people's lives. In choosing to do what they do, they receive feedback or learn from other people and themselves. This transformation not only happens within them but creates a ripple effect on the surrounding people (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) offers additional insights to the doing or performance of occupation. It began with Mary Reilly's work with some of her graduate students; and the concepts in MOHO were further developed by Gary Kielhofner who was a scholar in occupational therapy (Braveman et al., 2010; Forsyth et al., 2019). Under the MOHO, which offers an integrated perspective of people engaged in an occupation within their environment, doing is presented in three levels: occupational participation, occupational performance, and occupational skills.

Participation in occupation is based on the following: volition, habituation, performance capacity, and environment (Taylor & Kielhofner, 2017). Volition is the motivation for occupation (Yamada et al., 2017). People's motivation to participate in an occupation is, in part, driven by their previous experience. According to Forsyth et al. (2019), volition guides a person's choice of what they want to do and influences their experience of doing. The interaction between volition and occupation occurs in a cycle that involves anticipating the possibilities for doing, choosing what to do, experiencing the doing and, subsequently, having one's perception of the experience. Personal causation, values, and interests further influence people's choice as they impact on one's thoughts and feelings (Lee & Kielhofner, 2017b).

MOHO describes occupational performance as a series of steps, or acts of doing, that are performed in the coordinated sequences that make up people's daily living activities. Some of these acts are repeatedly performed as part of a routine, which then becomes habits. The concept of habituation refers to the process by which occupation is organised into patterns, habits, and routines (Forsyth et al., 2019), which is the way human beings orchestrate their lives through their occupations. The concept of habituation encompasses the idea that the occupations people do reflect who they wish to be, thus linking doing with being and becoming. People establish habituated patterns of doing through repeating actions in a specific context. Habits are learned ways of

doing things in conjunction with the context, as people use the environment as a resource for doing familiar things (Lee & Kielhofner, 2017a).

Roles underpin a person's identity as they form a cultural script for the set of responsibilities and obligations that one needs to do. People view themselves as workers, students, and parents; and recognise that these roles are fulfilled through certain behaviours. Roles are acquired through interaction with others and are an essential aspect of people's internalised identity. Roles lead to a way of doing things that fulfils the expectations associated with each role people have internalised. Established habits and roles underpin how people interact in their physical, social, and cultural environments. When environmental circumstances interrupt habituation, people can lose a sense of familiarity and consistency in their daily lives (Forsyth et al., 2019).

The physical and mental abilities can affect a person's ability to fulfill role expectations and give skilled occupational performances which, according to Yamada et al. (2017), is referred to as performance capacity. Humans are driven towards doing actions that they value (i.e., important and meaningful to do), feel competent to do, and find satisfying or interesting to do. Nonetheless, what we desire to do is influenced by the environment. The environment continually influences occupations, where a person's occupational circumstances cannot be appreciated without considering their environments (Yamada et al., 2017).

Participation in occupation emerges from the constant interaction between a person's habituation, volition, and performance capacities; with the physical and social environment. Therefore, participation in occupation is both personal and contextual. The personal aspect is that the types of occupations a person engages in are influenced by their unique motives, patterns of organisation, abilities, and limitations (De Las Heras Pablo et al., 2017). It is contextual in that the physical and social environment is part of a person's occupation, providing conditions for either enabling or restricting the occupation (Fisher et al., 2017; Kielhofner, 2008). The doing aspects of occupation engineer this process because people interact with others through social occupations. Therefore, social interaction is an aspect of being and becoming that is crucial for humans to develop their identities (Griswold & Simmons, 2019).

Being, Becoming, Belonging

A person's sense of occupational performance and capacity contributes to their overall state of being which, according to Wilcock and Hocking (2015), includes the "qualities that constitute living and is the essential nature of someone: their spirit, psyche, or core, inner person or persona" (p. 180). Although occupation provides a focus for being, it can exist independently during reflection and self-discovery. The meaning that people invest in life alongside their unique physical, mental, and social capacities are also part of being, which can be expressed through consciousness, creativity, and people's roles. In an ideal world, all individuals can exercise agency and choice in their expression of being, but this is not always possible or desirable (Hitch et al., 2014). The concept of being is frequently used in conjunction with occupational roles to express both a state of existence and the needs and interests that motivate individuals (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Being is also connected to thinking that grows from occupations—especially those associated with thought rather than action (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). It is in the nature of people, as occupational beings, to naturally produce actions through planning, thinking, and feeling. Based on these attributes, people are able to plan and dream of their future—even to create something entirely new (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Consciousness is a key aspect of being and is conceptualised as a state of feeling whereby the person is aware of both external and internal factors (Hasselkus, 2011). Complex occupational behaviour requires consciousness; therefore, consciousness and occupation are a two-way process. However, the type of occupation that an individual chooses to engage in influences their state of consciousness (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Belonging is a sense of connectedness to other people, places, communities, and cultures. *No man is an island* (Donne, 1624/2012); therefore, relationships are crucial to belonging, and people usually form relationships with other humans, groups, or places. These lead to reciprocity, mutuality, and sharing, which are characteristics of both positive and negative belonging relationships (Hitch et al., 2014). In Kim's (2014) study with South Korean immigrants in New Zealand, participants commented on the difficulty of being accepted as belonging because of the language barrier. The participants would often withdraw from a conversation, thus harming their friendships with locals because they were unable to communicate clearly.

The relationship between doing things together and belonging is central to being connected with particular people and places. Belonging through doing means creating a supportive environment because health is dependent on taking care of people and the natural environment (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015).

Wilcock (1998) defined becoming as “potential growth, of transformation and self-actualisation” (p. 251). Becoming is the constant process of growth and change that resides in a person throughout their life (Taylor et al., 2017). Humans develop uniqueness daily as they interact with others who do different occupations (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). What people become is influenced by their goals and aspirations that arise through choice or necessity. People regularly modify and revise their goals, which helps sustain momentum in becoming, as does the opportunity to experience new situations and challenges (Hitch et al., 2014; O’Brien & Kielhofner, 2017).

Goals can be following one’s occupational potential which, according to Wicks and Whiteford (2005), is a person’s capacity to do what they find personally meaningful. Women’s occupational potential is often diminished due to gender, as established societal norms of women running the household have predominated across most cultures (Scott, 2009). Across the studies reviewed for this chapter, women who become postgraduate students initially aimed to look after the household or focus on their career but becoming a student has altered these goals to be more directed towards succeeding in their academic studies (Baker, 2012; Haynes et al., 2012; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017).

Occupation and Its Relationship with Health and Well-Being

Well-being is a holistic part of health and essential to every human being (Wilcock, 2006). The World Health Organization (WHO, 1986) defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (para. 4). Health is a resource for and part of everyday living, which encompasses all the day-to-day occupations people participate in. Such doings are the foundation of health and well-being (Hocking, 2019), and are achieved through having choices, abilities, and opportunities to engage in meaningful occupations (Hocking & Ness, 2005). Yerxa (1989) stated that by engaging with occupations, people develop a sense of efficacy, discover spirituality, and create an identity.

Well-being refers to a perceived state of harmony encompassing one's life at an abstract level (Law et al., 1998). It concerns feelings such as self-esteem; also, a sense of order and contentment. Physical, mental, and social dimensions are useful to describe well-being. Physical well-being enables individuals to perform the everyday occupations they need or wish to do with their healthy body functions. It also includes beliefs about health and wellness, such as with the ways a person takes care of and balances the physical demands and stresses of daily life (Wilcock, 2006).

Mental well-being is related to the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual capacities of individuals to interact with others, be reflective, cope with stress, identify and clarify beliefs, make decisions, and find meanings in their lives (Baum et al., 2015). Social well-being is dependent on abilities to establish meaningful relationships and balance time with family, friends, and others in the community (Wilcock, 2006). Social and mental well-being generates a sense of belonging and acceptance that one's life has value for oneself and others. Spirituality is also included in well-being in that people find spiritual meaning in the religious and other occupations that they perform (Baum et al., 2015).

According to Wilcock and Hocking (2015), well-being is not a constant state. It is always changing as the situation changes. A problem that is affecting one's well-being today may be resolved at a certain point in time, and a positive state of well-being may be restored. The feeling of well-being also differs from one person to another. While someone may find doing a particular occupation harms their well-being, someone else may deal with it with ease and confidence but be challenged in managing other types of occupations in their daily lives. In other words, well-being is temporal, and what constitutes well-being varies for each individual.

When occupational needs are met, well-being is enhanced, and people feel satisfied (Hammell & Iwama, 2012). They can function and perform their occupations well, and this contributes to good health. Contrarily, disruptions, challenges, discriminations, limitations, and imbalances in occupations are examples of how health and well-being are jeopardised. When any of these happen, well-being is under threat, and the individual's health is at risk.

The occupational lives of South East Asian female doctoral students studying abroad have not previously been investigated from the perspective of doing, being, belonging, and becoming. However, their experiences of moving to a foreign country and

establishing everyday habits and routines that enact their life roles, support academic achievement and maintain health and well-being have some parallels to the experiences of permanent immigrants to western countries. The next section of the literature addresses that research.

Occupational Perspective on Immigration

There is mounting evidence for people's occupations changing in correspondence with a change in their everyday lives (Nayar & Hocking, 2006). This literature has predominantly explored the experiences of permanent immigrants rather than student sojourners. However, it provides insights into the shared nature of the occupational challenges facing people when moving to another country and how they modify their everyday occupations in response to that transition. It is suggested by Nayar, Hocking, and Giddings (2012) that the strategies people use to alter their everyday lives can facilitate, enhance, or challenge the process of adjustment in another country. These strategies will be explored in the following section by looking at studies that focus on the occupational changes enacted by immigrants and their adjustments.

Immigrants are defined as people who migrate, either by force or voluntarily, into a country which is not their motherland, to live in the newly-adopted country, often for the economic and lifestyle benefits of living there (Man, 2015). Emigrating from one country to another means that immigrants' daily occupations, which were once routine and habitual, are disrupted by the change in the country of residence. Immigration brings about changes to individuals and families (Martin & Reid, 2007) regardless of whether it is temporary or permanent.

Gupta and Sullivan (2013) studied the changes in the occupations of immigrant women in the USA and the way they handled these changes. Participants revealed that immigration disrupted their daily occupations in significant ways. Living in a new environment created challenges, compelling them to make adjustments. Part of these challenges is dealing with losses. Due to being geographically distanced from "an extended network of family, friends, and neighbours" (p. 26), participants in the study were reportedly experiencing loss of social connectedness in occupations upon their arrival. They were less likely to participate in social networks as participants found themselves missing the proximity and support from their family and community.

Gupta and Sullivan (2013) also found that adjustments are vital in dealing with occupational changes and that adjustments can be interpreted as occupational adaptation. Occupational adaptation is known as the altered and newly-added occupations concerned with performing daily tasks. This concept is seen in another study by Nayar et al. (2012) who found that Indian women immigrants in New Zealand utilised strategies “to move in and out of and move between occupational situations” (p. 10) to create a place in the new context. The adjustments were made to negotiate their experiences of moving between their Indian heritage with a new sense of self within the New Zealand context.

From an occupational science perspective, context is influential in research related to immigrants’ daily occupations. Immigrants who moved to a host country that has a higher cost of living than their home country often found themselves experiencing a change in their leisure activities. For instance, a study underpinned by the ethnographic-critical theory approach found that recreational activities enjoyed before migrating to Canada, such as skiing and attending the theatre, were seldom pursued in Vancouver because of the high costs associated with them (Suto, 2013). Instead, alternative and inexpensive leisure activities such as talking to people back home and socialising with the ethnic community were carried out to maintain support and well-being.

Wright-St Clair et al. (2018) found that socialising with compatriots is a common theme with immigrants. They identified that talking to people was the most satisfying and helpful strategy to prevent stress and loneliness among Indian, Chinese, and Korean immigrants in New Zealand. This finding ties with Wilcock’s (1998) assertion that meaningful relationships with family, friends, and people in the community are associated with happiness, enjoyment, and relaxation. Being in unfamiliar surroundings, some immigrants were quick to realise they needed to think creatively on how to pull in support through participation. They created opportunities to participate in the community through different means “by creating new, and pursuing existing, ways of engaging” (Wright-St Clair et al., 2018, p. 59), such as setting up a community group or meeting new people by volunteering. Through joining the community group, they picked up new skills such as knitting and, through that occupation, made connections with others. While they were receiving support, they were also providing support to other community members and newcomers; hence, helping each other became the norm.

Similar practices were conveyed in an earlier publication by Wright-St Clair and Nayar (2017). The spare time the immigrants had was meaningfully used for volunteering work that, in return, gave them life satisfaction for the contribution they made. From an occupational science perspective, engagement and collective participation are key contributors to good health and well-being.

The choice to participate in a co-national group or co-ethnic group comes from being able to share cultural similarities such as a common language and ethnic background. Maintaining relationships within a co-national group can be beneficial for newly-arrived immigrants during the initial adjustment to a new country (Kim et al., 2016). Although co-ethnic mutual support appears to create positive outcomes, some barriers can prevent immigrants from gaining this support.

For instance, in Smith's (2013) longitudinal grounded theory study of Somali Bantu people who were forced immigrants living in an urban area in the USA, although co-ethnic support was desired, the majority of the Somali Bantu people were living far away from each other, making it difficult for their community to provide support to one another. This finding is similar to that of Gupta and Sullivan's (2013) study, where difficulties with transport caused participants to stop visiting religious places that were a hub for sustaining social support. As a result, these communities faced a lack of primary resources such as food, which further impoverished their members and often led to financial hardship (Gupta & Sullivan, 2013; Smith, 2013).

The occupational changes people undergo have also been identified to shape their identity (Christiansen, 1999). Accordingly, because migration alters the routines and habits associated with the immigrants' daily occupations, it can lead to changes in their identity. Occupational identity is an important focus in immigration literature because the occupations that individuals engage in throughout their life reflects the transformation of themselves as a person (Kielhofner, 2008). To date, however, the relevance of establishing connections with co-nationals, barriers to achieving that, and the impact of changed occupational patterns on identity have not been explored in relation to student sojourners.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by reviewing the position of the literature review in grounded theory; then stated my approach to doing a literature review and presented the search methods used to obtain relevant literature for my study area. In the initial review stage, I examined past literature (within and outside New Zealand) regarding studying overseas and its challenges. Upon this review of literature, I confirmed the existence of a gap in the understanding of the everyday lives of international students, most notably in the daily lives of international female doctoral students. The identification of this gap provided the direction for this occupational science-based study, and the literature was updated as the generation of theory progressed.

To ground this study in occupational science, understandings about occupational science were offered with reference to components closely associated with the discipline. Part of this understanding also consisted of occupation and its relationship to health and well-being. Besides that, acknowledging there are parallel experiences between international students and immigrants, an occupation perspective on immigration was included at the end of this chapter.

In addition, the study of occupation is compatible with grounded theory as the methodology explores the social processes that shape human interaction and behaviour through engagement in occupation. In the case of this study, using SGT methodology is a way of better understanding occupational processes—particularly the interplay between being and belonging, as well as the self and others.

Underpinning the use of SGT is symbolic interactionism (rooted in pragmatism), which focusses on the idea that individuals as socially constructed beings who construe the meaning from the world by interacting with the environment and other people. A further elaboration of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism will be provided in the following Chapter Three.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Persons choose to do research because they have a dream that somehow, they will make a difference through the insights and understandings they arrive at through their research. But it is not enough to dream about doing research. Dreams must be brought to fruition by actually following through. (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 4)

Introduction

Research is sparked by people having motives to ask questions and seeking answers that will address their reasons and achieve an outcome rigorously and systematically (Mills, 2014; Wadsworth, 2011). The undertaking of research warrants a methodology, virtually a plan of action to conduct a research study (Crotty, 1998). To choose a methodology, it requires the researcher to reflect on a paradigm, select the philosophical or theoretical perspective behind a chosen methodology (Crotty, 1998), and overall methods that are relevant to their research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the research methodology utilised in this research that aims to explore how South East Asian female doctoral students manage their everyday living in New Zealand. The next chapter—Chapter Four—discusses the methods involved in the study.

The overview of this chapter begins with an explanation of the grounded theory methodology and my rationale for selecting this methodology for my research study. Included in this chapter are the historical background and evolution of grounded theory, the philosophical framework underpinning the SGT methodology, and the rationale for adopting this variant of grounded theory in the study.

This chapter also identifies the links between SGT, pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism, as well as the relationship between grounded theory application and occupational science. Subsequently, I will explain the core elements of grounded theory that are critical to studies grounded in the methodology.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory is one type of qualitative research methodology that has the purpose of generating theory grounded in data. Corbin and Strauss (2015) delineated grounded theory as “theory-building research that allows for identification of general concepts, the development of theoretical explanations that reach beyond the known and offers new insights into a variety of experiences and phenomena” (p. 6). The end-product of grounded theory in research is to investigate a given phenomenon and generate an explanatory theory that is grounded in actual data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Grounded theory fits within a naturalistic interpretive paradigm as the methodology can be used to study people in their context or actual setting and how they make sense of their social life-world (Bryman, 2016). Grounded theory is inherently used as a qualitative inquiry to explore people’s experiences. By studying “experiences from the standpoint of those who live it” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522), grounded theorists examine the actions and meanings people attached to their everyday living (McCann & Polacsek, 2018).

Furthermore, grounded theory is a methodology that explores processes and changes that occur over time (Birks & Mills, 2015). Grounded theorists are primarily interested in the complex social phenomenon or situation to which people must adapt and the process involved (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The purpose of grounded theory research is to empower researchers to explore beyond the known; to enter into and investigate the participants’ world from their perspective. In doing so, discoveries are made that contribute to the development of an integrated theory with an explanation to a process associated with a specific phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In grounded theory, the theory is empirically grounded in the data by systematic induction, not by logical deduction from a hypothesis or prior assumption (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Grounded theory generates substantive theory which delimits the area of study to specific localised cases dealing with particular real-world situations (Urquhart, 2019). Grounded theory applies to various disciplines beyond the field of studies such as sociology and nursing, which it is often associated with, and its core elements are compatible with both qualitative and quantitative research designs (Glaser, 1998; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010).

Rationale for Selecting Grounded Theory

Qualitative research designs are useful to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject matter being researched (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). This strength is the main reason for my choice to undertake this qualitative research study. At the outset of this research study, I considered various qualitative designs before selecting the grounded theory methodology for specific reasons. Firstly, the nature of grounded theory methodology is compatible with the research question and purpose belonging to this study. The question of this study is how South East Asian female doctoral students manage everyday living in New Zealand, and the aim is to generate a theory that explains the processes involved. Grounded theory is unique in that it is intended to understand “how participants create and respond to experiences” (Morse, 2001, p. 12), which supports the methodology’s usefulness in understanding the subject in detail.

Grounded theory is a comprehensive methodology that delves into deep understanding of the meaning and actions connected to the context, conditions, and consequences of the phenomenon of interest (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The methodology allows the researchers to move beyond basic description, creating a study that has in-depth and insightful findings. Therefore, a grounded theory approach constructs new knowledge of how everyday occupations of South East Asian female doctoral students are managed, including the strategies, actions, causes, along with the conditions that influence the social processes involved, and the consequences arising from those actions.

Secondly, grounded theory was mainly employed for its suitability for researching under-developed areas such as the present study, where there was a dearth of knowledge about South East Asian female doctoral students managing daily occupations overseas. Since grounded theory is useful for researching areas where there is a gap in understanding, undertaking grounded theory-based research is potentially helpful to gain better insights and perspectives on the phenomenon being studied (Polaseck et al., 2018). The knowledge generated can be used by academic institutions to assist the everyday living concerns of international students.

Moreover, grounded theory was chosen because its methodology has been proven to successfully work for both researchers and student researchers alike within a range of academic disciplines, “including but not limited to nursing, education, sociology, business, and information technology” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 4). To understand

how grounded theory methodology works, I needed to comprehend its history and development.

The History and Evolution of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was trail blazed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser was a student of Lazarsfeld at Columbia University with a strong background in quantitative research; whereas Strauss was a student of Blumer at the University of Chicago with a long tradition in qualitative research (Glaser, 1992; Strauss, 1993). Grounded theory was developed in the 1960s during a period when quantitative methods dominated social research and verifying theories was the main objective. During this time, qualitative research findings were often deemed as unfitting and inferior to quantified data (Charmaz, 2008).

Conversely, grounded theory methodology consists of qualitative methods with the principle goal of generating theory grounded within data. Glaser and Strauss were interested in empirical data obtained from interaction with the real world and not based on deduction (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Both accepted the challenge to prove that qualitative research was not merely anecdotal. It is through a systematic, rigorous, and inductive research approach, such as in the grounded theory methodology, they maintained, that qualitative research establishes its trustworthiness (Dey, 2004).

Glaser and Strauss's collaborative work was on a funded project concerning how dying occurred in a variety of hospital settings. They examined how terminally ill patients coped with the knowledge that they were dying, and the ways healthcare staff handled the news (Charmaz, 2014). Their findings were first reported in the book titled *Awareness of Dying* (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). During this collaboration, the two pioneers co-developed a research methodology that studies social life through distinctive analytic approaches, grounded in empirical data. This ground-breaking methodology was published in their notable 1967 text, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

However, in the early 1990s, differences started to emerge between them when Strauss co-produced a new book, *The Basics of Qualitative Research*, with Juliet Corbin. The latter was then a doctoral nursing student at the University of San Francisco (UCSF). Strauss and Corbin (1990) made refinements to the earlier grounded theory methods, which Glaser considered a divergence from the original grounded theory (Glaser, 1992).

These included an introduction to several supporting techniques and verification as part of the grounded theory; refinements that Glaser viewed as forcing data (Charmaz et al., 2018). This disapproval saw Glaser departing from the initial collaboration with Strauss and the existence of two distinct variants; namely, *Glaserian* (classical) grounded theory and *Straussian* (evolved) grounded theory (Stern, 1994, 2009).

Between Glaserian and SGT, some differences are apparent in terms of the role of the researcher, the use of literature, the underlying theoretical foundation, and the analysis procedures in developing theory (Tie et al., 2019). These differences are outlined in the following Table 1:

Table 1

Comparisons between Glaserian and Straussian Grounded Theory

Comparative Aspects	Glaserian	Straussian
Researcher's Role	The researcher holds a neutral role.	The researcher is an active participant in the study.
Literature Review	The researcher goes to the site with an open mind and reads on other areas non-related to the research to avoid data being contaminated by pre-conceptions.	The researcher brings in background knowledge and is encouraged to read around the research area for theoretical sensitivity and reflexivity.
Theoretical Foundation	Atheoretical	Pragmatism and symbolic interactionism
Coding Process	Two phases: 1. Substantive coding (open and selective coding) 2. Theoretical coding	Three phases: 1. Open coding 2. Axial coding 3. Selective coding

Although the differences distinguish Glaserian from Straussian Grounded Theory, they are not meant to show weaknesses of one variant over another. Without the partnership or collaboration between Strauss and Glaser, grounded theory may not exist today. Ultimately, the differences provide researchers with an understanding of how grounded theory has evolved since it was first co-founded.

Since its inception, more than 50 years ago, grounded theory has evolved with several other variants added to it (Flick, 2018a). For instance, after the death of Strauss in 1996, Juliet Corbin advanced Strauss's work. Leonard Schatzman, a colleague of the

grounded theory pioneers, introduced *dimensional analysis*. In contrast, Kathy Charmaz and Adele Clark, two former doctoral students of Glaser and Strauss, further developed the methodology into *constructivist grounded theory* and *situational analysis* (with critical theory lens), respectively (Morse, 2009). Besides these variants, other grounded theorists, such as Birk and Mills (2015), have initiated approaches to coding grounded theory data in their book, *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*.

There are common elements within grounded theory which remain the same despite variants produced from the methodology's evolution. These elements are conceptualisation through memoing, constant comparison, theoretical sampling, and theoretical sensitivity (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Therefore, the question of which variant of grounded theory should be used is dependent on the researcher's preference, suitability to the research work and questions being posed, as well as their perspective on epistemology (Sebastian, 2019).

Epistemology and Underpinning Philosophies of Straussian Grounded Theory

Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated that every methodology rests on the nature of knowledge and of knowing rather than being atheoretical. This statement brings ontology and epistemology into the study. Ontology is the study of being and is concerned about the nature of existence and what constitutes reality (Gray, 2018). The ways of knowing things and what counts as knowledge is known as epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism, a theoretical perspective that has its roots in the philosophy of pragmatism, underpins the epistemology of SGT methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Strauss originated from the same Chicago School of Sociology as Dewey and Blumer, which is well known for its tradition in philosophic pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Strauss, 1993). Both philosophies influenced Strauss's worldview (Bryant, 2019) and it is this framework that guides the SGT research process and analysis of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Handberg et al., 2015; Olson, 2018). In Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) early books, no explicit links to pragmatism were made. However, Strauss' approach to grounded theory was later revised by Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 2015) to make the links more consistent with the pragmatist tradition (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

Pragmatism

Between the 1800s and early 1900s, pragmatism began in North America as a humanistic and philosophical movement that originated from three philosophers: Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey (Thayer, 1985). Peirce (1839-1914) was the father of pragmatism. He initiated the philosophical stance of pragmatism. His work was later influenced by William James (1842-1910) who coined the term pragmatism (Crotty, 1998; Ormerod, 2006). A more explicit formulation for this philosophy was then developed by John Dewey (1859-1952) under whose work pragmatism gains its prominence and widely renowned reputation (Morgan, 2014; Ormerod, 2006).

Pragmatism is synonymous with the Greek word *pragma* (Stern & Porr, 2011), which means “to do.” Understandably, action becomes the central concept to pragmatism. Pragmatism views human behaviour or action as inseparable from past life experiences and beliefs. Therefore, all thoughts are intrinsically connected to action. Dewey was interested in the link between actions and consequences, and believed actions taken to deal with uncertainties have their consequences. As a result, before acting in a given situation, a pragmatist will consider the consequences by weighing various possible benefits of taking one action over another (Morgan, 2014).

Additionally, a pragmatist will use the outcome of their actions to predict the consequences of future similar actions or events. In the current study, it is proposed that participants’ experiences in their home country and beliefs derived from their culture, experiences, and expectations about living and learning in New Zealand will shape their actions; that is, how they manage everyday living in a new context. To relate this study to Deweyan pragmatism, I discuss the following criteria associated with the philosophy: inquiry, experience, habit, and transaction (Kaushik et al., 2019).

The first criterion, inquiry, had been explicated by Pierce and Dewey. Peirce (1878) regarded inquiry as a form of doubt and belief. Peirce’s groundwork on inquiry inspired Dewey who held similar understanding about the essence of doubt and belief (Garrison, 1999). On the one hand, doubt creates uncertainties in the mind, causing a person to think about the appropriateness of making certain actions. Belief, on the other hand, is a state of resolution that arises from clearing one’s doubt. In this sense, doubt is the initiator to inquiry while belief leads to habitual actions (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). To Dewey, problematic situations cause disruptions to habitual actions and these disruptions are the driver of inquiry.

In everyday life, inquiry begins with sensing problems that interrupt the flow of a normal course of activity (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Inquiry leads to decision-making, in which the choices made are determined by asking and answering questions (Morgan, 2014). The answers to these questions become the researchers' knowledge which they use to comprehend or alter their views on certain aspects of reality (Morgan, 2020)—a systematic process that uses the natural effort of humans to improve their situation.

The primary purpose of the inquiry is to incite change and improvement by garnering knowledge of the problem (Goldkuhl, 2012). Consistent with pragmatist beliefs, this study seeks to generate a grounded theory that will help improve the situation of South East Asian female doctoral students by resolving, to some extent, the current uncertainties about their experiences of managing everyday life.

The pragmatist point of view does not conform to the belief that external forces influence human actions. Instead, humans, with their intelligence, have the ability to veer external forces from influencing their choices. Pragmatists believe that reality does not exist in a static state; rather, it changes according to different situations. On a similar note, the world itself is ever-changing as it exists in a transformative state of becoming (Kaushik et al., 2019).

Actions also hold the role of an intermediate agent and are the way to change the world and existence. It is clear that actions are important to pragmatism. For people pursuing a PhD overseas, the reality is certainly not static as they are exposed to a different context, culture, currency, language, and ways of managing everyday life. Through their actions and intelligence, they adjust and adapt to the host country environment, but the nature of those adjustments has not previously been explored.

In pragmatist epistemology, experience transpires from knowledge. Each person is influenced by their unique social experiences that amalgamates into their own personal knowledge. However, much of this knowledge is shared as it is created from socially shared experiences. Knowledge is constructed with a purpose to take part in the world by managing one's existence better (Goldkuhl, 2012). Experience is a form of experimental activity for organisms as they adapt to, and within, their environments (Dewey, 1922).

Experience comprises both active and passive influences on given situations, involving knowledge and the transactional and social dimensions of everyday living. Moreover, experience has an objective dimension and serves a projective and anticipatory function

in linking present actions to future expectations. In other words, people live life by anticipating the future through projection of past experiences. It is this connection to the future that underlies all intellectual activity (Dewey, 1922). Accordingly, consideration was given in the study design to how knowledge of the participants' transactions with their environment could be gained.

Habit is another criterion in pragmatism. Habit is a type of action which reacts as a response to a situation (Dewey, 1922). When that habit is disrupted while responding to a situation, an inquiry will occur to anticipate the next response to a given situation, as well as how a situation may unfold. Therefore, through habits, humans can handle the demands of any actions in many situations. Another way that habits are expressed is through customs. Customs are a set of acceptable habits for particular groups of people in the same environment. New members have to modify with their own set of habits to be part of a particular group. By modifying their set of habits to the group customs, they would be able to adopt the acceptable habits or customs of a particular social group.

Mead (1934) defined habit somewhat differently to customs, but the ideas are relatively the same. Mead (1934) considered habit to be expressions of social norms of conduct, which are dynamically emergent and change over time. Habits are significant symbols that produce a response in advance of a stimulus and are often predictable. Due to this predictability, habits of behaviour contribute to the construction of sociality because people can easily anticipate actions in given situations (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Concurrently, sociality enables insights because a person had the ability to anticipate another person's reactions in response to their own, which contributes to self-regulation with the goal of creating favourable outcomes (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

With regards to habits, this study adopted the perspective of Dewey (1922) and Mead (1934). According to both philosophers, engagement in a new environment causes habit changes where responses to the environment continuously change according to the conditions of the environment. Significant symbols will allow a person to view their actions from an outsider's perspective, consciously shaping the roles adopted according to different contexts. Linking this to the South East Asian female doctoral students in this study, they are thrust into a new living environment, whereby previous habits or behaviours might no longer be applicable in the host country.

Consequently, they would need to adapt and adjust according to the changes in the environment—developing new habits and behaviours to fit into what is acceptable in their new environment. This action is related to transaction, which is a process of social engagement from one person to another person. Social engagement can be viewed as a communicative process because it involves people becoming socialised to a given group. This engagement creates a mutual expectation of behaviour that should be exhibited within the group; thus, bringing an understanding of both self and situation (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

Mead drew a distinction between interaction and transaction. However, Mead's term *interaction* contributes to the term *transaction* which was later defined by Dewey. According to Mead, transaction is not limited to the construction of solely one social self or in a social situation, but involves the combination of social selves and social situations (Dewey, 1922; Mead, 1934).

Pragmatism's action scheme conjointly ties with a determinedly anti-dualistic position. Pragmatists assume that interaction creates truth and that truth is validated instead of being discovered. This perspective pits the action and process-oriented philosophic tradition, which had a firm belief in scientific modes of thinking, against the positivistic form of science as well as against a priori interpretations of social life (Strauss, 1993).

The concepts of actions and meaning within pragmatism are also found in symbolic interactionism, which is reviewed in the next section.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a social theory of human behaviour at a micro-level (Carter & Fuller, 2015). Symbolic interactionism can be viewed as both a theory and an approach (Annells, 2011). It is a theory about human behaviour and is used to examine human conduct; that is, how people define and interact with the symbols and interactions that they experience together in their natural everyday settings. Given that the aim of this study is to explore how South East Asian female doctoral students manage their day-to-day living in a foreign country, symbolic interactionism is suitable for analysing their interactions within their surroundings at the most basic level.

Symbolic interactionism was developed by intellectual theorists such as Cooley, Parks, Dewey; and the most influential among these theorists was George Herbert Mead (Aksan et al., 2009). Mead was a pragmatist and anti-dualist philosopher who held

similar philosophical orientations with Dewey (Cook, 1994). Mead focussed on how people interact in their daily lives through symbolic interaction and how this process of interpretation, communication with themselves and others creates order and meaning. Interpreted meaning supports action to cope with the given situation, as an individual, group or society (Blumer, 1969).

Mead's work was later fostered and expanded by his student Herbert Blumer. Blumer (1969) developed the term *symbolic interactionism* to identify a distinctive method of studying human group life and human conduct. He postulated that symbolic interactionism is based on three fundamental premises:

1. people interpret the meaning of things and then act upon those interpretations;
2. meanings arise from the process of social interaction; and
3. people modify meanings while dealing with the things they encounter (Blumer, 1969).

The interdependency between the individual and society is demonstrated by the three central principles of symbolic interaction as one cannot be understood without an understanding of the other (Charon, 2010). Grounded theory methodology uses these three central principles of symbolic interactionism to discover and explain the underlying social processes that shape interaction and human behaviour in everyday activities (Crotty, 1998). Corbin (2009) added that people not only experience but also assign meaning to and react to what they experience based on gender, time, place, cultural, political, and professional background.

Another aspect of symbolic interactionism is the self-depicted as a term which indicates "that a human being can act socially toward him or herself as she or he might toward others" (Milliken & Schreiber, 2012, p. 689). In this respect, individuals can see themselves in a variety of ways. For instance, an individual interacts with one's self and becomes an object of one's actions through a social process of interaction with the environment. According to Mead, the self matures through the process of social interactions with the environment; whereby, humans learn to interact more meaningfully within society (Mead, 1934).

To better understand the concept of self, Mead's theory is composed of two components, the "I" and the "Me" (Mead, 1934). The "I" represents the self as a subject and the "Me" represents the self as an object. The "I" acts as an information processor, deciding how an interaction will be carried out. In other words, the "I" is also the

“thinking” aspect of one’s self. In contrast, the “Me” is the manifestation of the “I” in the form of attitudes, expectations, beliefs, understanding, and perspectives that emerge from the individual who has learned the expectations of society through the process of social interaction. The ongoing relationship and interaction between “I” and “Me” in self, acts as an interactor between the self and society, thus eliciting change in individuals and shaping their actions to make sense of the world (Blumer, 1969).

The symbolic interactionist perspective is consistent with this research study that investigates how South East Asian female doctoral students manage their everyday living in a different context than their home country. For instance, females from Asian countries are usually restricted to specific roles in society. They belong to the household, act as the family’s caregivers, and serve their husbands.

However, things often change when Asian women move to a Western country, as indicated in a previous study by Nayar (2009) that saw Indian women transferring and/or sharing their responsibilities with their spouse when they immigrated to New Zealand. This important finding reveals that the interaction between the participants and the host country shaped the participants’ behaviour and understanding of how certain things are done differently in a different context. Symbolic interactionism, thus, provides means to explore the interactions that took place among those who moved abroad and how their identities and roles evolve in a given context.

As previously discussed, pragmatism and symbolic interactionism influenced Strauss’ worldview (Bryant, 2019, Corbin, 1991; Morgan, 2020). The link between pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and Strauss’ worldview begins with pragmatism which acts as the precursor of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a key approach in Strauss’ previous studies as he focussed on human behaviour and roles. Both pragmatism and symbolic interactionism inform the research design, data collection, and data analysis of SGT methodology.

The next section proceeds with the rationale for selecting the SGT methodology for my study.

Rationale for Selecting Straussian Grounded Theory Methodology

At the start of my grounded theory exploration I was unsure of which variant of grounded theory to adopt, so I did some reading around the different approaches among the variants. I discussed the prospects of using these variants with my supervisors

before finally deciding on using SGT methodology. My decision was based on the following reasons:

- As a novice researcher, the set of techniques to approaching grounded theory study described by SGT provides useful guidelines for collecting and analysing data.
- While there are techniques provided, Corbin and Strauss (2015) in the latest edition *Basic of Qualitative Research* edition encouraged the application of creativity and flexibility (non-restrictive approach). As such, I selected this version to enable construction of an understanding of this research phenomenon.
- I also found Corbin and Strauss' view on utilising literature review and experience helpful in both identifying gaps in knowledge and using the literature to guide the research questions as well as enhance my theoretical sensitivity.
- SGT has the aim to develop a substantive theory that fits and has relevance to the situation and area being studied in a specific context (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This aim aligns with my intention to generate understanding and guide action that can change situations.
- SGT also emphasises meaning, action, and process, which is consistent with the pragmatism and symbolic interactionism theoretical perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) underlying my study.
- In my opinion, SGT offers insight and a better understanding of the workings of the social world, as it explores the meanings that people attach to their experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Grounded Theory and Occupational Science

Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that aims to develop theory based on data which has been systematically gathered and analysed (Urquhart, 2019). The approach has proven to be useful in developing context-based and process-oriented descriptions that enable the construction of original, in-depth findings that are closely linked to the data.

In occupational science, qualitative methodologies are reputable for offering the author the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study into everyday living occupations. An inquiry methodology, like grounded theory, is useful for studying the process of how

people interpret interactions and evolve through occupational engagement over time (Nayar, 2012). For instance, previous studies by Kim (2014) and Nayar (2009) have utilised grounded theory to investigate changes in occupations among immigrants, as well as their reactions to the newly-found or newly-changed occupations.

Other studies using grounded theory focussed on the concept of occupational adaptation and adjustment (Nayar & Stanley, 2015; Smith, 2013; Walder & Molineux, 2017; Walker, 2001; Wright-St Clair & Nayar, 2017) and these studies, which are published within the *Journal of Occupational Science*, highlight the usefulness of grounded theory methodology for occupational scientists.

Grounded theory methodology is utilised in this study to seek answers to my research question. Grounded theorists and other research scholars stated that grounded theory is suitable for exploring a phenomenon that has little existing information. For this particular reason, grounded theory is deployed in this occupation-based study to understand the phenomenon of how South East Asian female doctoral students manage their everyday living overseas and their associated strategies.

Core Elements of Grounded Theory

The essential core elements of grounded theory are constant comparison, theoretical sampling, memoing, and theoretical sensitivity. These elements contribute towards the authenticity of grounded theory as well as fulfil the methodology's aim to generate theory from data. These core elements are the crux of a grounded theory study.

Constant Comparison

One of the trademarks of grounded theory is constant comparison. Constant comparison engages the researcher with the process of constantly analysing data at every, and all, stages of data collection, interpretation process, and trying to understand how one relates to another. Data from the first data collection are analysed, and comparison is made with the new incoming data (Corbin, 1986b; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Constant comparison in grounded theory is performed in various ways such as constantly comparing between words, sentences, paragraphs, codes, and categories. The process also involves comparing: aspects of different people (e.g. their views, situations), data at different points of time within the same individuals, incidents, data within a category, and a category with other categories (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser &

Strauss, 1967). The back and forth interaction with the data facilitates researchers' understanding of the research phenomenon.

Theoretical Sampling

Another trademark of grounded theory is theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is not a procedure for sampling a population. Instead, samples vary from selecting people, sites, and documents that can contribute to enriching concepts through constant comparison, by which the development of emerging theory is strengthened (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Goulding 2002).

During the initial stage of data collection (open coding), researchers engage in purposive sampling by first recruiting participants who fit with the study selection criteria. However, as data analysis progresses with conceptualisation taking place (axial coding), theoretical sampling is included. The idea of theoretical sampling is more on sampling concepts in which researchers deploy theoretical sampling to collect as much information about the concepts being studied to fill in categories that have started to emerge (Morse, 2011).

At a more advanced stage (selective coding), participants are selected based on the potential contribution they would make to enable comparisons in experiences to fill in the properties of theoretical concepts and categories and further develop and refine the emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This theoretical sampling process is continued until all major categories are fully developed (e.g., properties in categories are dense; plus there are variations) and well-integrated. At this point, theoretical sampling ends, and saturation is achieved (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 2015).

Memoing

In grounded theory, memoing or memo writing is an essential part of data analysis. Memoing is considered the “bedrock of theory generation” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83) and undertaking this process ascertains that researchers are adhering to the practices and principles of a grounded theory approach (Lempert, 2007). Memos are defined as “records of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110).

Memo writing begins as early as the conduct of the first analytic session and is dated (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In memos, researchers write down ideas and thoughts on the concepts being studied, either briefly or with full details. Memoranda (memos) are the

backbone of conceptualisation and are instrumental in building a dense and parsimonious grounded theory (Stern & Porr, 2011). Additionally, writing memos is helpful to make the data analysis more explicit and transparent for researchers so they can develop their theory step by step (Corbin, 1986a; Flick, 2018b).

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity encompasses the entire of the grounded theory research process. It is perceived by Strauss and Corbin (2015) as the insight into what is meaningful and has significance in the data for theory development. Theoretical sensitivity is also defined by Birks and Mills (2015) as “the ability to recognise and extract from the data, elements that have relevance for the emerging theory” (p. 58). Glaser (1978), in his book *Theoretical Sensitivity*, emphasised researchers’ ability to differentiate data segments that are more important than others. Conducting grounded theory research requires researchers to maintain a balance between having an open mind and being skilful at identifying elements of theoretical significance during data generation, data collection, and data analysis.

Corbin and Strauss (2015) stated that qualitative researchers practice sensitivity by paying careful attention to participants’ data and respecting their views. As grounded theorist researchers become immersed working in data, their theoretical sensitivity grows and analytic ability increases (Birk & Mills, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Developing theoretical sensitivity is important so that researchers have an awareness of theoretical significance when interacting with data and personal experience (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The sensitivity and immersion in data enable researchers to work out the connections between concepts and progress the data analysis for theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This combination ultimately ends in an abstract, integrated form of grounded theory (Tie et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Grounded theory was originally derived from Glaser and Strauss. They jointly pioneered this methodology to generate theory through direct exploration of the real world rather than to prove or test a pre-existing theory. In this chapter, I have provided the historical background of grounded theory and explained how Glaserian and SGT variants exist. Subsequently, the rationale for selecting grounded theory and particularly SGT was outlined.

This chapter also discussed symbolic interactionism, which is inherent in pragmatism, as the philosophies underpinning and governing SGT are the same. Further, the application of grounded theory in the occupational science discipline was presented through examples of research studies.

I concluded this chapter with a description of the core elements belonging to grounded theory. Chapter Four continues with the methods of conducting the study, including ways in which the core elements were implemented.

Chapter Four

Methods

Grounded theory is a method to study process. It is, moreover, a method in process. (Charmaz, 2009, p. 136)

Introduction

A methodology is incomplete without methods. Methods are part of the methodology and outline the techniques or procedures applied in the research study (Chamberlain-Salaun et al., 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This chapter focusses on the methods I employed in this grounded theory research study. Within this chapter, I also present the ethical considerations and strategies to achieve rigour in the research study.

This present research study is a qualitative interpretive study explaining what went on in the everyday lives of South East Asian female doctoral students in New Zealand and the process of managing everyday living. As indicated in the previous chapter, this study adopted the Straussian variant of grounded theory based on the updated version (2015) while also drawing upon Glaser, Charmaz, and works of other grounded theorists. Grounded theory is an approach that enables the researcher to generate theory that is developed and verified through systematic data collection (Corbin, 1986b; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Following SGT methodological procedures, data in this study were analysed via three series of coding, namely: open, axial, and selective coding. In open coding, data were initially deconstructed and analysed line by line, using a gerund to indicate the actions taken. This step was followed by axial coding in which data were reconstructed to relate categories to subcategories, and their relationships were tested against data. In the last step, selective coding, all categories were unified around a core category (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Taking these steps enhanced rigour for the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration applies when research involves human lives. Ethics is used to prevent researchers from harming those who are being researched and to protect participants and the researcher if anything goes wrong (Webster et al., 2014). Following ethical rules contributes to enhancing the integrity and credibility of the research. Ethical approval was sought from the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEK) prior to

commencing the research study. Approval was granted on 19 October 2016 (Ref: 16/314) (Appendix A).

Safeguarding the participants is a priority in research. To protect participants, Tolich and Davidson (1999) outlined five principles of ethical research: do no harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, avoid deceit, and anonymity and confidentiality.

Do No Harm

In research, a fundamental ethical principle is that researchers collect data without causing harm to participants. To abide by this guideline, I utilised an information sheet (Appendix B) that informed participants about the impact of discussing personal life experiences that may trigger strong feelings. For example, although the main topic being discussed in the research was about ordinary everyday lives, there was a possibility that participants might disclose unpleasant or sensitive details that caused psychological distress during the interview.

I stated the possibility of psychological distress in the participant information sheet and offered a free counselling session from AUT health and counselling to discuss their issues if needed. In addition, I informed the participants they could review their transcript and remove any information they did not want to be included in the study. They also had the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences at any time up until data analysis commenced or before findings were being established.

Throughout the interview, I sought to care for and treat participants with respect. During the interviews, many of the participants shared the challenges and losses that they had experienced as a result of entering New Zealand; and some expressed their emotional sadness, anxiety, and frustration. One participant, for instance, had tears welling up in her eyes when she was talking about her PhD challenges and living separately from her family.

As an educator who has taken up a counselling course and has had prior counselling experience, I held back from continuing the interview by using my skills to comfort her. The participant also had time to recollect herself and was offered the opportunity to stop the interview. However, she assured me that she was fine and asked to proceed with the questions. After the interview, I did not immediately return home. Instead, I spent some time with her to ensure she was feeling alright. I visited her study space with her and let her freely talk about her favourite things in the room. When I returned home, I followed

up with her to check on how she was doing, ensuring that the interview had not negatively impacted her well-being.

Voluntary Participation

Confirming that participants are voluntarily participating in a study is a major principle of conducting research (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Voluntary participation was achieved when participants took part in this study of their own free will. Although I had a circle of friends with whom I was close, I did not use this advantage to involve them in my study, nor were any of them persuaded to join due to sharing a similar course, religion, ethnicity, or nationality to mine.

To ensure voluntary participation, I provided an information sheet that indicated to participants what was involved and what they were taking part in. A section in the information sheet indicated that participants' participation was purely voluntary (i.e., they are not obliged to participate), and they had up to two weeks to respond to the invitation for the research. Only participants who accepted the invitation by signing the consent form were included in this study to ensure they were participating without being coerced.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is part of establishing voluntary participation. Prior to beginning an interview session, I would provide a consent form (Appendix C) for interviewees to sign. The consent form included the objective of the research, an opportunity for the interviewees to ask questions, disclosure that I needed to take notes during the interview and to audiotape and transcribe the interview.

Before commencing the interview, I briefed each participant on what the session would entail. I also checked if they understood what they were participating in and if they had any questions to ask. Almost all participants were aware of the importance of understanding the information sheet and giving consent as they were also conducting research. Only after obtaining the participants' consents, some personal information was collected through a demographic data form developed for the study (Appendix D). The purpose of gathering demographic data was to give me a better comprehension of the participants' backgrounds.

Avoid Deceit

Tolich and Davidson (1999) reminded researchers that it is unethical to deceive participants and deceitful research approaches are a serious violation of ethics. To avoid deceit, care was taken to ensure several steps were taken while conducting interviews. For instance, I always notified participants that their interviews would be recorded, and the recorder tape was kept in view. Participants were informed in advance that they did not have to answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable with, and the tape recorder would be stopped at their request if and when needed. During the interview, participants were able to discuss topics freely and were not implicitly guided by me to produce a specific answer.

At the end of the interview, participants were thanked for their participation and given a *koha* (small token) as an appreciation for their time and contribution. This *koha* was not mentioned in the information sheet or revealed to participants until the interview had ended for two reasons: to avoid making them think I was enticing them with a gift or influencing them to participate in my study. I returned the interview transcript to the participants after transcribing the interview so that they could go through it and make amendments. Participants were allowed to add or delete any aspect of the document that they felt was appropriate to do so.

Several participants took this opportunity and returned the transcripts through e-mail. Participants made minor amendments, such as correcting misspelt names of places or inserting missing words not heard correctly during the transcription process. No participants requested for any parts of their documents to be removed; instead, one participant added explanation to demonstrate how a schedule for sending children to school was organised among group members.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity is differentiated from confidentiality by how the researchers identify participants. According to Tolich and Davidson (1999), participants are anonymous when they are not only unknown to the public but also the researchers. On the flipside, confidentiality is a situation where the participants are known to the researchers, but their identity is hidden from the public. Anonymity is rare within qualitative research since most studies would have the researchers being in direct contact with the participants; therefore, confidentiality becomes an essential ethical responsibility.

As part of ensuring confidentiality in the study, participants' real names were not disclosed in the study. Each participant was given a pseudonym; and to make these pseudonyms more natural, I used common South East Asian names. Furthermore, to keep their identity and privacy intact, some details that could identify them were also changed.

Confidentiality was also applied to collected data whereby all audiotaped and transcribed data were only made available to my supervisors and me. To further ensure confidentiality, all soft copies of interview transcripts and consent forms were stored in a password-protected computer. In contrast, the hard copies were kept in a locked cabinet either by my primary supervisor or me. Given the number of South East Asian students, particularly South East Asian female doctoral students, is relatively small in the urban cities in New Zealand, I have chosen not to name the city where this study was conducted. Besides taking steps to look after the participants, I also observed the need for looking after myself. To ensure my safety as the researcher, a safety plan (Appendix E) was documented to minimise risks if anything happened during the time of conducting the research on the site.

For instance, when I went to visit participants' homes in unfamiliar areas, I would inform at least one family member of my whereabouts, and the approximate time I should be away. If I did not make contact after the stipulated time, my family would have attempted to contact me; and if I could not be reached after a reasonable time, then the appropriate authorities would be alerted. At the same time, the plan was that whenever there was a concern or uncertainty faced during the research, I would bring the issues to my supervisors for discussion and advice.

During my site visits, I did not encounter any difficulties getting to or returning from the locations I visited. However, there were times my old phone ran out of battery, and I had to rely on the public phone to make calls to participants to inform them that I had arrived at the site.

Treaty of Waitangi

Undertaking research in New Zealand requires a researcher to consider the principles underpinning the Treaty of Waitangi¹ and how this influences research and ethical considerations. It is relevant legislation which recognises the significance of Māori as people of the land and the bicultural partnership between Māori (Tangata Whenua) and

¹ Further information on the Treaty of Waitangi can be found in Orange (2011).

non-Māori people (Tauīwi). Even though my study did not involve Māori participants, I attended a meeting with the AUT School of Rehabilitation and Occupation Studies Mātauranga Māori Committee to discuss potential issues concerning the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (partnership, protection, and participation)². At this meeting, I was assured that consultation around cultural issues could be provided if required. However, since no issues were raised during my research, cultural consultation was not needed.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study took place over 20 months; starting from the end of 2016 to the middle of 2018. This section on data collection provides information about the location in which this study was conducted, the recruitment of participants, participant selection and their characteristics. Included in this section are the data gathering methods, which comprised interviews and observations.

Research Site

The research site was in one of the prime cosmopolitan cities in New Zealand's north island. The site was chosen because of the large population of international students residing in the city which was advantageous for sampling purposes.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment involved purposive and theoretical sampling. Initial recruitment began with purposive sampling, wherein several participants who met the selection criteria were included in the study. However, as research progressed, theoretical sampling was used to seek participants who could contribute information for the emerging theory.

During purposive sampling, I recruited participants through various channels including creating an open invitation to potential participants at an international conference event, where I took part as a poster presenter. During this time, I distributed bookmarks that contained information about my study to people who came to visit my poster stand.

A similar invitation was later made at my own university through the New Zealand Scholars and ASEAN peers' mentoring group meetings that I attended, in which I

² Information about the principles of the Treaty is available from the Ministry of Health website: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/he-korowai-oranga/strengthening-he-korowai-oranga/treaty-waitangi-principles>.

informed the members (mostly postgraduate students) about my study. Another recruitment channel was through the dissemination of flyers.

Flyers (Appendices F & G) regarding the study were disseminated around two large university campuses. Information was also circulated via word of mouth within postgraduate networks. During purposive sampling, I recruited five participants and was able to compare the similarities and differences in participants' data, which enabled me to proceed onto theoretical sampling. I needed more specific data for developing concepts and categories; and, at this point, I began to realise that potential participants were more likely to respond if I initiated contact.

Based on this understanding, I took a different approach to recruit participants. I started to request intermediaries' (people who could identify potential participants) assistance to locate potential participants. I explained the participant characteristics needed, and the intermediaries helped relate my study to potential participants. If participants wanted to participate, they would provide the intermediaries with a contact number and/or e-mail address which was then passed to me.

Through intermediaries, I was able to recruit an additional 16 participants. Furthermore, existing study participants also volunteered the names of friends who would be interested in the study. This approach proved successful, and I quickly began contacting participants after they had given approval for their contact details to be shared with me.

Besides these means of recruitment, I approached two potential participants with caution and adherence to ethical guidelines. The first person I approached contacted me back and willingly participated in the study; the second declined the invitation to participate with a reason that she was unprepared and felt that the research topic was too personal.

Participation Selection

Participants were selected based on defined inclusion criteria. On the one hand, participants were recruited if they were:

- female doctoral students (regardless of marital status);
- identified as South East Asian;
- had either completed their studies and returned to the home country within ten years or were still enrolled in a PhD programme in New Zealand; and
- had been living in the country for at least six months at the time of the study.

On the other hand, this study excluded prospective participants:

- who were acutely unwell at the time of the interview;
- whose visa status was in dispute in New Zealand;
- whose command of English was insufficient to be interviewed in the language; and
- who were related to the researcher (e.g., family members).

Participant Characteristics

A total of 23 South East Asian female doctoral students from seven different South East Asian countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, East Timor, and Thailand) participated in the study and shared their experiences of living in New Zealand. Other countries (Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) were not excluded from this study; however, due to lack of female international doctoral students from these home-countries during the sampling process, the opportunity did not arise for including them as participants.

Participant ages at the time of recruitment ranged from 30 to 44 years old. Some were single, one was single with a child, and others were married with or without children. All the participants were full-time students and the majority of them were sponsored-students under either New Zealand's or their own government's scholarships. Just four participants were fully self-sponsored. Recruited participants were at different stages of PhD completion and had lived in New Zealand for no less than six months at the time this study was undertaken. The participant profiles are presented in Table 2 in the next page, in the sequence in which they were recruited.

Data Gathering Methods

Glaser's (1978, 1998) infamous dictum *all is data* indicates various ways of collecting data for grounded theory; and among frequently used types are interviews and observations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Dey, 2004; Richards & Morse, 2013). In this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews, which were the primary source of data, and participant observations, as a secondary source of data. Other supplementary sources of data were also used, including media such as online news and blogs, as well as the researcher's experience.

Table 2
Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Age	Religion	Marital status and accompaniment while living in New Zealand	Number of children	Length of time living/has lived in New Zealand during the time of interview	Type of education funding
Misha	33	Islam	Married (living with a single family member)	0	3 years	Self-funded
Nora	33	Islam	Married (living without family)	1	1 year	New Zealand Scholarship
Linda	44	Islam	Married (living with family)	3	3 years	Home-country scholarship
Lydia	43	Christian	Married (living with a young child)	1	2 ½ years	New Zealand Scholarship
Sabrina	43	Islam	Single (living with a single family member)	0	2 ½ years	Home-country scholarship
Natasha	43	Islam	Single (living with a single family member)	0	2 ½ years	Self-funded
Serina	34	-	Single (living without family)	0	7 months	Self-funded
Rita	36	Catholic	Single (living without family)	0	2 years	New Zealand Scholarship
Farah	40	Islam	Married (living without family)	2	7 months	Home-country Scholarship
Mia	44	Buddhist	Married (living with family)	2	3 ½ years	Home-country Scholarship
Suzanna	41	Christian	Divorced (living with a young child)	1	5 years	New Zealand Scholarship
Sasha	35	Islam	Married (living with a baby)	3	3 ½ years	Home-country Scholarship
Julia	30	Islam	Single (living without family)	0	3 years	Home-country Scholarship
Sophia	39	Islam	Married (living with children)	2	2+years	New Zealand Scholarship
Diana	38	-	Married (living with children)	2	7 months	New Zealand Scholarship
Lisa	42	Islam	Married (living without family)	2	1 ½ years	Home-country Scholarship
Sarah	41	Islam	Married (living without family)	2	3 ½ years	New Zealand Scholarship
Sheila	39	Islam	Married (living with family)	4	8 months	Self-funded
Tia	42	Islam	Married (living with family)	2	2+ years	Home-country Scholarship
Nadia	30	Islam	Married (living with family)	1 (expecting another child)	1 year	Home-country Scholarship
Rubi	43	Catholic	Married (living without family)	1	3 years	New Zealand Scholarship
Amy	43	Christian	Married (living with family)	2	4 ½ years	New Zealand Scholarship
Ema	40	Islam	Married (living with family)	2	3 years	Home-country Scholarship

Interviews

This study involved two modes of semi-structured interviews which comprised face-to-face and in-depth online interviews. Participants living in New Zealand at the time of the study were interviewed on a face-to-face basis, whereas those who had returned home were interviewed via WhatsApp since it was the communication platform that participants were familiar with and used with ease.

Contacts were established with potential participants in two different ways. For those still living in New Zealand, I sent a text message and made a phone call to explain what the study entailed and how to participate. Participants had two weeks to consider whether they would want to participate, but most agreed to take part in the study immediately. At the start of the interview, participants were given a short briefing and encouraged to ask questions. With their consent, I also collected the demographic data. Interviews with those who were still residing in New Zealand were conducted privately, face-to-face, at different university premises. They were also carried out according to time and location convenient to the participants.

A slightly different approach was taken for those who had completed their study and returned home. I contacted them via e-mail to explain the study and the procedures involved in the interview if they were to participate. When they expressed interest, I later e-mailed the information sheet and consent form, which they would return to me. Upon receiving their consent form, I then sent them the demographic data form. After the procedure was completed, an interview time was mutually arranged between the participants and me. Because of the time difference, I let participants decide the suitable time to be interviewed.

I prepared indicative questions (Appendix H) and took an exploratory opening for my initial interviews. I started with a general request statement, *“Tell me about the things you do every day here in New Zealand,”* to discover what their everyday living occupations were like and allow them to discuss their concerns. Subsequently, as data collection progressed and concepts started to emerge from extensive data analysis, interview questions were refined to include specific questions to understand how they dealt with the everyday lives’ challenges. In the interviews, I made use of some interview techniques such as probe questions. For example, I used my personal experience, *“I want to have a haircut but... I would wait until I returned home to have a haircut. Is there something similar or are there things that you want to do, but you are holding back from doing here in New Zealand?”*

In addition, what other participants had told me provided a starting point to elicit reflections from the participants; for example, *“My other participants also find the cost of living is expensive here. Tell me more about the cost of living....”* Before ending the interview, I often asked them again if there were anything else they would like to share about their experience living in the country (e.g., *“We are almost coming to the end of the interview. Would you like to add more or are there any other things you would like to tell me about living in New Zealand?”*).

In total, 26 semi-structured interviews were completed with 23 participants. Three participants were interviewed more than once. Interviews were conducted in English since all participants could speak the language and agreed to be interviewed in English. The interviews took approximately 60 to 90 minutes and were digitally audio recorded. The idea of recording was to avoid getting distracted when listening to participants or losing precious data if I was not quick or detailed enough with my note-taking. I also chose to transcribe the taped interview verbatim myself to be fully immersed in the data.

Participant Observations

I used participant observations to complement the interview method and increase the authenticity of the data. According to Goffman (1989), what people say is sometimes different from what they do; thus, I felt it was inadequate to just rely on interviews. I had several opportunities to observe the participants in different settings and times. For instance, I went along with participants when they shopped for their foodstuffs at various locations such as the supermarket, Fishmarket, and Saturday market.

Adhering to the observation protocol (Appendix I) and with the permission of participants, I also visited them at their rented accommodations that allowed me to see their living conditions and study places to have a look at their learning space and environment. Additionally, I observed one of my participants taking the bus home with her baby during the peak hour. To get a closer look at matters being studied, I also visited the places they mentioned to me during the interview. I took the bus to experience the journey of going to the Asian and *Halal* meat shops outside of the city myself. I travelled by train to some destinations to know how much time and cost it would take to get to campus.

Moreover, I looked at the accommodation options available and examined the living environment and conditions in students' hostels, apartments with shared facilities and private units. At the end of each fieldwork session, I always made efforts to

immediately write my field notes while everything was still fresh on my mind. Thus, it was not an unusual occurrence to stop by the roadside or to vigorously jot down notes on the bus trip home so as not to lose any necessary details and thoughts from my observations.

In this study, I practised overt participation, whereby my role as a researcher was disclosed to the participants. During fieldwork, I engaged myself in their activities and lent a helping hand to minimise my presence as a researcher. My status as a PhD student and carrying out almost similar normal activities further lessened the potential of participants feeling awkward or uncomfortable having me around. Field observations after interviews provided me with a means to observe participants' natural behaviour as they went about their everyday activities.

Observing participants engaging in their daily occupations also helped me in interpreting data beyond the interview transcripts. Figure 1 (on the following page) displays part of a fieldnote written based on the participant observation note (Appendix J) after visiting a type of accommodation.

Generating the Grounded Theory

This section presents the data analysis in which I review the procedures involved to generate the grounded theory. The following includes a discussion of coding processes and coding techniques used in data analysis and generation of the theory.

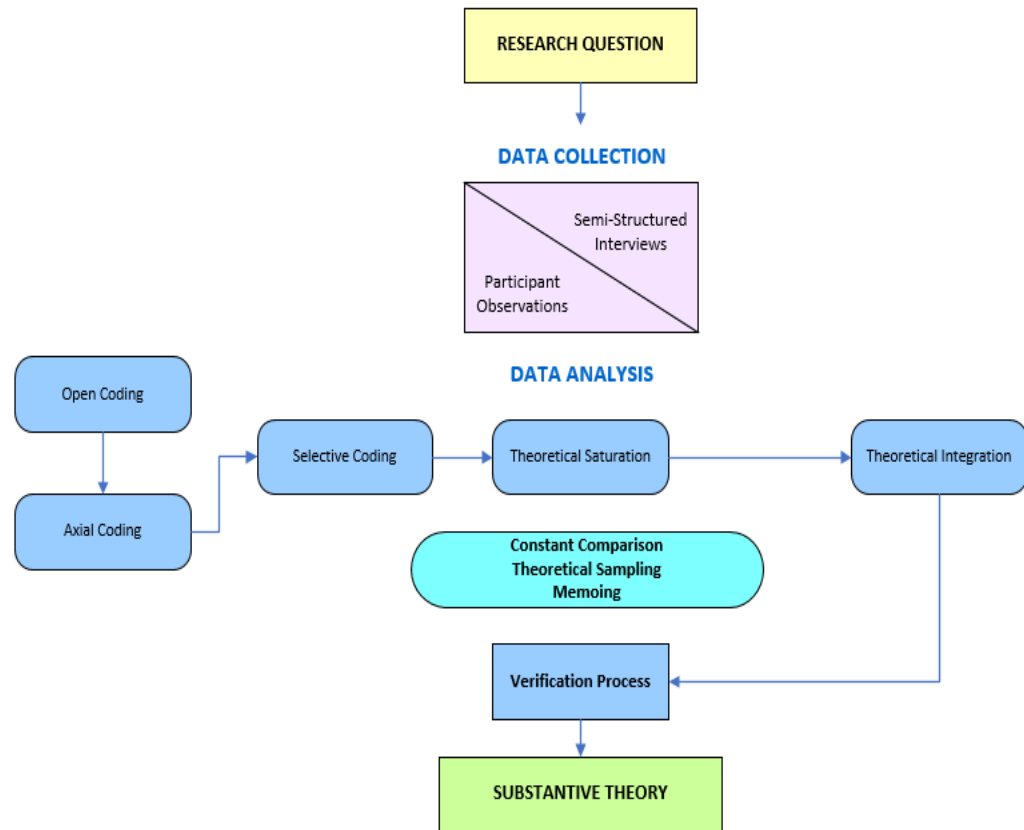
Grounded Theory Data Analysis

In grounded theory, the research process does not proceed in sequential order. Analysis in grounded theory is done concurrently with data collection through an iterative and a non-linear process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) involving theoretical sampling, constant comparison, and memoing. Analysis began with the first data collected, and as the research progressed, more data were collected and analysed through a series of coding processes, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

This mode of analysis was repeated and continued until the level of saturation was reached whereby no categories or subcategories emerged from subsequent interviews, and no additional details can be attached to each of the categories or subcategories. Figure 2 (p. 64) demonstrates the data collection and analysis process involved in this study.

Figure 1*Sample of a Fieldnote*

Fieldnote: Visiting Cyber-Potter Apartment		
9/3/17	P4 (Married and accompanied by a primary-school-aged child in New Zealand)	Time: 8:15 a.m.
<p>On Thursday, 9 March 2017, I had the opportunity to visit one of my participants who happened to rent at Cyber-Potter Apartment. An arrangement was made for us to meet at Z location so that she could show me around her apartment before going to university. I arrived early in the morning and, while waiting for P4, checked my camera and took photos of the surrounding area. P4 later came and after a warm greeting we walked together to her apartment.</p> <p>I was first shown the communal kitchen on the first floor where P4 shared the stove and oven with others. She was allocated storage to keep her pots and pans and a personal fridge which was kept safe in a locker. I saw two Asian men cooking, but there were no women around except us. All the time we were there, neither of the men talked to us. The kitchen was relatively clean and spacious, but I noticed two ovens were broken. Since P4 was not cooking while I was visiting her, I could not see if cooking in that kind of environment was easy for her.</p> <p>I tried to imagine if many people were cooking at the same time and what a busy kitchen it would be. I also wondered how it would be for those who were not used to this kind of cooking arrangement. I reckoned it might not be too much of a trouble for those who cooked simple food. I thought about P4's reasons for cooking simple food and cooking only once a day in the previous interview. Her choice was not just to save time, but it might also be because she must prepare in a communal kitchen. It was not her kitchen, and whatever she was doing could be seen by others. This situation might thus create some discomfort and inconvenience.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Extract from an extended version of a fieldnote)</p>		

Figure 2*Data Collection and Analysis Process***Coding Processes**

From the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), data are the basis for building theory; thus, the name ‘grounded theory’. The centrality of data to grounded theory study is supported by Strauss and Corbin (1990), who described coding as the process of analysing data. The essence of coding is captured in a more recent grounded theory scholarly text whereby coding is directly termed as “the process of developing, codes, concepts, and categories” (Flick, 2018a, p. 454) for the generation of theory.

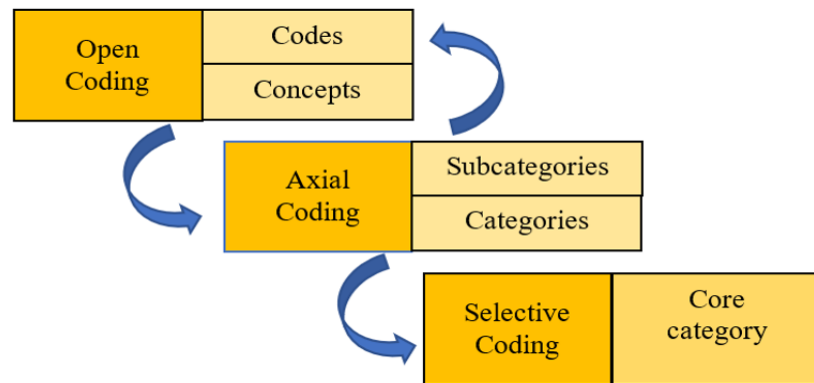
Adopting Corbin and Strauss’ (2015) procedures, data analysis for this study followed three major stages of coding: open, axial, and selective coding. Each of these stages involves different interventions, but coding often takes place concurrently between these stages and is overlapping (Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, 1998) procedures were deemed more structured, with a step-by-step formula that must be rigidly adhered to for building a well-grounded theory. In actuality, the procedures are guidelines and not meant to be taken rigidly (Cooney, 2010; Corbin, 2009). In recent editions, Corbin advised researchers to adopt

what is suitable, thus allowing researchers to make modifications to the technical procedures according to their own ways (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 2015). The open, axial, and selective process is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Coding Process: Open, Axial and Selective Coding



Open Coding

Open coding is the first of the three stages of coding in SGT. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), open coding is the initial analytical step that holds importance in informing the rest of the data analysis. It begins with the opening up of text (data from participants' transcripts) and involves a process known as microanalysis. In open coding, raw data are broken down into pieces, given microscopic analysis by continually making comparisons, then conceptualised and categorised. Analysis for this stage involves an inductive process whereby codes and categories which are generated emerged from existing data rather than from prior data collection or analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Following this process, as soon as the first interview data were gathered and transcribed, I performed a detailed analysis by going through the interview transcript line-by-line and closely examining the data to select words, phrases, and meaningful sentences. I then assigned appropriate codes in the margins of the interview transcript. This step of generating codes is known as labelling (Mills, 2014; Urquhart, 2013) or naming (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) the data.

With further interviews and incoming data, data were conceptualised by comparing incidents to other incidents, events, and other instances in the data. Constant comparison was used to identify the properties and dimensions in the data that I had as well as to guide for the next data collection. To increase the effectiveness of the process of

comparison, certain analytical tools such as waving the red flag (i.e., being critical of terms such as *always* or *never* to check on conditions) and life experiences (i.e., drawing upon personal encounters that are similar to what participants experienced) techniques suggested by Strauss and Corbin (2015) were deployed. In vivo codes, which refer to participants' direct quotes, phrases, and terms that they expressed to describe their experience (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss, 1987), were used whenever they were significant or useful to represent the participants' speech and meaning.

Taking a pragmatic approach, I kept close to my data and stayed attentive to the context and conditions that explained participants' actions and interactions with the phenomenon. During this time, comparisons were made, and I looked for words that indicated difference, such as *when*, *if*, *but*, *although*, *sometimes*, or *because*, in participants' data. To locate process and action, I used gerunds (the suffix *-ing* attached to words). As highlighted by Charmaz et al. (2018), gerunds have the advantage of "making individual and collective action and process visible and tangible" (p. 425). A sample of line-by-line coding is displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Sample of a Line-by-Line Coding

262	INTERVIEWER	
263	How do you find this different situation, being a bachelor (single) here and being a married person back home?	
264	INTERVIEWEE	
265	I feel in the beginning especially, it's really hard but by the time,	Initially finding separation difficult
266	because as a PhD student we are getting busier and busier,	Beginning to appreciate being without family
267	sometimes , it's a little bit helpful. <i>I really salute</i> someone who brings	<i>I really salute</i> - Admiring those who can study while their family is with them
268	their family here and they can also finish their study really well. That's	
269	really good support from their family. I have an experience when my	Relating an event: past experience studying while family was visiting in NZ
270	husband and my son came here for about 3 months and <i>I felt like...</i> I	Desiring for family to be around
271	love my family to be here but I think if I want to finish sooner, <i>maybe</i>	<i>maybe it's better now</i> - Considering the action (separating with family) as a helpful arrangement for completion
272	<i>it's better now</i> . I mean like this way that I separate from my family but	
273	I already told my supervisor, I leave my family back home so I need	Making a deal with supervisor
274	to meet them at least 4 months, every 4 months, so , I will go back	Returning to visit family every 4 months
275	home in Indonesia every 4 months. Like this year, I already back	Returning to be with family
276	home to Indonesia about 3 times. Yes, because I need that kind of...,	Maintaining roles and relationship
277	as a mother, I really need to meet my son and my family	Returning to keep one's roles active

Once I had the labelled codes, I then collapsed them into conceptual categories. To do this, codes were compared and clustered together for their similarities according to their characteristics or properties. These similar codes were then classified into concepts with comparisons made between and among concepts, and provisional hypotheses were generated. During this time, I remained open to what the data were telling me. I engaged with the data by often asking myself the “5W-1H” questions (e.g., who, what, when, where, how, and with what consequences) (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Flick, 2018a).

For instance, participants brought up matters around the high cost of living in the country. Because of it, everyday lives had become hard in the country, and that had also changed the ways they performed daily tasks. I was intrigued by the thought that they lived a minimal lifestyle and did things differently than what they used to back in their country. Holding these hypotheses prompted me to ask some of the following analytical questions: What was the issue being raised here? Who was being affected? What strategies did they apply, when were these strategies taken and for what reason(s)? Did they ask help? Where and from whom? With what consequences? How did things impact them?

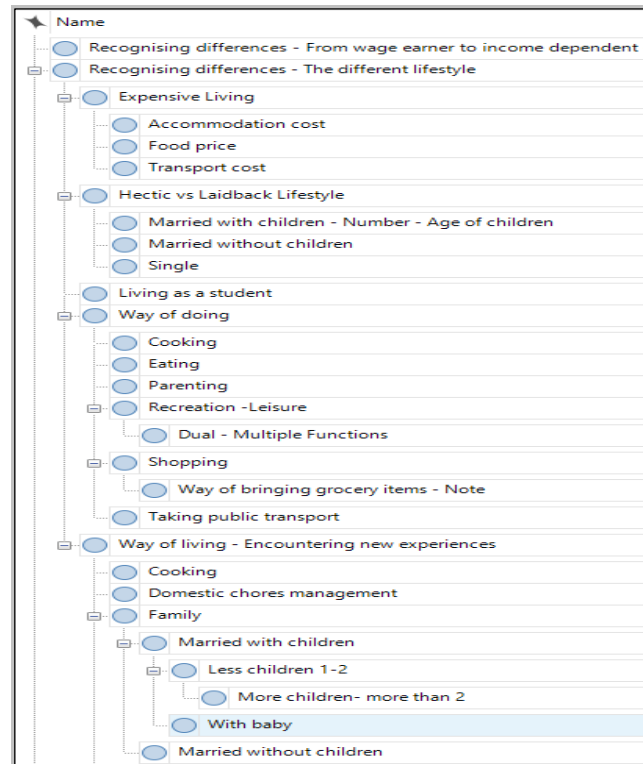
These questions kept me alert and assisted my thinking in discovering the ideas and meanings in the data; drawing out what was happening in the data. This task also led me to further theoretical sampling, in which I interviewed other South East Asian female doctoral students who may have similar thoughts or experiences. Asking questions enabled me to understand the phenomenon better as it increased my knowledge of properties, dimensions, conditions, and consequences. I frequently interspersed the coding with a memo writing as a way to reflect on my thoughts on how I carried out my coding analysis. In this study, my memos were complemented with the written field notes.

At the early stage of the coding process, I first hand-coded on the printed transcript then moved to use Microsoft Word. As more data were collected, I needed a better way of managing my data. Therefore, I opted to use a qualitative computer software programme, NVivo 11.0. I attended several NVivo training workshops for using the software, which was supported by my university. The software, however, was not utilised to do the thinking or analytical work. Instead, it was a useful support tool for organising data and storing memos, which I could easily retrieve whenever required. Figure 5 (see following page) illustrates how I used the NVivo programme to manage

my data. The computer software was useful for helping me retrieve and restore data while simultaneously facilitating my thinking process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Figure 5

An Extract from NVivo Programme



The concepts I had were abstracted to higher-order concepts to generate categories and subcategories. At this point, I did further review of the literature to enhance my theoretical sensitivity and continued with constant comparisons in the next stage, which is axial coding.


Axial Coding

As the second stage of coding, axial coding is concurrently performed with open coding to elaborate on the categories and subcategories developed in the initial stage. Axial coding systematically develops and relates categories to subcategories by applying the paradigm model—a conceptual, analytic device which organises and integrates conditions with the process whereby a phenomenon arises. Through this process, relationships within categories create more precise and complete explanations of the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In axial coding, I related categories to subcategories. I linked the categories along the lines of properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) using the paradigm model whereby the context, conditions (can be either micro or macro), actions/interactions (strategies), and consequences were laid out. With these categories, I identified their properties and dimensions and distinguished each category with its subcategories; thereby making a clearer link between the relations and patterns which form the basis of developing the emerging theory. The process continued with theoretical sampling and answering questions such as why, how come, who, where, when, how, and with what results, to relate structures (conditions) and processes (actions/interactions) (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Flick, 2018a). I also read and reread transcripts and took an iterative process to data analysis. The paradigm model is represented by tables as seen in the following example.

Table 3

Exploring Opportunities: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Choosing To Be Student Sojourners</div> 	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Pursuing aspirations	Being eligible to enrol in a doctoral degree	Pulling in resources and finances Locating a supervisor in the field of interest	Variable outcomes
	Seeking optimal benefits	Going abroad for a doctorate	Establishing the suitability of the host country Meeting entry requirement Gaining family approval	

Selective Coding

The final stage of data analysis is selective coding, which involves systematically relating the core category to other categories, integrating the categories and filling in categories that need to be further refined by the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The core category represents the central theme of the research as it holds theoretical explanatory power which links it to other categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008, 2015; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This theoretical explanation distinguishes theory from a description that might provide thick details but does not necessarily explain why and how something happens (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Similarly, Stern

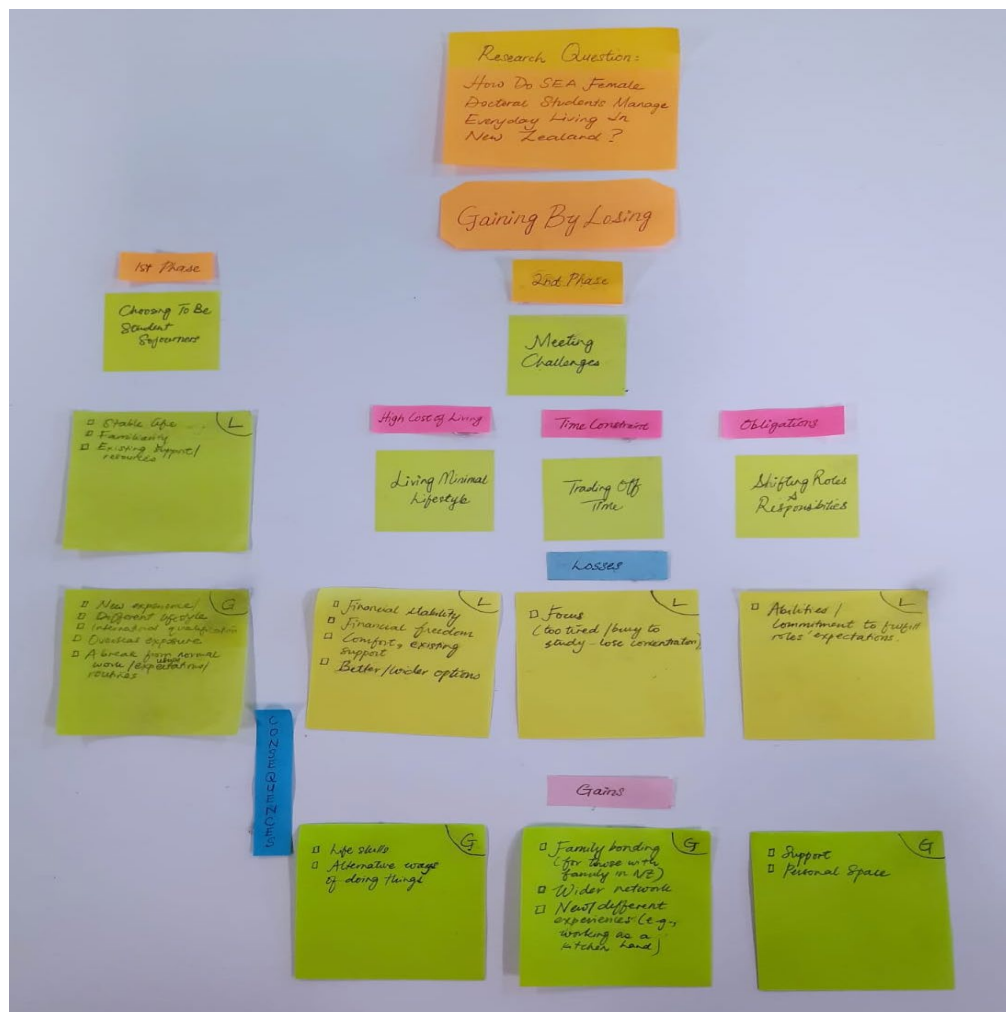
(1994) noted that at this final stage, the developed core category must be integrated with all other categories that fit together under it.

In selecting the core category of **Gaining by Losing** and coming to the theory generation, several techniques were applied. These techniques included writing storylines, diagramming, as well as sorting and reviewing memos (Corbin, 1986a; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Firstly, I wrote storylines to help me describe and explain the process of sojourning among international South East Asian female doctoral students. I wrote several storylines and found they were a helpful way to put together the story of **Gaining by Losing**. An example of my storyline is presented in Appendix K.

Secondly, I did a brainstorm of ideas using Coggle software (Appendix L) and created diagrams using software called Inspiration (Appendix M). I also made use of Post-It Notes (Figure 6) to work around codes, categories, and subcategories.

Figure 6

Sorting Codes, Categories and Subcategories Using Post-It Notes



Diagramming was a practical approach to relate relationships. During this process, the labels for the concepts, categories, and subcategories that were being developed were revisited and renamed many times before I came to final labelling (an example is given in Appendix N)—further diagramming helped me to perceive and draw the relationships and directions among concepts, subcategories, and categories before the selection of the core category. Overall, drawing diagrams had been a practical way to enhance the process of integration. By diagramming, I could make links between categories and build an integrative diagram as explicated by Strauss (1987). Thirdly, besides the already mentioned techniques, I also used memo writing. When I first started memoing, my memos were brief and often in the form of bullet points. As research progressed and I went further with the analysis, I gained a better understanding and confidence with memo writing. My memos became more analytical and reading a section in Saldana's (2016) book about writing analytical memos was also helpful. Saldana described analytic memos as reflective writing that is similar to a researcher's "journal entries" (p. 44) that is used to document coding processes and the process of inquiry that led towards theory. Theoretical memos were used to jot down and elaborate ideas that I had about the data and recorded my thoughts regarding the data analysis process.

Memoing enabled me to explore my hunches on the relationships between and among categories and guide me for further analysis. Sorting memos and grouping them together under similar ideas helped me to refine the coding process. Memoing had been useful in assisting me during the process of interpreting data and detailing the unfolding substantive theory to which the integration was achieved. My memos served as a databank of ideas and thoughts for the research project I was working on. An example of memo writing is illustrated below:

26.7.18. Rita expresses her concern with the living expenses in the city. She feels her scholarship is good but not quite enough to cover for the living cost. Rita mentions losing her stability coming to New Zealand and going through difficulties since then. She has experienced problems during supervision, moving homes numerous times, and keeps having to make adjustments. Despite all her trials, interestingly, Rita is still optimistic about her future gains. She believes what she is doing is worthwhile and has come to a country where she has tasted more freedom, able to improve her English language and learned to appreciate a life-balance. How does she see her experience? What does this indicate? I need to explore more about this concept of making gains and losses.

Writing, reviewing, and sorting memos led me to decide on what data to collect and where to find the correct data as directed by theoretical sampling. For instance, in developing the last category, **Returning Transformed**, I deliberately chose to recruit those who had returned home to seek information on the gains and losses they had experienced. Conducting this process lent to further development of the emerging theory, and during the final stage, my analysis reached theoretical saturation whereby no new concept or category could be identified from the data to fill in the categories. Analysis from the last interview with the 23rd participant confirmed the categories and the linkages between the categories.

By this stage, I had abstracted my core category to a higher-order level of analysis compared to the previous axial stage. Checking the core category against data, it was deemed as *grounded* since it could integrate with other categories and subcategories with confirmed linkages.

Establishing Research Trustworthiness

The quality of research is evaluated based on its rigour. Reliability and validity are two standard terms associated with a quantitative study to prove and validate rigour for undertaken research (Amankwaa, 2016). Conversely, the qualitative research inquiry relies on trustworthiness as a standard for assessing rigour (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). Corbin and Strauss (2015) included Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for establishing trustworthiness in a grounded theory study. There are four criteria mentioned: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; and these criteria were implemented in my study to ensure rigour.

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility refers to the assurance of truth in the research findings. Credibility in grounded theory is based on data collected through research and findings which are grounded in the data. Some techniques to achieve credibility include prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In this study, I closely followed these techniques to obtain credibility. The first technique, prolonged engagement, was described as I was immersed in the study for more than three years. The extended engagement with data collection through in-depth interviews and observations as well as rigorous data analysis afforded me a well-grounded understanding of my participants' experiences and worldviews.

The second useful technique was peer debriefing. Peer debriefing is a process whereby the researcher brings the phenomenon under study and the method of inquiry to others who are experienced and have knowledge expertise. Regular meeting sessions with my supervisors who are well-versed in qualitative research, with one of them being a grounded theorist, were useful to enhance the research processes involved in the study. Furthermore, I drew on the strength of the grounded theory support group at AUT that I regularly attended every month to get feedback and critiques from the members. These members, among others, include grounded theory scholars and supervisors as well as PhD students undertaking grounded theory research.

The last and most crucial technique for authenticating credibility in interpretive and naturalistic inquiry research is member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Iivari (2018) described member checking as an invitation for participants “to check or approve the researchers’ data or interpretations” (p. 114). After interviewing and transcribing interview data, I returned the transcripts of the interview to participants so that they could check and comment on whether I had accurately documented their voices. Additionally, when analytic categories and core categories emerged, I presented the preliminary and final theoretical analyses to some participants in the study to gain their perceptions and verify data.

By implementing this technique, I had the chance to test my interpretations from the participants’ point of view and gauge whether my reconstructions of their narratives are truthful, meaningful, and correctly aligned with their experiences. During this process, I received confirming feedback in which participants overall agreed that the findings were consistent with their experiences.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the research findings over time (Gasson, 2003). To ensure dependable findings, transparent and repeatable procedures of the research process need to be established. Bowen (2009) encouraged the use of audit trail—keeping a record of the research process to inform the theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices made at every stage of the research study so that all research processes are well documented and traceable. Towards achieving dependability, I recorded all the steps of the study, from the time it started to the end of the research and made explicit in my writing, the procedures that I employed to collect and analyse data.

Confirmability

One way of achieving confirmability is through reflexivity. Reflexivity concerns the prior assumptions and experience that influence the way the researcher and research process shaped the data (Mays & Pope, 2006). In qualitative research, the researcher plays an active role and is as much involved in the process as the participants of the study. The researcher is the individual responsible for gathering and interpreting data that were provided by the participants. According to Corbin (2009), the researcher is not separate from the research and analysis that are done. The researcher's role and standpoint also influence how a grounded theory is undertaken. In other words, the researcher is the research instrument (Corbin, 2009; Corbin & Straus, 2015; Creswell, 2014); therefore, the researcher needs to be aware of having preconceptions or a tendency to go native.

To begin with reflexivity, at the beginning of the study, I had a pre-supposition interview with a grounded theorist to draw my attention to my own opinions and potential biases so that I was aware of them when they appeared. Moreover, I practised self-reflection when interviewing participants and adopted a non-judgemental stance towards what my participants had to say. I also avoided assigning values to my participants' responses and accepted their belief and value systems might well differ from mine.

Understanding that I am an insider to my study, in that I belonged to the same South East Asian female community and was also a doctoral student like my participants, I often engaged in self-reflection during data analysis. I took extra care to stay true to the data by concentrating on what the data were telling me. In this study, I often reminded myself to regard participants as the experts of their own experience. At the same time, I avoided going native (going along with my participants' stance) by taking the one foot in and one foot back approach in analysing data (Bowers, 1988). Throughout the process of undertaking the research, I continued being analytical and reflexive.

All through the analysis and during the emergence of the theory, I kept memoing to record my thoughts. Many times, I went over these memos to recall earlier thoughts and discussions I had on the concepts I was working on. I crafted storylines to let my data tell its story from the analytical interpretation of the data, as suggested by my supervisors and other grounded theorists (Birks et al., 2009; Birks & Mills, 2015, 2019; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the probability that the research findings can be applied in similar contexts and with other participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The opportunity of recognising the transferability of my study appeared during a bus trip back to the city with Janna, an international doctoral student from the Middle East who was not my participant. Relating her experiences of studying and living in New Zealand, she indicated similar challenges and occupational changes to my participants. The Aha! moment for me was when she expressed the following sentence at the end of our conversation, “*When you come here, you lose, but you also gain; it’s all about losing and gaining.*” Her comment not only confirmed and strengthened my findings, but it also validated the transferability of my theory, **Gaining by Losing**, to another group of international female doctoral students in New Zealand.

Conclusion

This chapter briefly explained the difference between methodology and methods. A methodology is an overall plan of conducting a research study, whereas methods indicate how the research study is being performed. Part of this chapter involved outlining ethical considerations with reference to the Treaty of Waitangi, and data collection that focusses on the selection of research site as well as the recruitment of participants.

The data gathering methods—semi-structured interviewing and participant observation—were also included and described. Some discussion was made on the SGT coding processes, and the data analysis following open, axial, and selective coding was documented. Lastly, the chapter addressed the essential establishing of trustworthiness through four principles which include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The next three chapters (Chapters Five to Seven) present the findings of the study.

Chapter Five

Choosing To Be Student Sojourners

First say to yourself, what you would be; then do what you have to do.

—Epictetus (*The Discourses*)

Introduction

This study explored the sojourning experience of South East Asian female doctoral students and how they managed their everyday living in New Zealand. This chapter presents an overview of the theory generated from the research study, ***Gaining by Losing*** and the first phase, **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners**. The explanation is assisted by a model, as illustrated in Figure 7 on the following page.

An Overview of the Research Findings

Figure 7 illustrates the relationships between and among the categories and subcategories, as well as the position of the core category that represents the process of **Gaining by Losing** experienced by South East Asian female doctoral students who sojourned to New Zealand. In Figure 7, the three categories—**Choosing To Be Student Sojourners**, **Meeting Challenges**, and **Returning Transformed**—are represented as ovals, drawn in two shades of blue, to symbolise each phase of the process of **Gaining by Losing**.

The first category, **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners**, consists of two subcategories that are dynamic tension, as represented in the Yin/Yang configuration of **Exploring Opportunities** and **Making Sacrifices**. The second category, **Meeting Challenges**, incorporates another two subcategories **Encountering Difficulties** and **Making Adjustments**. Finally, the third category, **Returning Transformed**, is made up of the two subcategories **Living with the Choice** and **Experiencing Changes**.

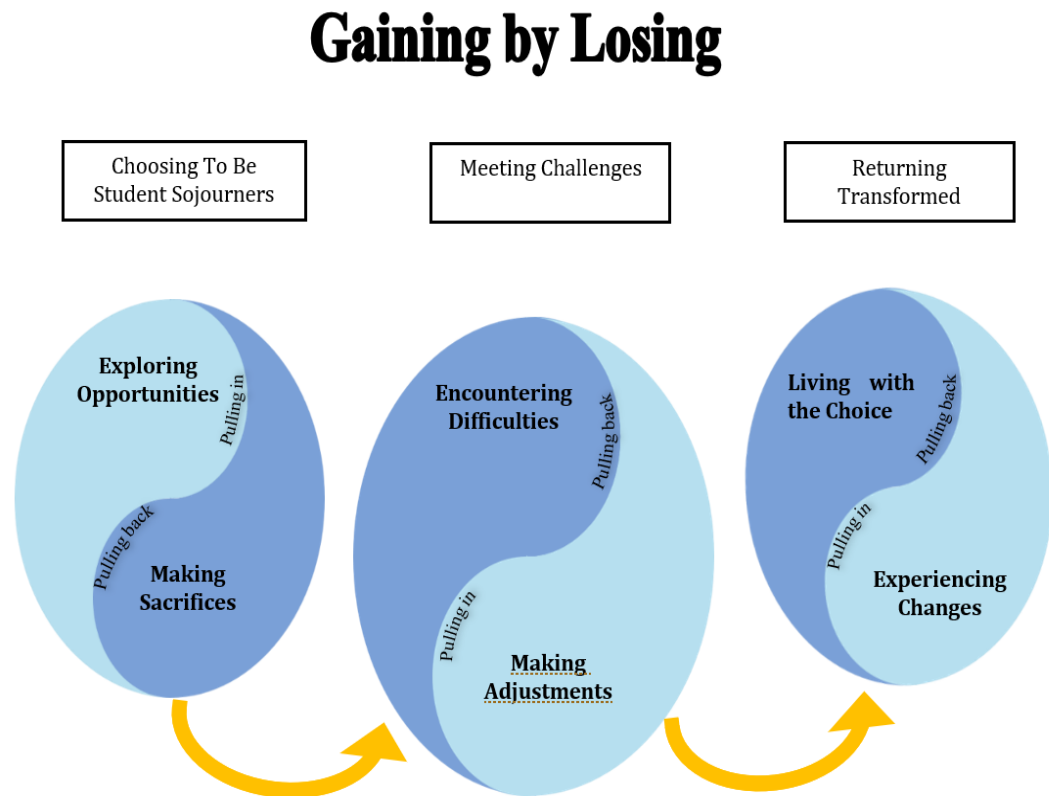
The six subcategories: **Exploring Opportunities**, **Making Sacrifices**, **Encountering Difficulties**, **Making Adjustments**, **Living with the Choice**, and **Experiencing Changes** are presented as dual processes representing the balance of gains and losses or the dynamic tension that the student sojourners experienced in this study. Each complete oval (categories) and the connecting Yin/Yang shapes (subcategories) are related to each other, and the yellow arrows show the movement from the first to the last phase. The terms ***Pulling in*** and ***Pulling back*** on the internal borders of each category are the two main strategies that participants in this study constantly employed

as they considered, enacted, and completed their pursuit of a doctoral qualification in New Zealand.

Gaining by Losing: The Process

Figure 7

The Process of Gaining by Losing



Gaining by Losing emerged as the core category of this study which captures the experiences of South East Asian female doctoral students who encountered gains and losses as they went through three distinct phases throughout their PhD study. The following is an overview of what occurred in the process of **Gaining by Losing**.

In the initial phase, participants chose to be student sojourners in anticipation of gaining benefits from doing a PhD overseas. For this purpose, participants had to first explore opportunities, through pulling in information, financial resources, and consent from their families. However, to gain something, they also had to lose something. To become a student sojourner, they had to make sacrifices that saw them pulling back from comforts (e.g., parting with personal possessions), familiarity (e.g., leaving behind known neighbourhoods and people) as well as familial roles and responsibilities (e.g., being separated with spouse, children and/or parents). At the same time, those who

accepted scholarships or borrowed money to go overseas also had to bear the associated risks (e.g., being in debt or losing face) if they were not successful.

The next phase, **Meeting Challenges**, focusses on the participants' arrival in New Zealand and the challenges they encountered throughout their time as a student sojourner. On arrival, they were suddenly presented with challenges they had to meet. The main challenge was the high cost of living in the host country. Housing, food, transport, and childcare, which were affordable in their home country, were found to be more expensive than anticipated, making life difficult.

These difficulties presented participants with challenges that they needed to adjust to constantly. Part of these adjustments included pulling back from doing things which would create losses, primarily financial ones, and pulling in support from existing or newly-created networks, along with making use of their past experience. By making these adjustments, they were gaining different ways of doing things and learning to do things differently.

In the final phase, **Returning Transformed**, participants endured the downsides from their choice of going abroad for a PhD. They pulled back from multiple things such as pursuing occupations that they wanted for themselves (e.g., cooking more often or socialising) and/or for their family members (e.g., enrolling children in after-school programmes or exploring different parts of New Zealand). Other things that they pulled back from included spending outside their means and needs, holding high expectations for domestic work done at home, and living in a suitable accommodation. Above all, they pulled back from quitting or giving up their studies and persevered.

Once the PhD journey was over, participants returned home different to when they had left because the journey of studying for a PhD and the experience of living abroad had been transformational. However, as they returned home with the sense of gain, they might find themselves returning to a place which had not progressed or was yet to open to changes, and they were presented with challenges again. Nevertheless, experiencing the changes, they pulled in what they had learned as well as developed from their sojourning overseas, and so, they ended on a positive. Essentially, their pulling back and pulling in strategies were significant for the completion of their studies.

Overall, **Gaining by Losing** underpins the findings whereby in the first category, the anticipated gain creates the loss, then in the second category, the loss creates the gain and finally, in the third category, the loss leads to gaining. The dynamics of gaining and losing are represented by the Yin and Yang symbol, whereby the fluid movement between them delineates the two main strategies recognised as pulling in and pulling back. Together, the strategies became crucial to the participants' everyday lives in New Zealand.

First Phase: Choosing To Be Student Sojourners

The first category in this study is **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners**. This category outlines the beginning of the participants' journey to do a PhD study abroad. The participants in this study were South East Asian females who chose to move to another country to study and live for several years in order to gain their doctoral degree. This relocation to gain a qualification and live temporarily outside of their home country defined them as student sojourners.

This first of the three main categories is made up of the following two subcategories: **Exploring Opportunities** and **Making Sacrifices**. Their associated properties, conditions, actions-interactions (strategies), and consequences are detailed in Tables 4 and 5.


Exploring Opportunities

After I completed my master's [degree], I keep looking for a chance to continue to do my PhD. (Rubi)

The first subcategory of **Choosing to Be Student Sojourners** is **Exploring Opportunities**. **Exploring Opportunities** is defined by the properties of pursuing aspirations and seeking optimal benefits. This subcategory provides insights into participants' intentions to undertake a doctorate and finding ways for the undertaking to be accomplished overseas. Table 4 introduces the properties, conditions, action-interactions and consequences of **Exploring Opportunities**.

Table 4

Exploring Opportunities: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Choosing To Be Student Sojourners</div> 	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Pursuing aspirations	Being eligible to enrol in a doctoral degree	Pulling in resources and finances	Variable outcomes
	Seeking optimal benefits	Going abroad for a doctorate	Locating a supervisor in the field of interest Establishing the suitability of the host country Meeting entry requirement Gaining family approval	

Pursuing Aspirations

Pursuing aspirations is a property of the subcategory **Exploring Opportunities**. Among the participants, there were several reasons for commencing a doctoral degree. For the majority of participants, the doctoral pursuit was based on a lifelong interest. Having previously attained tertiary qualifications, they desired to expand their knowledge through the PhD programme, which is the highest level of educational qualification offered at university, *“It’s actually my ambition or my passion from first degree. Actually, I started with a diploma then continued with a degree”* (Sasha). For some participants, the motivation to seek knowledge at a higher level remained strong despite having started a family and coming from a country where women seldom pursued tertiary education to a higher level.

As a woman from a developing country, back home, not many women doing their study at higher education level. I found myself talented enough to do reading, things related to academic stuff. So, even I get married, I still have the desire to reach the higher education, as high as possible. (Rubi)

For participants who were involved in an academic profession, the pursuit of a doctoral study was mostly driven by career requirements. Nowadays, most higher learning institutions expect staff to have a doctoral qualification; as a way of improving the university’s image and world ranking. Therefore, among academic professionals, a

doctoral degree is essential to belong in academia, *“My university in Indonesia was quite demanding in a way that they always push people to do PhD, the doctoral study. By 2020, everybody should be in some kind of doctoral study, starting or finishing”* (Sophia).

Similarly, participants who planned to permanently enter the academic field regarded a doctoral degree as advantageous for immersing in their disciplines, *“I worked as a part-time lecturer at one of the public institutions, but my work is just on a contract basis. I want to continue teaching at the university, and I think I want to have an expertise in something”* (Julia). Besides that, for participants from either an academic or non-academic background, a doctorate could be beneficial in terms of receiving better recognition, higher salary, and/or greater chances for job opportunities: *“Because when you have PhD you can secure better job and better payment. They said if you have a PhD, it’s easier to get a job anywhere”* (Julia).

While career advancement was the driving force for many participants, the choice to pursue a doctoral qualification was motivated by quite different factors for some. A few participants who had been in a career longed for a break; starting a PhD was an avenue for them to do something different from their existing work such as teaching or administration, *“I’m not interested in career advancement. This is purely out of interest. I want to take time off, to break from work”* (Serina). As a PhD student, engaging in full-time research was a way for these participants to reflect on their goals and, essentially, take time off work for a new experience.

Seeking Optimal Benefits

Seeking optimal benefits is another property which underlies the subcategory of **Exploring Opportunities**. It lays out reasons for participants choosing to go abroad for a doctorate. In this study, most participants who intended to advance their qualification had the option to either study locally or abroad, although one participant had no choice but to study elsewhere since there was no doctoral programme being offered in her country, *“We don’t have PhD. It’s a new country. Just 15 years of Independence”* (Rubi). Even if studying locally was possible, it was an option that many participants found less enticing, essentially because of the non-conducive academic environment back home. Participants reported that work consumed much of their time as they had to attend to different matters aside from their primary work, which made it difficult for them to focus on doing academic research. Suzanna explained:

I am the Head of the Department on my campus, but at the same time, I have to help manage postgraduate in another Graduate Centre. So, it's quite busy. And then, the problem with living here, I'm not really productive in doing my research. We tend to do a lot more administrative stuff. I have to do more on counselling and administration, doing something about administrative work, not doing a lot of research.
(Suzanna)

Moreover, in their home country, they had long work hours, “*Back in Singapore, I work from like 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.*” (Serina) and for some participants, the time getting to and from their workplace was wasted on the road due to heavy traffic. By the time they reached home, it was already late, and they would be exhausted. They could not even spend enough time with their children, who were also busy with their own personal and school activities, “*In Jakarta, I start about 7:00[a.m.]. I arrived at the office about 8:30[a.m.] because it's really jam-packed. And then, I would come back and arrive home at about 6:00[p.m.], so I don't have that much time to see the daily activities of the kids*” (Sophia).

Due to the hectic academic environment in their home country, participants also felt they would not be able to cope well if they were to do their PhD locally. This was because they might not get full-time study leave, “*If I do that [PhD] in Indonesia, it means I have to work, also to study*” (Farah). Doing the PhD on a part-time basis would be a burden since the workload and expectations were typically high. On top of that, there was also family to consider. The reluctance to start a PhD locally is noted below:

Because then, I have to manage three things: study, home, and work. And the work is quite challenging. Back in the university where I work, they don't give much support to lecturers who are studying. So, even if you're studying, you'll still work full time. And they don't give much allowance for us to take a day off to catch up with the research. I saw so many of my colleagues who do their study while working, and the stress level is quite high. (Sophia)

Apart from workplace issues, their own country sometimes lacked the necessary academic facilities: “*We have shortage of libraries, shortage of books*” (Rubi), resources: “*Even if we have good internet connection, we don't have the database—Scopus, ProQuest and JSTOR, the good library*” (Sheila), and technologies: “*The laboratory is still not working well*” (Suzanna) for conducting PhD work. Both the inadequacy and non-conducive learning environment in their home country eventually prompted participants to go to tertiary institutions abroad which they perceived to have

better academic facilities and support, *“I choose to study overseas because I like the academic support”* (Sheila).

Between studying locally and overseas, participants chose the latter option in anticipation of more advantages. They saw other benefits of going abroad, particularly to a Western country, such as New Zealand, to obtain their PhD. This choice was taken with the expectation of making gains which included an international qualification: *“New Zealand is also international”* (Sarah), language skills: *“If I get to continue to study overseas like in New Zealand, I can obtain language skills”* (Lisa), exposure to overseas experience: *“I just wanted to go abroad,”* and global networks: *“There are a lot of international students. We can know a lot of people”* (Suzanna).

Pulling in Resources and Finances

Prior to starting the PhD journey, participants pulled in several aspects that would afford them the opportunities to go abroad. These aspects encompassed financial assistance, assurances of the availability of supervisors, and information confirming the suitability of the host country and its requirements for acceptance, as well as approval to study abroad.

Securing Financial Assistance from Home or Host Country

An important consideration of finding financial assistance was the possibility of being sponsored to go overseas. Most participants in this study applied for scholarships from their government that had a practice of sending civil servants abroad for higher education. This option, however, was not always smooth as the application often took time to be approved and was sometimes unsuccessful due to the high number of applicants, *“It’s really competitive. There are thousands of applicants in each batch”* (Nadia); *“We did not get the scholarship... that was our third time applying for the scholarship”* (Sabrina).

Noting this difficulty, some participants took the initiative to self-sponsor their overseas study, *“We thought that maybe we should just go and do it ourselves”* (Sabrina). This self-sponsoring was done either by using their personal savings, *“I worked for ten years, and when I decided to come here, I literally make sure that I save up”* (Serina), taking up a study loan or accepting a deal whereby they would receive a salary but not a full scholarship to study abroad.

Alternatively, other participants searched for a different type of sponsorship. This attempt was made by applying to overseas countries that they knew offered international scholarships to South East Asian students. For some of these female participants, the scholarship was vital to enable them to study in the host country, *“Without the scholarship, it would be hard. If I were to do it by myself, I couldn’t afford. It’s quite expensive”* (Suzanna). Indeed, *“Without the scholarship, I would not have a chance”* (Diana) to study abroad. For females such as Suzanna, who was a single mother, and Diana who wanted her family to come along, the scholarship support was tremendously helpful, *“It was lucky that I have the scholarship support so at least I reach my dream for myself, but I also want my two kids and my husband to follow my dream”* (Diana).

Locating a Supervisor in Their Field of Interest

Aside from financial assistance, participants also surveyed university faculty for a potential supervisor. Various ways were used to find a supervisor. The most common was to search for and contact the potential supervisor directly via university websites, *“I just know these professors from e-mail or website”* (Farah).

Another way was by getting a recommendation from friends who knew someone who could supervise around the area of interest, *“My friend introduced me to my supervisor”* (Farah) or being invited and assisted by someone from New Zealand whom they befriended while the person was in their country for a certain kind of programme, *“I got to know the person in charge of this twinning programme, and so he invited us to come here to do our PhD”* (Sabrina).

A few participants were lucky to have the chance of meeting the would-be supervisor beforehand. This opportunity existed during the time overseas scholars visited the university in their home country, *“For selecting New Zealand, I come into contact with [supervisor’s name] who is currently my direct supervisor. He has research affiliation with the [University]. Whenever I know he is in Cambodia, I try to meet him”* (Diana). Another opportunity was through events such as conferences, *“Before coming here, I invited my supervisor for a conference to be the keynote speaker”* (Lisa).

Establishing the Suitability of the Host Country

Next, participants worked on finding out about the country where they would be sojourning. While there were a considerable number of countries they could go to, participants selected New Zealand and initiated research to learn about the country.

They did their research either through Googling on the internet or contacting people who they knew would have information about New Zealand.

Among the participants, some had always dreamt of coming to New Zealand and were much influenced by the beautiful images they saw on the media and printed materials, *“I saw this book on New Zealand. It was full of pictures... I was already able to imagine that there are a lot of sheep, it’s green...”* (Julia); the movie New Zealand was known for, *“I watched Lord of the Rings”*; or fantastic things they heard about New Zealand from their family members and friends, *“Before coming, I have friends [who] graduated from New Zealand Universities, from Victoria University of Wellington and from Waikato. I asked my friends about living here, what particular country New Zealand is”* (Lisa).

One participant, Mia, had her heart in New Zealand for a long time. She expressed her interest as follows:

I think when I was young... I would like to go to New Zealand. Maybe to travel or something like that. But, at that time, I did not expect that I will be here as a PhD student. It’s so strange. New Zealand is just in my mind. I don’t know why. (Mia)

When asked if she had thought of going to another country that is closer to hers, she responded by asserting her interest, *“It’s closer to go [from the country] to Thailand. But not in my mind since I was young. So, New Zealand is always in mind, always in my mind”* (Mia).

Another participant set her goal to study in New Zealand after watching videos and being encouraged to come to the country. According to Nadia:

I watched videos. I have some friends living in New Zealand, studying in New Zealand and they were like, “Come on, come here,” and they posted beautiful pictures when I was in the UK. (Nadia)

In general, New Zealand was chosen for reasons related to safety, *“Because one thing, it’s a safe country”* (Farah); status as an English-speaking country, *“I want to study in an English-speaking country where I can improve my English”* (Diana); appealing environment, *“I applied for New Zealand because the scenery is quite nice”* (Serina); and domestic PhD fees, *“New Zealand offers the same tuition fees at domestic rate”* (Sabrina).

For participants with family, the New Zealand immigration policy that permits students and their partners to work while in the country was a determinant for choosing New Zealand, *“I look at how the government policy [works]; the immigration policy, allows the husbands or spouses to get a job here”* (Nadia).

When children were involved, the suitability of the host country’s environment for children was also taken into consideration, *“Because I plan to bring my family, I need to make sure what particular country is good for living, for my sons. This is very important”* (Lisa). In this case, participants considered New Zealand as a country with a conducive environment for bringing and raising children, *“I think that New Zealand is a very nice place, a good place for raising kids”* (Nadia).

Other than that, aspects such as quality education, *“The education for my children is also good”* (Farah) coupled with free health and medical insurance for accompanying children further enticed participants to choose New Zealand, *“Here, the kids don’t have to buy insurance. Health and education are free”* (Tia).

Fulfilling Requirements for Acceptance

To get accepted to universities in Western countries, participants had to sit for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), an English language proficiency examination, and score the minimum entry-level stipulated by the university. In this study, some participants had been considering going to Australia to start a PhD. However, because of its lower expected IELTS score, they opted for New Zealand instead. Farah informed how the language requirement criteria enabled her to apply for a PhD study in New Zealand:

Australia is my priority because I’m already familiar with that country. But if I go back to my first uni, they required me to have IELTS 7.0. And that’s not easy for me. 6.5 is maximum for me. Before it’s only 6.5 for Master’s degree but for PhD, it should be 7.0. But in here, it’s 6.5. (Farah)

Gaining Approval

In addition to the abovementioned requirements, participants also needed to make household arrangements for their own family. Being South East Asian women meant participants were tied to their culture, which necessitated seeking their family’s approval to carry out plans; this is because, in traditional Asian culture, women usually live under the care of family members and are often protected by them. Because of their

roles and responsibilities as a mother, daughter, and/or wife, it is also uncommon for women, especially those who were married, to live far away from their family.

Thus, choices and decisions were not made without prior discussion with family. For married participants, immediate and sometimes extended family's agreement was essential. For example, to relocate the family abroad, participants first attempted to attain their husband's approval. For the husband to come along, there were usually conditions attached. These conditions included having the ability to take leave from his current job or to quit his job. Therefore, participants often had to negotiate, "*I negotiated with my husband*" and/or wait for the right time to obtain the approval, "*I was waiting for a few years until he was giving up his job*" (Tia).

Similarly, participants who planned to keep their children in the home country sought family members' approval for caregiving to change hands while they were away, "*I asked my brother and his wife if my daughter could stay with them*" (Sarah). Conversely, single participants were less constrained by household arrangements. Regardless, they still consulted their parents and sought their approval before embarking on their plan to study in New Zealand, "*My father studied here before... He supported my decision to come here*" (Julia).

In this study, participants' choice to go abroad for their PhD study was driven by the benefits they anticipated they would gain. This great anticipation saw them taking the necessary steps by pulling in the finance, the inputs, and the permission they needed to get them to New Zealand. Once everything was organised, and they received clearance, they acted on the opportunity, "*We decided to come [when] we got the offer letter*" (Sabrina).

Making Sacrifices


They [the South East Asian female doctoral students] take that risk of studying here... It's a big gamble. (Rita)

The second subcategory of **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners** is **Making Sacrifices** (Table 5) which is conceptualised in this study as pulling back on the familiarity, comforts, and financial security that the participants had enjoyed in their lives and established at home to achieve what they wanted. These sacrifices were enacted with the awareness that it was temporary and that, within a stipulated time of three to four years,

they would resume their normal lives once they returned home. Table 5 introduces the properties, conditions, action-interactions, and consequences of **Making Sacrifices**.

Table 5

Making Sacrifices: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Choosing To Be Student Sojourners </div> 	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Leaving comfort zone Changing family dynamics Relinquishing personal belongings and assets Gambling on success	Expanding horizons Financial requirement Conditions within the contract	Pulling back on stability, familiarity, and ordinary living arrangement Parting with possessions, borrowing money and relying on spouse for financial support Signing and accepting rules and regulations	Risks, fear and losses

Leaving Comfort Zone

Leaving comfort zone is one of the properties of **Making Sacrifices**. Participants left their comfort zone by venturing out to seek knowledge and experience in another country. In their own country, most participants had established a stable life. Many had already secured a good job, “*In my own country, I’m a lecturer*” (Linda), “*I was a director, and I was already earning good*” (Rita); owned a comfortable home, “*We have our own house in Malaysia. It’s a double-storey terrace house with four bedrooms*” (Sasha); as well as a personal vehicle, “*I have my own car, and my husband has his own car even though we work at the same place*” (Misha). They knew their way around and were able to manage daily activities in a familiar environment, “*Living in Malaysia... you are familiar with everything. You know where to go to get things, and it is easier for you...*” (Sabrina). In other words, they were practically living in their back yard, within a well-known surrounding.

Moreover, living in the home country meant they could have close family, friends and neighbours to rely on, “*Back home, we have everybody to help us*” (Nadia). Since housekeeping services usually existed, they almost always had help with domestic

needs, “*We have our housekeeper [who] could take care as well if I’m not around*” (Linda). It was relatively common too for the South East Asians to live with their parents, “*Because I’m single, I live with my parents*” (Rita) or live a short distance away from their extended family’s home, “*My own house is not far from my in-laws’ house*” (Sasha). Therefore, when a need arises, whether in the form of financial or other types of assistance, participants could still turn to family for support.

To seek knowledge and experience in a new place, participants resorted to pulling back on their previous lifestyle. Making this switch, however, resulted in the loss of stability, familiarity, and ordinary living arrangements that they used to have and relished in their own country.

Changing Family Dynamics

Changing family dynamics is another property of **Making Sacrifices**. In their home country, it was the norm for a family to live together. However, when participants went abroad, they had to be prepared for changes in well-established family dynamics. Due to some factors, it was not possible for all participants to bring their family or for the family members to come along. These factors could be because their scholarship did not cover family members, “*[The scholarship] is from Thai government, and it’s just for one person*” (Mia); there was a health problem which caused the family members’ visa not being approved, “*Their visas were not approved because from medical check-up, my husband was detected to suffer from Hepatitis B*” (Lisa); or their spouses’ work commitments in the home country prevented them from joining participants or accompanying them for the entire duration of their sojourning time, “*My husband returned to Indonesia because he works [in Indonesia]*” (Sarah).

On their quest for a PhD and life adventure, single participants who had never lived apart from their family took the big step to go solo, pulling back from the comfort of what was familiar to make discoveries, “*I thought that I would learn new things, especially [when] I am far away from my family*” (Julia). For some married participants with children, going solo was about bringing their children with them and caring for them on their own, “*I am a mum of one daughter, so I have to take care of her*” (Lydia) or going completely without being accompanied by any family members, “*I go to New Zealand only by myself, without my family*” (Sarah). Their move caused family separation and changed the dynamics of the family but pulling back from the

expectations of family support in childcare and everyday living were sacrifices to be made so that they could achieve their goals.

Relinquishing Personal Belongings and Assets

Relinquishing personal belongings and assets is also a property of **Making Sacrifices**. Having adequate finances was necessary considering that, for most participants, the currency exchange rate in the country they were heading to was much higher than theirs. While Brunei and Singapore shared a near similar currency rate to New Zealand, other South East Asian countries' currency could be far below the rate, *"I got a scholarship from the Malaysian government and also from the Malaysian university... half of it paid in Ringgit Malaysia. So, when we have to convert it, it's quite high with the currency [exchange rate]"* (Sasha). This situation created insufficient finance and called for action on the part of the participants to find extra money to supplement whatever financial support they already had or would be getting to survive financially in the host country.

Noting that the currency of the host country was higher, some participants made financial sacrifices ahead of their departure to the host country by selling their belongings. That might be a car, *"Before we came here, we sold our car"* (Natasha); a property, *"I sold a piece of land in order to have saving or spending here"* (Diana); or some insurance policies, *"I ended some of my insurance saving plans"* (Serina). Those who received a salary pulled in their salary and brought it along with their savings to New Zealand, *"I have already saved money from Indonesia and brought quite a lot of money from there"* (Sarah).

In some cases, participants took a further step by borrowing money from parents, *"We have to borrow money from my daddy"* (Mia) or arranging with their spouse back home to have money sent to them so that they could cover their living expenses while abroad, *"I got back up from my husband. So, he provides me with all other expenses like the living cost, the food"* (Sasha). In order to initiate their plan to study overseas, participants chose to relinquish their belongings and assets that they had back home. In doing so, they pulled back on their financial security and familiar lifestyle.

All these financial arrangements were perceived by participants as being positive. Natasha, for example, believed her action of parting with her belongings was a sacrifice worth doing, *"It's for a good cause. Studying is good"* (Natasha). Reasoning that it was

only a temporary inconvenience, another participant also felt the sacrifices she made were fitting.

I will be a poor student who will live by largely depending on money from my father, but I tell my father that this will not last long. It's for three years. After three years, we will come back to normal life. (Diana)

Nevertheless, the positive initiatives came with consequences. Since there was no surety that their study would earn the qualification they sought or could be successfully completed within the timeframe they aimed for, they might find themselves running out of money or needing to keep borrowing, which would lead to an accumulation of debt and/or financial distress.

Gambling on Success

The final property of **Making Sacrifices** is gambling on success. Gambling on success refers to the terms of the contract they had with their employers or institutions that provided them with study leave and/or financial assistance. These contracts usually have a range of terms and conditions which, among others, could include a cap on the study-leave time (generally up to three years with discretion for a time extension, depending on individual cases or circumstances), or a restriction on the number of people or types of expenses that would be covered under a given scholarship, *"I had to pay for my son by myself. Because the scholarship does not cover him"* (Suzanna). The scholarship would also often come with expectations for a certain level of performance from the participants.

To get the scholarship and/or study leave to go abroad, participants accepted the terms and conditions of their contract. The sponsorship was beneficial to enable them to study overseas, but there was also a price. By signing the agreement, the participants were legally bound by the rules within the contract; the main one being to complete their studies satisfactorily within the given timeframe and return to serve their contract. Failing to comply with the rules and regulations of the contract could result in their scholarship being terminated, allowance deducted or withdrawn, and participants could also be asked to refund the sum of money provided for their studies.

Therefore, they risked amassing a massive debt and, at the same time, losing face if they returned home without gaining the doctoral qualification. Besides the participants, their guarantors would also be affected as legal actions could be taken against them to make a payment on behalf of the participants.

Consequently, not only did participants have to pull back on the comforts and security of their everyday life, many were pressured by their sponsors to live up to the expectations while doing their PhD study. Because of the expectations and risks, participants often felt stressed and worried although they were endeavouring to get their PhD study done, “*PhD life is very struggle. I don’t know whether I can pass, but I’ve tried to do my best*” (Lisa). Some even pulled back from sharing their joy of studying abroad out of fear they might be judged.

I post updates [on Facebook] but not that frequent because I don’t want my friends or other people to think that I’m doing other things rather than focussing on my study. I don’t want them to think that ‘She’s in New Zealand just to have fun.’ (Julia)

In short, pursuing a PhD was a promising quest; yet, at the same time, a risky and demanding proposition that involved relinquishing or pulling back from the social, financial, and reputational security they and their families had worked to establish.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of the research findings and briefly explained the theory of **Gaining by Losing** as a process that underpins the study. This process covers three phases, beginning with the first phase **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners**. This chapter also presented the two subcategories: **Exploring Opportunities** and **Making Sacrifices**, which provide details for **Choosing to Be Student Sojourners**. The main strategies of *Pulling in* and *Pulling back*, as well as the associated consequences, have been explicated. The second phase, **Meeting Challenges**, is explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Meeting Challenges

When you can't change the direction of the winds, adjust your sails.

—Harriet Jackson Brown Jr. (*Life Little Instruction*)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the first category **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners** discussed the initial phase of participants making use of ***Pulling in*** and ***Pulling back*** strategies for the opportunity to pursue their PhD overseas. Chapter Six presents the aspects of participants' lives when they arrived and settled into life in New Zealand. This chapter considers the core of the study and demonstrates how the two strategies interacted as the participants took action to manage their everyday living.

Second Phase: Meeting Challenges

Meeting Challenges is another category within the process **Gaining by Losing**. By deploying the pulled in and pulled back strategies, participants were able to move past the first phase in venturing overseas for a doctoral degree. Departing from their home country, participants travelled with anticipations to the host country to embark on an inspiring academic journey. As it is typically with coming to a new country, they had their first impressions of New Zealand but later discovered the challenges that came by.

Two subcategories represent **Meeting Challenges: Encountering Difficulties** and **Making Adjustments**. The first subcategory, **Encountering Difficulties**, indicates the types of difficulties which occurred during the participants' time in New Zealand. Conversely, the second subcategory, **Making Adjustments**, demonstrates the different ways participants dealt with these difficulties to sustain their temporary living so that they could complete their PhD.

Encompassing both these subcategories is the process of **Gaining by Losing**, which encapsulates how participants managed their everyday living. The challenges experienced by the participants and the choices they made in the face of these challenges once again created gains and losses for them. Tables 6 and 7 display the properties, conditions, actions-interactions (strategies), and consequences for the subcategories **Encountering Difficulties** and **Making Adjustments**, respectively.

Encountering Difficulties

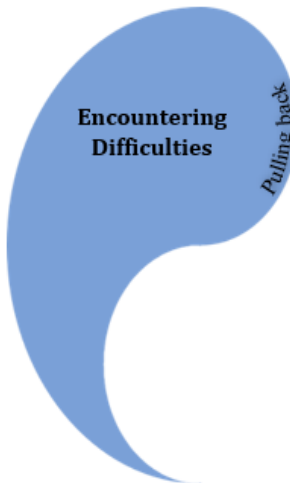
I think my life is very unique. VERY unique. I struggle. I find my life is a challenge. (Lisa)

Encountering Difficulties is the first subcategory under **Meeting Challenges**. With the clearance to go abroad to study for a PhD and financial sacrifices, as well as risks acknowledged, the participants were on their way to achieving their goal. However, relocating to New Zealand brought various everyday living challenges, which they must meet in order to fulfil their ambition.

In light of this statement, **Encountering Difficulties** (Table 6) is a concept that brings out the challenges of participants' everyday living while being away from their homeland; the most significant one being the high cost of living in New Zealand. They discovered that costly expenses affected their normal lifestyle and the choices they made had consequences. Table 6 introduces the properties, conditions, action-interactions, and consequences of **Encountering Difficulties**.

Table 6

Encountering Difficulties: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

Meeting Challenges	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Residing in a pricey cosmopolitan city	High cost of living - costly living expenses Currency exchange rate	Pulling back by: Settling for what was affordable within the living budget Changing the pattern of doing everyday living occupations	Altered lifestyle Changed habits/routines
	Change from wage and salary earners to full-time students	Lack of income to supplement existing savings or scholarships		

Residing in a Pricey Cosmopolitan City

A property of **Encountering Difficulties** is residing in a pricey cosmopolitan city. A consequence of the property is the condition of a high cost of living. Shortly after their initial arrival, participants discovered that they were residing in a cosmopolitan city which also happened to be among the world's top most expensive cities. As such, living costs were high and became a challenge to participants, *"It's really tough living here because it's really like high cost for everything"* (Nadia). The high cost of living was a major issue while participants were living in the country as noted by Suzanna, *"The only thing difficult for us in New Zealand is about the living. The problem is about the living cost."* Some participants knew beforehand about the expensive living as they had been forewarned. According to Sarah, *"People already mentioned it before when I depart to New Zealand."* However, the extent of the expenses caught them by surprise, *"I found that out of my expectation is living cost. Yeah. Living cost including food and also the rental, the cost of the apartment"* (Rubi).

Moving to New Zealand, all participants who previously either owned their home or lived with their family, now had to live in a rented accommodation, *"In Indonesia, I don't have to rent, but there I have to rent"* (Sarah), and pay a weekly rent *"They billed us weekly"* (Nadia). Since the city is currently facing a housing shortage, *"I read the electronic paper somewhere saying that New Zealand lacks housing"* (Amy), rent is expensive in the city. The problem affected many people, including *"scholars as well"* (Rita). Although participants had made financial plans, and some received financial assistance (such as a stipend), it was hard to cope with the cost of living in the country, *"I expect in New Zealand, the cost of living would not be so expensive. Not so expensive, I mean, is compared with my stipend"* (Sheila). In this matter, many recipients of scholarships commented that the stipend they received was just enough for a living but insufficient to get them suitable accommodation. Since rent formed the bulk of their living expenses, *"...almost 80% to 90% of the scholarship stipend"* (Diana), it left them with very little to spend on other needs.

I had to rent at least \$300 a week. That means \$1,200 a month. The scholarship I got is \$1,600 not until \$1,700, and it is already spent for the apartment for \$1,200, and there left only \$400 to \$500 for living in a month.
(Sarah)

Besides accommodation, other taxing living costs included food, personal items, transport, and childcare for those with children. For instance, prices for basic groceries and cost for dining out vary, but most participants found that both were considerably expensive within their limited budget. Besides food, transport fares were another cost that participants regarded as expensive, *“I was really shocked by the bus here as well. The bus is really expensive too”* (Serina). Although as students, participants were eligible for a concession, they found the fares still costly and the discount substantially low, *“It’s expensive to travel here. Even if you are a student... our AT Hop card, it’s not even 50%. It’s less than that”* (Sabrina). Childcare services were not cheap, either.

The high cost of living expenses was acknowledged by all participants including a participant from Singapore, whose currency exchange rate was almost at par with New Zealand, *“You don’t know what expensive is until you come to [Kiwi City]. I mean when I’m here, I feel it’s really expensive”* (Serina).

The contrast in the cost of living was particularly prominent among participants who came from countries with a lower currency exchange rate from New Zealand. In saying this, currency exchange rate became another condition in **Encountering Difficulties** as commented by a participant, *“If we talk about the cost, the price if you compare with Indonesia, I think it’s almost ten times more expensive”* (Diana).

Change from Wage and Salary Earners to Full-Time Students

The second property of **Encountering Difficulties** is the participants’ status change from wage and salary earners to a full-time student. The change of status contributed to the financial strain, *“In Singapore, I was earning a wage... but now I don’t have a constant income”* (Serina). Since they were doing mostly unpaid academic work, participants lacked disposable income and as such, were constrained by their financial status.

When I work as an official or NGO worker, everybody sees us like we are rich. I have a car, travel by car or a nice motorbike, eat at a nice restaurant. But when I become a student, then I become a poor student because students write a lot of papers to publish for no benefits. (Diana)

This situation was different from when they were working. As professional workers, participants earned a stable living wage or salary and were financially independent. They had a steady income that enabled them to make personal and family spending. For instance, they could shop for quality goods and toys, go for a vacation and stay in a

hotel, frequent eateries as well as hire childcare and domestic services. This lifestyle drastically changed for many participants when they became a doctoral student and lived abroad on a reduced income. The stark difference in their current lifestyle was strongly felt by Sarah, who saw herself being disadvantaged by her new position in the host country:

As a student, of course, we are with a very limited scholarship. In Indonesia, even though the salary is not very high, I can still live a better life. I can still have a car, house, saving. I can go everywhere and anywhere if I want. I can still go for relaxation, recreation. Go outside to restaurant. But in New Zealand, I am very low class. (Sarah)

The impact of the high cost of living was experienced and responded to differently by single and married participants based on their financial circumstances and whether or not they were accompanied by family members, as illustrated in the following findings.

The high cost of living and being a student living on a reduced income prompted many participants to adopt a minimal lifestyle which saw them being thrifty in many ways to accommodate their altered lifestyle. This action caused changes in their daily doings. Managing everyday living is focussed on participants' engagement with their ordinary day-to-day activities, such as cooking, shopping, childminding, and working part-time. In **Encountering Difficulties**, pulling back is the participants' strategy to refrain from doing something which would entail losses of time, security, and, most importantly, finance.

Settling for what was affordable within the living budget

When searching for accommodation, many participants aimed for a location that was conveniently located near their campus, "*Our priority is a place that is close to the university*" (Sasha). Achieving that would mean they would have access to university's facilities and services, be close to their supervisors and peers, could immerse in an academic environment and, most essentially, save on transport.

Besides that, they also searched for an area with easy access to amenities that could support their daily activities such as going places and shopping, "*I was looking around for places to stay which would make it easier for me to go to campus as well as to get our things like our groceries*" (Sabrina). In this case, a living location near public transport and grocery stores, especially Asian grocery shops where they could find local foodstuffs from their own country, would be handy. The City Central Business District

(CBD) was often a choice because of the centrality, amenities, and facilities that were offered. For some participants, the close distance between their accommodation and the university also made the city centre an ideal location.

Living in the city [centre] would be best. And it is also easier to get what we use, like Malaysian food uses things that you can't really find in [general supermarkets]. And living quite near to the train station, the bus station, the ferry terminal, is very easy to move around anywhere in the city. (Sabrina)

While these criteria were on their wish list, the utmost priority was finding accommodation which fitted their student's living budget. Nevertheless, the lack of housing and exorbitant rent posed a challenge for them with limited options to secure affordable accommodation that suited their needs.

In [Kiwi City Centre], it's very difficult to find accommodation. So, I was not successful to find a house around campus because it's a very expensive area. My scholarship is not really sufficient to cover that. (Sabrina)

The costs they had to make allowances for were not limited to rent but included utility bills that could increase during winter time due to the usage of extra electricity, "It's always very cold during winter. We have to use a lot of heater and the electric bills are very high. It's very expensive" (Diana).

The thing [rental accommodation] that we can afford is below \$450. Because after \$450, it's going to be very hard because that doesn't include water, that doesn't include electricity... See, you can imagine. That's only for accommodation. For internet, water and electricity and house, it's \$500 to \$550. (Tia)

In response, participants took several different steps. Those who were single and married but not accompanied by their family mostly went flatting with others in order to get a place close to university and share costs for rent, food, and/or utility bills. For those with a small-sized family, the chances of finding accommodation, particularly in the city centre, were much better compared to those with a bigger family.

Participants who came with family and children might find it challenging to get suitable rental homes in a particular type of accommodation, such as individual city apartments, "If you have kids, then there is less opportunity or different opportunity to find accommodation because landlords favour those who don't have kids" (Sophia).

It was more challenging if they had two or more children, and if these children were younger. This situation is because the living abodes in the city centre were mainly small-sized, *“What I can see is that it is quite challenging to find a place to stay here because of the price and the size... we feel that some of the apartments are really small”* (Sabrina), and for privacy and safety reasons, there is usually a limit on the maximum number of people that could stay in a unit of property.

Being thrifty and on limited finance, most participants with family and children were not willing to spend above their budget for an appropriate-sized accommodation. Instead, they pulled back their expectations and turned towards cheaper options, with the next type of available accommodation being an apartment unit with shared communal facilities.

Many of Indonesian students with kids and with very limited financial ability live in studio rooms in the city... [If they choose to live in the city], then their option will be [Cyber-Potter Apartment] because that will be the only apartment not counting how many people live in the room. (Sophia)

Due to the hassle of renting in the city, some participants disregarded that option and looked elsewhere. The suburbs or outskirts of the city were usually the alternatives, where they might get to rent a housing unit, a cabin, a hostel, or a room in the landlord's house at a lower cost. While the university provided student accommodation, it was the least preferred choice among the participants who considered the rental too steep for their budget, *“There's a hostel near the university, but it was quite pricey, it's over my budget”* (Julia); *“I started to look for accommodation on my own because the [student hostel] is too expensive. It's TOO much. It's not for student”* (Rita).

The application process for university accommodation was another deterrent due to the booking fees and closing date criteria, *“I applied for [the student hostel], but it's too late. Because the application is only for February, so I couldn't do that. And when I want to, it's full”* (Nadia). Furthermore, many of these hostels were neither built to cater for students with family needs nor their school-going children's requirement in mind, *“I couldn't stay at [the student hostel] because I had to look for the closest school for my son, we had to stay in the zoning area of the school”* (Suzanna).

The need to be thrifty was balanced against other important concerns. For instance, while prioritising rental options that were under budget, participants also looked for an area and accommodation that offered safety. Safety was a factor they carefully

considered, knowing that they were on their own, and their family would be worrying about them being far from home. Two single participants, who came together as sisters, checked on the neighbourhood area and considered safety features before deciding on where to live.

My sister and I walked around the neighbourhood, and we didn't feel quite safe around the place... because it was very quiet. Although my sister is with me, we are still girls. We are here away from my family... I don't want them to worry about us... I feel safe when I live in apartment because there is security and people can only access the building if they have access card. (Sabrina)

The choice of location for finding accommodation was also influenced by the need to minimise other expenses such as travel cost. For example, when living away from campus, participants ensured they were the only person needing to travel. In this instance, the living premises would usually be close to their husband's workplace or children's school which did not require the use of public transport, "*They [the children] can go to the school by walking... I am the only one who comes here. My husband also works there [in the residential area]*" (Amy).

A similar approach was taken among participants who were sharing accommodation and studying in different campus areas so that only one person paid for the transport cost, "*Because my housemate is doing her PhD at [another] campus. At least one of us is not paying for the bus fare*" (Sasha). Another way of reducing transport costs was by pulling back from coming to campus regularly unless there were reasons for it. Minimising trips to campus was seen as a sensible move although, given a choice, they would possibly want to come more often.

Money is my priority... that decides I come [to campus] or not... I need to save some money because even though we have tertiary concessionaire, travelling from A to B... I have to pay for around two times. So, even though I want to come, I have to pay a lot of money. So, I decided to work at home and come here for socialising. To see my friend, to talk to somebody else, to practise my English, something like that. (Mia)

To further save costs, participants pulled back from renting accommodation when not in use for an extended amount of time. For instance, when they returned home for data collection, they would usually terminate their lease on the rental property so that they did not have to pay the weekly rent, "*Every time I go home, I don't rent because I can save the money*" (Lisa). They would only search again for accommodation when they

were back in New Zealand. Whenever possible, participants would also pull back from renting unfurnished accommodation for the extra expenditure.

I would prefer the furnished ones. Because students, probably they won't stay forever and therefore it's really an annoying experience when you come here, you still have to furnish your apartment, for example, with all the stuff which are very expensive. (Nadia)

If they really had to rent an unfurnished home, participants would invest in very minimal furniture knowing that they might have to move again after their lease of rental property expired, *"I don't want to buy much because moving a house each time is really challenging and also very costly"* (Diana). Another reason was that disposing of furniture when the time came to vacate the premises would incur a cost, *"I have to be considerate on buying things. Because after I leave the house, I have to pay money to get all those stuff out of the house. So, I don't dare to buy much"* (Diana). Knowing that they were not bringing back with them the furniture bought here also stopped them from buying, *"I don't want to buy. I don't want to waste money on that kind of stuff because I'm not going to bring those stuff back home"* (Nadia).

Consequently, they often lacked the appropriate furnishings needed to properly do their work, *"I don't have a study desk"* (Diana). Not having a study desk, for instance, resulted in participants working on the floor, *"We just sit on the floor and do our work"* (Nadia) or *"We just do our work on the bed"* (Sophia). Sometimes, they would also substitute something else for what they were supposed to have or needed. This situation was different when they were back home and could have a comfortable studying environment.

In my country, I have my own study room... I would go to my own study room, and I would turn on the music, and then I study. I have a desk, I have nice chair, and I have a cupboard to put all my books, and I have drawers. But here, I only have a box. (Diana)

Aside from the above pulling back strategies for accommodation and furniture, participants made efforts to cut down on electricity use by decreasing the lighting usage at home, *"And using lights... we need to be smart as well. For some rooms that we don't stay, we don't turn on the lights"* (Diana). During the winter season, they also tried to reduce electricity cost by pulling back from using the heater at home. They would instead opt for alternatives, *"I will wear many layers [of clothes], and then I use very*

warm shoes, gloves and then tie a scarf... when I feel so cold... I go to the library because there, I can use the central heater” (Mia).

First timers were often unaware of incurring high-power bills due to the cost of heating their homes. Coming from a tropical country, it was not easy to adjust to the cold temperature. By themselves, they might still be able to cut fuel cost, but when children were present, it was hard to manage energy use. Since not all homes in New Zealand are adequately insulated, they could not help but use more electricity than usual, *“Since my kids are from the hot country, they just heat up [the heater] the whole night... the first month that they arrived, the electricity bill was \$350 for a month” (Diana).*

Changing the patterns of doing everyday living occupations

In response to the challenges they encountered, participants changed the patterns of doing their everyday living occupations. These changes were noted in the ways they did their cooking and other domestic chores. Changes also appeared in other occupational tasks such as shopping, childminding, and part-time jobs.

Cooking and performing other domestic chores

Since the cost of food in the dwelling city was not cheap, eating out or buying takeaway food, two activities that most of them were accustomed to doing very often and easily back in their home country, became an occasional deed, *“We don’t eat out often, maybe once or twice” (Nadia).*

Eating out was limited to scenarios when they were travelling outside the city, *“In Cambodia, I would eat out more often... In here, eating out when it’s unavoidable, like travelling” (Diana),* or celebrating events, and when they suddenly ran out of food at home, *“If we are celebrating something, my friends and I will go out to have a meal... and I will buy if I don’t have anything prepared for lunch or dinner” (Sasha).* Muslim participants who had to adhere to their religious diet, such as eating *halal* food also found they had limited choices. It could be an inconvenience to find *halal* food outlets, *“Firstly, it’s hard to look for halal food. Secondly it’s very expensive compared with [food] you cook by yourself” (Linda).*

Because the options of eating out or buying takeaway food were no longer sustainable, many of the participants pulled back from this usual habit and decided on cooking at home, *“We don’t eat out. We spend a lot of time cooking at home. Cooking by ourselves is less costly” (Sasha).* Even though *“I don’t really cook” (Sabrina)* or they abstained

from cooking in their country, “*I never cooked in Singapore*” (Serina), they began cooking regularly in New Zealand, “*I had to cook... I had to save money*” (Suzanna).

Interestingly, cooking now became part of their routine in New Zealand, and for some participants, it was a new skill that they began to develop. As one participant confessed, she only started cooking on her own in New Zealand when she encountered a situation that compelled her to cook for her housemate, who was pregnant.

At that time, when she was heavily pregnant, I realised that she often just ate bread, something really simple. Besides, she's really tired, and she really needs to eat something. So, yeah. I started to find recipes, the easy ones, and I tried to cook. Starting from there, I cook. It's like a turning point for me. (Julia)

With the availability of internet today, participants could easily find food recipes and cooking demonstrations on social media to go about with their cooking, “*Nowadays we have cooking blogs, and also I watch YouTube. So, okay, this is how you cook, and there are some tips. There's this Facebook cooking group*” (Julia). However, not all participants cooked or cooked regularly. One participant purposely chose not to cook because she felt being single; it was unnecessary and a waste of time and money to cook for just herself. Her strategy was to get the same food every day, at an affordable price that she could conveniently find at the campus site for her daily meals.

I do not cook. I find cooking is very time consuming, so I rather buy. I just buy the sandwich. I have a favourite breakfast sandwich which just costs \$4. So, buying a \$4 sandwich breakfast, I find it is more efficient for my lifestyle rather than cooking every morning and spending so much time. That's faster for me. (Rita)

Once a week, she got to eat something different when a friend took her out, “*During weekends, I meet my best friend... he always brings me to a Filipino food stall in [this one particular] area. So, during weekends I could try the Filipino food*” or the accommodation where she stayed in, organised a dinner, “*I lived in this Māori accommodation... once a week they cook food. There's a gathering. It's like a dinner*” (Rita).

Other participants chose to cook simple food, “*I just go for something simple like fried chicken or use a simple menu, not a complex one*” (Sasha); cooked in advance, “*When I get back home, I prepare lunch and dinner for the next day*” (Serina); make use of cooking appliances to save time, “*I just use blender for grinding*” (Linda); or limit the

time spent cooking by cooking just once in a day for all meals, *“We just eat whatever we have cooked for that day, and that’s it”* (Natasha).

A few of them chose to cook once a week for several dishes which would then be stored for later consumption so that they could save time, *“I cook quite a lot of different kinds of food, and then I store it in my fridge in my room. It’s like nine to ten kinds of food, and then I put them in containers and place them in the freezer. And after that, I can take it and microwave”* (Farah). To save money, participants and family also prepared food at home and brought a lunch box, *“I also prepare lunch box for my husband because here we can’t, it’s expensive to buy food outside”* (Misha).

Participants living in accommodation with a communal kitchen were the ones doing the least cooking compared to other participants in the study. Not having their own private kitchen and not being comfortable with the communal kitchen environment discouraged them from pursuing this activity more often.

Actually, I really love to cook. Cooking is one of my favourite things to do. But because the kitchen is not my private kitchen, so it reduces my feeling for cooking... when I took my Master’s programme in Australia, we had a room, and we had our own kitchen. And every time I got stressed, I always cooked. But now, it’s different. Because the kitchen is far away. I don’t want to spend my time to walk down there with so many stuff and cook there for two hours, four hours. (Farah)

Even when they did cook, they would cook early in the morning when less people were cooking so that they could avoid the crowds, get a stove to cook on and cook while the place was still clean.

There are a lot of people living there and when everyone goes out to cook for their meals... sometimes, you don’t even get stove to cook... The communal kitchen is always left dirty by the users, and I really hate it. And we didn’t know who used that stove before. That’s why it’s really difficult. And sometimes, the sink, you can see like there’s food still in there. It’s really disgusting. That’s why I don’t like it. It’s not hygiene even though there are two cleaners who come in to clean the kitchen, the whole kitchen area. They came in the morning. That’s why I always do it 10 o’clock because they came before 10:00 a.m. So, when I came there, the kitchen is clean. (Nadia)

Sometimes, participants used their creativity to cook in a rice cooker so that cooking could be done without going to the communal kitchen, *“I bring a magic pot to my room. Sometimes, I cook soup or even opor in that magic pot. It’s a rice cooker. It’s for everything. It’s magic!”* (Farah). To avoid hassles and save time, participants chose to

cook in their room, which was against the rules of the building—cooking in the room often emitted smells that might attract displeasure from other occupants living in the same building. It could even get them into trouble if the smoke from their cooking triggered the fire alarm.

It's really smelly... when I cook, I open my window. I open my bathroom door, and sometimes I open my front door. We are not allowed to cook in that room because it can trigger the alarm... and what happened is that probably the person who triggers the alarm is charged like \$2,000. (Nadia)

Among participants with family, they would often be the main person doing the cooking at home, “*I’m the person that’s cooking at home*” (Linda). When they did their cooking, participants usually modified the recipe to compensate for the ingredients that were not available or hard to find in New Zealand. This modification resulted in their food tasting differently from the original recipe.

However, since they were busy and there was not much they could do about the situation at hand, they instead ignored the different taste and pulled back from being fussy about it, “*The taste is different*” (Linda); “*[If there are missing ingredients], I try to cook another more easy... or just use what I have. I’m okay because I have no other choice. I have to do this and that, [I have a lot more of other things to do]...*” (Lydia).

Doing household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, might typically be the occupations of the participants as the female in the family. Yet, this role or duty was not always fully fulfilled. For instance, when participants with family were pressed for time or unable to cook, they would sometimes ask their more capable children to do the cooking, “*There are occasions, sometimes, when I have something, like I come here [campus] on Saturday, then I will make a phone call to my first and second ones, just to ask them to cook, like fried rice*” (Sheila).

At the same time, if the husband is capable, they would also let him step in to do the cooking, “*...he has more time, and he will cook*” (Sheila). Furthermore, since hiring helpers in New Zealand was beyond their means, participants would also delegate other household chores such as cleaning and doing laundry to the family members, “*Within 3 or 4 months, there’s home inspection... We have different jobs... my husband usually cleaning the dining room or the bed and I usually clean the toilet and the kitchen... and my son, I ask him to clean the outside of the house and the ceiling*” (Linda); “*When I*

stay at home, I will cook but [my husband] will like clean up, wash dishes, and even go [to the] laundry” (Nadia).

Pulling back from their primary role and duty was a move that empowered family members. Involving family members in carrying out daily chores was a good way of sharing responsibilities. The children, for instance, could learn to be independent but participants must also accept the possible danger when the children were tasked to cook at home, *“I am worried if something burns, if they burn something”* and at the same time, lower their standard for the quality of work they might expect from their other family members, *“He [my husband] can [cook]. He will cook like simple food”* (Sheila).

Shopping

When it came to shopping, participants took a frugal approach to buying groceries and other purchases. Among the participants, there were different ways taken to shop within their limited budget. One of the strategy participants used was to avoid over-spending by making a grocery list, *“I have a shopping list”* (Nadia) and attempting to stick to it. To curb overspending, participants also put limits on the frequency of shopping. For example, one participant had this strategy of limiting her grocery shopping to only once a week, *“If we go shopping more than once a week, that means you want to buy everything other than important things... so, just arrange once a week”* (Linda), or fortnightly, *“We buy the groceries... everything that we need for around two weeks”* (Nora), which otherwise would be more frequent in the home country.

Another participant limited her shopping for groceries to one store only. She believed if she did not do this, she would be tempted to spend for things that she would see at other shops too.

One of my strategies, I only do shopping once a week in the same place. For example, I know my friends like to go to Sunday market because it's cheaper and they go for their meat in halal butcher. So, different places. I find out if I do that, I spend more. Because interesting things in the market, interesting things in the grocery [store]. So, I just keep all my shopping at Pak n Save. (Sophia)

While this was a good idea, it was not always possible to get grocery shopping done at one place as noted by Natasha, *“You also need to go to a lot of places to shop.”* When buying groceries, participants would buy the essentials and pulled back from going for extra items. One single participant indicated that she could have snacks included in her grocery because she and her housemates pooled their money together, *“We're sharing*

with three other tenants... it's all in including for grocery, for snack and everything" (Nora).

To further stretch their dollars, some participants would buy discounted food items, *"I buy second-hand [lower-grade] fruits"* (Tia), and shopped at the most inexpensive grocery stores, *"I will go to the cheapest supermarket here"* (Sasha). Participants with a big family would buy food items in bulk which was usually cheaper, *"We buy in bulk, a lot at one time so that we can save"* (Mia), and those with a small family, like a couple, would buy only what they needed to avoid wastage from perishable food items, *"I just buy what I want to use for the next one I want to cook. I don't buy in bulk"* (Misha). Moreover, their diet usually consisted of a cheaper food option, such as chicken over meat for protein, *"We seldom eat meat. Most of the time it's chicken... chicken is cheap and it's easily available"* (Julia).

For other types of shopping items such as clothes, participants pulled back from wasting money by wearing whatever existing clothes they already had over new ones, *"You've got clothes already, so what are new clothes for? It still fits you"* (Nadia). Shopping for personal items would mostly be done in their own country, either before coming or when they had the opportunity to return home during their study, and brought back to New Zealand, *"Sometimes when I go to the Philippines, I already do my shopping there and then bring everything here"* (Rita); *"When we went back to Indonesia, there is where we did most of our clothing and shoes shopping"* (Sophia).

If they were to shop in New Zealand, they would often look for low prices, discounts and offers during sales promotion, *"Sometimes, they have discounts which is even better"* (Nadia); *"If I want something, I wait for sale and then I can have half price of it"* (Rubi). Saving in advance to buy things that they wished for was a typical practice among participants, *"I need these items... so, I have to save the money for the things that I need to buy"* (Rubi).

Participants also had their ways of avoiding buying at original prices. One way was to buy used items online, *"We normally buy second hand things through Trade Me"* (Ema) and another was to visit thrift shops, also known as opportunity shops (Op Shops), such as Save Mart, Salvation Army, and Red Cross that carry low-priced, second-hand goods. If they could not find what they were looking for at these kinds of shops, they would then go to budget stores where things sold were still affordable. This shopping

style might not be what they would normally do in their own country as indicated by one of the participants.

I buy at second-hand, opportunity shops here... In the Philippines, I have never bought second-hand clothes but here, clothes are very expensive. So, there is no choice usually, but to go to the opportunity shops, or to look for sales, bargains. But sometimes what I do, if I really want to buy cheap but good items, I go to 123 Dollars stores. I usually buy my stuffs there because it's cheap. (Rita)

In New Zealand, they were very thrifty to ensure that their spending was within the budget, *"We have set a certain amount of money that we could spend within a week, so we are following to that budget"* (Natasha); *"The way I save money is I try to limit the budget as low as possible. Like, maximum that we can spend [for shopping] in a week is \$200. Sometimes, we spend less but not more"* (Tia).

They monitored their spending and savings in the bank account so as not to overspend, *"Aside from budgeting, I also regularly monitor my account"* (Rita). If participants overspent the allocated money, they would cut on other spending and this would usually be on food, *"When I think that for this period I've spent too much money on other things more than usual, I try to limit spending money on food..."* (Lydia).

For participants with children, cutting down on food expenses was hard, knowing that it was important for their growing children to have a healthy balanced diet, *"I cannot limit their consumption because they are growing"* (Tia). Being economical, participants just pulled back from spending, *"I don't really buy stuff"* and at the same time, they taught their family members to be prudent too, *"When going shopping with my son, I kind like educate him on how to spend the money"* (Nadia).

For these participants, their spending must be calculated or planned, *"Planning... I do plan a lot for my expenses"* (Rita), often with very careful considerations, *"If I don't think I need it, I won't take it even if it is on sale"* (Nadia), and by prioritising the importance, *"Most important thing is, every month, I have to set aside money for my rent and also for the bills"* (Julia).

Childminding

Childcare was one of the aspects of living that had changed for participants with children. Back home, many of the participants already had an established childcare arrangement. When participants went to work, their very young children would be taken care of by a live-in nanny or family members such as their own siblings, parents, and/or parents-in-law. Older children would attend school whereas younger ones would go to the nursery and kindergarten, *“In Malaysia, I send my kids to childcare”* (Sasha).

There was often someone to take the children to or pick them up from school if they could not do so, *“And for sending the children to the school, we already have people for sending them and pick them up”* (Linda). Thus, caring for children in the home country was usually a shared responsibility with others. In other words, participants were not the sole caregivers for their children and did not spend long hours with these children every day.

Nonetheless, things changed when they brought along their children to live in New Zealand. Although childcare and after-school services are available, the fees could be taxing on participants and the operating hours might not be extendable. The location of the child centres might also be inconvenient for participants who did not have a personal vehicle and sometimes, there was a waiting list, *“... daycare is full, almost all the time, so there will be a waiting list. My friends had to wait for 6 months just to get the kid into the daycare”* (Nadia).

For these reasons, participants often chose to look after their own children or search for a childcare substitute. Most participants with school-going children would stop their PhD work before school time ended to bring their children home and continue their PhD work from home while being with their children at the same time.

This act was not something to which most participants were accustomed. One participant said she struggled to do her work with her children around, especially as they were all living in a small apartment within a confined space. In her country, she would normally get her work done at campus so that she could concentrate on looking after her children when she returned home. When she first arrived in New Zealand, she had her husband looking after the children intermittently. However, she could not get that help when her husband started full-time work to generate extra income for the family. She had to accept the fact that she needed to cope with studying and caring for her children, even though she found it stressful and upsetting.

It is not me that I can work and study when my children are around. Usually, I have to be total in doing my job or I have to be total to be a mother. But here, because we only live in a studio, it's only one room. So, the children are always around us... I got stressed. (Farah)

Another participant had a different way of tackling this situation. As she was also doing a part-time job besides her study, she would spend time with her children when she returned home until they had gone to bed. She would replace the time lost by doing her work late into the night before sleeping for just a short while, *"If children go for bed... I start to study... I just have a sleep for three or four hours every day... Usually, I'm going to bed 3 or 4[a.m.] because I have to catch up"* (Linda). Since both she and her husband were working, they sought their oldest child's help to babysit their other younger children when they were not at home.

We already have the [agreement] that if I cannot take care of my children at home, my husband must be at home. Or just like now, if my husband cannot take care of them and I cannot do that, so my oldest son would take care of his sisters at home. (Linda)

Apparently, family members were often the primary choice to be entrusted with the childcare task. Participants who came without adult family members would ask people they trusted to look after their children and that was done only when necessary. One participant who was in New Zealand with just her child asked help from co-nationals to look after her child on two occasions: when she was sick, *"Last year, I was sick. I asked help from my friend..."* and when she had something going on in university after school hours.

If I have a meeting with supervisor or I have like workshop after 3:00p.m., where my daughter will also be at home, I can also ask help from them, so my daughter can stay a little bit longer with them while I am not able to be with her. (Lydia)

When they had to pay for childcare, participants also looked for something that was within their budget and often searched for alternatives to save money on childcare. The convenience and flexibility of time sending and picking up the child were an important factor for the choice. This was done by hiring undergraduates to be a babysitter with an agreed amount of payment which was much less than the normal childcare charges, *"They're Malaysian undergraduate students here. Thirty dollars per day. So, that is for eight hours, from 8:30[a.m.] to 4:30[p.m.]. I know it's not much here"* (Sasha). In

taking this move, participants pulled back from choosing safety and quality care or best practices for their children for the sake of affordability.

Taking up menial part-time jobs

To ease their financial situation, some participants took up part-time jobs. Their jobs ranged from university work, such as invigilating exams, to doing odd jobs at food outlets and bookstores. Single or unaccompanied participants were more likely to take up extra jobs as they could fit the working hours within their daily schedule. For participants who had an accompanying spouse, it was almost certain for the spouse rather than participants to work full time, *“Because the cost of living is very, very expensive, he decided to work”* (Tia).

However, the jobs they did depended on what was available to them, as finding a job was competitive and hard to come by, *“I heard that when we come here, my husband can find job quite easily... but nearly two or three months, he just did some part-time [jobs]”* (Diana). Many times, the jobs they had were menial and different from the nature of the jobs they did back home, *“The only job he could do is working as an unskilled worker. It’s quite totally different from what he was doing back in Indonesia, but he wanted to support the family”* (Tia).

If the family was big, it was highly likely for participants to also take part-time work to supplement their family income, *“I’m studying, and starting last week, I start to work part-time job to help for our daily expenses”* (Linda). With extra income, they could have better chances of renting suitable accommodation, making necessary household purchases, getting a personal vehicle to move around, enrolling children in holiday programmes during school breaks and even sending money home to their dependent family.

Additionally, having a part-time job was beneficial to the participants because this was an opportunity for them to improve their existing skills. For example, interactions with other people within their workplace contributed to better language and communication skills. Sometimes, participants also picked up a different skill like cooking international or Western food.

I'm doing a part-time job outside of the uni. My part-time job is about being a chef assistant, so I'm helping in a café. I found that the environment is really friendly, and I feel confident to speak with other people... because I love cooking, so I can learn the new recipes, especially Western recipes. (Nora)

For participants who were separated from their family, working was a useful way to prevent them from thinking about the separation and feeling homesick, *“I left my family back home in Indonesia, so I need like a little bit of distraction, I don't want to think my family, like, every day”* (Nora). By working, they could keep themselves occupied and the money earned could be used for travelling expenses to return home for a family visit or to cover living expenses when family came over to visit participants in New Zealand.

While earning extra money provided benefits, it also caused challenges. Balancing work with their academic commitments was not always easy and more challenging when there was family to care for as well. The attempt to juggle multiple responsibilities led to exhaustion and loss of study time as experienced by one of the participants, *“Because I'm so tired, there is no time for me to study, just go for bed”* (Linda). This situation, when not efficiently managed, could have a backlash, *“I have some friends who were terminated from the programme because they could not manage their job and study very well”* (Sarah).

In brief, participants faced a different situation when they came to New Zealand. The expensive cost of living, the currency exchange, and being a student sojourner on a reduced income saw them **Encountering Difficulties**. These conditions required participants to utilise pulling back strategies by settling for what was affordable within their budget and changing their patterns of doing everyday living occupations. Their actions resulted in an altered lifestyle whereby their habits and routines also changed, as revealed in the findings.

The next section, **Making Adjustments**, further explores how participants adjusted to their new environment and living arrangement—forming the last part of **Meeting Challenges**.

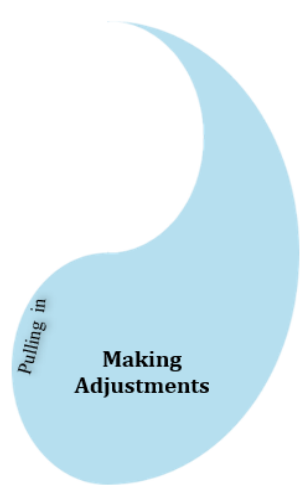
Making Adjustments

It's always an adjustment; an adjustment period of being in a new place.
(Rita)

Making Adjustments, the second subcategory of **Meeting Challenges**, is a concept of pulling in the help, support, and resources needed to make the doctoral journey a success among the participants. The properties, conditions, action-interactions (strategies), and the consequences of making adjustments are depicted in Table 7.

Table 7

Making Adjustments: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Meeting Challenges</div> 	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Adjusting to a new environment	The living environment The extent of network and support	Pulling in: Understanding of how things work Existing knowledge and support Social connections Opportunities/Resources	Developed abilities/Learnt to make adjustments
	Adjusting to a new living arrangement	Being accompanied or unaccompanied		

Adjusting to a New Environment

Adjusting to a new environment is one of the properties under **Making Adjustments**. Being new to New Zealand, it was vital for participants to learn how things worked in the country. The differences in operational systems between their country and the host country sometimes posed a challenge, but these differences were also opportunities for new learning experiences and knowledge, “*Because of different culture, different life, different country... you have to adjust... you have to learn how to open yourself to learn new things*” (Rubi). Some examples included taking public transport, making doctor appointments, finding rental accommodation, and doing business transactions.

In the home country, a lot of participants were used to having their own car to move around. However, since owning a car was not cost-effective and parking space was a problem for those living in the city centre, most opted to use public transport. Relying on public transport and adhering to the bus or train schedule were two new things for them to adjust to while living in the country. Since the public transport in New Zealand is generally efficient, participants pulled in this new way of travelling to their advantage, *“The bus here is quite good. Quite punctual and there are a lot of buses. You can go almost everywhere easily”* (Sasha).

Taking public transport to go places relieved them from the hassles of car ownership, *“We decided not to have a car... because of driving license, things are very complicated”* (Tia) and driving in traffic congestion. The time spent travelling in public transport could also be utilised to do other things, *“In the train, I usually read some research papers. I record my conversations with my supervisors, so I listen to it back. Sometimes, I just listen to music”* (Misha); *“I take the bus. In the bus, I will just think or maybe write it down. Okay, I’m going to make the to-do list”* (Nadia).

To use public transport, participants taught themselves to check and be alert to its schedule, *“Here, if you want to go somewhere, then [check] for the schedule. The bus will come at this time... so you have to make sure about that”* (Lydia). They pulled in this new knowledge by browsing the New Zealand transport website or through using mobile applications, *“Most of the things we need to do here, we can do it online”* (Sasha); *“There’s an App where you can check for the bus time”* (Serina).

In New Zealand, participants discovered that they needed appointments to see doctors; unlike in their home country where they could just go to the hospital or visit the clinic without an appointment. While the system could be unusual for participants, they found themselves getting used to making appointments in advance before meeting someone, including their supervisors, *“I have to make an appointment... but because the doctor is just in front of my apartment, walking distance, I can go there early and have a faster service”* (Sarah).

Another thing new to them was the way of searching for rental accommodations. Renting accommodation in the city has its own procedures in which the property-to-be-rent would be advertised online or through a rental agency, and there would be a property viewing on a set time and date for all potential renters. Participants learnt they needed to come on time, *“In New Zealand, the viewing of the house, there’s a certain*

time. *If you don't come, the agent will not wait for you*" (Amy) and join other people for the viewing, then send in an application to be selected as a tenant.

There were a lot of people coming for viewing at the same time with us. We find that even if you want the apartment, you still have to go and view the apartment with the agent, then only you can book and rent the apartment. So, those are the things that we learn in our first year. (Sabrina)

Besides that, business transactions were also conducted differently with most purchases in New Zealand paid via EFTPOS, a machine operated transaction, instead of cash, *"One thing that is different here is I don't use cash... that's one thing to know, how to use the card"* (Julia). Other payments such as rent or bills are also commonly made through online banking. Having this exposure led participants to be more familiar and adaptable with using technology for different purposes.

I find that I'm getting used to having all kinds of formal interactions, for example, banking activities, formal enquiries, applications et cetera, being done online or using applications on the mobile phone which I would have gone to great lengths to do them face-to-face back in Malaysia. I suppose I have greater confidence using these methods here compared to in Malaysia. (Sabrina)

For the first few months after arrival, most participants were unsure of how to go about doing these instrumental activities of daily living that were important to them. Lack of familiarity and not knowing people made it a challenge for them to work out things and make sense of their lives, *"During the two months in New Zealand, I didn't have anything, I didn't know many people. So, it's difficult for me..."* (Amy); *"I found the first six months very challenging... I was like, where can I find this and where can I find that?"* (Sophia). Noting the need to have a support system, participants made efforts to pull in social connections by establishing networks with their co-nationals and fostering friendships with other international students and people they met by themselves or to whom they were introduced.

Many of the opportunities to get to know people came while attending co-national gatherings, *"There are many Indonesian students and people from Indonesia who are going to apply for PR [permanent residence] here... sometimes we decide to gather, have a gathering"* (Lydia); university functions, *"There are a lot of seminars, and there's a morning tea every Wednesday"* (Rita); religious services, *"I do have [people] from the church. I went to the New Zealand church...most of them, the congregation, are from New Zealand, so I have some good New Zealand friends"* (Amy); and/or living

in shared accommodation, “*Although we live in a big place like that [a boarding place with many rooms], we can meet people easily*” (Sarah).

Sometimes, they pulled in the opportunities on their own by signing up for a programme, “*How I got to know people was through Meet Up when I go for hiking activities. That is when I got to know other people or other internationals*” (Serina); volunteering for organisations, “*When I attended NGOs activities, and I volunteered, I met new people*” (Rita); being part of students’ associations, “*We have a student association called [...]. I searched and got in touch with them*” (Sasha); and joining online social groups, “*I’ve already been a member of that Yahoo Group, and there is also Facebook for Filipinos here... I could ask more questions, and that will make adjustment easier*” (Rita).

Having strong networks in the country was most beneficial to reduce the feeling of loneliness while being separated from their own family. Unsurprisingly, some participants even took the newly-established networks to be their surrogate family in New Zealand, “*In my home country, we have a lot of relatives... In here, we only have friends. That’s why I try to change my mind. We have to live more like relatives here. [They are] not only friends, but our new relatives here*” (Farah). Establishing networks is useful and essential for other significant benefits, as testified by the following participants.

I am quite happy to say that five, six months down... now whenever I think of an emergency contact number, I have three persons’ names on my list that I would put in... (Serina)

Please make friends with people. Because when you make friends with people, you’ll survive with your study... you can improve your English, and you can learn from other people. Based on my experience, if people just isolate themselves, they won’t get anything from New Zealand. (Suzanna)

Adjusting to a New Living Arrangement

Adjusting to a new living arrangement is another property under **Making Adjustments**. Moving beyond their country, participants moved away from the norm of living with immediate family or living close to extended family. When South East Asian female participants arrived in New Zealand, they were either accompanied or unaccompanied by family members, which influenced their everyday lives.

Single participants mostly lived in accommodation shared with other people who were not family members. Flatting was a helpful way to save costs and find companionship, *“It’s quite difficult if I stay alone. I won’t have someone to talk to, to share. And what if I get sick, no one is going to know if I can’t get up”* (Julia). Still, it required adjustments to live with flatmates or housemates who could be of different ages and backgrounds. Likewise, participants who were married but came without their family and lived with other single housemates also found themselves having to adjust to the new living arrangement.

The new living arrangement triggered several adjustments. Participants who were sharing accommodation pulled in their past experience of living with others during boarding school or university years to get used again to the present living situation, *“Before this, while doing my bachelor’s degree, I studied in another state, so I lived with friends... I think my past experience helps me”* (Julia).

Showing respect, learning to compromise, being helpful, co-operating and sharing responsibilities were some of their key actions to live harmoniously with one another, *“We need to understand each other. When she’s in her room, I try not to disturb her, and she’ll do the same thing too”* (Sasha); *“I think I’m lucky to have good housemates because my housemates know their responsibilities. Each of us knows our responsibility to keep the house clean or to pay the bill on time”* (Julia).

Often, participants who were older and married, but lived with younger ones, made efforts to take time and be involved with their flatmates’ activities, *“My housemates have different gap and background with me. They are younger... but we get along very well. Sometimes, we spend time together... the thing I do with them is shopping, to buy groceries together”* (Nora).

When there was an option, they would choose to live with co-nationals so that they could maximise the sharing experience through similar culture, *“You know, it’s more comfortable because you eat the same food, you understand the language, you can better express yourself to them. Similarities in culture do help in adjustment”* (Rita). Only in situations where there were unavoidable conflicts or major fallouts, participants would resort to moving out and find another living place.

My [PhD] friend at that time also had a critical problem. She got stressed, depression, something like that. The situation also depressed me. She did not treat me like a friend, she treated me like a stranger, and I gave up living in [the accommodation], and I live here [in another accommodation]. (Lisa)

I had to leave the place because my landlady bought a dog without asking me if it's okay. It's okay to have a dog outside the house but not roaming inside the house. My landlady just surprised me in Facebook Messenger with a photo of a dog, 'Our new flatmate.' I asked her, 'Why don't you ask me if it's okay to have a dog?' and then she said it's their entitlement because it's their house. My reply was, 'I'm your flatmate. You should at least ask me if it's okay to have a dog.' She made me feel that the dog was more important than me. Just imagine that! The dog was more important than the person who's paying her \$150 per week... so I told myself I better transfer. (Rita)

For married participants who came solo and were living without their immediate family (spouse and children), the new style of living had its pros and cons. On a positive note, the time they were alone was considered to be a kind of 'freedom'. They had what they called *Me Time*, which gave them allowances to focus on their study rather than doing housework, "*Back home, I have to prepare everything from morning till afternoon, until night*" (Rubi) or taking caring of their family's needs.

Back in Malaysia, I live with my family. So, I still need to work, and then I still need to cook. But, I think the difference is... here I can mostly focus only on myself and cook meal only for me and prepare all the things that I need. And the difference between here and Malaysia, apart from our own family to take care, we also have our parents to look after... That needs our attention and time too. (Sasha)

In New Zealand, they had time in their hands and control over their schedules. Without their children, they could spend more hours on their research with fewer distractions or obligations, "*If I live without [my child], I can stay longer [in campus] until 8:00 p.m. I can do more work. If I don't cook, then I can just grab something from the café*" (Rubi). Like other single participants, they also had more time to interact with other people, and many of them took advantage of this personal time to do various other activities, "*Flexible to manage my own self and also do travelling*" (Rubi).

A distance relationship freed up space and time they needed while being a student. However, being away from family and for too long could affect family relationships, even if there was a mutual agreement or consent before the separation.

Temporary thing but maybe they consider it too long. I have been away for 2 years. There are advantages and disadvantages when we live far away from our family... every husband and son, they really want their wife to live close with them, so that fulfil their needs, look after them, especially for the Asian people. Even at the beginning, they support you to undertake the course, this journey...for men, maybe they decide today but tomorrow... they blame you again. So, this the challenge. (Rubi)

The participants' strategy was to maintain their relationship with their family back home. They kept in touch by making use of low-cost technologies that allowed them to make frequent calls to their family, *"With my husband and children, we usually do video call every day"* (Sasha) and going back to visit them as many times possible, *"Because my son always needs me, and my husband asks me to do that. I also feel, okay, okay, I go for a month and come back"* (Rubi).

Getting in touch and travelling home to be with their families might take time away from their studies. However, it also allowed them to fulfil their roles, *"I already told my supervisor, I leave my family back home, so I need to meet them... every four months, I will go back home to Indonesia... because as a mother, I need to meet my son and my family"* (Nora).

Participants who were in New Zealand with just their school-aged children had their own experience of the new living arrangement. While they found living without their husband or extended family to be challenging, *"For me, it's challenging in terms I don't have enough support system"* (Sophia), they somehow managed to pull in their study and children around the flexibility of the host country's school environment. For instance, the school day in New Zealand usually begins at 9 a.m. and ends around 3 p.m. Hence, there was time to prepare for or send children to school then go to university afterwards. For this group of participants, time at the university was often fully utilised to do research work or gather materials before their children returned from school, *"Usually, I come to uni and print everything, all the notes... and then I do all my work at home"* (Farah).

Since the primary school syllabus mostly is not exam-oriented, their children's lessons were not so taxing on them as a parent, *"I think... my time is a bit flexible, in a way I can do my work [in campus] and then continue at home. Here [in New Zealand], it's more manageable. I can be more involved with [the children's] activities"* (Sophia). The laidback lifestyle in New Zealand, in a way, made it possible to do things following

their pace, *“People here are really like, they take it easy, you know. They don’t rush on things”* (Nadia).

As for those who came with family, the experience of living just with their immediate family and going through a myriad of challenges together was an impetus for many positive changes which strengthened the family bonds. For instance, adjusting to having children around for most of the time taught them to adapt, *“Before I can never do reading if my children are still awake... but now, I try to get used to that kind of situation”* (Farah). Living in a small accommodation within an enclosed space, at times, was distracting and suffocating, but it also drew the family closer, *“The children are closer with me because they are with me almost 24 hours... this closeness is mainly because we are living in one room together”* (Farah).

Furthermore, family members’ contributions to help ease the burden of household jobs made the family more supportive, *“It’s pretty challenging, but I have my husband to help me”* (Diana). Without this support, it could be more challenging for participants to deal with the everyday demands while completing their PhD study, *“I really salute someone who brings their family here and can also finish their study really well. That’s really good support from their family”* (Nora).

Participants made adjustments by getting to know how things work. Through pulling in understanding, support, social connections and resources, they were able to find ways to adjust to the host country’s living environment and adapt to their current lifestyle, *“I have to adapt with that condition. I just make adjustment”* (Farah); *“The thing that we need [to do] is to adjust and accommodate”* (Tia); *“We just try to adjust ourselves”* (Amy).

Summary

This chapter is centred on **Meeting Challenges**, which is the second phase forming the South East Asian female doctoral sojourning journey. The focus of this chapter is on how the participants’ everyday occupations changed due to **Encountering Difficulties**, as well as how participants met their challenges through **Making Adjustments**. The two strategies ***Pulling in*** and ***Pulling back*** resurfaced in this chapter, as illustrated by examples in the subcategories. For example, the participants’ new ways of managing everyday living in a new environment and social connections are gains that were largely observed in this phase of sojourning.

However, there were also losses, such as the impact of distance, which caused strained family ties, reduced support while studying, and difficulties associated with being a single parent. Losses were also seen in the participants' living arrangement as they had to rent expensive accommodation and share with other people who were not family members. These gains and losses were represented by the core category, **Gaining by Losing**. The following chapter proceeds with the third phase: **Returning Transformed**.

Chapter Seven

Returning Transformed

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

—Robert Frost (*Mountain Interval*)

Introduction

This chapter is the last of the three findings chapters, which began with **Choosing To Be Student Sojourners** and was subsequently followed by **Meeting With Challenges**. **Returning Transformed** in this chapter is the final category from the previous two categories presented in Chapters Five and Six, which also made up the core category of **Gaining by Losing**. While Chapter Five outlined the pre-sojourning phase and Chapter Six focussed on the while-sojourning phase, Chapter Seven highlights the final sojourning phase for the South East Asian female doctoral students who participated in this study. This chapter concentrates on the outcomes of going through the experience of being a student sojourner in New Zealand which resulted in negative and positive consequences.

Third Phase: Returning Transformed

The opportunity to become student sojourners afforded South East Asian female doctoral students with overseas learning and living experience, but it came with challenges. Nonetheless, these challenges were a catalyst for participants to grow. Through living the overseas experience and meeting its challenges, participants underwent a transformation. **Returning Transformed** is represented by two subcategories: **Living with the Choice** and **Experiencing Changes**. The properties, conditions, actions-interactions (strategies), and consequences for the two subcategories are summarised in Tables 8 and 9.

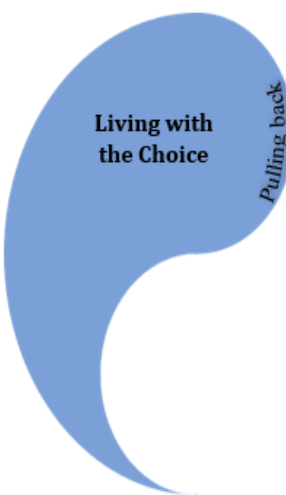
Living with the Choice

Study-wise, I believe the [PhD] journey would most probably be the same [as back home], but having the support... while going through the journey might result in a different experience. (Sabrina)

Living with the Choice is the first subcategory belonging to **Returning Transformed**. As part of this subcategory, **Living with the Choice** offers an account of how the experience of living in the unknown and enduring unwanted effects, which resulted from their decision to do a PhD study overseas, brought about a transformation of the participants. Table 8 highlights the properties, conditions, action-interactions, and consequences of **Living with the Choice**.

Table 8

Living with the Choice: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-bottom: 10px;">Returning Transformed</div> 	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Being in the unknown	Living with uncertainty	Refusing to give up Relying on available support system	Remained steadfast
	Enduring the unwanted effects	Choosing to study abroad		

Being in the Unknown

Being in the unknown is a property of **Living with the Choice**. When participants made their choice to go abroad for their PhD, they were undoubtedly stepping into the unknown. As they left behind their home country and made sacrifices for anticipated gains, they carried with them the uncertainties of living in the host country and their destiny.

There is a fear of the unknown. Because you're at a place so new. You don't know anyone. You don't know what'll happen to you. You fear for the future. You wouldn't know if you would really succeed. Because when you left your country, you risked a lot. (Rita)

Studying for a doctoral degree is an undertaking that is full of uncertainties, even at the beginning of the programme. For example, during the first year of provisional doctoral study, participants were uncertain if they could pass their proposal defence and be

accepted as a doctoral candidate to progress with the programme, “*For me, at that time, I didn’t know whether I could continue or not. Because at that time, we had to pass the provisional year*” (Suzanna). Furthermore, while a full-time doctoral research study ideally would take around three to four years to be completed there is, unfortunately, no assurance of success.

In some cases, the participants were knowledgeable in their field and had advanced research skills. Yet, they faced setbacks during their doctoral years due to personal problems such as health, “*I have diabetes. I have to visit doctor often, like frequently... recently, I feel tired, and I cannot study properly*” (Rubi), marital disputes; “*During most of our marriage, we have been supportive to each other. This is like the biggest argument ever involved because he doesn’t see me going overseas is good for him*” (Sophia); or financial constraints when something went wrong.

My husband needs to wait for their call to ask him to go somewhere [to do construction work], and then he will work there. But then, he didn’t get the call anymore. So, he understands that he has been fired, but still, he’s not being paid. He has been cheated. So, it’s a struggle for us because we need that money and at the same time, I have my class. (Sheila)

Academic issues were another setback that potentially hampered progress. Some participants started as a novice researcher; therefore, there were many things that they were unsure about, and required time to learn along the way, “*You know, PhD is a journey. So, it’s like when [I] started, I don’t even know what PhD is. It’s a big journey*” (Rita). The road to success for doctoral students was also not always smooth. There were bumps in the road where participants might find themselves not working well with supervisors, getting stuck in their study, and/or struggling to keep up with different academic expectations.

The nature of a PhD as a research work that is somehow unpredictable made it difficult to gauge how long it would take to complete their study. They could exceed the timeframe, and that had repercussions.

I’ve had to stay longer than the three years intended. This was partly due to the changes in supervisors, and also the journey of owning up and taking full responsibility of my PhD. The extension meant that I had to find funding for the additional time in NZ. (Natasha)

Enduring the Unwanted Effects

Another property of **Living with the Choice** is enduring the unwanted effects. Participants in this study chose to pursue a doctoral study overseas. Their choice put them through various challenges and drawbacks to their lifestyle. They had to temporarily endure many discomforts from the high cost of living. Their financial constraints deprived them of better living options and, as discussed in the previous chapter, restricted them from many activities they enjoyed doing and wanted to do, as noted by the following participants:

In Cambodia, I would spend 10% of my salary to buy things like nail polish or have a haircut or do the massage or go to the gym, but here, I don't do anything except for my kids... for my own needs, my own interest, it's almost completely cut off. (Diana)

Sometimes, that [lack of money] is the limitation. I couldn't support [the children] to go to extra classes. They used to have swimming lessons in Indonesia but here, I could not afford it. Life can be very boring because we are financially limited. (Sophia)

Participants had to bear numerous difficulties such as time pressure, lack of support from people back home, academic hardship, and financial deficits to reap the benefits of what they intended to do. Prior to the journey, they made sacrifices and while in the country they were constantly adjusting to accommodate their altered lifestyle and keep themselves afloat as pointed out by Nadia, “*We just try to survive.*” All the difficulties made life unpleasant, and the stress or anxiety from making numerous adjustments impacted their health and well-being, “*I had to live with this life, and I cried almost every day*” (Diana).

Refusing to Give Up

In order to tackle adversity, participants used the strategy of pulling back from the desire to give up. They relied on their understanding about the nature of being a student, “*My point of view of being a student... cannot enjoy so much of luxurious life or so much of free time*” (Diana) and accepting that doing a PhD study is an arduous task, “*I know what it is like to study... I accept all the challenges willingly, knowing that studying is hard, writing is hard, to keep up with supervisor's work is hard*” (Rubi).

During difficult times, many participants kept themselves strong by holding on to their faith, “*I prayed. I have to be strong*” (Rita) and on this faith, they deliberately took the risk from their action of choosing to go abroad for a PhD, “*I'm not complaining... It's*

my risk that I have to take” (Farah); “I don’t want to reject the belief of our religion. Just do your best and pray... if you can continue it, that is very good luck. But if not, I will not regret it. I will just accept it. That is fate” (Lisa).

Moral support from family members was taken as a great source of motivation that encouraged them to persevere, *“For academic, sometimes my husband also supports me like, keep going, keep going. Sometimes, if I tell him the whole challenge, maybe I can’t bear it... he said, ‘No, no, baby, you have to try more, you have to strive yourself”* (Rubi).

Relying on Available Support System

Some participants counted on support systems beyond family circles. Instances of such support are from fellow doctoral candidates, *“[Room code] is the PhD room. Because people support each other, it’s a family, It’s not just a PhD room”* (Rita); helpful supervisors who might be experienced at supervising international students, *“My last supervisor, he really helped me a lot... my second supervisor he’s really, really a supportive person, he’s really positive... You know, when you don’t understand, and people reached your hands, and they walked together with you”* (Suzanna), *“My supervisors have been very supportive maybe because they have experience with international students”* (Serina); and good friends to facilitate their learning, *“I have my PhD friends, and when I encounter some problems, I share with them. And also, I ask them to check my grammar when I do [my] writing”* (Rubi).

Despite their losses and difficulties, participants kept going. Ultimately, their refusal to give up fuelled their endurance, and this became the driving force to remain steadfast and committed to their PhD; being undeterred by the challenges.

Experiencing Changes

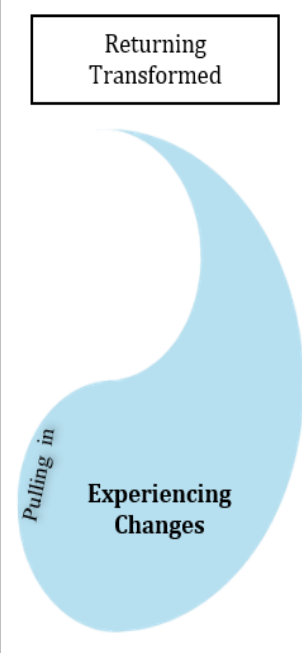
When I arrived, I was a bit naïve in terms of living in a foreign country and making friends with other people... After experiencing things... I think, perhaps, I’m more matured compared to before. Yeah. I think I’m more matured in terms of understanding how life goes. (Julia)

Experiencing Changes (Table 9) is another subcategory under **Returning Transformed**. This subcategory is a manifestation of changes following the participants’ challenging experience in the host country. Going through the sojourning experiences brought about two types of outcomes: intended and unintended. Table 9

presents the properties, conditions, action-interactions, and consequences of **Experiencing Changes**.

Table 9

Experiencing Changes: Properties, Conditions, Actions-Interactions (Strategies), and Consequences

	Properties	Conditions	Actions-Interactions	Consequences
	Intended outcomes Gaining the anticipated benefits	The academic system and people in the host country	Experiencing gains Adopting the host country's culture of living	Transformed by the changes
	Unintended Outcomes Acquiring unanticipated benefits	New ways of doing and thinking		

Gaining the Anticipated Benefits (Intended Outcomes)

Gaining the anticipated benefits is one of the properties of **Experiencing Changes** and is what participants expected to gain when they chose to go abroad for their PhD. For those who succeeded in completing their PhD, it was a dream come true. They achieved their goal and fulfilled their ambition that was set earlier, “*Since I have already graduated, I would say that I have fulfilled the intended outcome set before the journey*” (Ema).

Most participants were provided with the facilities they had anticipated, “*The university provides good facilities for the PhD students*” (Sabrina), resources, and academic support they had hoped to receive, “*The things were as expected; the learning resources and the learning support*” (Natasha). These somehow justified the reasons for choosing to go abroad for their academic pursuit.

Something you cannot get in Indonesia is the academic support. Library resources. The library online and offline and good people. Good librarians. If you ask someone in New Zealand, they will reply back to you. The latest is two days. In here, they'll never reply. We [are] like talking to the ghost. (Amy)

Besides gaining an internationally recognised doctoral qualification, participants also had the opportunity to experience living in a host country that was different from theirs.

I find NZ a beautiful place to live in, nature at its best. Wherever you go, you are always greeted by amazing views of nature that is different from the ones I would find at home, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to experience them. (Sabrina)

...Here, we have a lot of public parks that we don't have in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the government is trying to build everything in every single soil with more buildings. We don't have public areas. But here, they can do jumping, whatever they want, in public area. There are a lot of public parks here. (Farah)

Generally, they had positive experiences of New Zealand and interactions with people in the country, “*The view is totally beautiful. The people are very nice*” (Suzanna). Their family who came along with them also benefitted from the local education system, “*My son, has got proper education, and he loves going to school, and it's not really demanding, and that's what I really like about the education system in here*” (Nadia) and overseas exposure, “*I gained my PhD and my family living in New Zealand gained some international experiences living abroad*” (Sheila).

More than that, they also had the chance to meet a wider circle of people and establish connections with both the locals (Kiwis) and other international students.

I have other friends from Croatia. Because they're also PhD students so we went somewhere together. Another thing, I have a gang. I have a group of friends, really close group, from the school, from Malaysia, Nigeria, Filipino [the Philippines], Kiwis [New Zealand] and France. I have a lot of friends. (Suzanna)

Most participants stated that they generally had a positive experience with the local people they met whom they described as kind and polite, “*I like the people. They are very, very polite and helpful even if we don't know each other*” (Sasha); “*They are Kiwis... when you walk, and you meet the local people here, they will just say, 'Hi' and they will say 'Thank you', or if you go the shop, they would say, 'How are you, dear?'*”

(Julia). Many times participants were helped by Kiwis who were strangers to them. Lisa related the experience of receiving unexpected assistance:

Somebody helped me, and I didn't know them... this happened not only once but twice... I went shopping, and I asked a couple, 'What is the way to Countdown [Supermarket]?' [The couple said], 'You come with us. You follow us.' They had a car, and I went with them in their car... Once, I got a bicycle; there's a problem with the bicycle. I got help from a man... He took my bicycle and dropped me home. He also helped to repair the bicycle. (Lisa)

Another participant mentioned being helped by university personnel who was attentive to her needs, “[Staff member] really is like Santa Claus... he gives the mattress, he gives the chair, he gives table... to new students” (Suzanna).

This friendly environment helped participants gain confidence and reduced the cultural shock often experienced by international students, “I kind of understand what they say. So, language is no barrier for me, and the culture is in positive things” (Nadia); “It’s the first time we’re living in a different country... I realised we didn’t face any culture shock. We didn’t experience that. We really felt that New Zealand is like our hometown” (Suzanna).

Acquiring Unanticipated Benefits (Unintended Outcomes)

Acquiring unanticipated benefits is another property of **Experiencing Changes** whereby participants made unexpected gains that were not originally planned or thought of. The experience of undergoing PhD work and encountering everyday occurrences during their stint in New Zealand led to some developmental changes in participants. As they completed their PhD, participants noticed changes in their way of thinking, “*The PhD journey is an eye-opener for many aspects of my underlying beliefs, thinking and ways of working*” (Natasha).

Going through the process, they developed critical thinking, “*My thinking has improved, in being critical*” (Amy) and confidence in their actions, “*I think I feel more confident after I finished my programme from New Zealand*” (Sarah). They also became more adept at making decisions, “*Because of my PhD, I have my own stand*” as well as being vocal with their thoughts, “*I gained this strength, confidence, freedom of thinking, have a voice*” (Amy).

The new gains, however, were not something that participants could easily and readily apply when they returned to their home country. Within the academic realm, the gains would certainly be useful but not within the patriarchal society to which they belonged. This inequality was another challenge presented to participants that must be approached cautiously so as not to offend or create discord in the community. These unfortunate circumstances were soon discovered by a participant when she arrived home.

In academic, I don't have that problem because we really have gender freedom – freedom to talk. But, in other place, people in here don't really like it, particularly if you are a female. There is a gender imbalance in here, so they will start to talk about you behind your back. That's also another thing to be considered that I learnt from my returning home – how to balance between this strength and the way traditional sees females in the community. (Amy)

Apart from developing academically, participants also experienced personal development. The move abroad posed some challenges to participants, and some participants experienced more difficulties than others. However, through enduring the temporary setbacks and experience of working out strategies, they acquired a set of strategies for everyday living which would be useful at other times and places, “*I think I learnt to live more efficiently. We learn how to... we have to be very careful in managing everything*” (Sarah). Included among these skills were being financially savvy and living within their means.

As I am funding my own study, I find that I have to live within my means and not splurge on things that I do not need. Living in NZ is basically living on essential stuff. I find that I don't actually need a lot of stuff to function properly. For example, I could live without the microwave, and I could write my PhD without using tonnes of papers and stationery. (Natasha)

Other than that, the experience of meeting challenges also increased the faith of the participants as they sought solace in their Creator during difficult times, “*It has changed me and made me closer to Allah*” (Ema). For those who were academics, undergoing the sojourning experience as a student instilled empathetic behaviour in them. One participant admitted that the experience taught her to be more considerate and sensitive to the needs of her own students.

I had forgotten how it was to be a student, away from family and friends. By being here, I am once again reliving a student's life and realised that it's a hard thing to do, especially a person who is close to his/her family. This has given me a chance to understand and empathise with the students who are far from home. (Natasha)

In addition, experiencing different values and cultures prompted participants to reflect on their own self values, “*I had this bias... just imagine my bias towards dark people*” (Rita). Exposure to living with other people from around the globe taught them different ways of viewing things as well as learning to respect others who were different from them. This change, somehow, expanded participants’ worldview to be more receptive as a global citizen and think internationally when they returned or lived elsewhere.

I can see, here, we respect. Because we have a lot of people from many countries. When we can see that, we are likely to respect to other culture. But in [my country], we have only [one] culture. So, here I accept more. I mean, I can see the difference, but okay. Yeah, it's okay. Maybe, because I have lived in at least three countries, so I can see the different interactions. And I have friends from a different culture... I learn from them. And then, I open my mind more, so I can accept it like that. (Mia)

Being in New Zealand also freed them of the traditions and customs from their home country, “*Another thing that I like here in New Zealand is online dating is normal, especially for senior, mature woman, like me. Because in Philippines, if you are into online dating, it has a negative impression*” (Rita). Away from the strict influence and norms of their home society, participants had the chance to explore a new kind of living.

I gain freedom here. Yeah, it's true, especially with regard to my personal life. I learn a lot about life, about relationships, about myself. I think I have transformed already. Actually, I have transformed in the way I did not expect I will transform. I think that's how New Zealand has changed me. (Rita)

For some participants, when they returned home, their previous manner of depending on the family was also transformed. Before arriving in New Zealand, they lived in a supportive environment, such as living in a stable and familiar environment among close friends and family members. Upon arrival in New Zealand, they were challenged to live in a different environment and manage many daily matters independently or with just their immediate family, “*I used to have a family or people around me who helped me to manage the domestic jobs in my family, but in New Zealand, I have to do everything by myself*” (Sarah). Living abroad thus helped to foster independence, “*We*

have a very independent life” (Amy) as well as building stronger family ties among the participants *“We mostly share everything here. It makes your family becomes solid”* (Linda).

Owing to New Zealand’s family-oriented environment, participants had more opportunities to bond with their children, *“Here, we are more mingling rather than in Indonesia. I think there’s more family time for us now”* (Linda). Their parenting style changed as well, *“Because I am in Western country...I think it affects the way I treat my daughters”* (Mia). Participants also found their spouses were changing to be more involved and helpful around the house, which is a relatively common practice in New Zealand’s families.

My husband used to be like a prince at home. My mother-in-law would not be happy if she saw her son doing housework like washing clothes or cleaning dishes. He never does that in Cambodia. But, when he comes here, he changes a lot... He washes clothes almost every day and vacuums the house, clean the dish and tidy up the house. I am also happy that he has changed. (Diana)

Besides, being far away from family made participants more thoughtful and appreciative of family, *“Being away from family... I learnt to appreciate them and work to put in effort to keep in contact and keep our relationships strong even though we are thousand miles apart”* (Sabrina).

Living in New Zealand brought positive changes to participants when they adopted their host country’s culture of living, which emphasises healthy living and balanced lifestyles.

When I was in Philippines, I wasn’t very health conscious. For Filipinos, the concept of work and life balance is still strange. It’s new to them, but here, it’s how they are. In the Philippines, they just really work, work, work... they don’t really give themselves time to relax. Unlike here, people work, but they also consciously ensure people also relaxed, to do something else. Here, there’s more balance between working and doing some other things. Unlike in Philippines, people just focus more on work. There’s no consciousness about work and life balance. So, I think when I get back to the Philippines, I would carry with me the notion of work and life balance. And then, exercising. (Rita)

Other changes included safe driving, *“The way we drove in New Zealand, we tried to be more calm driving in Malaysia. I think it has also taught us to be more patient than before”* (Ema) and caring for the environment, *“The Kiwi’s love for their environment. I*

learnt to be more conscious of the environment especially in trying to reduce the use of plastic bags and to be more energy-conscious” (Sabrina); “I will be more caring and more conscious about how to care for the environment because of my experience here in New Zealand” (Rita).

There were also some things that participants with children observed in New Zealand, such as bedtime reading, *“We just read together her favourite book like David William’s or Roald Dahl’s book, and usually the kids got to bed at 9:30[p.m.]” (Tia)* and positive parenting, *“Here, I also learn to raise children... to be more patient with children” (Farah).* These practices were brought back to the home country *“We saw how Western-style and then when we came back to Indonesia, we kind of adapted that, then just continued” (Amy).*

At the same time, there is a need to ensure that these practices were acceptable within their home customs, *“When we talk to the older [people], we have to be more polite. But here, everyone is the same. We even just call them by their name. Sometimes are good but sometimes are not. Because we are Eastern, I think we cannot be totally Western” (Farah).*

Some of them also retained what they had started doing or developed while living in the host country, for example, cooking and eating at home, *“In New Zealand, people prefer to cook at home. We learn how to cook. We don’t really like to dine out now. Sometimes we do that, but not that much [anymore]” (Amy).* Those with family, especially, realised doing their own cooking had its advantages. Not only they could save money, *“That’s why I like to cook at home... I [can] save money” (Mia),* cooking on their own also allowed for healthier options and a more nutritious diet, *“The way you eat here [in New Zealand] is different as well because you cook by yourself, you know the ingredients, what’s good or not. Here, we eat so many fruits, so many vegetables, salad” (Misha).* By the same token, they could also have control over food quality and preparation, *“In Indonesia, eating out is cheaper but I’m also quite aware of the danger of eating out... like additives and things that you don’t want to be included in your food, can be there if you buy street food” (Sophia).*

Moving to New Zealand in pursuit of a PhD qualification is considered an act of courage for participants, since they had to undergo numerous changes and challenges as a result of studying abroad. Yet, very few participants recognised this until later. The difficulties and challenges they faced while living abroad were also worthwhile for the

experience, skills, and knowledge that they had gained. While going through the experience of living abroad, they had developed personal qualities that were previously hidden or undiscovered. They built greater confidence, independence, responsibility, capability, personal strength, and spirituality. Even more, as they developed endurance, they became a more resilient person.

Learning to live and deal with the challenges was evidence of the participants' increased maturity. By deciding to go abroad and living with their choice, participants made gains and eventually grew from the sojourning experience. Those with family, did not gain alone, but gained together with their family, *"So many things I have gone through while I was studying in New Zealand. They are definitely an invaluable experience not only for me but also my family"* (Ema).

Summary

This chapter highlights the third or final phase in the South East Asian female doctoral students' sojourning time in New Zealand. Subsequently, living and engaging with the conditions as portrayed in this part of the chapter led to participants **Experiencing Changes**. These changes include academic and personal developments that saw the participants **Returning** to their country **Transformed**.

In Chapter Eight, I discuss the findings from Chapters Five to Seven, along with the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. In relation to the core category, **Gaining by Losing**, participants gained new ways of doing and thinking, with a newfound appreciation of empathy and drive to self-reflect on their values. However, some of their acquired ways of doing and thinking were also losses because returning transformed meant that participants would find themselves needing to readjust to their home country's culture.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

*For everything you have missed, you have gained something else,
and for everything you gain, you lose something else*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson (*Selected Essay, Lectures and Poems*)

Introduction

This research aimed to explore how international female doctoral students from the South East Asian region manage their everyday living while in New Zealand. In doing so, the voices belonging to the group (which is often considered a minority) are provided with a space to be heard. The study used an occupational lens to address the lack of occupational focus in previous studies. Based on the literature review, I discovered that most studies involving international students centred on aspects other than their everyday living or occupations.

Although examples of everyday living were present in some studies, they were often unclear and did not detail the process of managing everyday lives among international students. Therefore, my thesis is a pioneering study, which probes into the management of daily occupations by international students. It brings pertinent issues encountered by female doctoral students to the surface, going beyond description and unpacking how conditions of the living environment can affect people's daily living.

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the theory and a critical analysis of the findings within the existing literature. I conclude this chapter with a review of the implications, strengths, limitations, and recommendations arising from the study, and include my reflections at the end of the chapter.

Summary of the Theory

The theory in this study is referred to as **Gaining by Losing**, which highlights the past, present, and future challenges faced by the international female doctoral students. It captures the dynamic processes of managing everyday living that changes as the students encounter a variety of challenges.

Coming to a new country and living in an expensive city, brought forth various challenges. In this study, I found that the difficulties of managing everyday life's challenges varied among participants, depending on if they were alone or accompanied

while in the country. The experience of addressing these challenges created unexpected changes for these female doctoral students, paving ways for the process of transformation to occur. Findings in the study bring to light the occupational changes and challenges of temporarily living in a high cost and urban city. The effect of high cost and urban living resulted in participants adopting two essential strategies: pulling in and pulling back. Pulling in was, for example, demonstrated when participants pulled in support and resources to get what they needed and, simultaneously, pulled back from giving up when adversities got in their way. In the end, they accomplished their mission while at the same time acquiring skills and being transformed as a result of the doctoral and sojourning experience.

The notable feature of this study resides within the gains and losses of the generated theory **Gaining by Losing**. The terms push and pull, which are usually associated with immigration, were used to indicate the factors which drive people to study overseas. Studying overseas through the push-pull factors exposed participants to challenges and caused them to experience both anticipated and unexpected gains and losses.

While the theory of this study indicated that international South East Asian female doctoral students, in this study, had made gains despite their scores of losses, a pivotal question has arisen: “Are all the sacrifices and mounting losses truly worth the gains achieved?” This question is not hypothetical but a critical question that calls for serious attention to the extent of losses experienced by the participants, which I will highlight in one of the sections (i.e., Sustainability of International Doctoral Students in Universities) in this chapter.

To proceed with this chapter, I would bring in a discussion on the study findings by critically relating the findings to existing literature. This process aligns with the grounded theory methodology, in which the researcher returns to engage with relevant literature in the substantive field of the research study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Situating the Findings within Existing Literature

Two significant findings emerged from the analysis, conceptualisation, and generation of the theory **Gaining by Losing** in this study; these findings are: minimal lifestyle and transactional perspective. Of these two findings, living a minimal lifestyle has emanated as the principal finding. Relevant findings from Kim’s (2014) and Nayar’s (2009) doctoral thesis studies will be used to support the discussion around living a minimal lifestyle and transactional perspective. Currently, studies on international students’

everyday living as temporary migrants in New Zealand are not widely available or almost non-existent. The closest local studies on immigration and daily living using an occupational perspective and grounded theory methodology were by these two scholars who conducted studies on Asian immigrants from South Korea and India, respectively. While their studies concentrated on examining immigrants' experience of arriving and settling in New Zealand rather than of international students' living adjustments in the country, some similarities and differences are worthy of being highlighted. A comparison between this present study and the previous studies opens the door to understanding how another group of people is living in New Zealand and their strategies to manage everyday living in the country.

Living a Minimal Lifestyle: A Trait of Poverty

Living a minimal lifestyle in the context of this study refers to South East Asian female doctoral students' actions to reduce spending, having less or doing without items, due to their economic hardship. This lifestyle is a relatively different concept from living a minimalist lifestyle in which individuals intentionally choose to live a simple life by giving up material items (Dopierala, 2017). Living a minimal lifestyle means that participants must live without certain items or fewer material resources, compared to a minimalist lifestyle where people choose to live with less, but with the possibility of purchasing items when desired. The participants in this study adopted a minimal lifestyle in different ways. Essentially, the participants made the best use of the resources they had and tried to make things work while experiencing financial constraints to sustain their living in the host country.

Living a minimal lifestyle is considered a trait of poverty associated with groups of people facing economic hardship. From an economic perspective, poverty is associated with living below the minimum standards of necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing. However, poverty can also be viewed in terms of socio-economic deprivation, where a person is unable to experience well-being due to a range of life circumstances (Gunasekara et al., 2013).

Poverty from the socio-economic viewpoint includes being unable to meet the need for essential goods, services, and social participation according to what society deems acceptable (Goulden & D'Arcy, 2014; Madden, 2014). These various aspects of hardship create stress (Easton, 2008; Saunders, 1997), deprive people of enjoying a good quality standard of living, and act as barriers to health and well-being (Jones, 1997; Spicker, 2007).

Impoverishment also contributes to occupational injustice when the circumstances (which are often beyond their control), leave people with little “occupational choice and diversity” (Wilcock, 2006, p. 343). This fact highlights poverty as “essentially occupational” (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015, p. 75) in that people living in challenging environments and financially limited lifestyle find it hard to meet their most essential and basic biological needs, including food, clothing, and accommodation (United Nations, 2015). As stated by Wilcock and Townsend (2019), people living in poverty are more impacted by social injustice. They may have to resort to particular occupations and living choices which do not suit their needs.

At previous times in human history, the issue of poverty occurred within rural populations. However, this changed with the coming of the 20th century. Urban poverty is becoming more prevalent among low and middle-income earners as a result of national economics. Among the main contributors to economic hardship are the high cost of living (e.g., rent, food, utilities) and a lack of adequate incomes (Department for International Development, 2001; Saunders, 1997).

In New Zealand, for instance, the cost of living in the main cities has spiralled into other problems such as the inability to afford decent living accommodation (Amore, 2016). The current housing crisis in the country is causing substantial rent increases and creating a barrier for local people as well as those who come to New Zealand as international students who have few options for choosing suitable accommodations to rent (Collins, 2016; Dreaver, 2019). People who experience poverty and housing insecurity have been noted to be at risk for ill health and reduced well-being (Hocking, 2019) as tension, inconvenience, and anxiety become part of their daily lives.

South East Asian female doctoral students, in the current study, were caught in the housing crisis. As tenants, on limited incomes in New Zealand, they experienced unforeseen effects (hardship, drawbacks, and challenges) that they had not encountered while living at home. Howden-Chapman (2015) looked into New Zealand’s housing crisis and found problems such as overcrowding, living in unsuitable accommodation, or poor-quality homes. In most cases, tenants in rental homes are shown to be the ones likely to experience low-quality housing (e.g., cold, damp, mould) and over-crowding compared to owner-occupied homes (Bierre et al., 2014; Chisholm et al., 2018; White et al., 2017).

In her book, *Home Truths: Confronting New Zealand's Housing Crisis*, Howden-Chapman (2015) remarked, “*Today there is a crisis, not just in access to and affordability of housing in New Zealand, but in the quality of our housing*” (p. 14). A common concern about housing in New Zealand is that many of the houses are old and poorly insulated, with low standards of housing energy efficiency and heating during winter (Law, 2020; McKague et al., 2016). Lack of energy-efficiency has created cold and damp homes that can contribute to the formation of mould spores appearing and cause sickness. Energy-inefficiency is a reason for renters paying higher bills to try keep their homes warm and mould free (Barton, 2014; Isaacs et al., 2010). Well-heated or insulated rental properties often come with a higher price tag and are unaffordable to lower income groups (Liddell & Morris, 2010).

The unaffordability of quality rental housing was made worse when people on low incomes were pushed to crowd together (Chisholm et al., 2017). Household crowding has been linked to infectious disease transmission (e.g., meningococcal disease and rheumatic fever) and poor mental health (e.g., stress, depression, and worries) (Baker, 2007; Bullen et al., 2008; Pierse et al., 2016). Cold weather and under-heated homes during winter are also associated with the risk of respiratory problems and more frequent visits to medical centres and hospitals (Howden-Chapman, 2015). The negative impacts of poor-quality or substandard housing on health and well-being have been documented in several related studies (Howden-Chapman, 2015; Howden-Chapman & Bennett, 2009; Howden-Chapman & Bierre, 2008; Howden-Chapman et al., 2013).

Research has also shown that people with low incomes are impacted by the location of the housing or accommodation in which they chose to live. For instance, those who lived outside of the central business districts were more likely to experience expensive commutes by car (Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Howden Chapman, 2015) or costly bus and train fares to come to work or study in the city (Morton, 2014). Due to lack of income, they are exposed to transport poverty and more prone to the risk of limitations that dictate the frequency and number of trips they can afford to make.

Furthermore, living away from the campus has consequences for students. A study conducted by Turley and Wodtke (2010) on the relationship between living on campus and academic performance among 2,011 students in 372 institutions showed a positive correlation between living on campus and achievements for students. The study, however, indicated that minority students, especially those with family, faced more

difficulties with commuting to and from campus when factors such as family responsibilities, lack of financial resources, and transportation were present. Expectedly, the study found that the minority students who were financially constrained were exactly the group likely to live further away from campus or in unpopular locations and neighbourhoods as they could not afford the accommodation near or on campus.

The study authors noted that the factors impeding access to affordable accommodation near or on campus were less visible in Caucasian students compared to other groups of students. Although this comprehensive study included a large sample of students from different learning institutions, their age (18-25 years) was not representative of older (30+ years and above) students' need for or experience of living on the campus. Mature students in the present study were found to shun student accommodation for several reasons (mainly due to affordability), and those residing in locations beyond the university premise had more disadvantages.

Because they were living away from university and their limited budget prevented them from regularly coming to campus, they were missing the social support that would be beneficial. The distance also deprived them of access to space, resources, and facilities that the university could have provided to support their studies and ease their financial loads. The strong connection between the location of doctoral students' living accommodation and their university was echoed in Ruming and Dowling's (2017) study on housing for postgraduate students in Australia, specifically PhD students.

In addition to problems with housing, Bostock's (2001) study of the lives of 30 low-income women with young children, found that not owning a personal car limited access to "both material and social resources" (p. 11). These factors created a stressful experience for the mothers as the alternative methods were to walk to facilities such as food shops and health-care services. Not owning a car also limited their social networks as they did not have time or energy to maintain their relationships with people.

The research finding is similar to the participants in my study, whereby walking became an inconvenient option. Those who did not own a car had a limitation in that they were unable to go shopping at multiple supermarkets to get different food ingredients or shop at supermarkets with better discounts outside their living vicinity. They could only buy what they were able to carry home by hand or in bags; as a result, walking disadvantaged the participants in terms of saving grocery shopping costs and time.

The economic hardship for people living a minimal lifestyle can also manifest as household energy hardship or fuel poverty. While the standard definition for fuel poverty is contestable, it is generally understood as the inability to adequately heat one's home to a reasonable temperature that is comfortable and safe. In the New Zealand context, a household is regarded to be in fuel poverty if it takes more than 10% of the overall household income to obtain an indoor environment of at least 21°C in the living areas and 18°C in other parts of the house. A study in 2012 found that one in four households in New Zealand were in fuel poverty. For a developed country, this condition is considered disadvantageous (Lloyd, 2006).

Many of these concerns have also appeared in the findings of the current study. Although none of the participants had become homeless or was living in cars (Bazley, 2016; The Guardian, 2016), many encountered problems such as lack of space, living in less suitable or ill-maintained accommodation, having cold and damp rental homes, risking fall-outs with landlords, and continually moving places. Their scarcity of income and on-going rise of rent further contributed to their current financial hardship which brought forth other challenges.

This situation must be interpreted in relation to the participants' gender, given the findings of Fodor's (2006) content analysis of in-depth interviews with 27 respondents in a study in Hungary. It was found that while men and women could equally be at risk of poverty, there was a difference in the way they experienced and responded to poverty. For example, women were more likely than men to opt for strategies that would curtail their financial hardship. Women living in a low-income household would plan strategically to contain their financial or economic situation. Among these women, the most common coping mechanism used was refraining or pulling back, in which they would reduce their consumption or cut back on expenditure for items such as clothing and shoes or other personal items (Lokshin & Yemtsov, 2001).

These research findings are supported by the United Nations (2015), which indicated that economic hardship in a household of low-wage or limited income earners often affects women more than men as they are usually given the responsibility to oversee the family spending. Internationally, studies conducted in developed countries (Dobson et al., 1994) as well as developing countries (Voola et al., 2018) supported a similar notion. Whether it was in England (as in the former study) or India (as in the latter study), women were often the ones tasked with taking care of their families' expenditure.

In New Zealand, Kim's (2014) study revealed that some female Korean migrants were changing their old habit of consistently buying new items and replaced this with an accepting attitude that second-hand items are just as useful as new ones. Reducing consumption, cutting back on expenditure, and opting for second-hand items were shared practices by participants in the current study and all pointed to their efforts to pull back from spending to save money. One stark contrast between the present study and Kim's (2014) study on migrants was that the permanent immigrants were not necessarily studying when they arrived in the country.

For most of them, their main aim of living permanently saw them straightaway finding a job and thus securing an income. In other words, becoming impoverished did not feature in Kim's findings, although some might have experienced financial difficulties at a particular stage of their immigration. Moreover, unlike the international students who were attached to the university's support and resources, the immigrants were not so tied to this necessity. Permanent immigrants were also not constrained to where their homes were located as they might still have other means and choices to get to their workplace.

Poverty has also been shown to influence food intake, as well as the way food is consumed and purchased. Dobson et al.'s (1994) case study of 48 households gathered data through interviews and diary methods, and several broad similarities are noted between their key findings and the present study. Female participants in both studies reported encountering difficulties managing when their income could not be stretched for anything else except the essentials. Their decision to do grocery shopping was influenced by the tight budget which dictated where, when, and how many times they would carry out the task. As an effort to save money, it was necessary to shop around for the best deals, but a one-stop shopping pattern was difficult to adopt. The strategies they developed for coping and managing their budget had to be relatively rigid.

Dobson et al. (1994) also found that poverty had an impact on household food preferences or diets. Families struggled to maintain a mainstream diet and were unable to afford the risk of changing their diets as the food might not be eaten. Food was cooked according to family preference, and this would usually be what they were familiar with, something conventional and filling. On a similar note, participants in my study were not so adventurous with Western food for the same reasons. Firstly, rice is a staple food for them; thus, replacing it with bread, for example, was not considered filling enough. Secondly, given the expensiveness of food items, exploring non-familiar

menus was avoided for fear that they would be wasted if not suitable to their Asian palate.

In the present study, families with access to additional income were found to be able to incorporate more of their food preferences. Likewise, participants who earned extra money through part-time work and/or whose husband worked in New Zealand had more allowance for food choices. Implications from this study pointed out that despite having enough food to eat, there was stress in managing the food budget and the diet could be poor and compromised. While the families spent what they considered to be the minimum on food, the food budget was one area of expenditure which was reduced to meet unexpected and immediate demands.

Similar strategies employed by the participants in the current study have been identified among other people living in low-income households. In terms of financial spending, money was exclusively spent only on necessities, such as paying the rent, utility bills, food, and children's needs. Extra spending such as eating out, purchasing new clothes, or buying extra groceries was only taken into consideration if extra money was available.

On another aspect, findings in this study were similar to another mixed-method study by Anderson et al. (2012), which revealed low-income earners chose to pull back on the range and quality of food purchased in place of necessities such as energy consumption through winter. In terms of energy consumption, it was not uncommon for occupants of a home to keep the use to the lowest level possible. In many cases, fuel poverty in households would result in a trade-off between keeping warm and fulfilling other necessities (Bhattacharya et al., 2003; Brunner et al., 2012; Howden-Chapman et al., 2012; McKague et al., 2016; O'Neill et al., 2006).

This finding relates to what was done by the participants in the study whereby, to reduce the consumption of energy at home, they would heat only a small section of the house for several short hours or wear layers of clothes. They would also find warmth elsewhere like studying at the public library. However, taking that option meant leaving the house in cold weather or working somewhere where there could be more distractions and interruptions. Faced with fuel poverty, they pulled back from adequately heating their home. Their act of pulling back was also an act of making a trade-off. Importantly, pulling back from keeping warm was traded with meeting more urgent requirements, such as ensuring rent and household bills were paid on time.

Findings from this study corroborate another outcome of living in poverty. An exploratory qualitative study by Mullin and Arce (2008) in an urban neighbourhood in Massachusetts disclosed a positive result from living in an undesirable situation. For instance, 16 professional community social workers who participated in the study observed clients with families struggling with a lack of financial resources and choices to solve everyday living problems. Despite this shortcoming, they recognised these families had resorted to pulling in strategies such as keeping the family members together, supporting each other, and communicating openly with each other to cope in times of stress, economic poverty, and hardship. Besides support, they had a positive mindset towards managing challenges and held to their unwavering faith that they would withstand their trials. Ultimately, these families attained specific goals against the demands and risks often related to living in poverty.

The experiences in Mullin and Arce's (2008) study resonate with the experiences of the participants with family in the current study. Their pulling in strategies were more than bringing their family along with them to New Zealand. In my research, the South East Asian female doctoral students who came with families negotiated their roles by pulling in support from the family members so that everyday occupations such as performing domestic chores and caring for younger children became shared responsibilities.

The challenges of living a minimal lifestyle were taken as an enduring test but, interestingly, the effort created a positive outcome. It was during this financially tough time that participants and family pulled in their faith and understanding that life was not always rosy. Adversities were dealt with and faced together as a family and, in the process, they learned to manage despite the struggle. It was the challenging life circumstances that also sparked the idea to think outside the box, to learn new ways of doing, utilise their creativity, and manage their occupations differently from what they were used to. In other words, what was initially a loss turned out to be a gain for participants as they acquired the skill of being creative when tackling challenges.

Having discussed living a minimal lifestyle, the next section introduces the transactional perspective as the second important finding in this study.

Transactional Perspective

Engaging in occupations is a transactional process between people and the environment (Hocking, 2020; Nayar & Hocking, 2013). Environment influences people's occupational goals; yet, people also respond to the environment through their actions

(Hocking, 2020). Transaction is a perspective embedded in the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey (Cutchin & Dickie, 2012). A crucial part of this perspective is Dewey's focus on occupation and its interaction with the social, moral (habits), and cultural components of action (Cutchin & Dickie, 2013), which Bunting (2016) has named the transactional perspective on occupation. Dewey and Bentley (1946) pointed out that in transaction, constructs such as person, occupation, and context are not viewed as discrete entities but rather co-exist and function interdependently with each other.

The Deweyan notion of situations extends beyond the immediate environment in which an occupation occurs (Nayar & Hocking, 2013). Occupations are linked to individuals' framework at the micro-level (such as family) and national and international contexts, including economic or cultural influences, at the macro level. Situations contextualise human experience and are "transitions to and possibilities of later experiences" (Dewey 1980, p. 236).

The transactional perspective is illustrated in Nayar's (2009) study, which found that as a result of interacting in a new society and living environment, Indian female immigrants in New Zealand modified their everyday tasks. Many of the female immigrants learned to perform household chores without the help of extended family, live-in nannies, or maids because hiring such service was an uncommon and expensive practice. Similarly, female participants in the present study lost domestic support when they came to New Zealand. Still, they adjusted by changing their cooking style to be simpler, faster, and cost-effective or pulling in help from immediate family to assist with house chores. In both studies, participants who were mothers were showing similar changes, in which their parenting style, to a certain extent, became more flexible, and they admitted becoming more involved with their children.

Moreover, some of the immigrants from South Korea and India came to New Zealand to secure a better future for their children (Kim, 2014; Nayar, 2009). Some of the South East Asian female doctoral students were identical to Kim's (2014) and Nayar's (2009) participants because they took the opportunity of living in this country to offer overseas exposures for their family members. A further point of comparison is that the female participants in all three studies were the primary homemaker, and those who were mothers were responsible for preparing meals, raising children, monitoring children's progress in education, and fulfilling the needs of their spouses. The occupations associated with these roles drastically changed when they moved to New Zealand as they had to find the best way to perform their occupations with limited resources.

Participants in this study disclosed that as a result of the interactions with their new living environment in New Zealand, their performance of daily occupations and roles changed, as did their perception of their selves. For instance, married participants found juggling academic and family responsibilities nearly impossible and impractical. They began to delegate work between family members, encouraging their children to be more independent and becoming accepting and appreciative of their spouse's involvement in their household management. As indicated in subsequent literature on immigrants (Kim et al., 2016; Wright-St Clair et al., 2018; Wright-St Clair & Nayar, 2017), they also pulled in support of other people (mostly co-nationals) who had already gone through the adjustment experience and who were more comfortable to relate to within their new community. Besides co-nationals, they pulled support from other people beyond their family as a means of adjustment. Beyond this point, participants who left their family behind pulled back from fulfilling their expected roles, creating space for themselves and space for changes to occur within their families' expectations.

This transition and the occupational changes that resulted were often not easy or smooth; instead, they were gradually implemented. The host country's environment supports these changes with values like independence and gender equality. For instance, men and children can be independent by taking responsibility to share household work (Pho & Mulvey, 2003). This change is seen in my study where the participants may have lost their old identity or role but gained in developing new partnerships in the family or a more open parenting style with a focus on respecting that children also have freedom, opinions, and voice. The finding of this study is in concert with the findings from studies by Liamputtong (2006) and Nayar (2009) regarding Asian women in Western countries.

Embracing some of the host country's values and being in a new situation did not necessarily mean that participants lost a connection with their home environment. In my study, one of the participants, who originated from Thailand, was more accepting of the open ways her daughters addressed her due to their upbringing within New Zealand's culture. Being open is not always common in Thai culture, and can even be considered disrespectful. This example aligns with the person-environment transaction described within the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement (Polatajko et al., 2013). Nonetheless, because she was adjusting to the New Zealand beliefs, she was more ready to embrace this new form of parenting communication. Recognising the cultural difference in showing respect to older people between Thailand and New

Zealand, however, she deliberately highlighted this matter to her children and reminded them of what is and is not acceptable in their Thai culture.

Transactional responses also occur through the interaction of social and political contexts. Those who had completed the PhD process and experienced living in a Western country found themselves gaining greater confidence and developing critical thinking. They were more critical of what was going on around them. They were less hesitant to express their opinions or disagree with the views of others. Their occupational behaviours had been shaped by gender politics in New Zealand that uphold women's position (Human Rights Commission, 2010).

This attitude conflicts with the values and practices of the society in their homeland, in which members of the community perceive women's rank as lower than men and thus might label them as being too outspoken, boastful, aggressive, or Westernised. Consequently, participants gained a newly founded identity while studying abroad and navigating the conflicting values held by the different cultures in their home and host country. Changes in the participants' identity, occupational behaviour, and attitude can conflict with the native country's standard way of behaving; thus, highlighting the transactional perspective.

Implications of the Study

From the findings of this study and the critical conclusions discussed above, my study has the potential to contribute both nationally and internationally. At a national level, the findings challenge aspects concerning the future of South East Asian female doctoral students electing to pursue higher qualifications in New Zealand and the role of university stakeholders. Internationally, the processes revealed in this study hold implication for university stakeholders as well as researchers involved in the field of occupational science.

Implications for Future South East Asian Female Doctoral Students Coming to New Zealand

From this study, it is recognised that having social connections and knowing how and where to access resources is vital when living on a constrained student income in New Zealand. The findings reveal the importance of networking with people prior to and during the early stages of the PhD journey. One specific encouragement is for future students to take initiatives to establish contacts and networks prior to and upon their arrival in New Zealand. These include exploring the student organisations or co-national

networks in the host country, planning how they will find opportunities to mix with local residents, and getting to know better their university's international support staff as well as international students' representatives.

Possible strategies to rapidly build a social support network are to plan their arrival time so that they can attend university programmes such as a doctoral induction programme and, given an opportunity, join the local community or students' clubs. It is a good idea to check if there is already a postgraduate or doctoral support group within their circle of doctoral students' community or set up a support group of their own if that is possible for emotional, social, and academic support.

One of the ways to obtain more knowledge about living in New Zealand is by accessing the international students' page on the university's website. Most universities such as Victoria University of Wellington, Otago University, Auckland University, and Auckland University of Technology have a section dedicated to future international students that provides details on what students should expect when coming to study and live in this country. Similar information is also accessible on websites and social media channels such as YouTube and Facebook. One of the matters that need to be given proper attention is the cost of living. Knowing how much the living cost is, especially the cost of living with a family, and how to manage financial needs or budgeting might help to reduce financial stress.

Moreover, since finding accommodation proved to be a significant challenge in big cities, it is suggested that future students prioritise this matter before coming to New Zealand. Those who intend to bring their family might want to consider coming on their own first to arrange for family accommodation or assess whether bringing a family is viable and whether the timing is right. If there is a student advisor for accommodation present within the university, it is recommended to contact and seek assistance with making decisions about whether to choose university accommodations. If private rental homes are more of an option, advice can be given about how renting a property works in New Zealand. Getting advice in choosing a suitable location that is close to their academic institution, shops, and a transport hub is also crucial to minimise living pressures.

Implications for University Stakeholders

Asian students are the largest group of international students in New Zealand (Butcher, 2010; Campbell & Li, 2008) and are a boost to the country's economic status (Martens & Starke, 2008; Education New Zealand, 2019b). Despite being the minority within this group, the presence of South East Asian female doctoral students helps to build research opportunities and collaboration in New Zealand, increases the country's university ranking, and promotes diplomatic links between Asia-Pacific countries (Marginson & McBurnie, 2004; Ziguras et al., 2011). Aspiring to be a world-known reputable host country for international students, the New Zealand government has already launched The New Zealand International Education Strategic Plan for 2018-2030. One of the objectives of this plan is to deliver excellent education and experiences to international students and, at the same time, ensure that their well-being is being cared for (Education New Zealand, 2018b). Based on this guideline and the findings of the study, some pertinent matters should be given attention.

Accommodation, Financial, and Employability Support

Findings indicated the high cost of accommodation had been a significant source of challenge for many of the participants. The inability to secure suitable accommodation that matches the student's budget affected their everyday living positively and negatively. However, the negatives in the living environment could be addressed by the university.

Single participants in this study reported that university accommodation (i.e., students' hostel) was too expensive for them. Moreover, participants with family members or children found they could not stay in the students' hostel for reasons ranging from unavailability of place, steep rent, that the accommodation is not suitable for a family, or it was out of school zone.

Consequently, participants turned to private accommodations either within or outside of the university precinct. Due to the housing crisis, international students were exposed to unscrupulous landlords, property managers, and property agents who might exploit the situation (Heron, 2018; Newton, 2018; Otter, 2017). Under circumstances where tenants complained or raised issues, they were given the exit option as noted by Howden-Chapman (2015), "the common understanding being - if you don't like it, leave and find another flat" (p. 49). The possibility of getting evicted if they complain often created insecurity among tenants and it is not uncommon for renters to keep moving homes.

International students are more vulnerable to deception, ill, or unfair treatments, and they might succumb to the pressure to accept low housing quality or agree to unfavourable conditions because they are desperate or do not know their rights as tenants (Chisholm et al., 2017). Even when this population group is informed of their rights as tenants, their status as an international student, unfamiliarity with the housing legal system, and lack of time due to studies may create reluctance in bringing forth their case to the authorities or the tenancy tribunal. In the end, they might leave the country harbouring ill-feeling towards their unpleasant stay in New Zealand.

Thus, it is vital that universities in New Zealand address this urgent issue. One solution for urban universities could be a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) that caters to the needs of different students, including female postgraduate students with children. Under PBSA, there are usually options of a modern studio-style apartment with en suite bathroom and kitchenette, or a larger apartment with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities. These apartments are typically furnished with basic furniture such as a bed, desk, chair, and wardrobe. They are usually located either on or near (walking distance or a short bus ride) to the university (Urbis, 2020).

Some universities in the UK and Australia have replaced the traditional style of university accommodation (e.g., halls of residence) with PBSA and this trend has recently been picked up in New Zealand (Keenan, 2018). For instance, the University of Auckland has started PBSA to house its postgraduate students; as such, if this initiative proves to be successful, more universities in New Zealand might want to consider emulating this option. Providing accommodation has previously and traditionally been one of the university's responsibilities; thus, it should be continued and given weight (Keenan, 2018; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016).

The availability of self-contained and well-maintained student accommodation would also be a pull factor for attracting international students, as they would not have to worry about hunting for accommodation or buying furniture (Steadman, 2020). Ideally, universities would individually or collaboratively take the necessary steps to look into the affordability of student accommodation and make it the most economical choice. Most importantly, commercialising or privatising student accommodation should not occur at the students' expense.

Moreover, since the living cost of urban cities is higher than other places, it is important for scholarships sponsors from both home and host countries to regularly revise stipends or financial awards to reflect the city's living expenses better. For instance, the last time AUT reviewed its scholarships was in 2018; thus, the next review might consider increasing the stipend or having a separate accommodation allowance. As previously mentioned, participants often felt that their scholarship barely covered the cost of their living expense because they had to spend most of their stipend on rent to ensure they had a roof over their head.

By law, international students need to be living in decent accommodation (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016; Lewis, 2005) which is something that New Zealand universities should be looking into because creating a supportive living and academic environment is interrelated. Students who are coping with financial distress and an unhealthy living environment are likely to find it hard to concentrate on their work. In contrast, it is more likely that they will complete their studies if they are in a conducive environment. Therefore, it is essential to provide support to international doctoral students for better financial assistance and ensure that their basic living needs are met so that they can perform their doctoral studies successfully (Custer, 2017).

From this study, specific approaches could be utilised to help support international doctoral students during their studies. One method might involve setting up an online accommodation portal on the university website that lists accommodation agencies which have a good or bad track record with housing students. Within the portal, students could provide feedback about their previous experience of rental companies. Having this portal would be beneficial for international students in finding trustworthy and reliable companies from which to rent accommodation.

As part of this online portal, a job search section could be added to help international students acquire jobs. Jobs for participants and their spouses in New Zealand were difficult to obtain because previous work experience and qualifications were not directly transferable. Even if their qualifications were recognised, there were scarce opportunities to secure jobs in a professional field. Despite approval for unlimited work hours from New Zealand Immigration (2020), the limitations of being a member from a minority group, lack of experience working in New Zealand, and temporary stay due to the international student status reduced the chances of securing professional jobs. Consequently, participants and their spouses had to pull back on their expectations of acquiring professional jobs that would generate sufficient income to cover day-to-day

living expenses. An easier, viable route was to accept low-paying or entry-level jobs including a cleaner, a kitchen hand, or a supermarket worker.

Having a job portal suited to international students' work experience would be useful for matching international doctoral students' skills with prospective employers in New Zealand, as well as creating opportunities for cross-country employment between universities and/or local and multinational companies in New Zealand and those from the home countries. Having this job portal would enable easier recruitment for both the employer and employee, as it would automatically find jobs that match the expertise and qualifications needed for the role.

Besides that, as a large higher learning institution, universities are also in the position to offer employment and job experiences to doctoral students, including international doctoral students. In some parts of the world, doctoral students are employed by the university as staff members and receive a wage. Several European countries, such as Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden, are known to practise this system already (Fastepo, 2020). Doing a PhD requires funding, a decent living stipend and living conditions, along with guaranteed financial stability as these factors influence health and well-being (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017).

Networking

Networking is a crucial activity for international students because it helps connect them with friends, potential employers, and other support systems. Currently, the role of assisting international students belongs to the university international student offices, which also assist with living arrangements and other everyday living matters. However, establishing a South East Asian alumnus in New Zealand (not only in their home country) and working with students who have graduated and remained in New Zealand might encourage and enable experienced students to assist their fellow international peers. Since one of the findings in this study indicated that international doctoral students sought their co-national's assistance, universities might consider networking with and financially supporting international student associations from South East Asia. This way, the associations would have the resources to help and accommodate newcomers on their arrival in New Zealand.

Besides international student associations, there are also possibilities of involving students from different faculties at the universities who could assist international students upon their arrival and throughout their stay in New Zealand. In AUT, for

instance, there are culinary programmes within the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism. Students from this faculty could demonstrate and promote local cuisines and healthy eating cooking classes to other students using simple and readily available ingredients that are filling, delicious, and affordable. This platform is an opportunity for sharing New Zealand recipes, and an avenue for international students to co-operate as meeting groups to showcase their cooking heritage.

In parallel, the Department of Occupational Therapy and Science could organise a peer support service that helps students with everyday activities – such as how to open a bank account, where to shop for ingredients, and how to travel using the public transport system. Coming together as a group to share these experiences would be a productive way of networking and an excellent example of sharing skills and information. Another option is to involve final year or postgraduate students in the Law Faculty. They could assist and advise students in legal matters related to housing, or employee rights and protections.

Specific Needs of South East Asian Female Doctoral Students

Universities may need to be aware that each female international doctoral student that they deal with is unique and has different needs. In general, South East Asian women are family-oriented and not very open with their feelings, difficulties, or needs. They may be more reserved when it comes to discussing private matters, health concerns, or reaching out for help. As they are mature students, international doctoral students might also think they are expected to be more independent and able to solve problems on their own.

On a separate note, South East Asian women are also tied to their culture and religion. For instance, most Muslims would be against the idea of unmarried males and females co-habiting and or sharing the same accommodation. Hence, support staff must be well-versed in international postgraduate students from diverse backgrounds and needs. In particular, a team who are familiar with South East Asian cultural customs and with some of its member having the experience of being female postgraduate students themselves might have a better understanding of female international students' needs and challenges (especially those with family).

One way of bringing out this understanding of female international students' needs is to develop a female-to-female group. In this group, the participants could come together and express their concerns, seek information, or share their knowledge on matters such

as women's health, family, and parenting skills. This group would help the participants explore the New Zealand ways of doing things such as navigating the health and education systems, what to expect, and what they can do if they encounter difficulties. Having this group would reduce the feelings of loneliness, alienation, and isolation that are often faced by international students as noted in previous studies (e.g., Li et al., 2014; Mori, 2000; Sawir et al., 2008).

Support and understanding from supervisors for this group of students are also necessary. Supervisors who have experience living or working in South East Asian could have a better understanding of the cultural background in supervising international students from the region. The supervisor's role is vital in assisting postgraduate students in whatever ways they could and inform the universities of the challenges some of their doctoral students might be facing.

More than an Educational Experience

New Zealand is a unique study destination for international students with extraordinary features such as its charming natural environment, welcoming people, and captivating leisure experiences that can create ever-lasting memories within a student's journey. Based on these features, universities may consider incorporating a mix of educational, leisure, and travel opportunities for international doctoral students so that they can fully be immersed in the sojourning experience.

In response to one of the identified pull factors that bring in international students to New Zealand, there is some expectation from international students that universities may offer these opportunities. This expectation comes from New Zealand's main strength as a beautiful country blessed with nature and scenery. However, because of the high cost of living and limited budget associated with studying abroad, most international students are unlikely to experience the country's unique attractions, or the New Zealand lifestyle and culture.

Taking the contemporary cost of living into account, a tourism-backed educational experience has the potential to attract more students (Glover, 2011; Michael et al., 2003). They could, for example, engage with nature and enjoy travelling to different parts of New Zealand at a student-friendly cost. This experience could be made possible if universities could sponsor or organise outdoor exploration at a low-cost or no cost at all for students to enjoy studying and having some nature adventures in the country.

Sustainability of International Doctoral Students in Universities

Sustaining the constant flow of international doctoral students is vital for a country's economic development because these students are a source of capital investment and contribute valuable findings that enhance the diversity of research in universities. In this thesis, I draw on the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UN SDGs) to indicate the initiatives and actions which might preserve the enrolment of international doctoral students in universities.

As one of the United Nations Member States, New Zealand has pledged to achieve the defined vision and local universities are to embrace and commit to working towards realising the goals by incorporating sustainability in their services, education, and research. The success in implementing the goals would be a pull factor as universities would be providing a positive image when it comes to branding. Likewise, it is vital that students belong to universities that adopt sustainable practices for achieving the UN SDGs, which would make a difference in their educational experience (Sady et al., 2019).

The UN SDGs are a compilation of 17 goals to be accomplished by 2030, with a focus on issues ranging from eradicating poverty (SDG 1) to revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17) (United Nations, 2015). Included in these goals are promoting and maintaining good health and well-being (SDG 3), as well as ensuring quality education (SDG 4). The UN SDGs also strongly focus on improving equity (SDG 5) among women, children, and disadvantaged populations; as well as aiming to reduce inequalities (SDG 10) (WHO, 2020).

Nonetheless, evidence from the current findings reveals that important goals which fall under the universities' jurisdiction have not been thoroughly fulfilled. Deciding to study in New Zealand, the South East Asian female doctoral students already incurred losses back home (e.g., losing stability, parting with personal belongings, and being separated with family) and, while in the country, they experienced further losses (e.g., bearing the high cost of living, running into poverty, and living through challenges to manage their daily occupations). New Zealand universities' move of bringing in and accepting internationals to study in the country, sustainably created equal opportunities for males and females to study abroad. While this action partly addressed inequality, there are other initiatives to be done to meet international South East Asian female doctoral students' needs as well as look after their health and well-being.

For example, universities could work towards optimising pastoral care that contributes towards achieving SDGs 1, 3, and 4, to tackle the problems encountered by international doctoral students living in New Zealand. Pastoral care from a sustainability perspective involves offering long-term solutions that enable international students to accomplish the following: positively manage their everyday living, achieve educational outcomes that enhance their future developments, maintain health and well-being, and reap benefits from social connections (Education New Zealand, 2017).

The International Education Strategy for New Zealand 2018-2030 outlines excellent education and student experience as one of its priority goals. Unfortunately, if the international doctoral students' losses are more significant than their gains, future students may pull back from the idea of attending New Zealand universities for their doctoral studies. On similar grounds, there is a risk that government or educational sponsors in their home countries will also pull back from sending them to destinations such as New Zealand if the severe financial hardships encountered translate into lower rates of completion, threats to health and well-being, or inability to engage with the local population.

New Zealand aspires to increase the enrolment number of international doctoral students (Brailsford, 2010); therefore, it would be helpful for universities to show that they care about international students by being concerned about their welfare and well-being. Universities must not recognise just the gains obtained by international students but the losses they suffer as well. Encouraging higher learning institutions to recognise and deal with their losses would give New Zealand an edge within the competition from other countries, as it would indicate that the universities are committed to providing the best overseas educational experience possible

Opportunities to Support International Students and Advocate for Transformation

Feeling safe is a significant pull factor, as indicated by past studies (Ejiofo, 2010; Morrish & Lee, 2012; Van Horne et al., 2018). International students can feel safer in their host country if they have access to social support and resources. This initiative is something that New Zealand has done relatively well in, as exemplified by its proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than quickly returning international students home, New Zealand provided necessary assistance to help them continue their studies through the hardship fund (e.g., rent relief, food parcels, household goods, utility

relief, and petrol costs). Social support mainly came in the form of counselling sessions from the university and the 1737 Helpline that was available 24/7 (AUT, 2020). The prevalent attitude in New Zealand was that international students are not to be seen or treated as cash cows but as an asset to the country.

Currently, New Zealand universities are motivated to recruit and retain international students but do so independently from other universities. If universities across New Zealand could collaborate and share resources, this would benefit all students. Universities that are within proximity, for instance, could be connected by a one-stop centre. This one-stop centre could house facilities such as a *halal* food shop, banks, teller machine, transport ticket kiosk, café, printing shop, prayer place, citizen advice bureau, and gymnasium under one roof. Within the centre, services useful to students such as movers, storage hire, and transport transfer from and to the airport could be offered to students at a reasonable student rate.

The universities could also share available information on surviving everyday living while studying at postgraduate level in university by developing one portal that includes the opportunities, strengths, and advantages all universities in New Zealand have to offer. The variations across universities in terms of programmes, facilities, and support services would allow international students to compare what is being provided in selecting which place or university is best for their needs. This comparison would also be a lead and a healthy pull factor for universities to compete and improve their facilities and services to support international students better and enhance their reputation internationally.

Additionally, forging a partnership between the universities and the city council could be explored to create a city that is attractive to international students and holds a student-friendly atmosphere. International students' satisfaction with their host cities could be researched in terms of their daily living experiences as they can be better supported to sustain their living and enjoy their time in the host country while studying overseas.

A large portion of New Zealand's diversity can be attributed to the arrival of international students who participate in the university's campuses and communities. With this on-going participation, international students and local students can learn from each other. Universities can also capitalise on this opportunity by presenting a platform for them to mix and enhance their social experience. Some avenues are shared

accommodation services or international and local programmes at the university hostel where both groups of students would understand and appreciate the differences found around the world.

Māori-based student accommodation for international students might also be considered to introduce and educate international students about Te Reo Māori (Māori language) and the unique Māori culture. These kinds of experiences would positively influence the students' personalities, especially in understanding cultural differences and handling diversity. Consequently, they would transform as they develop new habits, values, and ideas aligned with what is needed in today's world.

Beyond this expectation, universities could acknowledge and accept the fact that when international students leave for their home country, they had somehow changed following years of living and studying abroad. Universities are urged to research international doctoral students' re-entry experience since there are very few studies on a similar topic, one being McGrath's (1998) study focussing on South East Asian students' re-entry. A challenge is for New Zealand to equip students best to return home and re-enter their countries of origin after they have completed their studies in the country. It is also essential for universities to keep collecting feedback and take proper actions on the feedback received.

To ease the readjustment process, universities could create an online alumni group for international students who have returned so that they can share their experience adjusting to life back home with other international students. Since word of mouth is one of the best ways to advertise a country (Sweeney et al., 2014), the returnees could promote New Zealand's faculties and universities to new students based on their experience studying in the country. This approach would also enable alumni members to maintain contact with their corresponding New Zealand universities and assist with the readjustment process for students returning home.

Implications for Occupational Science

New insights about the occupations of South East Asian female students in New Zealand have been obtained from this study, revealing how their responses to a different environment shaped their unique transformations. One of the significant findings of my study includes the two prominent strategies: pulling in and pulling back, that were used to manage life within an expensive city. Although pulling in and pulling back have been

indicated in other migrant studies like Kim (2014) and Nayar (2009), these two strategies are explicit in the present study.

The theory **Gaining by Losing** generated in this study challenges and extends how people view living as a student sojourner. It shows the importance of the environment, people, and resources that are factors which can affect students' health and well-being during their journey. Developing the **Gaining by Losing** theory offers a rich perspective to sojourner or immigrant literature as not many studies have been published concerning how the host country affects their lives. The leading studies by Kim (2014) and Nayar (2009) are among the few that have looked at the experience of immigrants and how the process of settling in a new environment influences occupational engagement and well-being. The participants in these studies (Kim, 2014; Nayar, 2009), informed that their occupations had changed or evolved when they immigrated to New Zealand.

Occupation-based research previously focussed on immigration and research on temporary migration has been sparse. International student sojourners are an under-researched population, and their everyday living is an under-addressed area in occupational science. Current occupational science literature concerning students' transition, engagement, interaction, adaptation, and adjustment (i.e., strategies used to manage within the daily occupation realm) are almost null.

Through using an occupational science lens, this study was able to generate rich insights into the occupational challenges for this group of people. The findings may find applicability or suggest novel lines of research with other groups whose living circumstances dramatically change, such as women thrust into poverty due to loss of employment or relationship breakdown, or people displaced by natural disasters.

Strengths of the Study

The utilisation of grounded theory methods in this study enabled me to explain the social and environmental context that influenced the actions and strategies of South East Asian female doctoral students managing everyday living in New Zealand. Grounded theory has helped to identify the specific processes and procedures that have afforded abilities for the female doctoral students to embark on a doctoral study in New Zealand, cope with the challenges while living in this country, and experience transformation as a result of their sojourning. It has initiated an understanding of the challenges to manage everyday lives among female doctoral students. Most importantly, this study has

revealed to higher learning institutions the area or gap to be undertaken in supporting international students.

The strengths of a qualitative research study are based on the quality of the study design. I have addressed rigour in Chapter Three, and rigour is revisited here to reinforce the strengths of this study. In this study, rigour was enhanced by adhering to the procedures of grounded theory. Apart from that, I also implemented Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for developing trustworthiness for a sound qualitative inquiry. The trustworthiness of this study draws back upon credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility and Dependability

Credibility in this study was attained by spending a considerable amount of time listening to the recorded tapes of participant interviews and getting immersed with the data while transcribing the interviews. During this time, I paid careful attention to details when analysing data to develop and refine theoretical concepts that would reflect the participants' realities of managing everyday living in the host country. Supervision meetings were used as the platform to present the phenomenon under study and method of inquiry to gain critical feedback from supervisors whose expertise enhanced the research process.

Apart from that, regular meetings with the grounded theory support group further strengthened the development of the theory. In terms of dependability, through the analytical process and procedures, I explored how the categories and the relationship between categories evolved. Using multiple ways of collecting data and by obtaining feedback from participants, I had the chance to discern the categories and their relationships in a triangulated manner.

Transferability and Confirmability

In terms of transferability, further research is required to obtain transferability of the theory to a different and larger population in another country. As there have not been any studies done on managing everyday living among female doctoral students, it would be an opportunity to investigate whether the theory **Gaining by Losing** would fit with a future study exploring the experience of everyday living of another group of participants. In achieving the confirmability of the analysis, I regularly met with my supervisors to present and discuss the research analysis.

At all phases of analysis, my two supervisors would ask questions and challenge the analysis, which kept me constantly thinking at a higher level while working with the data. At the same time, having a pre-supposition interview before conducting the research and practising self-reflection throughout the research guarded me against holding a judgemental stance on what my participants had to say or letting my own experience as a South East Asian female doctoral student influence the analysis and interpretation of the data. Objectively, the theory of the study, **Gaining by Losing**, was determined by these rigour criteria as well as through conclusive feedback from the study participants.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The present study has both strengths and limitations. While this study encompasses numerous strengths and contributes to new knowledge about managing everyday living among South East Asian female doctoral students in New Zealand, several limitations need to be considered.

The grounded theory of **Gaining by Losing** was generated from data in this study that depicted the gains and losses of South East Asian female doctoral students at different stages of their enrolment and included those who had returned home as a graduate. However, I did not account for the possibility that some of these students might opt to discontinue their studies before completing their qualification if the losses became too great. Neither did I seek informants whose enrolment had been suspended by the university, perhaps because the time pressures from childcare or part-time work, challenges to sustain family nutrition on inadequate funds, accumulating health issues and the like, had exceeded their capacity to complete doctoral study requirements. In the absence of these voices, it is likely that the weight of accumulated losses has been understated, or that conditions that further jeopardise the possibility for some South East Asian women to successfully complete doctoral studies in New Zealand were not identified.

There are also limitations in the range of occupations discussed with participants. Some hidden occupations (e.g., performing prayer) and domestic responsibilities (e.g., doing laundry), are absent. Inclusion of the full range of occupations the participants were managing could provide a better insight into their everyday lives. A suggestion for further research to address these gaps is to conduct a longitudinal study to take a closer

look at the relationship between PhD attritions and everyday living as one of the potential contributing factors.

Aside from these limitations, there are also limitations concerning the applicability of the findings in other contexts. In this study, data were gathered from participants who were interviewed belonging to one gender (women) in a single country. As such, it limits the explanatory potential of the study to gender and a specific country context. Besides that, this study was conducted in only one of New Zealand's megacities. Since each city is unique, the interactions within the environment of these cities may differ from one another and thus influence the research findings.

Future research might consider including male participants and undertaking this study in other English-speaking (e.g., Australia, Canada, America, and Britain) and non-English/European developed countries (e.g., The Netherlands, France, Japan, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland), particularly in expensive cities like Tokyo, Paris, New York, and Geneva. Although the findings from these comparisons might differ in other living environments, they would allow a better understanding of the everyday living of student sojourners in these cities through the theory developed in the current study.

Moreover, while this study investigated the experience of international student sojourners' everyday occupations in New Zealand, it would also be interesting to have future research that looks into the daily occupations of other populations who live temporarily abroad. These people could be expatriates, workers undertaking internships or seasonal jobs, and students on exchange programmes.

The research literature on the re-entry living experiences of international students upon completing and returning home remains scarce, and there remains relatively little research literature on their occupations upon returning home. Another area for future research is the experience of Kiwis' daily living overseas which would make an interesting comparison to the findings of international students coming to New Zealand.

Conclusion

Chapter Eight encapsulates the successes (gains) and drawbacks (losses) experienced by the 23 international South East Asian female doctoral students who participated in my study. Their experiences of everyday living within a country known for its high cost of living contributed towards my substantive theory: **Gaining by Losing**. Although participants acquired considerable gains, there were undeniably surmounting losses

impacting their doctoral journey. These losses should be taken into consideration because international students bring vast economic and academic benefits to New Zealand.

Undertaking this study has also contributed to the occupational science literature by providing empirical findings to fill the gap in understanding the daily occupations of international students who are studying overseas. Noting that there is little research into the everyday living of international students involving minority groups, this research amplifies the voices of international South East Asian female doctoral students in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

To sustain the flow of international doctoral students into New Zealand, universities (as a stakeholder) must support their international students while upholding the government's aspirations for international students and achieving the UN SDGs. The universities have an essential role in preserving New Zealand universities as a desirable educational destination, by ensuring that their international students receive gains that are bigger than their losses.

The findings of this study provided implications for practice and recommendations for future research. The study is significant because currently there is no other in-depth research being conducted in the area of study. This study, thus, is a pioneer in New Zealand and knowledge contributed by this study would be valuable to make improvements so that the health and well-being of the international doctoral students would be sustained.

Upon reflection, I find that adopting grounded theory for this occupational science-based study has turned out to be worthwhile. Although it has been a time-consuming and demanding process to carry out this research, employing grounded theory in this study was a catalyst for discovery. I began this study with a spark of interest in my study area and little knowledge of exactly what I would be exploring. The grounded theory methodology further ignited this spark of an idea by providing me with the means to unravel the challenges encountered by international female doctoral students and how they managed their everyday living while sojourning in a foreign country, in the context of a super city.

Conducting this research has contributed to my own transformation and growth alongside my participants as we travelled on similar but separate journeys. I end this chapter with a poem that I consider meaningful for those who have chosen to venture out for their study overseas, acknowledging that some chosen life paths can turn out to be infinitely more challenging than anticipated.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
 And sorry I could not travel both
 And be one traveller, long I stood
 And look down one as far as I could
 To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
 And having perhaps the better claim.
 Because it was grassy, and wanted wear;
 Though as for that the passing there
 Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
 In leaves no step had trodden black.
 Oh, I kept the first for another day!
 Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
 I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
 Somewhere ages and ages hence:
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
 I took the one less travelled by,
 And that has made all the difference.

—Frost, R. (1916/1993)

Postscript

The collection of data in this study took place between 2016 and 2018 during the time New Zealand received an influx of immigrants and recorded a significant international student population. It was during the same time that the housing crisis and high cost of living in mega cities around New Zealand was extensively visible. For instance, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Dunedin, and Wellington were named among the costliest cities with the least affordable home ownership (Conchie, 2018; George, 2020; O'Meara, 2017; Winter, 2017).

The Covid-19 pandemic broke out while this thesis was at near completion. This unprecedented situation abruptly changed the entry record number of immigrants and international students to New Zealand. Since the pandemic is still on-going, it is not possible to know how long and what the impact of the pandemic will be on international students' enrolment, and whether the cost of living in New Zealand major cities will further increase with recession looming, opportunities for employment reduced, and housing prices remaining high.

Given that international doctoral students create substantial contributions to New Zealand's economy and play a role in boosting research work for university ranking, it has become more important for universities to care for and pay close attention to their living conditions and occupational needs. Universities could start by concentrating on minimising losses (push factors that will deter future doctoral students' arrival) and maximising their gains (pull factors that will ensure New Zealand continues to be the prime destination choice for doctoral studies). Proactive strategies based on the recommendations provided and beyond, would put New Zealand in an advantageous position among its competitors.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics



19 October 2016

Clare Hocking
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Clare

Re Ethics Application: **16/314 How female Southeast Asian doctoral students manage everyday living in Aotearoa, New Zealand**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 18 October 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:


- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 18 October 2019;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 18 October 2019 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.


To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,



Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date information sheet produced
11 August 2016

Title of project
How international female Southeast Asian doctoral students manage everyday living in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Invitation to participate
Kia Ora, Hello. My name is Ida and I am enrolled as a PhD student at Auckland University of Technology. I would like to invite you to participate in the research project I am undertaking which looks at the everyday living of female Southeast Asian doctoral students while in New Zealand. This research will also contribute to a qualification.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection without consequences.

What is the purpose of this research?
The purpose of this research is to understand how international female Southeast Asian doctoral students manage aspects of daily lives in New Zealand, such as shopping, cooking, caring for themselves and others, and staying in touch with friends and family.

The findings will reveal aspects of everyday occupations that participants are confident or concerned about. This information will be useful for:

- informing and guiding other international postgraduate students who intend to come to New Zealand for a PhD study
- developing relevant services and supports for international students, particularly international doctoral students

The end product of this research will be a doctoral thesis and results of the study might be published in academic journals.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You may have heard about this research project through my advertisement, flyer or by word of mouth.

I aim to interview up to 25 participants for this research project. The inclusion criteria are:

- Female, regardless of marital status.
- Identify as Southeast Asian (citizens from the following countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and East Timor).
- Have either completed a PhD and returned home within the last 10 years or have lived in New Zealand for at least 6 months while enrolled in a PhD programme.

If you meet the inclusion criteria and are interested in the study, your participation and assistance would be most appreciated.

How do I agree to participate in this research?
You can indicate your interest in participating in the research by text, phone or email. If you have provided your contact details, you can wait for me to contact you. Once I hear from you,

I will contact you to arrange an interview via skype or face to face. I will ask you to complete a consent form before conducting the interview. With your consent, I will collect demographic data and the demographic form will be sent to you after you have returned the consent form either by hand or e-mail.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the data collection is completed, removal of your data may not be possible.

What happens in the study?

Your involvement in the research would consist of approximately 60-90 minutes' interview. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. You have the right not to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with. During analysing data, I may request another interview to clarify things from the first interview.

For participants still living in New Zealand, I may seek your permission to allow me to accompany and observe while you, for example, go to the supermarket to do your grocery shopping or take a public transport to come to university.

All interviews and observations would be arranged to suit your time and convenience.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Being interviewed may bring up experiences from the past and this may cause discomfort when you are sharing your experiences. For instance, you may be upset when you recall certain stressful, and/or challenging experiences that you encountered and which you have to deal with while living in New Zealand

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with. If there are signs of distress, you or the researcher may choose to stop the audio recording. Later, we will discuss to decide whether we can still continue once you are ready again or end the interview.

In the unlikely event of you needing a counselling support, a counselling service will be provided to you by AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing. You are able to receive three free sessions of confidential counselling support while participating in this research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research, and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling>.

If you are no longer a student in New Zealand, a list of accessible counselling agencies within your country will be made available to you.

What are the benefits?

There are no immediate benefits to you for taking part in this study. You will be contributing to information that could help to provide better support and services for international doctoral students. The research will benefit the researcher to gain a qualification.

How will my privacy be protected?

The interview data will be coded to ensure anonymity. The anonymised data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet or password protected computer file. Data will be kept for a period of six years after which it will be destroyed (deleted). All participants will be given a pseudonym and any identifying information about participants will be removed in the written material for de-identification.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no financial costs to participating in this research, apart from your time for which I greatly thank you.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have at least a week between receiving the information sheet and being asked whether you want to participate in the study. There is also an opportunity to ask any questions about the study before you give consent. Please take note that your participation in this research project is completely voluntary.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive a copy of the interview transcript and you are welcome to review and omit any information you do not want to include. You can also receive a summary of the findings of the research once the project has been completed and you can choose to have it delivered to you via e-mail or post.

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, Professor Clare Hocking, clare.hocking@aut.ac.nz, (64) 9-921-9162.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext|6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

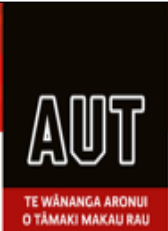
Name: Ida Che Arr
Phone: (64)027-489-3167
E-mail: ida.arr@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Name: Professor Clare Hocking
Phone: (64) 9-921-9162
E-mail: clare.hocking@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/314.

Appendix C: Consent Form



AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Consent Form

Project title: How international female Southeast Asian doctoral students manage everyday living in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Project Supervisor: Professor Clare Hocking

Researcher: Ida Che Arr

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 11 August 2016.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that the study includes observation of selected day-to-day activities and I can choose not to be observed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I understand that I might be contacted for follow-up interviews.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

Time :

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 October 2016.

AUTEC Reference number 16/314.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D: Demographic Data Form

Participant's Demographic Data Form

Age	
Nationality	
Ethnicity	
Religion	
Marital status	
Number of children	
Year of arrival	
Length of time living in New Zealand	
Field of study	
Current year of PhD study (for those who are still studying)	
University name & location	
Type of education funding (E.g. sponsored/self-funded)	
Current employment	

Signed:

Date:

Time:

Appendix E: Researcher's Safety Plan



Researcher Safety Plan

- Gain as much prior knowledge and information about the address that you are visiting.
e.g. type of area, dogs
- Study map of the area to visit and exit routes to use in case of safety being compromised.
- Obtain prior information about the participants and their living environment.
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged and working
- Carry sensible amounts of money.
- Stay in communal rooms while at private homes.
- Inform someone (e.g. family member) when and where you are conducting the interview and agree to contact that person at a certain time. If you do not make contact, the contact person will attempt to contact you. If you cannot be contacted after a reasonable time (e.g. 30 minutes' post interview), the contact person may then alert the appropriate authorities.

Appendix F: Flyer for Participants Who Are Still Studying and Living in Kiwi City

*ARE YOU A SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE
DOCTORAL STUDENT LIVING IN KIWI CITY,
NEW ZEALAND?*

Kia Ora, Hello

I am a doctoral student at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) who originates from Southeast Asia. I am carrying out a research project on the **everyday living of doctoral students in New Zealand** and looking for female participants who:

- Come to New Zealand from Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, East Timor)
- Are undertaking a PhD study with higher learning institutions/universities based in Kiwi City, New Zealand
- Have lived in Kiwi City for more than 6 months



If you fit these criteria, you are most welcome to participate in my research project. For further enquiries, please contact:



Ida Che Arr
Phone: (64)027-489-3167
E-mail: ida.arr@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/314.

Appendix G: Flyer for Participants Who Lived in Kiwi City and Graduated

*ARE YOU A SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE
DOCTORAL GRADUANT WHO HAS LIVED IN
KIWI CITY, NEW ZEALAND?*

Kia Ora, Hello

I am a doctoral student at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) who originates from Southeast Asia. I am carrying out a research project on the **everyday living of doctoral students in New Zealand** and looking for female participants who:



- Come to New Zealand from Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, East Timor)
- Have completed a PhD programme or graduated with a PhD from higher learning institutions/universities based in Kiwi City, New Zealand
- Have returned home less than 10 years ago

If you fit these criteria, you are most welcome to participate in my research project. For further enquiries, please contact:

Ida Che Arr
Phone: (64)027-489-3167
E-mail: ida.arr@aut.ac.nz



Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/314.

Appendix H: Sample of Indicative Questions



Indicative Questions

The researcher is interested to understand how international female Southeast Asian doctoral students manage aspects of their daily lives such as shopping, cooking, caring for themselves and others, and staying in touch with friends and families while living in New Zealand.

To understand the participants' occupational experience while in New Zealand, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews. A range of open-ended questions will be asked of participants to understand the experiences from the participants' views.

Some examples of the questions are as follows:

Could you describe your experience coming to New Zealand?

What contributed to your choice of PhD study in New Zealand?

Could you tell me about doing everyday activities in New Zealand?

How different is doing daily chores in New Zealand compared to how they were done back home?

How different is your life (or family life) in New Zealand compared to previous lifestyle?

In what ways things may have changed for you?

What factors bring these changes in your life?

How do you manage these changes?

Who or what helped you to make decisions about what to do?

Were there any effects of your decisions on yourself (or your family)?

Appendix I: Sample of Observation Protocol



OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

The focus of the observation

The focus of the observation is on how participants respond to their new environment while living in New Zealand. The researcher is interested to observe participants engaging in familiar and unfamiliar occupations (e.g. riding the bus or doing shopping) and draw out participants' comments/opinions on how their participation in the occupation they are doing is the same or different to how they did things back home.

How the observation will occur?

The researcher will ask the participants for permission to be observed while they participate in their daily occupations. The participants will determine what types of activities, tasks, events or situations they would be comfortable with being observed by the researcher. While observing, the researcher may also participate in non-invasive ways (e.g. help carry grocery bags or check the bus timetable together).

The researcher will state in the Information Sheet the intention to carry out the observation with participants who are still living in New Zealand. The participants' consent to be observed will be obtained through the Consent Form which will be given to the participants before the observation begins. The researcher will also verbally inform the participant of consent again prior to the observation. If incidental participation eventuates during the observation (e.g. when a family member or friend of the participants unintentionally takes part in what the participants are doing like helping to cook a dish), the researcher will get the person(s) involved to sign the Consent Form.

The researcher will use Participant Observations Note to record significant processes occurring in the field after the observation has ended.

Who and how many people will be observed?

Several female Southeast Asian female doctoral students (less than 25 participants) who are still living in New Zealand may be observed for this purpose.

Where and how many observations will occur?

The participants will choose at which places they would allow observations to occur. The researcher will decide if these places are suitable or safe to conduct the observations. The number of observations depends but is highly unlikely to exceed 10 episodes or be more than 2 hours

Appendix J: Sample of Participant Observation Note

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION NOTE

Participant No:

Activity:

Observation Date:

Starting Time:

Finishing Time:

Location:

People Present:

Description of environment (e.g. layout, any physical patterns, significant objects in the area, placement of people and furniture):

Non-verbal behaviour (e.g. tone of voice, posture, facial expressions, eye movements, body movements, mood and hand gestures):

Content of activity (e.g. reactions, planning, motivation or involvement of others):

Researcher's impressions (e.g. participant's interaction with certain people, events, or objects):

Analysis: (e.g. researcher's questions, tentative hunches, trends in data, emerging patterns):

Situational problems (e.g. timing of activity, interruptions, available material of decision making):

Appendix K: Sample of a Storyline

Gaining by Losing: The Storyline (30/6/19)

This study explores how South East Asian (SEA) female doctoral students managed their everyday living in New Zealand. The everyday living refers to the daily activities that people do such as cooking, shopping and looking after children. In Occupational Science, these daily activities are termed *occupations*.

Gaining by Losing is the core category in this study. It is made up of three categories: Choosing to be Student Sojourners, Meeting Challenges and Returning Transformed. These three main categories are phases that show movement, from the beginning to the end, of the overseas PhD journey for the participants.

1st subcat: Exploring Opportunities

The initial phase saw the participants choosing to be student sojourners in anticipation of gaining benefits from going abroad for a PhD. Among these benefits include an international qualification, a different learning environment, academic support and resources, overseas experience, global networks and language skills. For this purpose, they strategised by pulling in ways to get them the opportunities (e.g., locating supervisors in their field of interest, fulfilling requirements such as sitting for IELTS examination, going for medical check-up, getting visa, checking the suitability of the host country – safe, child-friendly, work visa, domestic fees and obtaining family consent (e.g., those who are single asked permission from their parents and those who are married asked for a green light from their spouse and/or family members, especially if they intended to leave their child behind to be cared by family back home).

2nd subcat: Making Sacrifices

However, in order to gain something, they also had to lose something. Back home, these participants were wage/salary earners. They earned a stable income and already had some stability in lives. To become a student sojourner, they needed to make sacrifices and so, they pulled back on comforts (e.g., parting with the usual things they had - own home or car), possessions (e.g., personal belongings and assets to add on to their financial resources), familiarity (e.g., known neighbourhood and people close to them) as well as familial roles and responsibilities (e.g., some of them separating with their spouse, children and/or parents). And once everything was in place, they were ready to pursue their study in New Zealand.

3rd subcat: Encountering Difficulties

The next phase focusses on the participants' arrival in New Zealand and the challenges they encountered as a student sojourner. The initial gaining shifted in this phase whereby as they arrived in the country to start their study, they were suddenly presented with challenges. The main challenge is the high cost of living in the city where they were residing in. Due to their reduced income being a student who was mostly dependent on saving and scholarships as well as the low currency exchange rate, the housing, food, transport and childcare which were once affordable now became expensive; creating difficulties for them. These difficulties posed challenges and prompted them to react by pulling back from doing things which would spark losses, especially financial ones. Part of these pulling back examples included settling for the most affordable accommodations although they might not be suitable for them, skipping their usual habit of eating out and start cooking at home, restricting their spending in New Zealand, going for an alternative/cheaper childcare services to save money (these were also examples of how their habits and routines were changed).

4th subcat:
Making Adjustments

In New Zealand, they also made adjustments to their new environment and living arrangement. This was done through pulling in their past knowledge/experience, support from existing family, help from other people (their newly-established networks) including co-nationals, other international students and the local Kiwis. By making these adjustments, they were gaining different ways of doing things and learning to do things differently.

5th subcat:
Living With The Choice

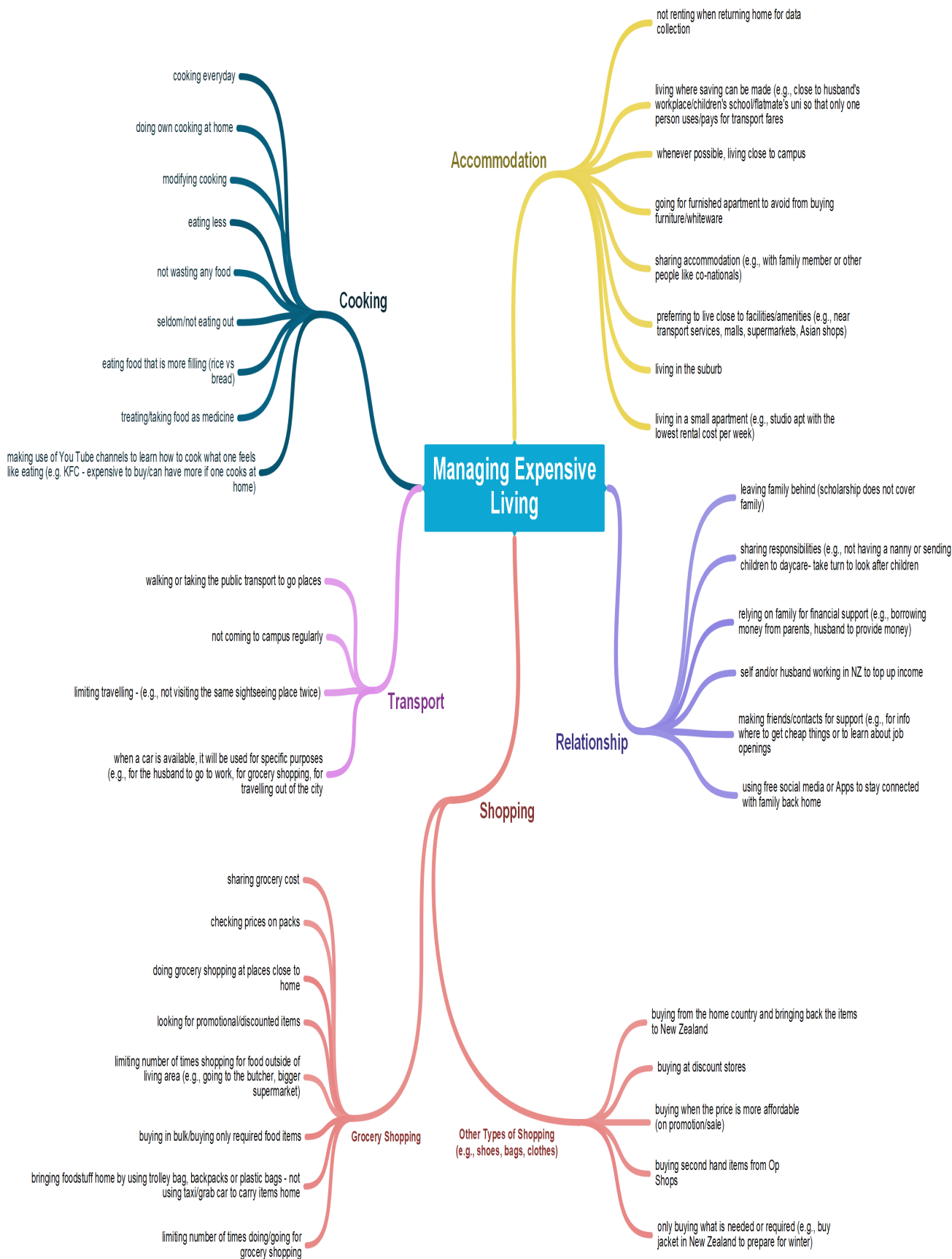
In the final phase, Living With the Choice is where participants endured the downsides from their choice of going abroad for a PhD. They had to live with the risks of the decision that they made, they had to live with a fear of the unknown. They carried with them the uncertainties of living in the host country and their future. They did not know whether they would survive living in the country or if they would really succeed or fail with their PhD. The PhD itself had its own difficulties and they had to also temporarily stomach much discomforts and other unwanted effects (such as losses, sacrifices, and unpleasant experience) from their choice. Despite all odds (all the difficulties), they pulled back from giving up. Instead they kept going on. Their refusal to give up fuelled their endurance and became the driving force to remain steadfast and committed to their PhD.

6th subcat:
Returning Transformed

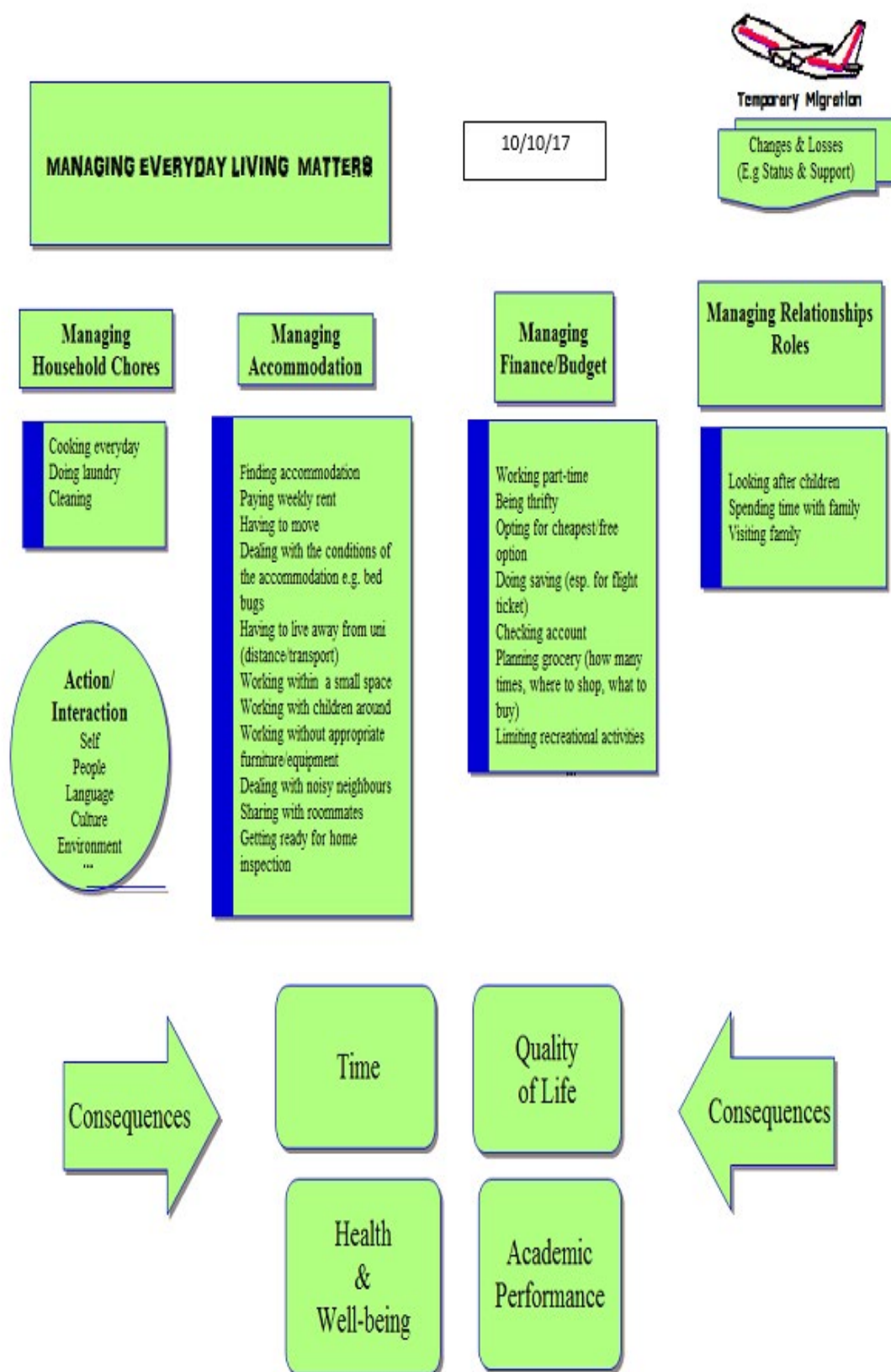
Ultimately, with the endurance came changes. Once the PhD journey was over, participants returned home transformed because the journey of PhD and the experience of living abroad was transformational. For instance, participants who had completed their PhD noticed changes in their way of thinking. They became more of a critical thinker, had their own stand and were vocal with their thoughts. They also became less bias, more independent and spiritual. As they returned home with this new sense of gain, they might find themselves returning to an area which still remained the same and they might be presented with challenges again. Nevertheless, experiencing the changes, they also pulled in what they had learnt and developed from their sojourning overseas. Many adopted the New Zealand practices such as caring for the environment and positive parenting. They also learnt to be a financial savvy, continued to cook at home and became more family-oriented. With all these gains, they ended on a positive.

Overall, Gaining by Losing underpins the findings whereby in the first category, the gain creates the loss, then in the second category, the loss creates the gain and finally, in the third category, the loss leads to gaining. The dynamics of gaining and losing are represented by the Yin and Yang symbol in contrasting shades of blue, whereby the fluid movement between them, delineates the two main strategies which are recognised as Pulling In and Pulling Back. Together, these strategies became crucial to the participants' everyday lives in New Zealand.

Appendix L: Brainstorming Ideas



Appendix M: Diagramming



Appendix N: Samples of Analysis Process

