MONASH University

OPTIMISING THE PROFESSIONAL ADAPTATION OF ASIAN AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRANT TEACHERS

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Master of Education

Bachelor of Science (Hons)

A thesis submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* at
Monash University in (*2021*)

Faculty of Education

Abstract

Asians are the fastest-growing immigrant group in Australia, and immigrant teachers make up a significant proportion of the teaching workforce. While there have been studies on immigrant teachers in Australia, few have specifically explored in detail the experiences of the growing number of Asian immigrant teachers in Australian schools. This qualitative study aims to understand Asian Australian immigrant teachers' experiences by exploring the enablers and inhibitors that optimise their professional adaptation.

Qualitative analysis of the data collected from a series of one-on-one interviews with 10 Asian Australian immigrant teachers revealed that their professional adaptation is underpinned by a sense of belonging to their school community, which is constructed from three underpinning constructs: their professional identity, their sense of vulnerability, and their intercultural perspectives. The findings contribute to the literature on immigrant teachers by demonstrating that professional adaptation is a complex and multidimensional construct that involves the interactions between the cognitive (professional identity, intercultural perspective), emotional (sense of vulnerability) and psychological constructs (sense of belonging), and the behavioural consequence of these interactions (professional adaptation).

It is argued that there needs to be a more complex view of immigrant teachers' professional adaptation in place of the deficit perspective that frames the current support strategies that focus on getting immigrant teachers to fit in and conform to the local teaching habits and practices. A more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon is necessary to clarify the constructs that affect professional adaptation and the interaction of these constructs, as such knowledge can increase the momentum for structural changes to harness the diversity of the teaching workforce by mobilising the strength and talent of immigrant teachers.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

Many people have helped me throughout my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) journey. First and foremost, I wish to thank my husband and three children, who have been with me on a day-to-day basis, supporting me in this journey and holding space when it all seemed too hard. I am also immensely grateful to my supervisors, Professor Zane Diamond and Dr Eisuke Saito, for advice and encouragement throughout my PhD journey and also to the people who participated in this study, as without their generosity and patience in sharing their stories, this research would not have been possible.

I am particularly grateful to my father and my two sisters for their quiet and steadfast support. Knowing that they believed in me and are always behind me has helped me tremendously on this journey. I am also grateful to my late mom, who is watching and protecting me from above. I would like to believe that I have inherited her strength, determination, and perseverance to walk this journey, knowing that she will be proud of what I have accomplished.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter overview

Chapter One introduces this qualitative study on the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. The chapter explains my motivation for this study, followed by the background, rationale, research purpose, and guiding question. A brief outline of the research design is then provided, followed by the significance of the study and an exploration of the key concepts and terminologies used. This chapter concludes by providing an overview of the structure of this thesis.

1.2 Personal motivation

My first contact with immigrant teachers occurred several years ago when I was asked to oversee a series of induction and mentoring programs for new entrant immigrant teachers in the school in which I taught in Singapore. That period coincided with an unprecedented increase in the number of immigrant- background teachers employed in mainstream schools in Singapore. I observed firsthand the difference between these new teachers and my local teacher colleagues. Their beliefs about education, teaching styles, and pedagogical approaches seemed quite different from that of the local teachers. As their mentor, I had frequent interactions with these teachers and was regularly involved in mediating the tensions between them and their department heads, students, and students' parents. That experience, which took place almost a decade ago, ignited my interest in learning more about immigrant teachers who are teaching in cross- cultural contexts, and became the topic of my master's dissertation, which was eventually published (Yip et al., 2019). In the years after completing my master's degree, I continued to interact with many more immigrant teachers in my work. It was intriguing to see how some immigrant teachers have adjusted well, were highly popular among colleagues and students, and proceeded to take on leadership roles in the school. In contrast, others appeared to continue to struggle with adjusting to the local teaching conditions in Singapore and finding a space for themselves in their new teaching context.

It is interesting how life has come full circle, as years later, I moved to Australia and found myself in the same position as my immigrant teachers after taking up the position as a part-time teaching associate in the university sector. As a new-entrant immigrant teacher in my adopted country, I had my share of hardships coping with an unfamiliar education system and learning new ways of teaching and interacting with students. This experience of viewing immigrant teachers from the 'outside' to now being an immigrant teacher myself has

prompted my interest in deepening my understanding in this area and, hence, my research into immigrant teachers' professional adaptation.

To provide information on the context in which this research sits, the following section provides background information on Australia's cultural diversity and its teaching force and an overview of the Australian Government's policy initiative of engaging Asia through education.

1.3   Background

1.3.1   Cultural diversity in Australia

A significant proportion of the Australian population is made up of immigrants. Over 7.5 million settlers have arrived in the country since 1945 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2020), and in 2019, its immigrant population constituted 29.7% of the total population, which is a proportion that surpasses other major immigrant-receiving countries such as the United States (13.5%), Canada (20.1%), and New Zealand (23.8%) (Organisation for Economic Co- operation and Development [OECD]/European Union [EU], 2018). According to the OECD/EU (2018), Australia (28.1%) has the third-largest proportion of immigrants in its population after Luxembourg (46.3%) and Switzerland (29.3%).

Migration is by no means a new phenomenon in Australia. Throughout Australia's post-war history, immigration was part of its nation-building effort to support population and workforce growth (Teicher et al., 2002). However, the scale and pattern of immigration have varied over the years, in keeping with the nation's political and economic priorities. Australia's post-World War II immigration policy aimed to accept only immigrants whose appearance, culture, and language were closer to its original settlers so that new immigrants could assimilate into their new country and culture more easily (Crock, 2011; Jayasuriya et al., 2003; Jupp, 1995). Hence, only people from the British Isles, and later other parts of Europe, were accepted into the country. The expectation was that these European migrants would very quickly immerse themselves into Australian society and adopt its way of life. The intention was to have a culturally and linguistically homogeneous population (Jayasuriya et al., 2003; Jupp, 1995).

What started as a policy to achieve cultural and linguistic homogeneity in Australia has, over the past century, transformed the country into one with the most remarkably diverse population in the world (ABS, 2017). Following the abolition of the race-based immigrant policy in 1973, the number of immigrants from non-European countries, particularly from Asia, has gradually increased. By the mid-1980s, migrants from Asian countries had begun

to outnumber those from European countries, including the United Kingdom, which had been Australia's traditional immigration source (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2016). Since the late 1980s, a significant number of immigrants from countries in Asia have arrived under the skilled migration schemes. The latest data indicate that Asian immigrants make up 47.3% of the total annual immigrant intake while immigrants from the United Kingdom (UK) have declined to 9.3% (DIBP, 2017).

1.3.2   Asians in Australia

Asians are the fastest growing immigrant group in Australia. In the 2016 Census (ABS, 2017), approximately 3.4 million individuals, representing about 14.4% of Australia's total population, identified themselves as having at least one Asian ancestor. The number of first-generation immigrants from Asian countries steadily increased from 856,144 to 2,445,232 between 1991 and 2016 (ABS, 2017). In 2016, Asian-born Australian residents made up 11.2% of the total population, which is almost triple that of the 3.8% recorded in 1991. The most common Asian backgrounds are Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Malaysian, and Sri Lankan (ABS, 2020). Combined, Asians from these six countries made up close to 30% of the Asian-born Australian immigrant population (ABS, 2020).

The recent growth in the Asian Australian population has been seen as providing Australia with a unique opportunity to unlock the social and economic rewards in the largest and fastest growing region in the world (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Among the key recommendations in *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* is fostering Asia-related capabilities, including Asian language skills and cultural knowledge. The imperatives to nurture an Asia-literate population and an Asia-ready workforce were subsequently implemented through various education policies and initiatives, including the Australian Curriculum Cross-Curricular priority (Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia) and a General Capability (Intercultural Understanding) (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014), the National Plan for School Improvement (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Standard 1.3) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011).

1.3.3   Cultural diversity in Australia's teaching force

The demographic trend in the general population is reflected in many facets of Australian society, including its teaching workforce. Demographic data from the *Staff in Australian Schools Survey* in 2013 showed that 16.4% and 19.2% of the primary and secondary school teachers, respectively, were not born in Australia (Department of Education, Skills and Employment [DESE], 2013). Of this group of overseas-born teachers, 47% and 43% in

primary and secondary schools, respectively, were from Asian countries. These teachers hailed from various regions in Asia and were characterised by significant cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Although the proportion of overseas-born teachers is still underrepresented in the Australian teacher workforce (16.4% for primary teachers and 19.2% for secondary teachers) when compared to the 27.7% of the Australian total population who were born overseas (ABS, 2017), their presence is increasingly being felt in Australian schools (DESE, 2013).

Immigrants with professional qualifications and work experience have, for a long time, been given priority in the Australian immigration processes to fill the teacher shortage (Department of Home Affair, 2021). While immigrant teachers have traditionally come from countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, there has been an increase in teachers from Asian countries filling teacher shortages in specific curriculum areas and sectors (Reid, 2014). This increase in Asian immigrant teachers appears to mirror the general demographic trend in the Australian population.

This rise in the number of immigrant teachers within the Australian education system has, over time, led to an increased research interest in the field. Many of these researchers have treated the group of immigrant teachers as a whole and documented immigrant teachers' general workplace experiences across multiple and diverse educational backgrounds. (Collins & Reid, 2012; Kamler et al., 1998; Reid, 2014; Santoro, 2007; Santoro et al., 2001; Seah, 2002; Sharplin, 2009). The most recent comprehensive nationwide study appears to have been carried out by Reid et al. (2014), who used the Australian census data from 2006 together with a questionnaire and focus group interviews to study the teaching and living experiences of migrant teachers in Australia. An emerging body of research has looked into more specific areas such as immigrant teachers' professional identity (Peeler, 2002), support strategies needed for immigrant teachers (Guo & Singh, 2009; Peeler & Jane, 2005), and the pedagogical practices employed by immigrant teachers (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). Some work has also been done on individual states' specific contexts, specifically Western Australia (Dunworth, 1997; Jones & Soyza, 2006) and Queensland (Bella, 1999; Oliver, 1998). These studies are scattered across different immigrant groups, with only a small number focusing on Asian immigrant teachers in Australia (Luong-Phan & McMahon, 2014; Santoro et al., 2001; Singh & Dooley, 1996).

1.3.4 Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Against the backdrop of the economic rise of Asia and its more prominent role on the world stage, the Australian Government launched the *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*

as a roadmap for the country's success by taking advantage of the opportunities offered in the Asian century through increasing economic, social, political, and cultural ties with Asian nations (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This national policy has implications for the country's education sector. At the policy level, this paper was translated into national goals for schooling in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008), which states that young Australians need to be "Asia literate" and able "to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia" (p. 9). These national goals are implemented through the Australian Curriculum, mainly through the Asian languages curriculum and the cross-curriculum priority area of 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia'. At the school level, this focus was translated into a push for greater awareness and knowledge of Asian culture among students and staff, and therefore a need for an Asian-literate teaching workforce to develop and implement a relevant Asia-centric curriculum (Halse et al., 2013). It appeared that immigrant teachers from Asia are well-positioned to fill these needs due to their language and cultural background and their knowledge of Asia. However, whether this is indeed the case and how this new education focus affects their experiences in Australian schools are areas for investigation.

1.4   Rationale for this study

While teachers around the world have similar goals and aspirations in wanting the best for their children and there is also some general agreement on pedagogical practices and approaches, how teaching is enacted varies significantly according to the immediate local circumstances and the broader socio-cultural context. For this reason, immigrant teachers who have been trained and have taught in another country may need to undergo some form of professional transition in their new teaching context in order to function effectively as teachers. While the national data have shown a rise in the number of immigrant teachers from Asian countries in recent years, there have been limited studies on the experiences of this growing group of immigrant teachers in Australia, other than Santoro et al. (2001), Singh and Dooley (1996), and Reid (2014).

With the attention given to Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia in the current education landscape and the growing number of Asian immigrants in the Australia teaching workforce, key questions remain regarding Asian Australian immigrant teachers' professional adaptation: How do they navigate the seemingly Eurocentric framework in schools? How does the new narrative for Asian literacy shape their professional adaptation? What perspectives do they bring to the classrooms? What helps their professional transition,

and what makes it difficult? This study, which is set against the backdrop of the current social and educational context, seeks to address this gap in knowledge.

1.5   Research purpose, question, and scope

This research seeks to deepen the understanding of professional adaptation. By exploring the insights and experiences of 10 Asian Australian immigrant teachers, the study aims to construct a theory to explain immigrant teachers' professional adaptation. To ensure that the study remains focused and relevant, it is guided by a single overarching research question:

> *What are the enablers and inhibitors of optimising the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers?*

In this study, Asia is defined by its geographical boundaries in accordance to the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) developed by the Australia Bureau of Statistics. SACC splits Asia into four major groups of countries: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central and Southern Asia. An Asian Australian is defined as an individual whose ancestry falls within Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central and Southern Asia (ABS, 2017). The teachers in this study are Asian Australian immigrant teachers, who are defined as practising teachers who were born in Asia, have undergone teacher training in Asia, and have worked as teachers in an Asian country before immigrating to Australia. They reflect the largest number of Asian teachers who have relocated to Australia for professional reasons.

The study is set in Australia, a country with a significant proportion of immigrants in its population. As the researcher is based in Victoria, a state in southeast Australia, and the recruitment of participants was conducted locally, it was expected that the majority of the participants would be from the same state. However, this criterion was not a prerequisite in the recruitment exercise. As such, the researcher was introduced through mutual contacts to two participants from outside of Victoria. One was from the state of New South Wales and another was from the Northern Territory. These interstate participants provided additional perspectives to the study.

1.6   Key concepts and terminology

1.6.1   Professional adaptation

As a key concept in this study, the definition of professional adaptation is surprisingly limited. In the general human resource literature, professional adaptation is defined as the

process whereby a newly hired employee adjusts to their new role, expectations, and the intricacies of work and culture in their new work environment (Gajda, 2015). The main goal of the adaptation process is to introduce the employee to the organisation as soon and as efficiently as possible, mainly by informing them of the patterns of behaviour required in the future (Huselid et al., 2009).

Professional adaptation differs from professional socialisation in that the former is understood to be the process in which an individual adjusts to work in a specific work environment, while the latter focuses on individuals taking on the beliefs, values, and culture of practice that are associated with the profession (e.g., teachers, doctors) in general. However, professional adaptation for immigrants tends to be more complex and multifaceted. It involves immigrants going through a process of negotiating previous expectations and practices with the new workplace context (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). For immigrant teachers to teach effectively, they need to gain the knowledge associated with the culture of teaching and learning in their host country (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Virta, 2015). Therefore, in this sense, the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers goes beyond just adjusting to working in a new school, but also involves taking on the beliefs, values, and culture of practices associated with the teaching profession in a new country.

1.6.2   Immigrant teachers

In defining immigrant teachers, a literature review showed considerable variation in the terms used to describe teachers who have crossed international borders to teach in their newly adopted country. The most commonly used words to describe these teachers are 'immigrant teachers' and 'migrant teachers'. Other terms include 'overseas trained teachers', 'overseas educated teachers', 'foreign-educated teachers', and 'international educated teachers', or any combination of the above. This research uses the term 'immigrant teachers' to describe the specific group of teachers that are being researched. Immigrant teachers are defined in this research as foreign-born teachers who have attained professional qualifications and teaching experience overseas, and have moved across international borders to become permanent residents in another country, which in this case is Australia.

1.7   Significance

This study is possibly the first to construct a theory to explain professional adaptation from interviews with Asian Australian immigrant teachers. Asian Australian immigrant teachers represent a significant proportion of the local immigrant teacher cohort, which requires a

new conceptualisation of their professional adaptation. This study has the potential to provide policymakers and school leaders with a deeper understanding of the circumstances and experiences of Asian Australian immigrant teachers, which could help to inform a range of practical initiatives relating to the recruitment, development, and retention of immigrant teachers in Australia. Asian Australian immigrant teachers are a valuable resource for meeting the skill shortages in specific areas and providing the opportunity for the education system to diversify the teaching force to address the increasing cultural diversity within the student populations (Santoro, 2015). The skill sets and the expertise offered by these teachers could potentially benefit the school and the education system in general.

The increasing number of Asian Australian immigrant teachers and the rapidly increasing contacts between Asia and Australia can provide an opportunity for the co-construction of new knowledge and more collaborative ways of working and thinking. In light of the Asian Century, where Australia wishes to engage with Asian nations by increasing economic, social, political, and cultural ties with Asian countries, Asian Australian immigrant teachers can contribute to this national imperative to broaden and deepen Australian understanding of Asian cultures and languages. Thus, a deeper understanding of professional adaptation for Asian Australian immigrant teachers is especially valuable against the background where Australia's teaching force can potentially harness these teachers' talent and expertise to drive its national imperatives of nurturing an Asia-literate population and an Asia-ready workforce through a more Asia-centric curriculum.

1.8   Overview of thesis structure

This thesis is organised into six chapters. The first chapter outlines my motivation for this study and the background and rationale for this study, and also presents the context of the research problem, including the research purpose, question, and scope. It presents the key concepts and terminologies used and argues for this study's significance.

Chapter Two presents a review of the existing research on immigrant teachers. It describes the current knowledge on immigrant teachers both globally and within the context of Australia, and examines the literature relating to the research question, including the literature in the fields of cross-cultural and professional adaptation. Given that the link between teaching context and teacher professional identity is well-established in the literature, this chapter also offers a discussion on the research literature on teacher professional identity.

The methodology is presented in Chapter Three. This chapter outlines my research philosophy and explains how it has guided my research approach. A detailed explanation of the research design, including the research process, data collection methods, and analysis, are presented along with a discussion of the ethical considerations and steps that were taken to ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of the research. The chapter concludes with a discussion on my positionality and reflexivity as a researcher.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of my findings. The chapter commences by introducing the participants, and providing their characteristics, unique challenges, experiences, and perspectives. This description is followed by presentation of the findings based on the questions asked during the interviews and the categories and themes emerging from my data analysis. The chapter concludes by drawing on the themes and categories to answer the research question on the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers.

Chapter Five is the discussion chapter, where the findings are discussed in light of the research question, existing literature, and theories. The chapter first presents the findings that concur with and are consistent with other research literature. It then moves on to discuss the findings that appear in the relevant research literature but were absent from the current analysis, and discusses the possible reasons for such absences of corroborative evidence in this small study. The third section presents the key findings that emerged from this study that reveal some of the answers to my research question. Finally, a detailed argument is presented for the need for a new theory for professional adaptation due to the lack of a good explanatory fit offered by the existing theories. The chapter concludes by proposing a new theoretical framework to explain the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers.

The thesis concludes in Chapter Six by offering a summary of the theoretical framework developed based on the data analysed in this study. It also states the contributions to research, as well as the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with a reflection of the research journey I undertook while conducting this study.

1.9   Chapter summary

This first chapter described my personal motivation and established the background for this inquiry. It then explained the rationale for this study, the research purpose, question, scope, and significance, as well as the outline of this thesis. To provide the background for this

study and situate it in the context of previous research in the field, the next chapter offers a critical review of the relevant literature related to the topic under study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

Chapter Two provides a description and critical evaluation of the works related to my research on the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. This chapter is organised into four sections. First, an overview of the current knowledge in the field of immigrant teachers is provided, followed by a discussion of the research literature in the area of adaptation, in particular literature related to cross-cultural adaptation and professional adaptation. This discussion is then followed by a review of the literature in the field of teacher professional identity, which is an area that has been shown to be linked to changes in a teacher's teaching context. Finally, the intersection between immigrant teachers, adaptation, and professional identity are explored, including how the literature in each field intersects, what is known, and where the gaps in knowledge are.

2.2 Immigrant teachers

Globalisation has led to an increased international movement of working professionals, including teachers. The global movement of teachers is an important issue for many education systems worldwide and has been the subject of significant research in recent years. Research in the area of teacher mobility and migration has generally been concerned with one or more of the following areas: movement of teachers as a global phenomenon (Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006; McNamara et al., 2007; Reid, 2014; Sharplin, 2009), the experiences of immigrant teachers in the host countries (Janusch, 2015; Manik, 2014; Maylor et al., 2006; Pollock, 2010; Reid, 2014; Remennick, 2002; Walsh et al., 2011), and the effect of immigrant teachers on the education system in the host countries (Bartlett, 2014; Collins & Reid, 2012; Fee, 2011; McNamara et al., 2007; Reid, 2005).

The data collection and research methods used in these studies include surveys (Miller et al., 2008; Santoro et al., 2001; Sharma, 2012), interviews (Bartlett, 2014; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Pollock, 2010; Reid, 2005; Remennick, 2002; Virta, 2015), and narrative inquiry (Abramova, 2013; Bense, 2014; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Fee, 2011; Janusch, 2015; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Phillion, 2003). In some cases, mixed method research consisting of a combination of surveys, interviews, and fieldwork observation have been used to collect data (Caravatti et al., 2014; Collins & Reid, 2012; Iredale et al., 2015; Seah, 2004).

Many of these studies sought to explore the intersectionality of globalisation, migration, and education, and have drawn on theories from wide-ranging fields to explain their findings. Some of these include migration-related theories (Appleton et al., 2006; Iredale et al., 2015; Manik, 2014; Sharma, 2012), socio-cultural theories (Bense, 2014; Maylor et al., 2006; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Phillion, 2003; Seah, 2004), theories related to cultural and human capital (Reid, 2014; Fee, 2011; Santoro, 2007; Sharma, 2012), cross-cultural adaptation theories (Fee, 2011), professional identity (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Virta, 2015), and professional integration theories (Michael, 2006; Miller, 2008).

This study explores the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. To provide the background and situate the study in the context of previous research in the field, this review focuses on the research literature on immigrant teachers' experiences in their host countries. Other aspects of the immigrant teacher phenomenon (e.g., the brain drain effect on migrants' home countries, immigrant teachers' impact on the education systems in the host countries) are not within the scope of this study. Database searches were conducted using a range of relevant search terms to locate literature for this review. Academic literature was obtained through three educational databases: EBSCOhost, Informit and ProQuest. Grey literature such as reports and government statistics were obtained through web search engines such as Google. The databases were searched using various combinations of the following terms: Immigrant teacher(s), Migrant teacher(s), Teacher migration, Internationally trained/educated teacher(s), Overseas trained teacher(s), Foreign trained teacher(s), Overseas teacher(s). Searches were limited to English language publications from the year 2000 onwards. Results from these searches were individually reviewed for possible inclusion into this study. Each reference was carefully analyzed, coded and categorised. The literature review aims to discover what is known about immigrant teachers' experiences in their host countries and what is not known about the issue, and then to identify any gaps that have yet to be addressed.

This process uncovered a significant body of research about immigrant teachers' professional transition experiences. The issues that these immigrant teachers experience when re-establishing their teaching career in another country have been well documented. The majority of this research has been carried out in countries with a large population of immigrants, such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Although the social context of this research differs, several recurrent themes have been found to be common in the experiences of immigrant teachers: (1) accreditation and employment, (2) professional practices, (3) professional integration, and (4) support

strategies for immigrant teachers. The following section provides a review of the literature related to these issues.

2.2.1   Accreditation and employment

The first theme in the immigrant teacher literature is the challenges they face when seeking accreditation and employment. The ability to gain employment in their trained field is central to the economic and social integration of immigrant professionals, and is often used as a key indicator for immigrant integration (OECD/EU, 2018). The difficulties immigrant teachers experience in securing employment in their host countries have been widely documented. Studies in Canada (Janusch, 2015; Schmidt, 2010), the United States (Subedi, 2008), and Australia (Collins & Reid, 2012; Santoro et al., 2001) have all shown a high level of unemployment among immigrant teachers.

While most immigrant teachers have acquired teaching qualifications and accumulated teaching experience in their home countries, the different education systems in their host countries mean that immigrant teachers need to have their overseas experience and qualifications accredited by the local teaching registration bodies in order to obtain the necessary licence to teach (Phillion, 2003; Reid, 2014). For many immigrant teachers, this process can be arduous, as it involves dealing with complicated bureaucracy (Collin & Reid, 2012), navigating a series of regulatory compliances (Roy & Lavery, 2017; Walsh et al., 2011), and passing a language proficiency test to prove their competency in the local language of instruction (Collin & Reid, 2012; Janusch, 2015; Roy & Lavery, 2017). In the Collins and Reid (2012) survey on 269 immigrant teachers in Australia, problems associated with the accreditation process were highlighted as a significant obstacle and source of stress for immigrant teachers. In some cases, the process may involve immigrant teachers having to upgrade their qualifications to meet the requirement for recertification in the host countries, which is a process that often requires a time commitment to attend additional classes and/or school placement and pay the required fee (Collins & Reid, 2012; Fee, 2011; Käck, 2020; Remennick, 2002).

For immigrant teachers who manage to get their professional qualifications accredited, the path to employment is another major obstacle. Some research has shown that systematic discriminatory hiring practices, such as the requirement for local teaching experience, have made it difficult for newly arrived immigrant teachers to receive job offers since immigrant teachers would not be able to acquire local teaching experience if they were not offered a teaching job in the first place (Schmidt, 2010). Also, as a language-dependent profession, a teachers' command of the language of instruction is a critical factor that affects their success

in securing employment (Hahl & Paavola, 2015; Remennick, 2002; Schmidt & McDaid, 2015). Numerous studies have documented immigrant teachers' struggles with obtaining employment due to language barriers and foreign accents (Abramova, 2013; Myles et al., 2006; Reid, 2014; Remennick, 2002), and those who do find employment often find themselves working in short-term contract positions (Maylor et al., 2006; Remennick, 2002; Roy & Lavery, 2017; Santoro et al., 2001) or as casual relief teachers (Collins & Reid, 2012; Janusch, 2015; Manik, 2014; Walsh et al., 2011) with no job and financial security. In addition, immigrant teachers are sometimes recruited to fill shortages in schools in less popular rural and remote regions or low socioeconomic areas (Bartlett, 2014; Collins & Reid, 2012; Hahl & Paavola, 2015; Janusch, 2015; Manik, 2014; Remennick, 2002; Santoro et al., 2001; Sharplin, 2014; Walsh et al., 2011). They are also more likely to be deployed to teach more challenging and less popular classes (Santoro et al., 2001).

In summary, immigrant teachers face a range of challenges when seeking accreditation and employment in their host countries that include dealing with complicated bureaucracy and regulatory compliance, producing evidence of language and teaching competence, taking on short-term employment contracts that do not offer job security, teaching in less popular schools, or taking on more challenging classes.

2.2.2 Professional practices

Secondly, there is a significant body of research that discusses how immigrant teachers change their professional practices as teachers when they begin teaching in the host countries. The professional practices of teachers relate to how teachers deploy effective teaching pedagogies to meet the learning needs of students, how they engage with students (AITSL, 2011), and the role they play in the school.

Researchers have noted that teaching is highly context-dependent and influenced by the social, economic, and cultural milieu in which it takes place (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2002; Orgoványi-Gajdos, 2016). Immigrant teachers' understanding of teaching is gained through their past experiences as students and teachers and their professional training in their home country (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). Therefore, the pedagogical practices of teachers, the way they interact with students, and the role they play as teachers in the school are often the consequence of their teaching context. The following sections discuss the challenges that immigrant teachers encounter with regard to these three aspects.

2.2.2.1 *Pedagogical practices*

Past research has documented immigrant teachers shifting their pedagogical practices to align with the expectation of their host countries when they transit from one cultural setting to another (Caravatti et al., 2014; Colliander, 2020; Cruickshank, 2004; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Fee, 2011; Hutchison, 2006; Myles et al., 2006; Reid, 2014; Seah, 2004). Studies have shown that the pedagogical practices that teachers adopt are shaped by their students' cognitive profile and learning preference (Barmeyer, 2004; Joy & Kolb, 2009: Fridland, 2002; Yamazaki, 2005), and the educational values and expectations of the school (Bense, 2014; Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Reid, 2014; Seah, 2004). Tensions develop when there is a mismatch between immigrant teachers' pedagogical practices and that of the expectations of the host countries (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Maylor et al., 2006; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Seah & Bishop, 2001), and these tensions cause immigrant teachers to feel anxious and stressed. For example, immigrant teachers in Fee's (2011) study reported feeling overwhelmed by the expectation to differentiate instruction and adopt teaching strategies that are new to them.

In relation to pedagogical practices, there is also research that suggests that students' learning preference, and therefore teachers' pedagogical practices, are the result of their cultural background (Barmeyer, 2004; Fridland, 2002; Joy & Kolb, 2009; Yamazaki, 2005), and that teaching and learning may be problematic for teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds (Sari, 2020; Santoro, 2009). It is further suggested that students in large power- distance Asian societies tend to prefer a more structured learning approach with clear learning objectives and detailed assignments, while students in weak uncertainty-avoidance countries such as Australia prefer learning environments to be more open-ended and assignments and goals to be more broadly defined (Hofstede, 2010). In keeping with this argument, the pedagogical approaches that teachers from Asia are familiar with may not be received well by students in Australia.

Although Hofstede's (2010) theory has gained broad acceptance, it is also fiercely criticised for its oversimplication and staticity (Huo & Randall, 1988; McSweeney, 2002; Orr & Hauser, 2008; Signorini et al., 2009), and being inadequate for Asians (Fang, 2003; Yeh, 1983). Hofstede et al. (2010) subsequently agreed that the cultural dimension theory may be "too coarse a net for catching the finer cultural nuances between regions" (p. 336). Hence, while Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimension theory may help to explain the differences in students' learning preference and teachers' pedagogical practices across cultures in the broadest sense, it does not consider other attributes such as students' family background, the schooling environment, and the expectations of the society that would have also influenced

teachers' pedagogical practices. In fact, some research has shown that individuals can adapt and change their learning behaviour upon exposure to different teaching styles (An & Carr, 2017).

2.2.2.2 Interaction with students

Another area relating to changing professional practices highlighted by immigrant teachers is the nature of their interaction with students. Several studies have found that immigrant teachers find it particularly challenging to gain the respect of their local students (Benson, 2019; Collins & Reid, 2012; Fee, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006; Remennick, 2002). In Australia, immigrant teachers of visible minorities have reported negative responses and perceived racism from students (Collins & Reid, 2012). Manik (2014) and Maylor et al. (2006) highlight the anxiety and stress experienced by immigrant teachers in the UK due to disciplinary and classroom management issues. Several studies attribute this to the immigrant teachers' unfamiliarity with the local teaching context, the mismatch in the expectations of teacher-student interactions (Bense, 2014; Maylor et al., 2006), and the differences in classroom dynamics (Bense, 2014; Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006; Remennick, 2002).

The challenges that immigrant teachers experience when interacting with their students are often the result of communication issues (Hutchison, 2006; Sharplin, 2009), particularly for immigrant teachers who are not native speakers of the language of instruction of their host country. Even teachers with a reasonably good command of the language of instruction also encounter communication difficulties. These difficulties range from not knowing the local educational terminologies (Maylor et al., 2006), having an accent that differs from the local teachers (Myles et al., 2006), and not knowing cultural nuances (Abramova, 2013), to a general lack of ability to express themselves well (Bense, 2014; Janusch, 2015; Remennick, 2002).

A further area that affects the nature of teacher-student interactions relates to the social status of teachers. Immigrant teachers who enjoyed a higher social status in their home countries often found themselves adjusting to a different way of interacting with students in the host countries (Bense, 2014; Fee, 2011; Jhagroo, 2016; Maylor et al., 2006). The reason for this could be that the nature of teacher–student interaction is deeply rooted in a society's culture (Hofstede, 2010), and is shaped by the social status of teachers in the society (Bense, 2014; Fee, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006). For instance, according to Hirabayashi (2006) and Li (2006), teachers are viewed as the fountain of knowledge and are highly respected by students in Asian countries that subscribe to Confucian and Buddhist philosophies. As

such, students in these countries regularly defer to their teachers as experts in their field. The students also tend to be quiet in the classroom, and rarely disrupt or challenge their teachers (Han & Scull, 2010). In contrast, students in Australia tend to perceive their teachers as co-constructors of knowledge and are more comfortable in voicing their views in class (Hofstede, 2010). The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) in Australia also notes that teachers from Asian countries may struggle to adapt to the Australian school culture as they are unfamiliar with the Australian culture of learning, and they may find it difficult to engage students due to differences in expectations in teacher-student interactions and learning style (AEF, 2010).

While the above literature shows that cultural differences may impact on the way teachers and students interact, it is important to be cautious against overgeneralisation as individuals' experiences and practices may differ due to variations in personal, cultural, and contextual differences. For example, Exley's (2005) study on Asian students in Australian showed that the students exhibited a range of learners' characteristics that are influenced by cultural and institutional demands, as well as their English language proficiencies, and that not all Asian students are described by their teachers as passive, shy and quiet learners.

2.2.2.3 *Role of immigrant teachers in school*

The last area that relates to the professional practices of immigrant teachers is their role in the school. Research has noted that due to their bilingual linguistic ability, immigrant teachers are often called upon to serve as mediators and translators in communication with immigrant parents and to foster home–school partnerships (Basit et al., 2007; Basit & McNamara, 2004; Hoy, 2003; Milner & Hoy, 2003; Santoro & Reid, 2006). However, the effectiveness of such practices has largely not been explored in the immigrant teacher literature. Moreover, by assigning immigrant teachers the exclusive role of cultural experts, there is the risk that they are positioned as different and out of the main teacher community (Santoro, 2015). Virta (2015) observes that this exclusive role might put immigrant teachers in an "ambiguous" and "awkward position" (p. 91) between the school community and the migrant families. Moreover, immigrant teachers have reported feeling overwhelmed by the demands and expectations that come with the additional responsibilities as cultural experts (Basit & McNamara, 2004; Santoro, 2007). Several studies document this added burden being a possible factor in the premature resignation of immigrant teachers, in addition to challenges such as racism from students, parents, and colleagues (Basit & McNamara, 2004; Basit et al., 2007; Osler, 1997; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Santoro et al., 2001).

In summary, the above discussion highlights the shifts in professional practice that immigrant teachers experience in their transition to a new teaching context. These are changing pedagogical practices, adjusting to new expectations of interacting with students, and dealing with increased responsibilities as the cultural experts in the school.

2.2.3 Professional integration

The third theme in the immigrant teacher literature refers to their relationships with colleagues and the school administration. Several studies have documented the struggles teachers experience in establishing positive relations and collaboration with their colleagues and the school administration (Myles et al., 2006; Reid, 2005). In Bascia's (1996) study on immigrant teachers in Ontario, the participants lamented that their conversations with their white colleagues remained superficial, and they reported feeling socially isolated in school. Similar studies in the US have illuminated the racism and discrimination faced by immigrant teachers from Asia (Nguyen, 2009; Philip, 2014; Sheets & Chew, 2002). Other studies report social marginalisation; for example, participants in Phillion's (2003) study in Canada reported feeling socially isolated in the staff room. Immigrant teachers who teach foreign languages also reported feelings of professional isolation (Bense, 2014; Fee, 2010; Virta, 2015). Furthermore, immigrant teachers felt that they have fewer promotion opportunities than their local counterparts (Reid, 2014), and that systematic barriers have prevented them from taking up key positions in schools (Michael, 2006). Immigrant teachers' interaction with colleagues is further affected by their unfamiliarity with the local lingo (Maylor et al., 2006), as they are less articulate than their local colleagues (Bense, 2014) and having a general lack of confidence to speak up due to language fluency and lack of familiarity with the local environment (Janusch, 2015; Remennick, 2002).

Further, immigrant teachers' lack of knowledge about the differences between the education systems of their home country and host country can result in difficulties and misunderstandings in their professional transition process (Peeler & Jane, 2005). What is perceived as the norm in one education system may be seen as an exception in another. Therefore, the professional transition for immigrant teachers may involve negotiating their previous beliefs and practices with the expectations in their new teaching context (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Peeler & Jane, 2005). Researchers suggest that for immigrant teachers to teach effectively, they need to gain "culturally specific educational knowledge" (Peeler & Jane, 2005 p. 325), understand the expectations of teaching and learning in their host countries (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Virta, 2015), and learn about the cultural norms and practices in their new school (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004). This process of learning and adjustment may entail the

reconstruction of their teacher professional identity (Deters, 2006; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Virta, 2015).

As a whole, the issues associated with immigrant teachers' professional integration are multifaceted, and encompass professional and social isolation, perceived racism, discrimination and systematic barriers to promotion, immigrant teachers' lack of knowledge and familiarity with the local environment and education system, and a general lack of confidence due to poor language fluency.

2.2.4 Support strategies for immigrant teachers

Finally, given the significant struggles that immigrant teachers encounter in their professional transition, several studies in the literature call for customised support strategies to address the specific needs of immigrant teachers (Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Hutchison, 2006; Maylor et al., 2006; Sharplin, 2009; Walsh et al., 2011), as the current support is either lacking (Fee, 2011; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Sharplin, 2009) or too brief and generic to be useful (Collins & Reid, 2012; Maylor et al., 2006; Walsh et al., 2011). For instance, Michael (2006) cautions against using the same support program for immigrant teachers as is used for beginner teachers as their needs are different. Instead, the support program should acknowledge immigrant teachers' previous experience and tailor the program to their specific needs (Fee, 2011; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Walsh et al., 2011). It is suggested that support programs that include discussion on the local educational system, job expectations, subject-specific pedagogical issues and assessment practices, and student characteristics may be helpful for immigrant teachers (Bartlett, 2014; Caravatti et al., 2014; Farahnaz, 2010; Fee, 2010; Hutchison, 2006; Janusch, 2015; Luong-Phan & McMahon, 2014; Maylor et al., 2006, Walsh, 2011).

Also, longer-term strategies such as mentoring or support networks have been shown to help immigrant teachers' professional adaptation (Caravatti et al., 2014; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Sharplin, 2009; Walsh et al., 2011). When studying the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers in Canada, Deter (2009) found that social support within the teacher professional network facilitated the professional acculturation of immigrant teachers. These networks offer relational connections and resources to help immigrant teachers adapt to the new teaching context. In contrast, immigrant teachers who experienced discrimination and racism in their professional communities reported feeling othered, and that their culture, language, and professional practices were undermined.

Immigrant teachers' lack of understanding of the host countries' schooling context can potentially hinder their ability to teach effectively (Peeler & Jane, 2005). To mitigate this problem, immigrant teachers are advised to learn the "codes of behaviour" (Elbaz-Luwisch (2004, p. 397) and adjust to new practices (Collins & Reid, 2012) in the host country. An effect of this could be a corresponding change in immigrant teachers' professional identity (Deters, 2006; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Virta, 2015) as they seek to establish a pedagogical space for themselves in their new teaching context (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007).

Overall, the above discussion shows that the current generic, short-term support strategies that target new teachers in general do not effectively meet the needs of immigrant teachers. Long-term strategies such as mentoring and a professional network that focuses on knowing the local educational system, job expectations, and subject-specific pedagogical issues appear to be more helpful for addressing the specific needs and concerns of immigrant teachers.

2.2.5 Summary for immigrant teachers

The above discussion provides an overview of the literature related to immigrant teachers' experiences when attempting to adapt to the new educational context in their host countries. What has been documented is the considerable challenges that immigrant teachers encounter in terms of seeking professional accreditation and employment, adjusting to differences in the professional practices of teaching, integrating into the professional teaching community, and the inadequate support for immigrant teachers. Many of these challenges have been attributed to the differences in educational systems and teaching practices between countries, the immigrant teachers' lack of familiarity with the host country's schooling context, and the gap in customised support strategies for immigrant teachers.

However, most of the studies cited above are broad-based, and document immigrant teachers' general experiences across diverse educational contexts and participant groups. What is not known is the professional adaptation experiences of specific groups of immigrant teachers in particular educational settings. To adjust to the new teaching context, immigrants will need to undergo professional adaptation to learn about and adopt the norms and expected behaviour of being teachers in their host countries. However, based on this review of the immigrant teacher literature, there is little knowledge about what facilitates their professional adaptation and what makes it more difficult. Therefore, a more fine-grained approach that focuses on professional adaptation experiences of immigrant

teachers in specific regions and teaching in specific educational settings can provide valuable knowledge on what enables and inhibits their professional adaptation. The next sections explore the literature on professional adaptation and teacher professional identity.

2.3   Adaptation

The phenomenon of migrant adaptation has been investigated extensively in the migrant literature (Berry, 1997; Kim, 2006; Sam & Berry, 2010; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). While it is inevitable that immigrants will undergo some form of adjustment when they move to live in an unfamiliar environment (Kim, 2006), the process for immigrant teachers appears to be multifaceted as they undergo the "double culture shock" (Austin, 2007, p. 253) of adjusting to living in a new country and adapting to the new norms and expectations of working as teachers in a unique teaching context. In doing so, it is clear that immigrant teachers are likely to undergo some form of cross-cultural adaptation and professional adaptation. The following section presents an overview of the research in this extensive and complex field and its related theories.

2.3.1   Cross-cultural adaptation

Extensive research has been conducted on the adaptation experience of both short-term sojourners (e.g., students and expatriates) and long-term immigrants and refugees who plan to live in the host country permanently. While their adaptive experiences are different in significant ways, many would have experienced some form of upheaval when adjusting to living in a new and unfamiliar place where the predominant culture is different from their own.

Oberg (1960) referred to this situation as culture shock, which he defined as the "anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (p. 177). Thus, the view resulting from this definition is that cross-cultural adaptation is problematic and can lead to mental and emotional distress. For example, Berry (2005) emphasises the concept of "acculturative stress" in the adaptation process of immigrants (p. 287). On the other hand, some researchers have chosen to view cross-cultural adaptation as an empowering process for learning and growth, as immigrants acquire new skills and cultural knowledge to live and function effectively in a new environment (Adler, 1987; Kim, 2001; Ruben, 1983).

The traditional view of cross-cultural adaptation is an assimilationist view. In this view, cultural convergence is the desired goal, and migrants are seen as having no choice but to fit into the host country's culture to survive and function. However, in the pluralistic view,

immigrants are seen to exercise their choice in deciding their desired level of interaction and adoption of the host culture. This pluralistic view of cross-cultural adaptation is manifested in Berry's (1997) acculturation model. Berry (1997) defines acculturation as the behaviour and attitudinal changes that take place as a result of continuing contact with members of other cultural groups when a person migrates to a new country or culture. In his model of acculturation, Berry conceptualises the notion of acculturation on two dimensions: immigrants' attitudes towards maintenance of their original cultural heritage and identity and their preferred level of interaction with the dominant group in the host country (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005; Berry et al., 1987). He maintains that migrants' choice of acculturation strategies depends on the level to which they desire to maintain their home country culture and acquire the host culture. The four acculturation strategies are described in Berry's (1997) acculturation model as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1

Berry's (1997) Model of Acculturation
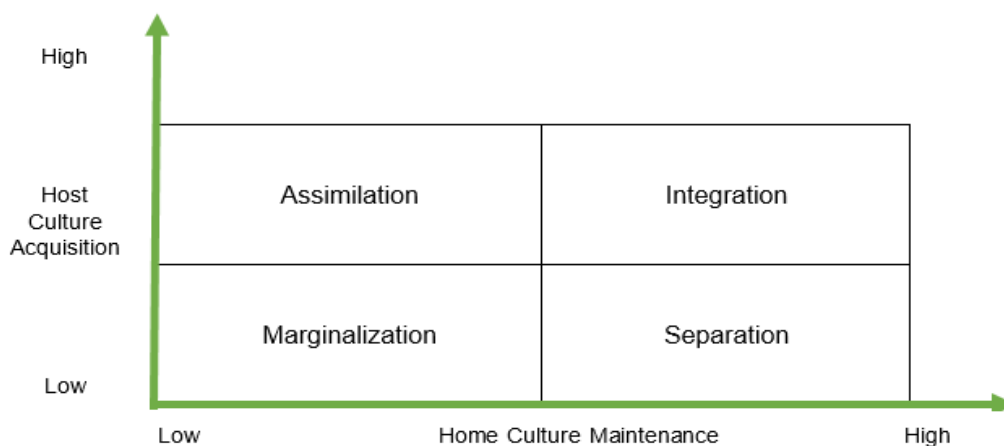
Immigrants' acculturation strategies reflect their attitudes and orientation towards their host countries. Individuals who adopt the strategy of integration value both cultural maintenance and intergroup relations. Those who are less concerned with cultural maintenance but value intergroup relations will likely adopt the assimilation approach, and individuals who cherish cultural maintenance but do not value intergroup relations are likely to adopt the separation approach. Finally, those who value neither cultural maintenance nor intergroup relations are said to be marginalised. According to Berry (1997), individuals who adopt the integration strategy of acculturation, in which they maintain their own culture and learn the host country's culture, adapt most successfully in their host countries. Berry (1997) argues that given a stable environment, acculturation could morph into adaptation, which is the long-term adjustment 'process that takes place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands'

(p. 13). This process is likely to include individuals learning the expected norms and behaviours of the new culture and shedding some aspects of their previous practices (Berry, 1997, 2005).

Other researchers describe the changes during acculturation in terms of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Psychological adaptation is associated with mental and emotional well-being, while socio-cultural adaptation refers to the acquisition of culturally appropriate knowledge and skills, social competency, or language competency to allow one to interact successfully with the new culture (Sam & Berry, 2010; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 2001). Psychological adaptation is primarily influenced by an immigrant's personality, social support, and life change variables (Ward & Kennedy 1992; Ward & Searle 1991). On the other hand, socio-cultural adaptation is more strongly affected by cultural distance, length of stay in the host country, language ability, the amount of interaction with the host culture, and cultural distance knowledge (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

Other factors that are said to affect psychological and socio-cultural adaptation are cognitive factors and social skills, acquisition of cultural knowledge and language ability (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), and the acculturation strategies adopted by the immigrant (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). While both psychological and socio-cultural adjustments are most significant for newly arrived immigrants, socio-cultural problems steadily decrease when the new immigrant becomes more familiar with the host culture and has increased interactions with the host nationals, but psychological distress appears to be more variable over time (Ward & Kennedy, 1996a, 1996b; Ward et al., 1998). Moreover, while psychological and socio-cultural adjustment appears to be interrelated, the magnitude of their relationship may vary over time and across different immigrant groups, depending on the cultural distance between the immigrant and the host country (Ward et al., 1998).

2.3.1.1 *The adaptation process*
Research findings on cross-cultural adaptation differ considerably regarding the process of adaptation and the patterns of adjustment over time (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 1998). Researchers such as Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg (1960) describe the adaptation process in four stages: the honeymoon stage, the culture shock stage, the adjustment stage, and the mastery stage. The stages are illustrated in the U-curve of adjustment shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2

U-curve of Adjustment
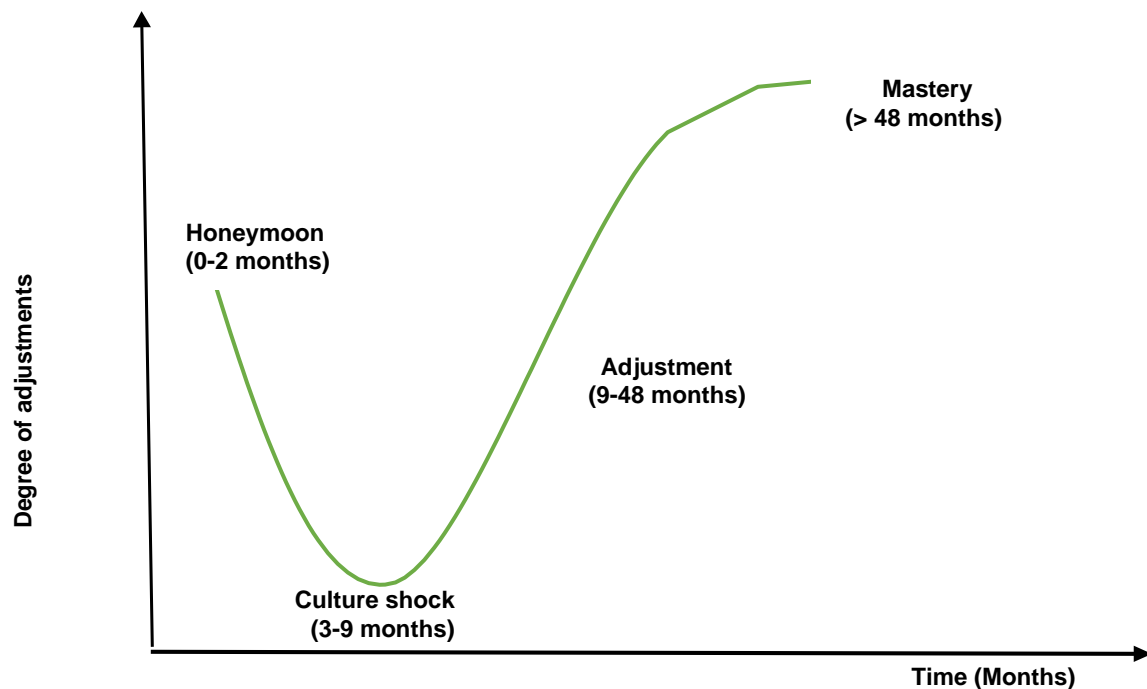
The initial cross-cultural adjustment period commences with a honeymoon stage of fascination and enthusiasm. This stage is then followed by a period of crisis and distress in which one goes through transition and adjustment before successful integration into the new environment. Despite its wide adoption, research on the U-curve pattern of adjustment has been criticised for its cross-sectional rather than longitudinal study, as the latter is deemed more appropriate for exploring the adjustment patterns of individuals over time (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Berardo, 2006). Other researchers report that immigrants do not always begin their stay in new environments with elation and optimism as described by the U-curve. Some studies have found the adaptation process to be a linear and progressive one where adjustment problems are most significant when the immigrants first enter the host countries but decrease over time (Ward et al., 1998). Other studies report a gradual and incremental trend in psychological and social adaptation as immigrants' length of residence in the host countries increases (Kim, 2001; Ward et al., 2001). Subsequent reviews of research in the field also conclude that the evidence for the U-curve is "weak, inconclusive and over generalised" (Church, 1982, p. 542).

The stress-adaptation-growth model (Kim, 2001, p. 59) in Figure 2.3 was proposed as an alternate view to the U-curve model of cultural adjustment.

Figure 2.3

Stress-Adaptation-Growth Model (Kim, 2001, p. 59)
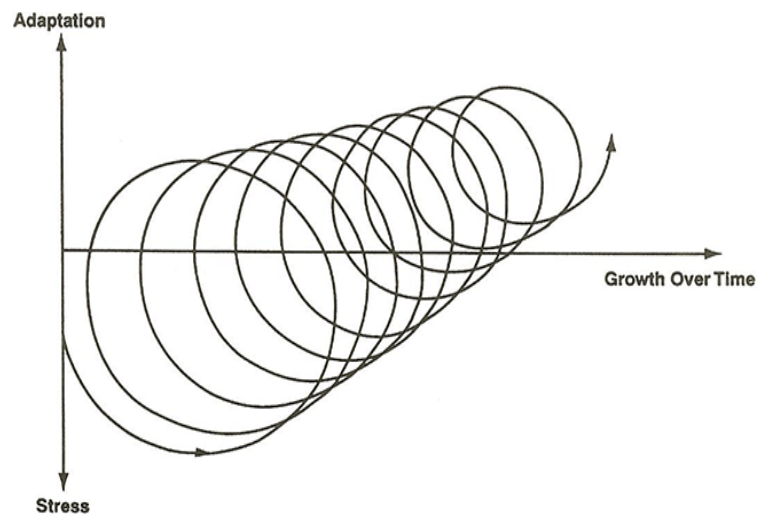
Kim (2001) perceives stress, adaptation, and growth as being central to newcomers' cross-cultural experiences in a new environment. In her model, the dynamic of cross-cultural adaptation is not a smooth, steady, and linear progression but a continuous and cyclic "draw-back-to-leap" pattern. Each stressful experience is responded to with a "draw back", which, in turn, activates the adaptive mechanism to help individuals reorganise themselves and leap forward. This process continues as long as there are new contact and communication challenges with the host environment. However, the overall movement is forward and upward, towards the direction of greater adaptation and growth. Large and sudden changes are more likely to occur during the initial phase of exposure to a new culture; however, over a prolonged period, the difference is perceived to decrease in magnitude as the individual becomes accustomed to the new cultural milieu.

On the other hand, American psychologist Milton Bennet conceptualises cross-cultural adaptation in terms of how individuals acquire intercultural sensitivity and competence to interact with people of different cultures. His developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1986) provides a theoretical framework for examining and explaining how people experience, interpret, and react to cultural differences. The model, which is based on a constructivist view, explains the observations of intercultural adaptation and identifies six orientations to examine how individuals move from an ethnocentric worldview of denial, defensiveness, and minimisation, towards an ethnorelative worldview of acceptance, adaptation, and integration on the DMIS as they become more interculturally sensitive and acquire intercultural competence. Figure 2.4 below provides a diagrammatic representation of Bennett's (1986) model.

Figure 2.4

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

**Experience of
Difference**

Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration

Ethnocentrism ⟶ Ethnorelativism
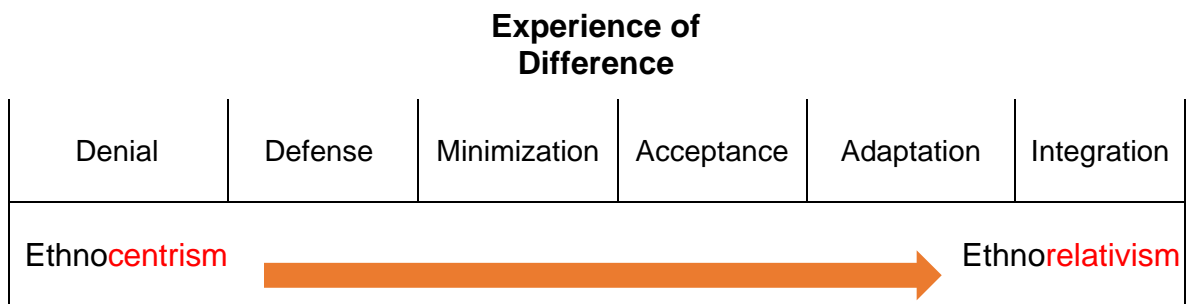
The first three DMIS orientations are defined as being more ethnocentric, meaning that individuals tend to evaluate other cultures according to their preconceived ideas that are based on their own culture, customs, and standards. The first stage of the DMIS is 'denial'. Bennett observes that individuals in this stage tend not to see cultural differences or deny other people's culture, viewing their own culture as the only universal culture in this world. The next stage is 'defence'. At this stage, individuals tend to defend their own culture and feel that their own culture is superior to others (Bennett, 2004). They may be critical of other cultures, have a narrow view of what constitutes acceptable behaviours and culture, and feel threatened by other cultures and their differences (Cushner et al., 2012). As individuals move into the next stage of the DMIS, they begin to minimise cultural differences by finding commonalities between themselves and people of other cultures. Cushner et al. (2012) found that individuals at this stage may also assume that their own culture, beliefs, and worldview are relevant across all cultural contexts. To move from this stage, individuals need to develop cultural self-awareness and accept that their own beliefs, values, and behaviour are influenced by society and connected to specific cultural contexts (Bennett, 1986, 2004).

The second three DMIS orientations are defined as being more ethnorelative, meaning that an individual's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. In this stage, individuals start to accept and appreciate cultural differences. They recognise that their own culture is just one of the many cultures in the world and that other cultures are just as sophisticated and important as their own (Bennett, 2004). While they may not always agree with the host country's culture, they recognise that there are other ways of thinking and responding to certain situations (Cushner et al., 2012). Individuals in this stage are often curious about different cultures and have a desire to learn about another culture's language and customs (Bennett, 1986, 2004). As an individual progresses to the 'adaptation' stage of the DMIS, they begin to be more competent in communicating with people of other

cultures. At this stage, individuals are able to preserve their own cultural identity while being able to effectively communicate in the contexts of a different culture. They can see the world through another's eyes and can change their behaviour to communicate more effectively (Bennett, 2004). Bennett (1986, 2004) observes that at this stage, the primary issue for most people lies in the ability to reconcile their sense of self with the expectations and norms in their host country. The final stage of the DMIS is 'integration', during which individuals are able to have other cultural experiences move in and out of their worldview. Those at this stage are usually culture mediators who help others understand different cultures and promote unity between the two cultures (Cushner et al., 2012).

Bennett's model is underpinned by the assumption that as an individual's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, their intercultural competence increases (Bennett, 1986, 2004). "To be effective in another culture, one must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behaviour as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures" (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992, p. 416). Thus, individuals with higher intercultural sensitivity are more likely to exercise stronger intercultural competence (Hammer et al., 2003). The ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways is believed to facilitate immigrant adaptation (Mao, 2015).

2.3.1.2 *Differential adaptation*

Although researchers have tried to generalise adaptation patterns, it is widely acknowledged that no two adaptations are the same. Differential adaptations are attributed to a variety of factors, including personality characteristics (e.g., one's openness to the host culture, strength, and positivity), communication skills and demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, age), the receptivity of the host environment (Kim, 2006), the occupational prestige of the migrants and the transferability of skills in the host country (Weinstock, 1964), and the perceived positive value of the ethnic identity of the migrants (Silvers, 1965).

In an attempt to offer a comprehensive view of acculturative stress among immigrants in Canada, Berry and Kim (1987) identified several groups of factors that are said to impact on the rate of adaptation: (a) the nature of the host society, (b) the type of adapting group, (c) the type of adaptation experienced (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalisation), (d) demographic factors, (e) psychological factors, and (f) social characteristics of individual immigrants.

In summary, while adaptation problems are likely to decrease over time as the immigrant acquires the culture-specific skills and knowledge to function effectively in their host culture, some immigrants continue to feel like outsiders in their host countries when confronted with

conflicting values and beliefs (Kim, 2001). Researchers attribute this to individuals having certain aspects of their cultural beliefs and values ingrained in them that they are unlikely to abandon altogether (Berger 1984; Byram 2004; Kim 2006). Kim (2001) perceives the process of adaptation as a dynamic one in which an immigrant struggles for an internal equilibrium when faced with adversarial environmental conditions. While Berry (2001) claims that the process entails letting go of some elements of a person's culture of origin and adopting aspects of the host country culture, Kim (2006) goes further to suggest that immigrants may take on a new personal identity, which may be a hybrid of their old and new identity.

2.3.2 Professional adaptation

As discussed in Section 2.3.1, immigrants' acculturation process generally begins with the social settings where immigrants come into contact with and learn about the host culture. While these social settings typically occur in the local community and neighbourhood, for immigrants in active work, the workplace setting is another important context for immigrant acculturation (Tonder & Soontiens, 2014). Unlike other social contexts, an individual's behaviour and interaction in the workplace are influenced by the organisation's purpose, the nature of the work, and the power differentials between superiors, subordinates, and co-workers (Tonder & Soontiens, 2014). As securing employment is vital for ensuring economic and financial stability for most immigrants, for those who spend a substantial proportion of their time at work, the workplace contributes significantly to their adaptation experience.

When studying the professional adaptation of immigrants in the workplace, researchers often employ the concept of acculturation, as it captures the processes by which a person adapts to another environment (Chirkov, 2009; Cohen 1994; Deters, 2009; Kissman 2001; Miller 2008; Padilla & Perez, 2003). Drawing from Berry's (1997) notion of acculturation and adaptation, the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers can be understood as being the process that takes place when individuals who have been qualified as teachers according to their profession's standards in one country subsequently move to a new country and undergo changes as they adopt, acquire, and adjust to new cultural patterns, beliefs, and behaviours to gain membership into the teaching profession in the new environment.

As immigrant teachers have been trained and socialised into the teaching profession in their country of origin, their professional transition to a new teaching context in the host country would mean that they need to be re-socialised into the cultural norms and expectations of

teaching in the host country. Therefore, in the next section, the concept of teacher socialisation is drawn upon to understand immigrant teachers' professional adaptation.

2.3.2.1 Teacher socialisation

Research on teacher socialisation can be traced back to the larger body of research on occupational socialisation. The professional socialisation of teachers refers to "the manner in which teachers become exposed to and internalise the socially constructed norms, behaviours, and knowledge of teaching as a profession" (Ainsworth, 2013, p. 59) and become active participating members of a school community and the teaching profession (Danziger, 1971; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). It is concerned with teachers' learning how to teach, understanding the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and recognising the values, attitudes, and concerns of schools and the teaching profession (Lacey, 1977).

Teacher socialisation is traditionally viewed as a one-way process in which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge to become a member of the teaching fraternity. This perspective assumes that it is the individuals' responsibility to adapt and fit into the existing social structure while the nature of the teaching fraternity remains unchanged. A more contemporary view of teacher socialisation shows that the individual and the socialising agent could mutually influence each other in this dialectical exchange such that the worldview of both the individual and the organisation may change and move closer toward one another in the process (Schempp & Graber, 1992). However, the power differential between the organisation (e.g., education system, school) and individual means that in the socialisation process, the individual may be reshaped to a greater extent than the organisation (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Some researchers (e.g., Curtner-Smith, 1997; Scarth, 1987) observe that while individuals may not have the power to challenge organisational structures such as the education system, school policies, and practices, they may at times use covert tactics to assert their sense of agency and resist socialisation.

Some researchers conceptualise the teacher socialisation process in three phases: the acculturation phase, the professional socialisation phase, and the organisational socialisation phase (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Templin & Schempp, 1989). The acculturation phase of teacher socialisation begins early in an individual's life as children spend a considerable amount of time in close proximity to their teachers. Through "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 62), one learns, through experience with teachers, what to emulate and what to avoid when they become teachers themselves. According to Lortie (1975), this latent culture, which is later activated during formal teacher training and school experience, is the key influence in shaping an individual's conception of the role of a teacher. The professional socialisation process also occurs through formal means such as learning

about teachers' roles and the skills and knowledge of teaching by attending teacher education programs or college and by interacting with education professors. Organisational socialisation occurs when new teachers enter the workplace and acquire the school and local community's norms, values, knowledge, and skills (Brunton, 2007).

While teachers' backgrounds, local contexts, and governmental policy have been said to influence the socialisation process (Achinstein et al., 2004), research also suggests that teachers' professional practice is shaped by their past experiences, personal beliefs and values, and cultural orientations, and mediated in response to different teaching contexts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Monzo & Rueda, 2003; Rodriguez, 2007). Therefore, the socialisation process for immigrant teachers would involve them negotiating the culture of their new teaching context and their existing beliefs and values, knowledge, and past experiences of teaching in their home country.

Edgar and Warren (1969) observe that the teacher socialising process might involve "pressures to change in socially desirable directions, to drop previous patterns of behaviour and accept new norms held by the socialising agent or significant others" (p. 387). They maintain that it is crucial to examine the on-the-job socialising experience of teachers as it is in this situation that teachers come face to face with the "pressure to change". They define the "significant others" as "one person acting as a role model, or groups of people such as colleagues, parents, or students whose various expectations impinge on the role of the teacher" (Edgar & Warren, 1969, p. 384).

In addition, Edgar and Warren (1969) conceptualise socialisation as a power process in which the organisation and the person who has the authority to evaluate the performance of the newcomer are in a position of power to influence the newcomer's attitudes and behaviour. They elaborate that the extent of this influence is determined by the newcomer's skills, abilities, and experiences and the nature of the affective relationship between the newcomer and their evaluator. In general, newcomers with a higher level of skills, abilities, and experience are more resistant to the influence of the organisation or their evaluator. At the same time, a positive affective relationship between the evaluator and the newcomer is more likely to bring about a change in the newcomer.

These workplace influences on teacher professional socialisation are identified by Pollard (1982) as occurring at three levels: (1) the interactive level within the classroom, (2) the institutional level, and (3) the societal level. At the interactive level within the classroom, students are said to have a significant influence on teachers' professional socialisation,

given that students form the core of a teachers' work (Pollard, 1982). Students influence the pedagogical approach, teaching strategies, and patterns of language that teachers use in the classroom (Doyle, 1979). For immigrant teachers, the socialising role of pupils may be even more significant as these teachers are more experienced and more aware of and concerned with the pupils (Larsson, 1987).

In addition, learning to teach involves "learning the texture of the classroom and the sets of behaviours congruent with the environmental demands of that setting" (Doyle, 1977, p. 31). Hargreaves (1988) observes that the actions of teachers are closely tied to environmental circumstances, and that a successful teacher tends to have a set of coping strategies that are appropriate to particular classroom settings:

> Teachers do not just decide to deploy particular skills because of their recognised professional worth and value, or because of their own confidence and competence in operating them. Rather they make judgments about the fit between particular skills, constraints, demands, and opportunities of the material environment of the classroom; about the appropriateness of particular styles or techniques for present circumstances. (p. 219)

In the current study it is argued that teachers' judgment is likely to be informed by their knowledge and past experiences. For immigrant teachers, especially recent arrivals, these are the knowledge and past experiences gained from their countries of origin.

At the institutional level, teaching colleagues play a significant role in teacher socialisation and affect the successful assimilation of newcomers into the school environment (Pollard, 1982). Given that teachers in the same school generally work under similar conditions, collegial influence is likely to be closely linked to the everyday circumstances that teachers encounter in the teaching environment. Although some researchers observe the presence of several diverse teacher sub-cultures in a single school and that new colleagues often face conflicting pressures by colleagues to influence them (Carew & Lightfoot, 1979; Metz, 1988), other research suggests that the head of the school or those who have the power to evaluate a teacher's performance have an impact on the socialisation of the teacher (e.g., Edgar & Warren, 1969). However, there is also research that has found the influence of these people to be limited (Connell, 1985; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985).

At the societal level, the socialisation of teachers has been linked to the expectations of teachers held by the society and the local community (Carew & Lightfoot, 1979; Gracey, 1972; McPherson, 1972; Metz, 1978). Arfwedson (1979) maintains that the working

conditions of teachers are strongly linked to the school that they work in. Hence, teachers' professional socialisation varies according to the school conditions, which are, in turn, dependent on the local social context and community. According to Artwedson (1979), parental pressure exerts a strong influence on the socialisation of teachers into the school community, especially for schools that serve high socioeconomic populations. His assertion is supported by several studies that show that parental expectations could significantly influence the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers (Eden, 2001; Schempp et al., 1993).

Beyond the school community, changes in education practices and policies and other factors in society such as the bureaucratisation of work, the deskilling of teachers, stereotypes, and gender discrimination (Apple, 1987; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986) have all, to some extent, affected the circumstances of teachers' work and their professional socialisation. On the whole, there appears to be little up-to-date research on the workplace influences on teacher socialisation. Most of the research available was conducted between the 1960s and 1980s. Atkinson and Delamont (1985) observe that the interest in other fields of educational research has not been mirrored in the study of occupational socialisation of teachers, and there is a lack of research that documents the everyday life of teachers in work settings to study the process of socialisation and the development of teacher culture.

Another area of concern is that research on teacher socialisation tends to focus on the individual and their attributes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions. There has been little research on the professional socialisation patterns of teachers according to specific group characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, social class, and teachers of particular subjects at specific levels in the schools (Zeichner & Gore, 1990); however, there are some studies on the influence of gender on patterns of teacher socialisation (e.g., Freedman et al., 1986; Goodman, 1988). Likewise, the socialisation of immigrant teachers who have crossed international and cultural borders to teach in a different educational setting is an area that has received little attention

A frequent critique of research on the professional socialisation of teachers is its methodological weakness. Most of the studies are cross-sectional in nature; however, socialisation itself is a process that involves change over time. It is doubtful that a snapshot analysis can identify the behavioural and attitudinal changes in teachers that are claimed in these studies (Battersby, 1981). Another critique is that in the teacher socialisation literature, teachers are seen as passive and submissive subjects who conform to a set of norms, while

the professional adaptation process is the active and domineering agent responsible for the transformation of teachers (Edger & Warren, 1969). It is argued in the current study that such perspectives ignore the complexity of the professional adaptation process. On the whole, there appears to be a lack of research on the dialectical view of teacher socialisation and how teachers may assert an agency effect on the socialising agent and the institution.

2.3.3   Summary for adaptation

The previous sections provide a review of the literature on cross-cultural and professional adaptation, which is a key area that is central to immigrant teachers' experiences in their host countries. What is clear from the existing research literature is that the immigrant adaptation process is multifaceted and occurs at both the personal and the professional levels.

At the personal level, immigrant adaptation is shaped by an individual's attitude towards maintenance of their original cultural heritage and identity, their preferred level of interaction with the dominant group (Berry, 1997), and a whole array of factors that include their personality, language ability, the cultural distance between the home and host country, the length of stay, and the extent of interaction with the host culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). It is further proposed that individuals' intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence are also significant in shaping their adaptation (Bennett, 2004). Researchers also propose a variety of adaptation patterns for immigrants, including the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960) and the stress-adaptation-growth model (Kim, 2001).

At the professional level, immigrant teachers' adaptation involves them negotiating between the culture of their new teaching context and that of their existing beliefs, values, knowledge, and past experiences of schooling and teaching in their home country. Edgar and Warren (1969) found that organisational evaluation and the affective relationship are significant factors in teacher socialisation. As teaching is a highly context-driven profession, a change in teaching context may entail immigrant teachers changing their previous practices to align with the students' needs, the schools' norms and expectations, and the beliefs, attitudes, and values associated with the teaching profession in the new context. These changes can occur at the interactive level within the classroom when immigrant teachers deal with discipline issues, differences in student-teacher interaction, and the learning preference of students; at the institutional level where teachers manage the challenges of interacting with colleagues and integrating into the culture of the workplace; and at the societal level where teachers handle the expectations of parents and differences in attitudes and values towards education (Lassila et al., 2021; Pollard, 1982; Uitto et al., 2020).

While this literature review has identified the elements that affect immigrant teachers' adaptation at both the personal and professional level, what is not known is how these elements interact to affect the adaptation process and the extent of influence of these factors on adaptation. Given that some studies suggest that the adaptation of immigrant professionals involves the interaction between their professional identities and their experiences in the socio- cultural and professional environment (Bressler & Rotter, 2017; Lefever et al., 2014; Pullen- Sansfacon et al., 2012;), it would suggest that the transition between teaching contexts may, to some extent, result in a shift in the professional identities of immigrant teachers. Therefore, the next section of this chapter reviews the literature on teacher professional identities.

2.4   Teacher professional identity

The literature review has so far identified the challenges faced by immigrant teachers, the cross-cultural and professional adaptation process that they may have to undergo as they adapt to living and working in a new environment, and the factors that may affect their adaptation. In this section, the literature on teacher professional identity is reviewed. Teacher identity is an essential aspect of the life of teachers that is said to be influenced by changes in the teaching context, and it can affect teachers' performance and work in the school (Freese, 2006; Hoban, 2007; Olsen, 2008; Sachs, 2005). The section first outlines the construct of identity, then defines teacher professional identity, highlights its importance, and discusses the elements that influence teacher professional identity.

2.4.1   The construct of identity

Early sociologist Cooley (1983) views identity as a standalone, stable, and constant concept that is unaffected by contextual elements and a person's life history or past experiences. This challenges Erikson's (1968) conception of identity as a process in which individuals gradually develop as a result of their experiences and maturation. Mead (1934), on the other hand, emphasises the social nature of identity. He maintains that an individual's identity is defined in relation to their interaction and communication with people around them. The concept of identity has been explored across a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology (Holland et al., 1998), philosophy (Mead, 1934; Taylor, 1992), and psychology (Eriksen, 2001), and across different areas of personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity. In line with the aim of this study, this review focuses on the literature on teacher professional identity only. Other aspects of identity are not included within the scope of this review.

2.4.2   What is teacher professional identity?

Research into teacher professional identity has generated considerable interest in recent decades, partly as a way of driving the professionalisation of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Sachs, 2001, 2005). Debates are commonplace on whether teaching is a profession, a craft, or a discipline (Loughran & Russell, 2007; Pratte & Rury, 1991), and what kind of expertise, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are needed to teach and how they are developed (Kelchtermans, 2009). Scholars argue that teaching is more than an external act, as it is also deeply intertwined with a teacher's sense of self (Day et al., 2006; Kelchtermans, 2009; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Nias, 1989), and a strong interrelationship exists between the teachers' personal and professional selves (Day & Kington, 2008). Therefore, events and experiences in teachers' personal lives are closely linked to their performance in their professional roles (Acker, 1999; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996).

Day and Kington (2008) caution against confusing teachers' professional identity with teachers' roles. The professional identity of a teacher reflects the beliefs, values, and practices that guide the teacher's actions (Knowles, 1992; Walkington, 2005), while the role is simply the list of tasks that teachers are expected to do. Teachers' self-concept and image are often shaped by contextual factors, professional experiences, and learning over time (Beijaard et al., 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Goodson & Cole, 1994). The broader policy and social-cultural context in which teachers live and work, the personal and professional elements in teachers' lives, and their experiences, emotions, beliefs, and practices have all been said to affect teachers' professional identity (Day & Kington, 2008).

Sachs (2001) believes that teachers' professional identity is "mediated by their own experience in schools and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be" (p. 6). She defines professional identity as:

> a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act', and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather, it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience. (p. 15)

The literature on teacher professional identities often looks at how individuals take up their identities as teachers over time as they assimilate into the culture and discourse of teaching,

and how this identity is influenced, developed, maintained, and reconstructed throughout their careers (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Nias, 1981). Within the field of teaching and teacher education, teachers' professional identity is conceptualised as unstable, dynamic, and evolving (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004), and that it is shaped by social, cultural, political, and historical contexts (Rogers & Scott, 2008).

While teacher identity is sometimes seen as "hard to articulate, easily misunderstood and open to interpretation" (Olsen, 2008, p. 4), it is generally agreed in the literature that teacher identity has three features: (1) it is shaped by personal and contextual factors, (2) it is shifting, unstable, and multiple, and (3) it is formed in relationship with others.

2.4.2.1 Teacher identity is shaped by personal and contextual factors

Scholars have noted that many personal and contextual factors shape the professional identity of teachers. Teacher identities are constructed from the technical and emotional aspects of teaching of subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and students' academic performance (Nias, 1989, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Sumsion, 2002), as well as the interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural, and workplace environment. Therefore, finding an equilibrium between one's personal views and experiences and the professional and cultural expectations of what it means to be a teacher is an important aspect of a teacher's professional identity (Pillen et al., 2013), and personal factors and contextual factors are said to interact in a reciprocal and dynamic way to shape and reshape an individual teacher's identity over time (Beltman et al., 2015).

2.4.2.2 Teacher identity is shifting, unstable, and multiple

Given that teacher identity is influenced by a range of internal and external factors, including one's life experiences, work context, and the relationship with people (Beijaard, 1995), it is generally conceived as one that is unstable, multiple, dynamic, and constantly evolving (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005; Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006; Zembylas, 2003). In fact, "identity formation is conceived as an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences as one lives through them" (Kerby, 1991, as cited in Beijaard et al., 2000, p. 750). Teacher identity is sometimes equated with the construction of stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005), and understood as "a unique embodiment of his or her stories to live by, stories shaped by the landscapes past and present in which he or she lives and works" (Clandinin & Huber, 2005 p. 44). Teachers construct their own professional identities based on their

life experiences and emotions as they interact with others within the context of the school and the larger teaching community (Beijaard et al., 2000). The dynamic and evolving nature of identities means that teachers are confronted with "multifaceted, constantly shifting and unstable definitions of themselves" (Trent, 2014, p. 58).

2.4.2.3 Teacher identity is formed in relationship with others

Teacher identity is also perceived as being co-constructed between the teacher, the other stakeholders in the school, and the broader society to which they belong (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). The emotions that result from the interaction between teachers, students, colleagues, school administrators, and other stakeholders in the schools are said to influence teacher identity (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2003).

The field of teacher emotions has been increasingly featured in the literature on teacher identity (Britzman, 1992; Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2003). Teachers experience a range of emotions in the course of their work ranging from positive to negative (Hargreaves, 2001). In their study on 300 teachers working in 100 primary and secondary schools in England, Day and Kington (2008) highlighted conditions such as promotions/career advancement/additional role at work, continued professional development, supportive leadership, colleagues, teamwork and pupil relationship, family/friends support, and few family responsibilities as having a positive influence on professional identities. However, conditions such as policy changes, increased workload, pupils' lack of respect, lack of parental support, poor in-school communication, inadequate discipline procedure, personal and family illness, poor family relationships, and lack of family support and financial worries were said to have a negative influence on teachers' professional identities.

Kelchtermans' (1996) study of Belgian teachers reports that teachers feel vulnerable when their professional identity is threatened by policy changes, parents, school inspectors, or colleagues. Similar findings are reported in Jeffrey and Woods' (1996) study on teachers in England, where teachers experienced professional uncertainty, confusion, inadequacy, anxiety, and doubt when the local education authority inspected their work. Zembylas (2004) observes that "teacher identity and emotion discourses are formed within specific school political arrangements, in relation to certain expectations and requirements, ones that presume a teacher should conform to particular emotional rules" (p. 226). He speaks of the "emotional labour" (p. 302) that teachers engage in to conform to what is deemed appropriate within schools, which, when coupled with the negative emotions that teachers may experience in their day-to-day teaching and interaction with people in the school, may lead to a feeling of vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996; Zembylas, 2004).

2.4.3   Why is teacher professional identity important?

It is widely acknowledged that the teacher's professional identity is central to teacher development (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Stenberg, 2010). According to Carter and Doyle (1996), to become a teacher is to transform one's identity, adapt one's personal beliefs and ideals to match institutional realities, and decide how to express oneself in the classroom. Research in teacher education has repeatedly shown that professional identity plays a significant role in a teacher's work (Britzman, 2003; Day et al., 2006; Hoban, 2007; Nias, 1989). Hammerness et al. (2005) posit that:

> developing an identity as a teacher is an important part of securing teachers' commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms … the identities teachers develop shape their dispositions, where they place their effort, whether and how they seek out professional development opportunities, and what obligations they see as intrinsic to their role. (pp. 383-384)

Professional identities are said to have a direct influence on classroom practice (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Hsieh, 2015), and have been shown to contribute to teachers' motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, and overall job satisfaction (Day et al., 2006). Therefore, professional identity is a critical factor in becoming and being an effective teacher.

Professional identity is associated with a "sense of purpose for teaching and being a teacher" (Rex & Nelson, 2004, p. 1317). It can be used as an analytical lens to examine a teacher's work (Olsen, 2008) and to understand their professional lives, the quality of their instruction, their motivation and commitment to teaching, and their career decision making (Schutz et al., 2018). It could also be a means for teachers to "justify, explain, and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and in the context in which they operate" (Maclure, 1993, p. 312). Research into teachers' professional identities has been said to be an essential means of enhancing the understanding of the teaching profession and what it means to be a teacher who is striving to be competent in both their personal and workplace contexts (Day & Kington, 2008).

A positive professional identity contributes to a teacher's self-efficacy, motivation, commitment to teaching, retention, and job satisfaction (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Day et al., 2006; Day & Kington, 2008; Hammerness et al., 2005), and also influences how teachers deal with changes in their teaching context (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Day et al., 2006; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Mitchell, 1997; Stenberg, 2010), all of which are closely linked to their performance in the classroom and overall effectiveness as a teacher (Acker,

1999; Day & Kington, 2008; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). However, it is observed that creating and maintaining teacher identity entails a "continuing site of struggle" (Maclure, 1993, p. 313), which is situated within a given social and cultural space (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Sachs, 2001). It depends on teachers' views of themselves and their work contexts. Teacher professional identity is a culmination of their past experiences as students in schools and in teacher preparation courses, and as teachers (Feiman–Nemser, 2001).

2.4.4 What influences teacher professional identity?

According to Day and Kington (2008), the elements that influence teacher identity can be broadly grouped into three clusters: (1) socio-cultural and policy, (2) workplace, and (3) personal. A teacher's professional identity is the results from the interplay of the elements within and between these clusters.

2.4.4.1 Social-cultural and policy elements

The socio-cultural and policy elements reflect the social, cultural, and policy expectations of teachers and the teaching service (Day & Kington, 2008). A teacher's professional identity is said to be influenced by the societal norm of the image of a good teacher and what constitutes good teaching (Pollard, 1982; Sach, 2001) and the policy changes associated with education reform, teachers' workloads, roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for professional development (Avalos, 2011; Sachs, 2001). For example, Coldron and Smith (1999) argue that teachers' professional identities are the result of their choices in learning and teaching, which are influenced by policies and institutional restrictions.

Varghese et al. (2005) note the interplay between cultural and professional identity when they state that "in order to understand a teacher as a professional, we need to understand their cultural and individual identities" (p. 22). Cultural identity refers to one's "sense of belonging or not belonging to particular groups, based on his or her history and participation in particular practices and systems of meaning" (Menard-Warwick, 2008, p. 624). It is rooted in shared norms and practices (Eriksen, 2001). Research findings have demonstrated that teachers can recast their existing ideologies and cultural beliefs in response to the elements in their new context and reconstruct their professional identity when teaching in a cross-cultural context (Benson, 2019). Some participants are able to construct a bicultural and multilingual identity to gain legitimacy in the host context (Menard-Warwick, 2008).

2.4.4.2 Workplace elements

Workplace elements refer to the micropolitics and social relationships in the school. They are affected by local conditions such as student behaviour and the quality of leadership (Day & Kington, 2008; Thomas et al., 2020b). Micropolitics play an important role in teachers'

views of their teaching experiences and influence their identity formation (Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Thomas et al., 2020a). The immediate work environment, including the school norms and regulations, which are often referred to as the school culture, appears to exert a significant influence on the professional identities of teachers (Duffee & Aikenhead, 1992; Jordell, 1987).

Teachers' professional identities have also been linked to the teaching discipline, the status of their teaching subjects, the role conception of teachers, and the interaction and relationship with students and colleagues (Beijaard, 1995; Kelchtermans, 1993; Sikes, 1992; Varghese et al., 2005).). Other workplace elements that have a profound impact on teachers' identities are job stability, vulnerability to the judgment of superiors and colleagues, and a sense of contribution to the school (Kelchtermans, 1993).

2.4.4.3 Personal elements

Personal elements refer to factors outside school that may inform teachers' identities (Day & Kington, 2008). Lortie (1975) suggests that the "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61), during which students observe their teachers teaching, their experiences as students, and the influence of significant others such as family members are factors that exert a powerful influence on new teachers' views of teaching and themselves as teachers. Other studies also confirm that the personal experiences as students, teaching traditions, and cultural archetypes of teachers are significant influencing factors (Beijaard et al., 2000; Hsieh, 2015; Sugrue, 1997). As the work of teaching demands substantial personal and emotional investment (Zembylas, 2003, 2005), events and experiences in teachers' personal lives, family and social relationships, professional histories, and cultural and biographical factors also influence how they perceive and interpret the nature of their work and their identities (Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans, 1993; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005; Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006).

It is observed that teachers' sense of efficacy, self-esteem, job motivation, commitment, perception of job stability, and future development are essential elements that contribute to their professional identity (Bandura, 1977; Choi & Tang, 2009; Day, 2004; Nias, 1981). They experience positive self-esteem when their values are congruent with that of the institution, but they feel vulnerable when their professional identity and moral integrity are questioned (Kelchtermans, 2005), which, according to Nias (1989, 1996), may affect their self-concept and personal and professional identity.

It is clear from Day and Kington (2008) that individual teachers' lives can be affected by influences from the socio-cultural/policy, workplace, and personal contexts to varying extents, and that they may experience tensions within and between these clusters of

influences at any given time. The interaction between these influences contributes to teachers' professional identity, which is subsequently manifested through their commitment, well-being, job satisfaction, and resilience. As the three clusters are not always in equilibrium, one may become more dominant at any particular time, thus challenging the stability of teachers' existing sense of professional identity. Managing these instabilities and tensions requires additional time and emotional energy from the teacher, which can have a negative impact on their professional identity.

2.4.5 Summary for teacher professional identity

The sections above provided a review of the literature related to the construct of identity, the definition of teacher professional identity, its importance, and the constituent elements. The literature review has so far illuminated that a teacher's professional identity is shaped by personal and contextual factors, is shifting, unstable, and multiple, and is formed in relationship with others. Teachers' professional identity is said to be a critical factor in becoming and being effective teachers as it affects their commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms (Hammerness et al., 2005). It shapes their dispositions and has a direct influence on classroom practice (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Hsieh, 2015). It is also shown to contribute to teachers' motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, and overall job satisfaction (Day et al., 2006). As a construct that is dynamic and constantly evolving, a teacher's professional identity is influenced by an array of elements in the socio-cultural and policy, workplace, and personal contexts. Therefore, it is anticipated that immigrant teachers may experience a shift in professional identity as a result of the change in their social-cultural, political, and workplace contexts.

2.5 Intersectionality of immigrant teachers, adaptation, and teacher professional identity

Sections 2.2 to 2.4 described the research literature in the fields of immigrant teachers, adaptations, and teacher professional identity. The following subsections seek to discuss the research literature that sits in the intersections of these fields.

2.5.1 Immigrant teachers and adaptation

Literature on immigrant teachers is generally concerned with the issues and challenges that immigrant teachers encounter in their host countries. An implicit finding in these studies is the notion of adaptation; that is, the changes that immigrant teachers undergo to meet the expectations of their new teaching context (e.g., Bense, 2014; Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Reid, 2014; Seah, 2004). These changes, which are discussed in Section 2.2.2, generally involve a shift in their professional practices as teachers and include changes to their pedagogical practices, how they manage student discipline and the classroom, and how they address parental expectations in the new teaching context (see Sections 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, and 2.2.2.3.). These changes may encompass learning new knowledge and skills (e.g., Farahnaz, 2010; Peeler & Jane, 2005), shifting their beliefs and values (e.g., Colliander, 2020; Cruickshank, 2004; Fee, 2011; Hutchison, 2006; Myles et al., 2006; Reid, 2014; Seah, 2004), and adapting to new norms (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004).

While not explicitly linked to immigrant teachers, some of the findings in the teacher socialisation research appear to be relevant to immigrant teachers. For example, Brunton (2007) observes that teachers entering a new school often have to undergo an organisational socialisation process of acquiring the norms, values, knowledge, and skills expected by the school and the local community. This same finding of acquiring new norms, values, knowledge, and skills is regularly echoed in the immigrant teacher literature (e.g., Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Peeler & Jane, 2005). In the same light, the findings on the pressure that immigrant teachers experience to conform, relinquish some of their previous practices, and align with the beliefs and practices of their new teaching context in the adaptation process resonate with Edgar and Warren's (1969) study on teacher socialisation.

Pollard's (1982) theory on the workplace influences on teacher socialisation also appears to be relevant to the adaptation of immigrant teachers. For example, the significant impact of teacher–student interaction, student discipline, and classroom management is highlighted in both the teacher socialisation (Pollard, 1982) and immigrant teacher literature (Collins & Reid, 2012; Fee, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006; Remennick, 2002), while the influence of teaching colleagues on teachers' successful assimilation into the school environment is

underscored in Pollard (1982) and the immigrant teacher literature (e.g., Myles et al., 2006; Reid, 2005). Finally, the influence of societal influence, including parental expectations, on teacher socialisation put forward by Pollard (1982) is consistent with the concerns raised by immigrant teachers (Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2011; Janusch, 2015).

So far, the discussion has shown that the field of immigrant teachers and adaptation are interrelated. Research on the experiences of immigrant teachers in their host countries shows that it regularly involves some form of adaptation to the new environment. However, this review shows that the research in these two areas often takes place in silos. Except for a few studies (e.g., Fee, 2011) that draw on aspects of Adler's (1975) and Pedersen's (1995) cross-cultural adaptation theories to explain the adaptation of Latino immigrant teachers in the USA, this literature review did not find any studies that make explicit links between these two fields of research.

2.5.2 Adaptation and teacher professional identity

Theories related to teacher socialisation and adaptation have been drawn on from time to time to explain the shifting and unstable nature of teacher professional identity. For example, Carter and Doyle (1996) observe that the process of becoming a teacher, and therefore acquiring a teacher professional identity, often involves changing one's personal beliefs and ideals to adapt to the social structure and expectation of the teaching context. This observation is consistent with both Edgar and Warren's (1969) and Pollard's (1982) theories on the institutional and workplace influences on teacher socialisation.

The notion of teacher professional identity being influenced by elements in the socio-cultural and policy and workplace contexts and teachers shifting their professional identity to adapt to these contexts is evident in some of the teacher professional identity literature (e.g., Coldron & Smith, 1999; Day & Kington, 2008; Duffee & Aikenhead, 1992). These studies suggest that a teacher's professional identity is ever-changing and characterised by continuous shifting and adapting to external demands. These studies show that while an individual teacher's identity may be "mediated by their own experience in schools and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be" (Sach, 2001, p. 6), it is also heavily influenced by how individuals adapt to the local culture and discourse of teaching and the institutional and workplace expectations.

The above examples highlight the general link between teacher professional identity and adaptation, in particular professional adaptation. However, these studies do not address the

adaptation and shifts in the professional identity of teachers who have crossed international borders to teach in a different educational context.

2.5.3   Teacher professional identity and immigrant teachers

While there is a plethora of studies on teacher professional identity in general, only a small handful of these studies have investigated the professional identity of immigrant teachers. For example, Kooy and de Freitas (2007) found that diasporic movement and migration leads to the disruption and recreation of teacher identity. Lefever et al. (2014) also observed that immigrant teachers draw on their personal and cultural resources in their teaching and the development of their professional identities. Bressler and Rotter (2017) found that the professional identities of immigrant teachers are contingent on whether they accept the unique role ascribed to them due to their migrant background or whether they reject such expectations and prefer to be recognised for their pedagogical skills just like their local colleagues. Other studies on immigrant teachers' professional identities have focused on the role of language (Villegas-Torres & Mora-Pablo, 2018), foreign accent (Benson, 2019), and the pressures to conform to local language styles in immigrant teachers' professional identity (Hutchison et al., 2006). Finally, some studies have shown that immigrant teachers are marginalised in schools as a result of their immigrant teacher identity (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Virta, 2015).

While teacher professional identity is an important area in teacher development, the relatively small number of studies on immigrant teachers' identity is a cause for concern. As studies have shown that professional identity is influenced by changing context, major events such as migration would likely have a significant impact on immigrant teacher identity. Clearly, for immigrant teachers, a major event such as migration and the subsequent change in teaching context would have a substantial impact on their professional identity. The global migration of teachers and the strategies to diversify the teaching workforce in some countries has led to complexities in teacher diversity; however, this review shows that the studies on immigrant teachers' identity are relatively few in number compared to the literature on teacher identity as a whole.

2.6   Summary for the intersectionality of immigrant teachers, adaptation, and teacher professional identity

In summary, the review of the literature on the intersectionality of immigrant teachers, adaptation, and professional identity shows that while these fields are interrelated, the research is mostly carried out either in silos or across two of the three fields (see Figure 2.5). There appear to be few studies that have drawn on the knowledge across all three

fields of research. In view of this gap in knowledge, the study seeks to explore the intersectionality of immigrant teachers, adaptation, and teacher professional identity to better understand the issues surrounding professional adaptation of immigrant teachers.

Figure 2.5

Intersectionality Between Immigrant Teachers, Adaptation, and Teacher Professional Identity
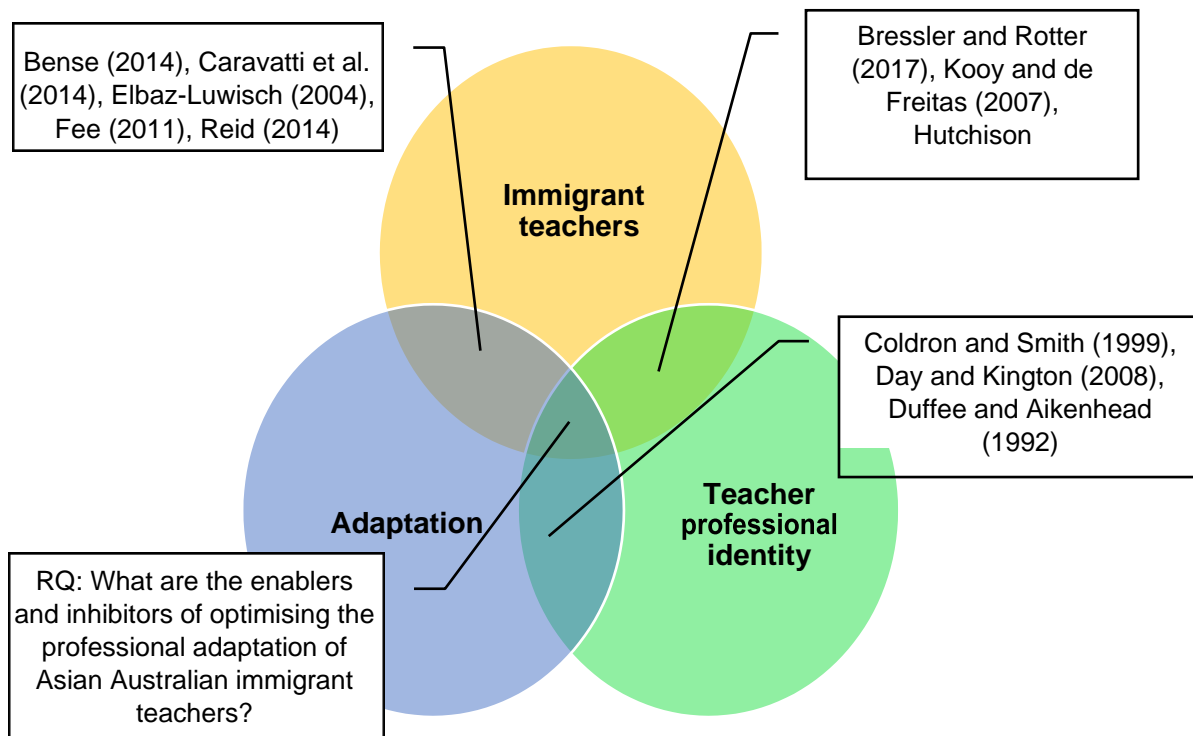
2.7 Chapter summary

This literature review examined the existing contributions from research that has informed current understandings of immigrant teachers, migrant adaptation, and teacher professional identity. The key challenges of immigrant teachers appear to be associated with accreditation and employment, professional practice, and professional integration. Adaptation for immigrant teachers often involves the dual process of cross-cultural and professional adaptation as immigrant teachers adjust to life in a new country and their work as teachers in a new teaching context. The transition process may entail a corresponding shift in their professional identity as they adjust to the new norms, expectations, and practices in their new environment.

While previous research has separately studied the issues faced by immigrant teachers, the adaptation process of immigrants, and the notion of teacher professional identity, relatively little is known about how these three areas intersect and influence the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers from specific backgrounds and in particular contexts. There are also no known theories that describe the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. As so little is known about this group of teachers, this gap is addressed by the current study. To fully explore and understand the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers requires a qualitative approach that considers and explores the individual's experience of professional adaptation. In this study, this approach is accomplished through the development of a nuanced substantive theory. The details of this methodological approach, the research design, and the rationale for the specific methods chosen are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

Chapter Three explains how this research was conducted. It outlines the research purpose, question, and scope of this study, my research philosophy, the study's qualitative research approach, and the grounded theory techniques employed. The ethical considerations are discussed in Section 3.4, and are then followed by a detailed description of the research process, including the sampling and recruitment of participants, data collection, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the study's rigour and trustworthiness and a reflection on my positionality and reflexivity as a researcher.

3.2 Research purpose, question, and scope

This study aims to develop a new understanding of the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers by exploring the insights and experiences from the perspectives of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. I began the research wanting to find out about immigrant teachers' experiences in schools. At the start of this study, I undertook a preliminary literature review to get a general sense of the research in immigrant teachers and adaptation and to identify research gaps in the field. Having read in the literature that teachers may experience a change in professional identity resulting from changes in the teaching context, the literature on teacher professional identity was also reviewed. Urquhart (2013) suggests that a preliminary literature review helps orientate the researcher to the field of study but should remain non-committal so as not to prejudice researchers towards existing theoretical concepts. Engaging with the literature may also increase theoretical sensitivity and contribute to the researcher's theoretical construction (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I am ever mindful to avoid imposing pre-existing theories or knowledge on the analysis process (Birks & Mills, 2011). The literature review was refined and expanded over time to make it more thorough, systematic, and relevant after the data were collected and analysed.

Likewise, the research question was gradually refined over time as I developed a better understanding of the field and the nature of the different research methods. Birks and Mills (2011) recommend that researchers state their "research questions broadly and in terms that reflect a problem-centred perspective of those experiencing or living the phenomena" (p. 21). These research questions may be refined or modified in the course of the research to reflect the pertinent issues in the field (Charmaz, 2014).

Early in the study, my research focus was on the workplace adjustment for immigrant teachers and how their presence is beneficial. My initial main research question was: "How are Asian Australian immigrant teachers and schools optimising their professional cultural adaptation?" There were also several sub-questions: What are the experiences of professional cultural adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers? What strategies did they employ to adapt to the teaching community? How did the school optimise Asian Australian immigrant teachers' professional cultural adaptation? How did the presence of Asian Australian immigrant teachers bring about school improvement?

These questions were revised and refined several times, resulting in a single, more focused overarching question of "What are the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation?" The 'how' in the main question was replaced by a 'what', as the former appeared to be a very flat research question that could have resulted in a descriptive rather than analytic piece of work. I wanted to move beyond description and towards a potentially actionable understanding or theory of professional adaptation. The terms 'cultural' and 'school improvement' were removed to avoid the assumption that professional adaptation is a cultural issue and that the presence of Asian Australian immigrants will lead to school improvement.

The scope of this study was limited to participants who were trained as teachers in Asia before arriving in Australia, had practised as a teacher in Asia before arriving in Australia, and are currently teaching in a government or non-government school in Australia. These criteria ensured that the participants' experiences in schools were relevant and up-to-date. The next section describes this study's research methodology.

3.3   Research methodology

Methodology refers to a set of principles and ideas that inform the research design while methods are practical procedures used to generate and analyse data (Birks & Mills, 2011). With its underpinning philosophy, the methodological framework influences the position a researcher takes in the study and how they work with participants (Mill & Birks, 2011). In this section, I will present my research philosophy and the rationale for the qualitative approach and constructivist research paradigm.

3.3.1   Researcher philosophy

In deciding on the design of a research study, it is vital that researchers articulate and reflect on their philosophical beliefs on the nature of reality (ontology) and how knowledge is

constructed (epistemology). These considerations guide them in their methodological decision and selection of research methods (Birks & Mills, 2011).

The philosophical beliefs on the nature of reality (ontology) consider whether there is a single, objective reality, or whether there are multiple realities that are subjective and determined by the contexts and interpretations of the individual. On the other hand, epistemology is concerned with what knowledge is known and how we come to know about it. In this sense, it guides the choice of methodology to discover the reality. A positivist epistemological perspective believes that knowledge is created through systematic, objective observation to establish universal, deterministic laws about the real world, and to discover causal explanations and make predictions about the world (Charmaz, 2014). An interpretive epistemological position, on the other hand, believes that reality is constructed from participants' interpretive portrayal of the world, and is shaped by their experiences and interactions with objects and others (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher's philosophical beliefs about ontology and epistemology together inform the research methodology applied in a study, the nature of the participants' interaction, and the data collection and analysis methods.

As detailed in Chapter One, this study aims to build a theory to explain immigrant teachers' professional adaptation by exploring the insights and experiences from the perspectives of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. This knowledge is multiple and socially constructed (Patton, 2015), subjective, and interpreted through the lens of the participants, and is therefore informed by their experiences and worldview (Crotty, 2003). This study is also informed by social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1996), which is an epistemological perspective that asserts that all knowledge is socially constructed and that individuals construct meanings from their experiences of interactions with others. According to Berger and Luckmann (1996), human behaviour is not the same everywhere. The ways that people act are influenced by the society and their culture and is the result of the socialisation process in which they internalise the values, habits, and attitudes of the society in which they live. This social constructionist worldview contributed to my decision to adopt a qualitative research approach and to adapt the techniques in Charmaz's (2014) grounded theory method for this study. The latter seemed to align with that of the Berger and Luckman philosophy (Charmaz, 2008) and the aim of this study, which is to build a theory to explain immigrant teachers' professional adaptation.

3.3.2 Qualitative research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), "qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 8). Qualitative researchers seek answers to the 'what', 'how', and 'why' questions of a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Kuper et al., 2008) and they also aim to reveal the human side of an issue by enabling people to speak for themselves (Kuper et al., 2008). It allows an examination of the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers "through the eyes of my participants" (Cohen, 2007, p. 21). The qualitative approach aligns with my philosophical position and what I hope to achieve in this study.

3.3.3 Grounded theory techniques

Previous research on the adaptation of immigrant teachers has tended to base the investigations on established theoretical perspectives, for example the social-cultural theory and the cultural adaptation theory, at the expense of exploring the possibilities of developing new theories. This approach has resulted in the lack of theory about immigrant teachers' professional adaptation experiences that is grounded in data and closely tied to everyday experiences. Creswell (2013) posits that the grounded theory method is particularly suitable for research into people's experiences in a new way as it calls for the inquirer to "generate a general explanation of a process, an action or an interaction shaped by the views of the participants" (p. 83). To this end, I have drawn on some of the techniques of the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 2017), including coding practices, memo writing, constant comparison, theoretical saturation and sorting, diagramming, substantive theorising, and engaging in reflexive practice, as these techniques align with my research purpose and question.

The grounded theory was first described by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s in their study of dying hospital patients. The method has evolved over the years with different variations. I found Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory to be most closely aligned with my worldview and hence most suited to the nature of this study. Charmaz (2014) defines grounded theory methods as "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves" (p. 1). Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory differs from the earlier Glaserian and Straussian version in that she assumes that "reality is multiple, processual, and constructed", that "the research process emerges from interaction", and that "researchers co-construct the data with research participants" (p. 402). In other words, she acknowledges that the researchers' findings are shaped by the context, the researchers' prior experiences,

and their interactions with participants (Charmaz, 2014). As such, she advises researchers to account for their positionality and articulate their role in the theory development process. She encourages researchers to conduct preliminary literature reviews, collect rich data through the use of open-ended interview guides, and record and transcribe interview data rather than just take field notes (Charmaz, 2014). In addition, she allows for more flexibility in how data is analysed, written up, and presented (Charmaz, 2014, 2017). The rigour of a constructivist grounded theory is assessed in terms of credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (Charmaz, 2014), as it aims to provide a new understanding of a phenomenon instead of trying to explain, predict, measure, or control people's behaviour (Charmaz, 2014).

Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory method is used as a general guide for this study, but it is adapted to take into account the practicalities and constraints that I experienced on the ground. These include acknowledging the positionality of the researcher (Section 3.8) in this research and providing a sense of context by describing participants' characteristics and experiences (Section 4.2). I began the research with a preliminary literature review. This is followed by preparation of an interview guide, recording and transcribing of the interview data, and the commencement of the data analysis as soon the first interview was completed. I documented my observations and reflections after each interview. Memos were written throughout the data analysis process to detail the coding process, the shift from descriptive codes to more focused ones, and the clustering of similar codes to form conceptual categories. The codes and categories were then compared to look for relationships between categories, and attempts were made to construct a theory to explain the participants' professional adaptation experience. A more detailed description of the research process is provided in the later section of this chapter.

3.4   Ethical considerations

Official approval for this study was sought from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) (Appendix B). Creswell (2013) advises that researchers need to consider ethical issues at every stage of the research process, from study design to reporting writing. The main ethical issues that need to be addressed in this study are participant recruitment, informed consent, data storage, and confidentiality.

Participants were recruited online and through mutual acquaintances. An explanatory statement (Appendix E) that described the nature of this research was presented to the participants and their written consent sought prior to the interview (Appendix F). As the participants' experiences and stories are deeply personal, it was essential to ensure that

their stories and experiences were accurately represented and their privacy maintained (Babbie, 2017; Creswell, 2014; Newman, 2011). I assured the participants through the explanatory statement and informed consent that the data extracted from their interview would not contain names or identifying characteristics that may link the data to them. In addition, I transcribed and analysed the data myself, and no third-party services were engaged. All data were stored securely in locked cabinets and on password-protected computers. To preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were carefully chosen (Creswell, 2014; Ruth & Wiles, 2016). The next section describes the research process in detail.

3.5   Research process

A frequent critique of research on immigrant adaptation is its methodological weakness. Most of the studies are cross-sectional in nature, relying on the use of a single survey questionnaire to collect data (Church, 1982; Eringa et al., 2015; Furnham & Bochner, 1986). However, adaptation itself is a process that involves changes over time. A snapshot analysis using a single survey questionnaire is unlikely to identify the behavioural and attitudinal changes that are claimed in these studies (Ward et al., 1998), and at most may present a fragmented and incomplete picture of participants' experiences.

To address the weakness in the use of survey questionnaires and to generate a theory closely related to their everyday experiences as immigrant teachers, I decided to interview the participants in person. The interviews were carried out over a span of time and in the participants' chosen environment to give them sufficient time and a comfortable space to tell their stories. The data were collected through a series of interviews based on a set of broadly framed questions (Appendix A) and memos that documented my experiences, observations, and reflections were written after each interview. In addition, official statistics, policy documents, and media reports related to immigrants and teachers in Australia were analysed to provide the contextual background and enrich the understanding of the phenomenon. I adapted Seidman's (2006) three-step interview protocol for the interview process and referred to Charmaz's (2014) research method and Saldana's (2016) coding manual to guide the data analysis. These are discussed further in the later sections of this chapter.

Given that a longitudinal study is not viable within the time limit of this research, the weakness of the cross-sectional approach used in other adaptation literature was addressed by selecting participants across different professional life stages in their teaching career (Day,

2008; Fessler, 1995; Huberman, 1993; Sikes, 1985) who have been living in Australia for different numbers of years. The sampling range was also broadened to include participants from different genders, Asian regions and ethnicities, grade levels, subjects taught, school types (government and non-government), and both metropolitan and regional schools. In doing so, it was hoped that the heterogeneous sampling would capture a wide range of perspectives to tell a rich story about the professional adaptation experiences of Asian Australian immigrant teachers.

My participants' experiences provide invaluable insights within the deeply structured and embedded environments of schooling, and constitute a good way to look at the bigger issues in the education landscape (Goodson, 2008). Through this research, I seek to understand the contextual elements in my participants' professional adaptation and generate explanations that reflect their experiences in the Australian teaching context. Figure 3.1 below provides an overview of the research process.

Figure 3.1

Overview of the Research Process
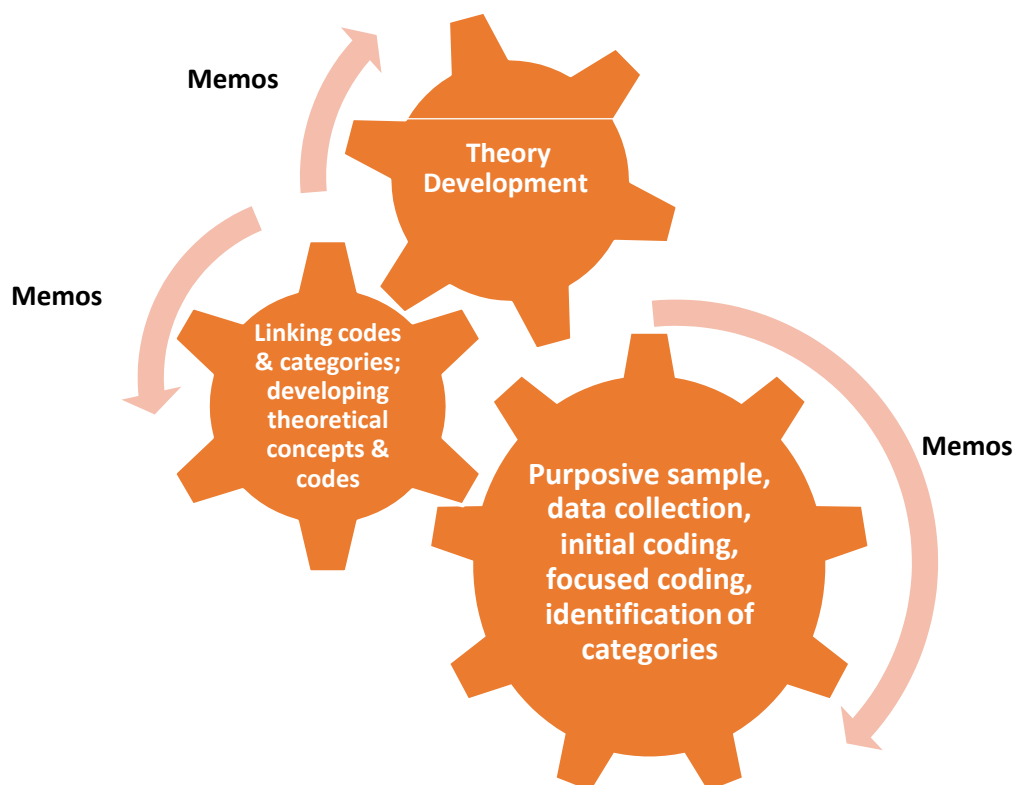
Morse (2009) posits that grounded theory is primarily a particular way of thinking about data, which means that it cannot be standardised. Hence, whenever a grounded theory is used, it requires adaptation according to the research question, situation, and characteristics of the

participants. The following subsections describe the sampling, data collection, and analysis as informed by the literature and the practicalities of this research.

3.5.1 Sampling and recruitment of participants

My participants were recruited through purposive sampling, which is a technique widely used in qualitative research to identify and select participants who have had experiences or knowledge relating to the phenomenon being researched (Babbie, 2017; Patton, 2015). These participants were deemed to be able to share their insights in a reflective, articulate manner (Morse, 2012). While grounded theorists have called for theoretical sampling to follow purposive sampling after data patterns have been identified and researchers have clarified the theoretical constructs and relationships, this sequence was not carried out in this study due to time constraints and the difficulty of identifying new participants. Instead, clarification was sought from the existing participants whenever possible. Also, the amount of data collected from the 10 participants appeared to have reached saturation, and there were diminishing returns with subsequent interviews.

This research required a sample of Asian Australian immigrant teachers, who were defined as practising teachers who were born in Asia and had trained and practised as teachers in Asia before migrating to Australia. These criteria were stated in my recruitment advertisement (Appendix C). Flyers, social media invitations, and emails were created for the recruitment of participants. Participants were recruited online via professional teacher associations and social network groups for teachers and immigrants in Australia (see Appendix D). Permission was sought from the administrators to place my recruitment advertisement on their social media pages. Some teacher professional network groups also helped to promote this study through their contacts (e.g., the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria). By far, the most successful recruitment came from my network, as five of the 10 participants are mutual acquaintances with varying degrees of connection.

The original plan was to recruit a heterogeneous sample of participants from different Asian regions (Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia), and across various years of teaching and years of residence in Australia. After commencing the recruitment process, it became evident that there would not be any participants with less than three years' teaching experience as they would not have qualified for an Australian skill-based migration visa. The two participants (Nara and Anushu) who came to Australia through marriage have also accumulated four and five years' teaching experience, respectively, in their home countries. Both initially arrived on a partner visa and subsequently converted to permanent residency visa and citizenship.

During the interaction with potential participants in the recruitment process, it became clear that almost all of them did not have a stable job in their first year of arrival in Australia. Many were in the process of applying for teacher registration with the relevant authorities, and others were teaching in tuition centres or working as casual relief teachers, usually across different schools. Due to the instability of these work conditions, I decided to exclude from this study those who had been in Australia for less than a year. My heterogeneous sample of participants was made up of individuals with a range of personal, cultural, and professional characteristics. My analysis of the available research (Beijaard, 1995; Beijaard et al., 2000; Day & Kington, 2008; Hsieh, 2015; Kelchtermans, 1993; Sikes, 1992; Sugrue, 1997; Varghese et al., 2005) indicates that the participants' professional adaptation experience as teachers might to some extent be shaped by these characteristics.

My participants work in different educational institutions, including primary and secondary schools, government and faith-based school, and schools located in metropolitan and regional areas, and they also work across different teaching subjects. Each of these settings requires distinct knowledge bases and skill sets related to subject content, curriculum design and delivery, assessment, and managing students of different age groups and learning needs. Participants drew on these specifics when sharing their experiences regarding what had helped and hindered their professional adaptation.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below provide an overview of my participants' personal, cultural, and professional characteristics. In summary, nine female and one male teacher were interviewed. Eight teachers are from Victoria, one is from New South Wales, and one is from the Northern Territory. Of the 10 teachers, eight teach in schools in the metropolitan area, and two teach in regional schools. Two teachers are from East Asia, five are from Southeast Asia, and three are from South Asia. The teachers' ages range from the early 30s to the mid-50s. At the time of the study, they had been teaching for between four and 25 years and had been residing in Australia for between one and 15 years.

Table 3.1

Summary of Participants and Their Personal and Cultural Characteristics

S/N	Name	Gender	Age	Years in Australia (based on 2019; rounded to the nearest year)	Nationality-ethnic group	Asia region (home
1	Angela	F	40s	2	Singaporean - Chinese	SE Asia
2	Renuka	F	30s	5 (did not teach in the first two years)	Sri Lankan-Singhalese	S Asia
3	Marilyn	F	50s	15	Indian	S Asia

4	Anusha	F	40s	15	Indian	S Asia
5	Kai Meng	M	30s	1	Singaporean - Chinese	SE Asia
6	Janice	F	30s	1	Singaporean - Chinese	SE Asia
7	Rehvinder	F	50s	3	Singaporean-Indian	SE Asia
8	Michiko	F	40s	11	Japanese	E Asia
9	Kate	F	30s	7 (did not teach in the 1st year)	Malaysian-Chinese	SE Asia
10	Nara	F	30s	2 (did not teach in the 1st year)	Japanese	E Asia

Table 3.2

Summary of Participants and Their Professional Characteristics

S/N	Name	Years of teaching (Asia + Aus)*	School locality (Metro/Reg) (State)	School system (Govt/Faith-based)	School type (Pri/Sec)	Teaching subject (s)
1	Angela	8+2	Metropolitan (VIC)	Government	Sec	Science
2	Renuka	5+3	Metropolitan (VIC)	Government	Pri	General (Primary)
3	Marilyn	3+15	Metropolitan (VIC)	Government	Pri	General (Primary)
4	Anusha	5+15	Regional (VIC)	Government	Pri-Sec	Maths
5	Kai Meng	4+1	Metropolitan (VIC)	Faith-based (Anglican)	Sec	Maths
6	Janice	7+1	Metropolitan (VIC)	Government	Pri	General (Primary)
7	Rehvinder	22+3	Regional (NSW)	Faith-based (Catholic)	Sec	English
8	Michiko	7+11	Metropolitan (VIC)	Faith-based (Catholic)	Sec	Maths & Japanese
9	Kate	3+6	Metropolitan (VIC)	Faith-based (Islamic)	Sec	Design & Technology
10	Nara	3+1	Metropolitan (NT)	Government	Sec	English

* based on 2019; rounded to the nearest year

My original plan was to recruit more participants through snowball sampling. Hence, at the end of each interview, the participants were asked if they were able to identify other Asian Australian immigrant teachers in their network. However, after spending some time in the field, I realised that this approach did not work well for my participants. Many said that they do not know of other immigrant teachers like themselves, while a few said that although there are other teachers who look like Asians in their schools, they are not close to these colleagues and were not comfortable approaching them.

Noy (2008) observes that the process of snowball sampling reveals "the dynamics of natural and organic social networks" (p. 329) of the population being sampled. I wonder if my participants have friends who are like themselves – migrant teachers from Asia. While a few spoke about interacting well with local colleagues in schools, they seemed unwilling to recommend them. Perhaps the phenomenon being investigated is a source of embarrassment for the participants and the challenges they face are hidden and sensitive, or perhaps they were worried about being stigmatised or their job being jeopardised. In this way, the attempt at snowball sampling had not only been a technique for finding participants but was also a revealing part of the inquiry.

3.5.2 Data collection

3.5.2.1 Semi-structured interview

The primary data for the study were collected through one-on-one interviews with my participants. The interview is a commonly used data collection tool in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 2002). Seidman (2006) maintains that "interviewing provides access to the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour" (p. 10). The focus was the participants' experiences and the meaning they made of that experience, and also what Schutz (1972, p. 50) referred to as the "subjective understanding" of the Asian Australian immigrant teachers. Therefore, it seemed that interviewing would be the best approach to the data collection because it would provide the quality of data required to address the research question. In addition, field notes and reflection memos were written after each interview to document any observations and feelings. All the interview sessions were audio recorded to "preserve the events in a fairly authentic manner for subsequent data analysis" (Gall et al., 2003, p. 21). Whenever appropriate, reference was made to official statistics, policy documents, and media reports to provide the contextual background to my participants' experiences.

The interviews were semi-structured in nature as I felt that this approach offered a good combination of structure and flexibility to examine the participants' experiences (Babbie, 2017). Open-ended questions were used to allow opportunities for unanticipated responses and issues to emerge (Tod, 2006). The questions were developed around the research aim of understanding the professional adaptation experience of the participants. The interview questions were kept clear, short, and in a conversational tone to put the participants at ease. Technical language and jargon were avoided (Berg, 2009), and prompts were used to follow up with participants about their individual experiences or pursue spontaneous issues raised by the interviewee during conversation (Berg, 2009; Neuman, 2011).

I took care to intentionally place the more sensitive, difficult questions towards the latter part of the interview when rapport and trust were more likely to have been established and the participants were more relaxed (Trochim, 2005). The interview was pilot-tested with two fellow researchers before the study interviews took place to allow for modification of confusing or poorly phrased questions (Berg, 2009). As a result, some questions were rephrased to ensure that they were unambiguous and succinct in eliciting clear answers. When appropriate, probing questions were used to draw out more information and seek deeper levels of meaning and clarity (Ryan et al., 2009).

These face-to-face interviews allowed probing and exploration of hidden meanings, which enhanced my understanding of what my participants said and hence facilitated the collection of richer, more textured data (Ryan et al., 2009). The meetings mostly took place in their homes or schools, but also in a public library, a café, and in one instance, my workspace. We talked about a range of topics – about their lives here, their families, their children, their homes in Asia, their jobs here, their crises, their aspirations, their frustrations, their joys, and their everyday routines. These interviews were usually conducted in the late afternoon after my participants had finished their work in the school for the day.

Bearing in mind that language plays an important role in maintaining rigour in qualitative research as it influences how meaning is constructed and expressed (Hennink, 2008), my participants were offered the option to have the interviews conducted in their native language along with the use of an interpreter should it be a language that I am unfamiliar with. However, all participants decided to be interviewed in English as they are fluent speakers. In fact, all of the teachers (except Michiko) had taught their subjects of specialisation in English in their home country. While Michiko used to conduct maths lessons in Japanese in her home country, she had taught the same subject in English for several years in Australia and could express her views in English fluently during our interviews.

3.5.2.2   My role as the interviewer

I was cognisant that the participants would likely have diverse and complex reasons for agreeing to be interviewed, and they might also feel anxious about how they were perceived and how their responses were being evaluated. Therefore, to put them at ease, the participants were assured that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. I reminded myself to remain neutral and refrained from making any judgment throughout the interview. Kvale (1996) points out that the relationship between the

researcher and their participants is not equal. I sought to establish rapport and trust from the outset. I started the interview by sharing some information about myself and encouraged the participants to be honest in sharing their experiences and views, assuring them that pseudonyms would be used and that what they said would not be traceable to them or their school.

I was also aware that the nature of my questions and how they were asked during the interview might affect the way my participants tell their stories and the richness of the information collected. The interview questions were iterative in nature, and I made an effort to remain open and flexible throughout the interview process. Legard et al. (2003) suggest that the demeanour of the interviewer is crucial and that a relaxed, confident, and attentive approach demonstrated by the interviewer would help a good interview relationship to develop. Knowing that my participants were busy juggling work and family commitments, I asked them to suggest a comfortable time and place for the interviews that would fit their busy schedules. Throughout the interview, I was mindful to keep an open posture, appropriate facial expression, and maintain good eye contact. From time to time, I echoed or repeated what the participants said to let them know that I was actively listening, and in doing so, encouraged them to continue with their sharing (Allen & Wiles, 2016).

As some of my participants' stories could resonate with my story, I was careful to refrain from offering comments or judgment. Except for the occasional probe for clarification or elaboration, I made it a point to allow my participants to talk uninterrupted and at their own pace (Kvale, 1996; Roulston et al., 2003). Kvale (1996) observes that the use of silence is an important aspect of conducting good interviews. I found this to be especially relevant in the last section of the interview, where I encouraged my participants to reflect on their experiences. By allowing silence after the question, my participants were given time to pause, reflect, and consolidate their thoughts before sharing.

An interesting point to note was that a few participants provided more information after the audio- recording device was turned off. For example, Nara spoke in detail about her students' misbehaviour, and Rehvinder spoke about the perceived incompetence of her colleagues and her frustration of having to work with them. They might have felt the need to share these experiences with me but had considered the information sensitive and hence did not want it to be recorded. Both indicated that they were fine with me quoting what they said in my thesis.

3.5.2.3 Interview process

The ten Asian Australian immigrant teachers who participated in this study were interviewed over three months between January and April 2019. I met with seven of the participants twice and each interview with them lasted between one and two hours. The two participants who live in the regional area were only interviewed once, but for a longer duration of about two hours. One of the participants, Janice, decided to go back to her home country not long after the first interview, so it was not possible to meet her again. In total, 17 interviews were conducted. All the interviews were conducted in person, which made it possible for me to observe body language and facial expression and maintain eye contact with the participants.

I drew on aspects of Seidman's (2006) three-step interview protocol to guide the interview process. According to Seidman (2006), the interviews should ideally be conducted in three segments, with each interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes and spaced three days to one week apart. In the first interview, the interviewer should strive "to put the participant's experience in context by asking them to tell as much as possible about themselves in light of the topic up to the present time" (p. 17). The second interview concentrates on the "concrete details of the participants' present lived experience in the topic area of the study", while in the third interview, participants are encouraged "to reflect on the meaning of their experience" (p. 18).

I made initial contact with the participants as soon as they responded favourably to the recruitment advertisement. This initial contact sought to establish trust and clarify any concerns that the potential participants had before making practical arrangements for subsequent interviews (Neuman, 2011). While the interview structure was initially set up following Seidman's approach, it became clear that the structure would not work well with the participants. Most of the participants are teachers and mothers juggling a full-time job and family life. They have more pressing needs than to devote 90 minutes each week for three consecutive weeks to a novice researcher. To avoid burdening the participants, the number of interview sessions were reduced from three to two. On the two occasions that required travel to faraway regional towns to meet my participants, interviews one, two, and three were conducted with them all on the same day.

Seidman (2006) notes the challenges of complying with the structures and procedures of the three-step interview process in some cases. He maintains that as long as a structure exists to allow participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experiences within the context of their lives, changes to the three-step interview structure with regard to duration and spacing of interviews can be explored, for "there are no absolutes in the world of

interviewing and relatively little research has been done on the effects of following one procedure over others" (p. 22). Figure 3.2 shows how Seidman's three-step interview protocol was adapted for this study.

Figure 3.2

Interview Process Adapted from Seidman's 3-step Interview Protocol

Seidman's (2006) 3-step interview protocol	My interview process (adapted from Seidman, 2006)
Interview 1: Focused life history (60–90 min)	**Interview 1:** My life before coming to Australia (60 min)
Interview 2: The details of experience (60–90 min)	**Interview 2:** Details of my present experience teaching in Australia and reflecting on my experience past and present (90 min)
Interview 3: Reflection on meaning (60 – 90 min)	

The interview questions were organised into three broad sections: (1) my life before coming to Australia, (2) my present experience teaching in Australia, and (3) reflecting on my experience past and present. These steps mirrored that of Seidman's (2006) three-step interview protocol. Questions asked during the interviews were grouped according to the three broad areas. This approach allowed the interviewer and participants to discuss the experiences in depth and place them in context (Schuman, 1982), as participants' behaviour only becomes "meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and those around them" (Seidman, 2006, p. 16).

To put my participants at ease, I began the interview with easy, non-threatening factual questions about age, nationality and ethnic group, years of teaching, years in Australia, school level, and teaching subjects to gather the necessary background information of my participants. Participants were then briefed on the sequence of the questions that would follow so that they were aware of what specific areas they would be asked about. This approach helped to reduce my participants' anxiety as they knew what to expect in the interview.

In the first section of the interview, participants were asked to share details about their lives up to the point they came to Australia. This background information put the participants' experiences in context in light of the research topic (Seidman, 2006). These questions also allowed an insight into my participants' lives in terms of their schooling and teaching experiences in their home countries, their decision to enter teaching, and the decision to migrate to Australia.

The second section of the interview concentrated on my participants' lived experiences (van Manen, 2016) in Australia. To put their everyday experience within the context of this study, my participants were asked to talk about their experiences with the job search and their relationship with students, colleagues, school administrators, and students' parents. I also encouraged them to share stories about their day-to-day experience in schools as a way of eliciting details.

In the last section of the interview, participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences in Australia. The combination of exploring "past events that led participants to where they are now" and describing the "details of their present experience helped to establish the conditions for reflecting" on their experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 19). Here, participants spoke at length about the differences they have experienced between teaching in Australia and teaching in their home countries, the adjustments they have to make, what they perceived as their contribution to the local teaching profession, and their experience as an Asian migrant teacher in Australia.

After each interview, I spent another two to three hours writing my reflections and field notes, recording as much detail as possible on my immediate observations, thoughts, and feelings. This additional information enabled me to capture my own attitudes and responses to the participants in their raw state. Babbie (2017) maintains that memoing is an important data source in qualitative research. The memos are my own field recording of what I heard, saw, experienced and thought about in the course of collecting and reflecting on the process. The memos, dated for ease of correlating them with the interview data, consisted of both descriptive and reflective notes such as hunches, impressions, and feelings (Miles, 2014). Substantial time over the next two days was spent transcribing the audio-recorded interviews into text. In the process, the transcripts were annotated with the non-verbal cues, such as the nuances, facial expressions, and body movements that the audio recording could not have picked up. The interrelationship of the memoing with the data analysis process is represented in Figure 3.1.

There several interactions with the participants during the process of setting up the interview, including the initial correspondence when the participants responded to my recruitment advertisement and the subsequent text messages and emails to confirm the appointments, helped me to establish a substantial relationship with the participants over time. In addition, my own experience as an immigrant teacher from Asia did, to some extent, help to create uniquely trusted relationships with the participants. During subsequent interviews, some participants (Renuka, Janice, and Angela) remarked about how comfortable they felt speaking with me as I understood their "lingo". Therefore, both the trusted relationships and the immigrant teachers being able to tell their accounts through informal conversations in a comfortable setting enabled the capturing of authentic and rich data. Table 3.3 summarises the data collection procedures between January and April 2019.

Table 3.3

Data Collection Procedures

S/N	Participant	Initial contact (mode)	1st interview Duration/venue	2nd interview Duration/venue
1	Angela	14 Jan Text message	17 Jan 1530–1630/Home	21 Jan 1430–1600/Home
2	Renuka	22 Jan Text message	30 Jan 1000–1130/Library	6 Feb 1600–1700/School
3	Marilyn	7 Feb Email	15 Feb 1600–1700/School	22 Feb 1600–1715/School
4	Anusha	27 Jan Email	9 Mar 1800–2000/Home	-
5	Kai Meng	18 Feb Text message	11 Mar 0830–0930/ Researcher's office	23 Mar 1400–1530/Home
6	Janice	17 Jan Text message	8 Mar 1400–1530/School	Meeting cancelled. Janice went back to home country for good.
7	Rehvinder	23 Jan Email	16 Mar 1600–1830/Home	-
8	Michiko	26 Feb Email	20 Mar 0900–1030/Cafe	27 Mar 1600–1700/School
9	Kate	17 Jan Email	20 Jan 1500–1630/Home	26 Mar 1530–1700/Home
10	Nara	29 Mar Text message	11 Apr 0900–1000/ Cafe	25 Apr 0900–1010/Cafe

Five of the interviews were conducted in the participants' schools, either in a meeting room during their free periods or in their classrooms after their classes ended for the day. On several occasions, interviews were also conducted in their homes, usually between cooking

and child- minding duties. While a few formal interviews were carried out with the list of interview questions, the informal conversations that occurred following the formal interviews were sometimes equally as effective in capturing the wide range of my participants' experiences.

In the first interview, the participants were asked to share their lives before coming to Australia. The questions asked were, "Why did you choose to be a teacher?", "What was your own schooling experience in your home country?", and "Why did you choose to migrate to Australia?" The aim was to put the participants' experience in context by asking them to share as much as possible about themselves up to the present time. All of the participants spoke vividly about their experiences in their home countries. Some of the participants who have lived in Australia for a long time reported that the questions "brought back many memories which they would not have otherwise thought about" (Marilyn).

Whenever possible, the second interview was conducted within two weeks of the first interview to allow the participants time "to mull over the preceding interview but not enough time to lose the connection between the two" (Seidman, 2006, p. 21). The two-week time frame was possible for most of the participants; however, due to her busy schedule, Kate could only meet again two months after the first interview. In her case, a substantial amount of time was spent at the start of the second interview recapping what we had spoken about in the first meeting. In the second interview, participants were asked to reconstruct the details of their typical workday and share any anecdotes and stories of day-to-day interactions with colleagues, students, school leaders, and parents. Hence, the questions asked were, "What is your experience teaching in schools in Australia?" and "How is your interaction with your students and colleagues?"

As this second interview was an amalgamation of steps 2 and 3 in Seidman's interview protocol, the participants were encouraged to draw from their past and present experiences to reflect upon what they are now doing in their lives and their aspirations for the future. Vygotsky (2012) proclaims that the very process of putting experience into language is a meaning-making process. When participants were asked to reconstruct details of their experience, they selected events from their past and, in so doing, imparted meaning to them. To stimulate this reflection process, the questions asked were "Given what you have shared about your work as a teacher in your home country and now as a teacher here in Australia, how do you feel about the whole experience?", "How has this transition experience shaped your view as a teacher?", and "Where do you see yourself going in the future?"

3.5.3 Data analysis

The data analysis process was carried out at three levels: (1) organising the data, (2) coding and generating categories, and (3) answering the research question. Figure 3.3 provides an overview of the data analysis process.

Figure 3.3

Overview of the Data Analysis Process
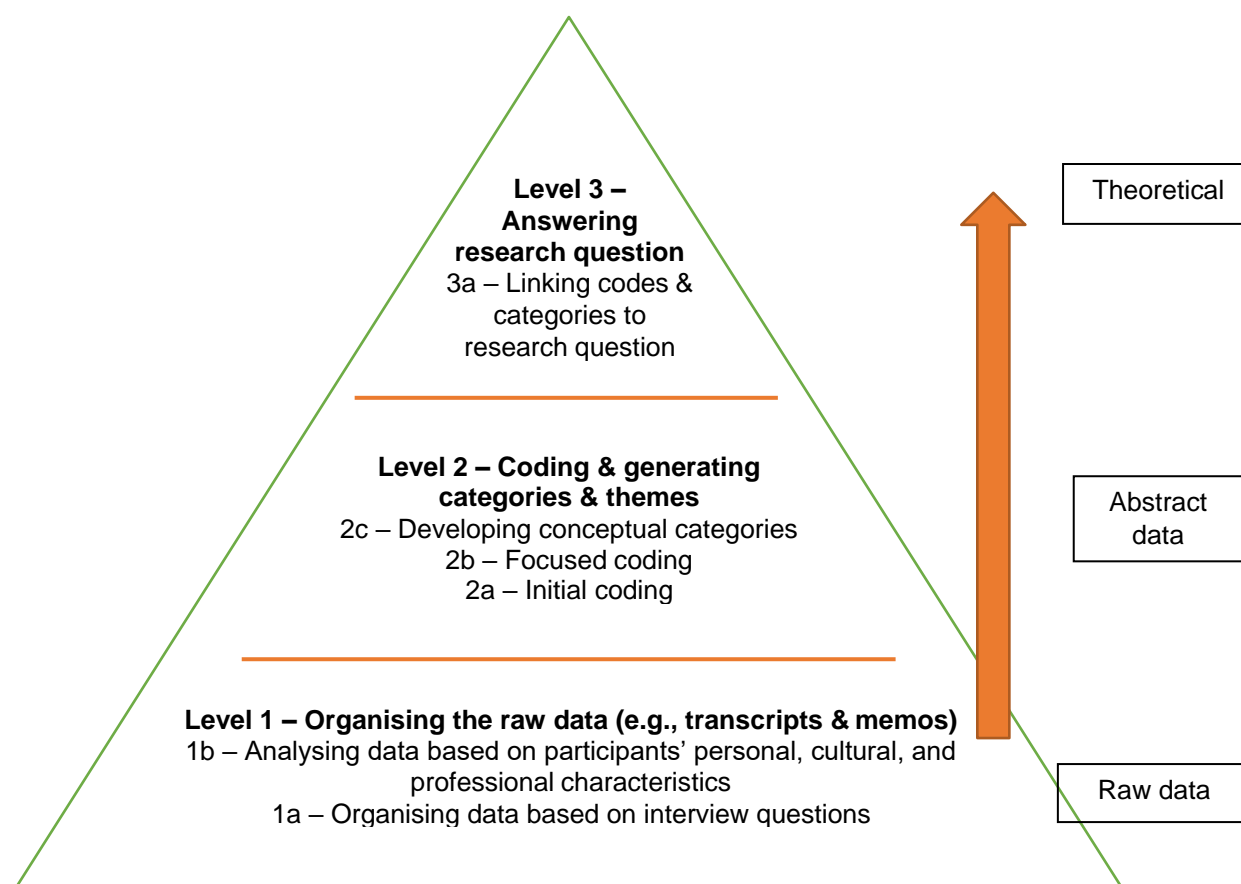
3.5.3.1 *Organising the data*

After transcribing the verbatim account of the interviews, the transcripts were read several times to get a general sense of the interview as a whole before being organised into broad categories based on the interview questions. As the participants' responses to the questions were scattered throughout the conversation, the process involved reading the transcripts several times to link their responses to the related questions. This process provided an overview of the participants' experiences, what they perceived as important, and their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. The data were then analysed according to the participants' personal, cultural, and professional characteristics to allow for comparison across characteristics of physical age, professional life stage, years of residence in Australia, nationality-ethnic group, school level, school type, and school locality.

By describing the participants as a group and then developing an overview of each person's experience (see Section 4.2), it was possible to gain a better understanding of each interview transcript by looking at it in relation to the 10 participants. Organising the data in this way allowed for a preliminary analysis of the similarities and differences among the participants' experiences. It was also possible to check whether the study has internal generalisability among my participants' experiences (Maxwell, 2005). The process of reading the transcripts numerous times also helped to become more familiar with the data before beginning the coding (Braun & Clark, 2006). Figure 3.4 illustrates the data analysis process.

Figure 3.4

Summary of the Coding Process
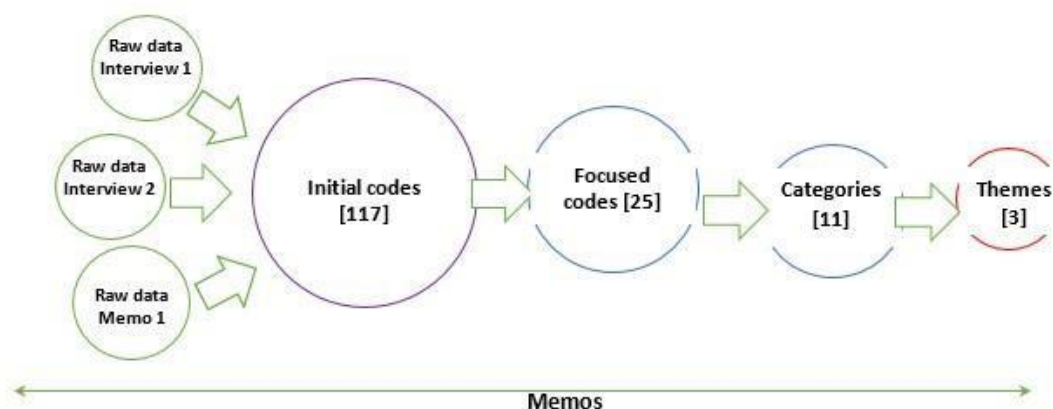
3.5.3.2   Coding and generating categories

The transcripts of the interviews, the field notes, and the memos were analysed using an inductive text analysis approach (Saldana, 2016). I coded the interviews as soon as they were transcribed by going through the transcripts line-by-line and writing first impression phrases that came to mind when reading the transcripts (Saldana, 2016). The coding was carried out line-by-line in a concentrated and thorough manner to avoid eliminating any data at this preliminary stage (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2013). To avoid applying any preconceived notions to the data analysis, I made a conscious effort to adopt a reflexive stance by questioning any preconceived notions and decisions in the coding process. Throughout this process, I wrote reflective memos on what I observed in the data and also documented my coding decisions.

Open coding was used, which meant there were no pre-set codes. Rather, preliminary codes were developed and then reviewed throughout the coding process. Through multiple readings and stages of analysis, some of my codes were collapsed, some were made

redundant, others were refined, and new codes were created to reflect newly emergent patterns. At this stage, the codes were mainly descriptive in nature, summarising the primary area of discussion in each section (see Appendix G: Coding Table 1). Some examples of these codes include "interaction with students", "workplace culture", "role perception", "views of education", and "difficulties/challenges".

As these initial codes were insufficient to tell the participants' stories, they were revisited and expanded to include *in vivo* codes (Birks & Mills, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 2017); that is, words or phrases were taken directly from what the participants themselves said in order to capture the emotions of the participants. In vivo codes are seen as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meaning, although their usefulness should also be subject to the same degree of analysis as other codes (Charmaz, 2014). The expanded codes included words commonly verbalised by the participants during the interviews. Many of these were emotive words such as "intimidating", "outsider", and "vulnerable", while others were words that recurred in the interviews, such as "accent" and "differentiate". This second phase generated 117 codes (see Appendix G: Coding Table 2).

The process of line-by-line coding of the full interview transcript and field notes through numerous rounds of reading made it possible to be deeply immersed and familiar with the data. As the ideas became clearer, some of the data were re-coded. Birks and Mills (2011) believe that the process of line-by-line coding and deep reading of the data, together with a researcher's prior experiences, knowledge, and self-awareness, contribute to a researcher's theoretical sensitivity and help the development of categories and theory (Birks & Mills, 2011). Charmaz (2014) describes theoretical sensitivity as "the ability to understand and define phenomena in abstract terms and to demonstrate abstract relationships between studied phenomenon" (p. 161).

With the 117 codes, it was decided to cluster together the words and phrases that evoked similar emotions or described identical situations. This process condensed the 117 initial codes into 25 focused codes. These codes were more conceptual than the initial line-by-line code, and were further collapsed into 11 categories. Some of these categories were "skills and knowledge", "social status as teachers", "interaction with students", and "ethnocentrism".(See Appendix G: Coding Table 2). The 11 categories were then further organised into three themes that seemed to say something specific about the research question. Appendix G: Coding Table 3 shows the three themes that were developed and the categories that were associated with them. The data analysis process was ongoing and iterative, so it was important to ensure that the themes were not hastily constructed. The

three themes that emerged were professional identity, vulnerability, and intercultural perspective. A summary of the coding process and a coding example is shown in Figure 3.4 and Table 3.4, respectively.

Table 3.4

Example Illustrating how the Codes Become Themes

Initial code	Focused code	Category	Theme
1. It was just very intimidating. 2. It was a daunting experience. 3. "…completely made me shiver! 4. It was a very horrible experience teaching in a secondary school. 5. "My first day of teaching …my first initiation into the scary world of secondary schools in Australia. 6. It was tough. 7. Students were curious about me. 8. They kind of take you lightly at first.	Experience with local students	Interaction with students	Vulnerability
9. The discipline in the public school is really bad. 10. There were lots of discipline issues. 11. The students are not very well-behaved. 12. The students do show a great amount of misbehaviour. 13. I require a certain level of discipline to teach. 14. I ensure discipline so that nothing can get in our way of getting there (success). 15. … they don't ever discipline. 16. The way they talked to the teacher, it is sometimes very rude.	Bad discipline/ behaviour		

Charmaz (2014) cautions researchers against forcing their data into preconceived codes and categories. Researchers may subconsciously harbour preconceptions that flow from their standpoints of race, gender, culture, profession, prior knowledge, and experiences, and these may permeate the data analysis without the researcher realising it. One way to mitigate this issue is for the researcher to engage in critical reflexivity through memo writing.

3.5.3.3 *Memo writing*

Memo writing is an integral part of the data analysis process. Memos that were written in the early stages of the data analysis can help to explore emerging codes, categories, and relationships, while those written in the later stage of the research can help to place the findings within an argument and make comparisons within and across categories, and can therefore help to increase the level of abstraction of the data (Charmaz, 2014). Memo writing serves many purposes. It encourages the researcher to engage in critical reflexivity by making the researcher's standpoint and assumptions visible: it provides a space for the

researcher to actively engage in the materials by allowing comparison between and across data, codes, categories, and themes. This process facilitates conceptual abstraction by helping to shift the descriptive initial codes to conceptual categories and subsequently to theory construction (Charmaz, 2014).

In this study, the act of memoing was vital to the data analysis and subsequently the development of the emerging theory. The early memos are mainly post-interview memos that documented my observations, hunches, and reflections after each interview. The example below is the memo with the title "First meeting with Maria", dated 2 February 2019.

> *The fact that Maria responded to my email so readily and cancelled her physiotherapy appointment (because she double-booked) to meet me showed that she looked forward to our meeting. Throughout the interview, Maria provided rich, lengthy details about her life in Kerala, including her ride in the 'tut tut' to school every day, the daily communal lunch with her colleagues, and experiences in Australia. Despite the many years that have passed since she came to Australia, she was able to recall in detail the conversations with people in the school and her emotions associated with these interactions. I was surprised to see that Maria had tears in her eyes at the end of our interview. She told me that our conversation has helped to bring back many beautiful memories that she had, both in India, New Zealand, and Melbourne. The interview was the first time since she arrived in Melbourne 15 years ago that she had reflected on her experiences.*

Memos also help to facilitate reflexivity. Birks and Mills (2011) argue that writing memos from the start of the research process can help the researchers to identify their worldview and biases and guide subsequent data analysis. It also allows researchers to capture their own emotions, feelings, and actions, which can heighten the researchers' awareness of the potential influence of their assumptions on the data (Birks et al., 2008). An example of this situation is the memo titled "Being rejected", written on 8 March 2019 after meeting with Janice. It made me realise that my positionality can influence how the participants respond to me, which, in turn, influences the data collected and the findings of my study. It was also an alert that I could potentially influence the data due to my prior experience and preconceived notions.

> *Janice was initially very candid during the interview but ended the interview abruptly after about an hour and a half. I wonder if I have asked anything inappropriate but couldn't recall any. I sense that Janice may have suddenly realised that she has*

spoken too much and that as a fellow educator from Singapore, we may have mutual friends or that I could have been friends with her previous superiors. That could have made her feel uncomfortable. It was then that I realised that my positionality could have affected how my participants perceive me. Kate told me that she actually checked on my social media account and contacted some people that she knows in Singapore to ask about me before she agreed to participate in my research. This could also be the reason why Angela was initially reluctant to participate in the interview (although she had a change of mind later).

The memos are varied and written spontaneously throughout the research process. Some are handwritten in the notebooks, while others are typed and stored in a 'memo folder' on the computer. There are analytical memos that were written during the coding and data analysis, post-interview memos that document my observations and 'hunches' after each interview, reflective memos that capture my reflections and thoughts at different junctures in the research process, and reflexive memos that capture my internal dialogue and assumptions whenever they surfaced. I pondered over these memos from time to time during the research process, mindful that the emerging theory should be grounded in the data and be reflective of the participants' experiences and not my own.

The analytical memos were written throughout the data analysis process. Codes were compared with codes and categories with categories, and similarities and differences in the codes and the relationship within and between categories were identified. The coding processes were documented in the analytical memos (Saldana, 2016), as were the thinking behind the code choices, how the choices changed, and the initial patterns and categories that emerged. The analytical memos provided an avenue for thinking critically about the study, confronting and challenging assumptions, and heightening my awareness of how my worldview shapes what I see (Mason, 2002).

3.5.3.4   *Moving from descriptive to theoretical*
The data analysis resulted in 117 initial codes, which were later condensed into 25 focused codes, 11 categories, and 3 themes. At this point, the data were revisited in the light of the research question: ***What are the enablers and inhibitors of the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers?*** While this level of analysis is able to identify the enablers and inhibitors and tell the stories of the professional adaptation of my participants, I realised that the analysis needed to be moved to a more theoretical level. Charmaz (2014) encourages the use of theoretical coding in the later stage of data analysis to further move the "analytical story in a theoretical direction" (p. 63). These theoretical codes were

considered to be advanced abstractions that enhanced the explanatory power of the findings and their potential as theory (Birks & Mills, 2011).

To derive theoretical codes, the data on the enablers and inhibitors that shaped participants' professional adaptation were reviewed. It was necessary to think broadly and look beyond my existing knowledge to identify keywords and concepts that may be potential theoretical codes that could explain the analysis. The codes and categories continued to be sorted, and diagramming was used to identify relationships between categories. This visual representation helped to elicit relationships among the categories and their strength, direction, and movement. This process constitutes the final phase of data analysis and is said to assist in theorising the findings (Charmaz, 2014). The descriptive and theoretical findings from the data analysis are presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

3.6   Rigour and trustworthiness

Rigour refers to the strength and quality of a research design (Liamputtong, 2010; Morse, 2015). Researchers argue that the traditional criteria of reliability and validity that are commonly used to assess the rigour of quantitative studies in the positivist paradigm are not suitable for qualitative research. Instead, naturalistic investigators such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the concept of trustworthiness in place of rigour to assess the quality of qualitative study, and also propose four corresponding criteria that should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are used in preference to the validity, generalisability, reliability, and objectivity that are used in quantitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2018; Shenton, 2004).

To ensure that this study was conducted in a fair and ethical manner and reflected the participants' experiences as closely as possible, care was taken to address this study's trustworthiness in terms of its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985).

3.6.1   Credibility

The cornerstone of good qualitative research is the congruence between findings and reality (Merriam, 2016). Immersion in the literature, media reports, and official documents on the statistics, accreditation, employment, and experiences of immigrant teachers both within and outside of Australia provided familiarity with the phenomenon before the first data collection dialogues occurred (Shenton, 2004). Also, to ensure that the findings offered an accurate reflection of the phenomenon under study, two separate interviews were

conducted with most of the participants over a span of time. The initial contact with the participants to brief them on the project, the subsequent interview session, and the follow-up via email or phone calls for clarification allowed for prolonged engagement (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2018) between me and the participants, which helped to build rapport and establish a relationship of trust as I noticed my participants becoming more trusting and confiding in successive interviews. This familiarity allowed the participants "to move past superficial accounts to provide stories that are more detailed and substantive" (Fuji, 2018, p. 45). The time lapse between the interviews allowed both the participants and me to reflect on what was being said in the first interview and to clarify and cross-check information in the second interview. By allowing participants time off between the interview sessions, they came back to the topic fresh and ready to share new insights and events that had taken place in the interim (Read, 2018).

After each interview, I wrote field notes which described what I observed about participants' non-verbal expressions, cues, and body language, my initial impression, and the patterns and theories that were emerging. Looking at these notes has been exhilarating as they recorded how my thinking changed over the course of the study. Verbatim transcription was carried out meticulously after each interview to ensure all data were captured in detail.

Whilst the primary method of data collection was through interview, I also referred to official government websites, for example the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) websites for information regarding the registration and employment of immigrant teachers. This information allowed for cross-checking and confirmation of what the participants said in the interview. A heterogeneous sample of participants with different demographic and professional characteristics was recruited for the interview, which allowed for individual viewpoints and experiences to be verified against others, ultimately providing a rich picture of attitudes and experiences. The experiences of participants were also compared against those with similar personal, cultural, and professional characteristics to allow for corroboration of data.

Regular meetings with my research supervisors throughout the research process provided an important platform to test ideas and interpretations and to raise issues and concerns, while also alerting me to my own biases and blind spots. The project was presented at the annual Monash Education Research Conference, milestone review panels, and various thesis workshops and peer support groups over the duration of the project. These venues provided feedback and opportunities for scrutiny of the project by PhD peers and

academics. These platforms were especially useful as they provided fresh perspectives, and challenged assumptions that may have been overlooked due to my proximity to the project. The questions and observations made by the milestone panel members were especially helpful for developing a more detailed explanation of the research design and methodology and strengthening the arguments in light of the comments made.

The credibility of the findings is further enhanced through member checking, which in this case involved asking the participants to check the accuracy of the interviews and whether the transcript was complete and realistic (Creswell, 2014). Although the initial plan was ask the participants to check the analysis and interpretation of their thoughts and words, this step was not carried out. From a constructivist-interpretivist perspective, there is no fixed truth of reality against which the results of the study could be compared or confirmed by the participants. Rather, it is more important that they are able to confirm that their words and ideas were accurately captured, which they have all done.

In addition, according to standpoint theory (Rolin, 2009), how individuals view the world is grounded in their contexts and circumstances. My participants' standpoints and worldviews may be different from mine, even though there was sometimes overlap and intersection between our contexts and personal and professional characteristics. After long consideration of the various advice given by research methodologists, it was decided that asking them to check the analysis and interpretation could lead to confusion and distress rather than confirmation, as the participants may have different views of the same data or change their minds about an issue as a result of reading the analysis. Also, new experiences may have emerged since the time of our last contact, and these may interfere with the interpretation of their data (Barbour, 2001; Morse, 2015; Sandelowski, 1993). Further, it may not be appropriate to expose the participants to my worldview by asking them to read my analysis. Hence, the member check was strictly restricted to checking the accuracy of the transcripts.

3.6.2 Transferability

While the notion of producing truly transferable results is not a realistic goal in qualitative studies due to the contextual difference for each study, a detailed write-up of the contextual information would allow readers to determine the extent to which they can transfer the findings and conclusion to other situations. "Thick description" was used when writing up the results in order to contextualise the findings (Creswell, 2009). Detailed background data are provided to establish the context of the study and provide the basis for comparison with other studies in similar areas. Other researchers who wish to apply all or part of the findings

can make an informed judgment about the degree of fit or similarity based on the contextual data provided.

3.6.3 Dependability and confirmability

The details of the research design, its implementation, a detailed description of the data collection process, and my reflection are documented to allow for an audit trail and the potential to repeat the study. Detailed records were kept of the research process. These included the professional associations that were contacted to recruit participants and the recordings and detailed documentation of each interview. This systematic chain of evidence ensures that the procedures that support the ethical integrity and rigor of my research and findings can be presented and explained (Merriam, 2016). Throughout the research process, memos that served as an audit trail were maintained, making it possible to trace my interactions with the participants and the data. The memos that were written during the coding process helped to ensure that all the transcripts were coded in the same way, which helped to ensure that the analysis was consistent (Creswell, 2014). It has also been useful to examine the similarities and differences in the participants' stories to determine whether the study has internal generalisability (Maxwell, 2005).

To ensure that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than my story, I engaged in reflexive practice to examine my own biases and assumptions. This reflexive practice involved documenting my thoughts and feelings before, during, and after each interview and when analysing the data. These memo entries included specific situations and words that made me feel optimistic, uncomfortable, and troubled. Reflecting on these memos at different times during this research journey made me more sensitive to the subjectivity in the research process.

Finally, the understanding of immigrant teachers' experiences is gained through comparison and corroboration of the findings in multiple studies. Even when different investigations offer results that are not entirely consistent with one another, it does not necessarily imply that one or more is untrustworthy. Rather, it may be that they simply reflect multiple realities, and it is necessary to understand the reasons behind the variations (Dervin, 1997). The current study's findings are examined in relation to existing bodies of knowledge on immigrant teachers, theories of adaptation, and professional identity, and will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

3.7   Researcher position and reflexivity

Positionality refers to the researcher's stance in relation to the social and political context of the study (Merriam et al., 2001). I am aware that the researcher is inextricably linked to the participants in the study (Grix, 2004). The researcher's positionality, assumptions, and biases shape the interaction with the participants, the data collected, and the interpretation (Patton, 2015).

I am cognisant that the findings in this research are socially constructed between the participants and myself. Hence, the backgrounds of both myself and the participants should be considered when data are being collected, selected, and analysed. The findings in this study are subject to my interpretation of the data provided by the participants, and guided by my "beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22). These findings are interpretive and shaped by my culture, knowledge, past experiences, and interactions with the participants (Charmaz, 2014). Hence, there is a need for me to position myself within the research by acknowledging relevant experiences, values, and beliefs (Altheide & Johnson, 2011).

As such, Creswell (2013) advises qualitative researchers to disclose the "cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics" they bring to a study (p. 215). He also encourages people to discuss their "experiences with the phenomenon being explored" and reflect on how these experiences may have shaped their understanding of the topic (p. 216). The understanding of the data stems from the shared experiences and relationships with participants. In exercising self-disclosure, I acknowledge my role and influence in the research to help readers understand the context (Creswell, 2013). Charmaz (2014) explains that "if we start with the assumption that social reality is multiple, processual, and constructed, then we must take the researcher's position, privileges, perspective, and interactions into account as an inherent part of the research reality. It, too, is a construction" (p. 13).

Bearing these in mind, I would like to disclose that I am a Chinese Singaporean who lives in Melbourne, Australia. My career in Singapore spanned 15 years in education, including stints as a classroom teacher, education policy officer, curriculum head, staff developer, and school leader in the government sector. In the last three years that I have been in Australia, as well as pursuing a doctoral research in education, I have also worked as a teaching and research associate at the university and as a teacher in private tuition centres for 7 to 18-year-old students. Having a common shared immigration experience with the participants has somewhat positioned me as an insider in the research (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006; Kanuha, 2000; Padgett, 2008), which has offered certain advantages in the research, including an

early familiarity with the phenomenon and easier access to participants. While my insider status facilitated my understanding of the nuances in the participants' responses and reactions due to the challenges that they encountered being in many ways the same as those I experienced, I reminded myself not to impose my own experiences on those of the participants.

My affiliations with the various professional and social network groups for immigrant teachers significantly facilitated the recruitment of participants for the study, including teachers from my country of origin. As an Asian-born, educated, and trained teacher who has migrated to Australia, my experiences undoubtedly helped to create uniquely trusted relationships with the participants. Therefore, combined with the nature of a semi-structured interview, which allowed the participants to tell their accounts in their most comfortable state, my personal characteristics and circumstances made it possible to capture the natural and rich data desired in qualitative research.

Introspective reflexivity (Gray, 2018) is an element that was considered carefully when analysing the data. Birks and Mills (2011) define reflexivity as "an active process of systematically developing insight into your work as a researcher to guide your future actions" (p. 52). I was aware that my experiences, attitudes, and emotions would affect my engagement with the participants and the subsequent analysis of the data. The data that had been collected was interpreted through the lens of the participants, and shaped by their experiences and worldview. For the same reason, the participants' stories are interpreted through my lenses, which are shaped and coloured by who I am, and my own culture, knowledge, and past experiences. Therefore, it is challenging for qualitative researchers like myself to be totally objective (Crotty, 2003), and there may be a gap between the data and the reality that they are supposed to represent (Blaikie, 2009). To this end, I took on an introspective reflexive stance when analysing the data (Gray, 2018). I considered how my previous experience and review of the literature might influence my interpretation of the data, and whether there might be alternative analytical understandings to explore. I attempted to set aside any preconceived ideas so that they did not impose or limit the discovery of new constructs or themes (Urquhart, 2013). Memo writing proved to be a valuable tool for recording actions, ideas, and feelings throughout the data collection and analysis processes. The memoing process raised my sensitivity to my prior assumptions, biases, and attitudes, which I made a concerted effort to put aside as I sought to minimise the influence on the data.

I was aware that my relationship with my teacher participants is a legitimate factor and has to be recognised. The quality of my relationship with the teacher participants will influence how they engage with me during the interview. Therefore, what the participant said, how she said it, and why it was said would be interpreted in the light of our relationship at the time of the interaction. To establish a stronger rapport with the participants, I proactively shared personal details and answered the participants' questions during and after the interviews (Mills et al., 2006; O'Connor, 2001). In doing so, it was hoped that the participants would perceive me as being credible and trustworthy and hence feel more comfortable participating in the research (Williamson et al., 2011).

Also, the participants may have diverse and complex reasons for agreeing to participate in the study, and this could, to some extent, affect what they say during the interviews. Some reasons that they have cited for participating in this study include wanting to help a fellow teacher from their own country/region (Kate and Janice) and being curious about the research (Marilyn and Angela). A few were curious about the study (Kai Meng and Rehvinder). Others may have been driven by social obligations, such as returning a favour (Michiko), or seeing the interview as a platform to air grievances (Renuka).

While my cultural and professional positioning as an educator from Asia has certainly heightened my sensitivity to the collected data, it could have also resulted in the participants assuming particular shared knowledge and experiences in the process of working with me. This situation is particularly so for the participants from my home country. Coming from the same professional community in Singapore, we share similar backgrounds and familiarity with the teaching context in Singapore. While these shared connections might have made it easier for rapport building, as the participants may have perceived me as being credible and trustworthy (Williamson et al., 2011), it also meant that my Singaporean participants may have assumed that I understood their meaning without providing detailed elaboration. Thus, whenever possible, I adopted the "socially acceptable incompetent" role (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 69) and asked them to explain in detail the professional languages and situations that they felt that I would be familiar with, given our similar background and teaching context. Although my previous position as a school leader from Singapore may have resulted in some degree of structural authority differentials (Ritzer, 2010) between myself and participants from my home country, this influence was, in practice, negligible in the current research context. The participants were self-selected individuals who exercised agency to participate in the study. In light of the new relationship dynamic in the Australian context, they were not limited by the previous structural hierarchy from voicing their views.

From viewing immigrant teachers from outside to now being an immigrant teacher myself, I am cognisant that my personal and professional experience would have shaped my worldview and perspectives as a researcher and doctoral student. However, it is crucial that I intentionally step outside and observe the phenomenon from an outside perspective (Thomson & Gunter, 2011). Hence, it is with this understanding, coupled with my own experience, that I begin my journey of inquiry to understand immigrant teachers' professional adaptation experiences.

3.8   Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the way that this study was designed and conducted. It included an overview of the study's qualitative research approach, constructivist research paradigm, and research method. The research process was described in detail, followed by the considerations for ensuring trustworthiness and the researcher's position and reflexivity. The next chapter presents the data on the 10 individuals who participated in this study, which covers their characteristics, unique challenges, experiences, and perspectives. It also presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the findings of the research, which explored the professional adaptation experience of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. To understand their experiences, I interviewed, over a period of three months, a heterogeneous sample of 10 participants with a range of personal, professional, and cultural characteristics and who are working in different school types. Section 4.2 presents a synopsis of each participant's characteristics, unique challenges, experiences, and perspectives. This section is based on what participants shared during the interviews and my observation. The aim was to maintain the integrity of each person's life story and highlight the diversity of their experiences. The snapshot of characteristics helps to contextualise the findings articulated later in the chapter. The participants are presented in interview order, using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Section 4.3 then provides a general overview of the findings based on the questions asked during the interviews and the results of the analysis of the data according to participants' personal, cultural, and school characteristics. During this process, similarities and differences among the participants' experiences are noted. Next, in Section 4.4, the key themes of *professional identity*, *(in)vulnerability,* and *intercultural perspective* that had surfaced in the data analyses are presented, the categories within each theme, and how the three themes converge into an overarching theme of *sense of belonging*, which appeared to be the way to understand participants' professional adaptation. The chapter concludes by drawing on the themes and the categories to answer the research question on the enablers and inhibitors of the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers (Section 4.5).

4.2 Participants' characteristics, unique challenges, experiences, and perspectives

4.2.1 Angela

Angela is in her early 40s and teaches science in a government secondary school in Melbourne. The Singaporean-Chinese mother of three young children had been a teacher for eight years in Singapore before relocating to Melbourne two years ago. Angela is passionate about science and views teaching as an opportunity to pass on her love for science to students:

> I worked in a science laboratory for several years and soon grew tired of the job. At that time, I thought I would try teaching. I did some relief teaching, and I quite liked interacting with students. I liked the challenges, the dynamic environment, you get

to see something different every day, and I still get to do science, which is something that I really like, and I can pass it [science] on to the students. So, I went for the interview and got it [the job].

The desire for a more family-focused lifestyle and good education opportunities for her children featured heavily in Angela's decision to migrate to Australia. Angela described how her family needs shaped her career trajectory. Her story is a typical one that resonates with many immigrant teachers who struggle with balancing work and family demands:

After I had my second and third children, I found myself just struggling to survive, coping with the heavy workload in school and my growing family. My husband and I were both full-time working parents. We felt that we wanted to have more time for the kids. More work-life balance, we wanted a different lifestyle. We have a very close friend who lives in Melbourne. We visited them almost every year. They have three kids just like us. When we were there, we stayed with the family. We saw how they live their life here, we like it, and we wanted to try.

Angela was initially apprehensive about taking part in the research, as she was concerned that it would take away her time with her children. Our interviews took place in her home, mostly at the dining table between housework, childminding duty, and meal preparation. Every now and then, we would pause the interview so that Angela could attend to her children's requests.

In her first year in Melbourne, Angela worked as a casual relief teacher, moving from school to school. About six months before our meeting, she was offered a teaching position in her current school to fill in for a teacher who was on long-term leave. Angela had been teaching in the school for almost a semester but still felt anxious about interacting with her colleagues. She felt lonely and considered herself an outsider in the staffroom. She also admitted to feeling inferior to her local Anglo-Australian colleagues:

Because I am Asian, I sometimes feel inferior towards the ang moh (literally translated into 'red hair', a racial descriptor used in Southeast Asia to refer to white people). They don't push it on me, but sometimes I feel like because I am Asian, I feel that I am not as good. I think it's just the way I was brought up in my culture. The ang mohs are always seen as better, smarter, and it doesn't help that I am not as quick-witted and as vocal as them. In a situation where there are many ang mohs, I

will feel very shy about speaking out because I will feel like…like I'm not good enough…

Angela has few friends at the school. She spends most of her non-teaching hours in school refining her teaching resources. She proudly shared that her department head complimented her on the quality of her lesson resources and spoke fondly of her interactions with students. Overall, Angela has found her experience in Australia to be "refreshing" and was excited to experiment with new teaching approaches, interact with new students, and learn the new syllabuses for her teaching subjects.

4.2.2 Renuka

Renuka, is in her late 30s. She responded readily to my appeal for participants on social media. We met the next day in an affluent suburb where she lives with her parents and two teenage daughters. Renuka warmed up to me very quickly and spoke freely throughout the interview.

Renuka grew up in Sri Lanka but travelled to Melbourne, Australia, with her neurosurgeon father and schoolteacher mother when she was 17 years old. She studied in a private secondary school and completed her university degree in Melbourne before heading back to Sri Lanka for marriage, where she stayed on for 10 years. Renuka travelled back to Melbourne as a single mother with her daughters after her marriage broke down five years ago. During her stay in Sri Lanka, Renuka taught for eight years, first in an international school that uses the British Curriculum and then in a public school. Renuka's path into teaching was shaped by family circumstances:

> *After I went back to Sri Lanka…I worked in human resource for about a year but wasn't happy, so I left the job. After my marriage broke down, I needed a job to support my two girls. Then I started teaching in a private school in Sri Lanka. I like that it was flexible. My girls were still very young then and needed a lot of care.*

Renuka has been teaching in her current school for nine months and was concerned that the school would not renew her one-year contract as she had a few brushes with her principal over her absenteeism and deployment, which culminated in a series of arguments. Without any prompting from me, Renuka volunteered a lengthy description of what she perceived as unreasonable treatment from her principal, which led to her filing a complaint with the teachers union:

I had to go for an emergency operation for my back. The doctor said that I could go back to work in 6 weeks. But he [the principal] wanted me to take 14 weeks, no pay, which included 2 blocks of school holidays. If the doctor says I can start work in 6 weeks, so why can't I come back in 6 weeks? I needed the money! I can't afford to go on no pay for so long! Then I contacted the union. Then they were like…if your doctor said you could go back to work, he can't stop you. So go to your doctor and get a letter and then, you know, he can't prevent you from going back.

So that was what I did. But he was angry with me and constantly found fault with me. During one of our department meetings, he just shouted and shouted at me, and it was really … [sign] I had never been spoken to in my life that way [tearing]. I was in tears…Even my children don't know…I need this job, but at the same time…He just yelled and yelled and yelled…But I came under attack. He was so rude... even my team was like, what was happening…there are three other teachers and myself. He was very confrontational. Then the rest of the team realised… oh my goodness! That's not normal at all.

Renuka was obviously upset and teared up as she recounted the incident. She felt that her principal did not trust her. Her one-year contract was coming to an end and she felt that it was unlikely to be extended due to her stormy relationship with her principal.

Renuka arrived visibly depressed and angry when we met again for our second interview:

Jobs are so competitive! I don't know…at the moment it seems, there is not much in terms of vacancies. I found that the staff weren't so united, everyone kind of looks out for themselves a bit, and because of the 12-month contract and the rehiring process, you wonder if you have a job the next year.

During the interview, Renuka shared that she had just been informed that her contract would not be extended for another year. She lamented that she would need to start packing up and bringing home the teaching resources she had bought at the beginning of the year. She had started going for job interviews again but had not received any job offers. Both her parents are retired and are dependent on her, as are her two teenage daughters.

4.2.3　Marilyn

Marilyn is in her late 50s. She has been a teacher for more than 18 years: three years in India and 15 years in Melbourne, Australia. I met Marilyn through a mutual friend whose daughters

had been taught by Marilyn more than a decade ago. Marilyn was initially apprehensive about how she could contribute to the research but eventually decided to participate:

> *It was such a long time ago [that I moved from India to Australia], I don't know how much I can remember. But I think it's important for people like us to speak up about our experiences so that others are aware.*

Marilyn did not set her mind on being a teacher. Her path into the teaching profession was largely shaped by the economic situation in her home country at that time:

> *Now I can say that teaching is a profession that I would like to make a difference in students' lives. But when I joined, this was not my philosophy; it was "where can I get a job quickly?" That year, I did a crash course in teaching. It was nine months, not even one year. I just got married and was wondering what to do. I was 21. I had no profession, nothing on hand, and the entrance test came up, and my parents and my husband said, "If you want to do this, then you go and take the entrance test." Because I got in, I did my teaching cert. It was not what I wanted at that time, but over the years, I grew into it.*

Our interviews took place in Marilyn's classroom after she finished her lessons for the day. Marilyn displays the photographs of her two daughters in her classroom. She spoke about them with pride and shared that her family migrated to Australia to seek better education opportunities and a future for her daughters. Both daughters have since graduated from universities and have secured good jobs. The success of her daughters seems to have affirmed Marilyn's decision to migrate:

> *I visited India recently and met up with my brother and his children. The schooling environment there is totally different. My daughters would not be what they are today if we didn't come here. It was not easy, but a good decision nevertheless.*

Marilyn taught secondary school students in India but decided to teach in a primary school after several negative experiences with secondary school students in her early years in Australia. She started as a volunteer in her current school and was offered a teaching position after a year. Having taught in the school for almost 14 years now, Marilyn was visibly comfortable and content with her work. As we walked from the school's general office to her classroom, she exchanged friendly greetings with colleagues, students, and even parents. Her

ex-students came back to visit her during one of our interviews. It was apparent that she has a good relationship with her students.

During our interviews, Marilyn would show me the work of her students, which she proudly displays on the walls, and shared with me the details about each student. While Marilyn clearly enjoys teaching, she is also actively planning for life beyond the classroom in the next phase of her working life:

> *I am interested in student well-being and counselling. I have been giving parenting talks on how to manage the social and emotional well-being of their children. I will be starting a diploma program next month, and I hope to be contributing to this area. I see many children with many issues related to their well-being. So, for the rest of my working life, I want to do something in this area.*

4.2.4 Anusha

Anusha is in her 40s. Originally from New Delhi, India, she came to Australia 15 years ago after marrying her husband, who works as a police officer in Melbourne. Before migrating to Australia, Anusha had taught in an elite boarding school for girls in India.

> *My husband migrated to Australia with his parents as a child. So, he basically grew up here. When he was of marriageable age, just like many Indian families in Australia, his parents decided to look for a bride for him in India. The matchmaker brought his photos to show my parents. Then he flew to India to meet me, and within two weeks, we had our wedding. I didn't know much about him or about Australia. My parents said that he works as a policeman, so he must be a good man. I don't know anything about Melbourne, but it sounded like a nice place. So, a week after the wedding, I arrived in Melbourne.*

Unlike most of the participants who seek long-term employment, Anusha is happy moving from school to school as a casual relief teacher. In her 15 years in Australia, she has taught in eight schools. Two years ago, Anusha relocated with her husband and two teenage sons to a rural town with a population of less than 600, some 400 km away from Melbourne city, to "get away from the crowded city". At the time of our interview, she had taught in a special education school in the town for about one year.

I met Anusha through a mutual friend. The interview was conducted in her house. Anusha came across as shy and quiet at the start of the interview but warmed up after some time. She

was polite and spoke slowly and calmly. On numerous occasions during the interview, she talked about being content and satisfied with her life. She enjoys the tranquil and peaceful atmosphere in her rural town and is glad to be away from the hustle and bustle in the city. Anusha's calm and patient disposition seemed to complement the special needs students that she works with:

> *The kids in my school, many are not in control of their physical self. Some make strange noises or have impairments. Some people don't like it, or they feel uncomfortable. That doesn't bother me, and I don't seem to irritate them.*

As the only Asian family in the rural town and the only Asian in the school, Anusha experiences xenophobic comments from her students every now and then. She attributed the comments to her students' lack of exposure to people from other parts of the world:

> *It is because they haven't seen enough, they haven't travelled enough, or their parents haven't.*

Anusha's experience of moving from school to school meant that she has rarely forged social relationships with colleagues in the school. She prefers not to be involved in the micropolitics in the school:

> *As an outsider, I don't get caught up with the politics of staff. I try not to. I kind of see it as an outsider…maybe because I don't stay in a school for too long, I made it a point not to be part of any group. I don't talk too much or take any sides.*

4.2.5 Kai Meng

Kai Meng is in his 30s and is a secondary school maths teacher from Singapore. Kai Meng taught in a government school for 10 weeks when he first came to Melbourne. At the time of the interview, Kai Meng was in his second year of teaching in a non-government girls' school in the city. Kai Meng requested that our first interview be conducted at my workspace in the university. He was considering postgraduate study and wanted to "check out the campus". The second interview was conducted in his home as he needed to look after his 4-year-old daughter. Kai Meng spoke candidly about the family circumstances that drove him into teaching:

> *I chose to be a teacher primarily because I received a teaching scholarship. My family was poor, and the scholarship helped relieve my parents' financial burden. And because I like maths, being a maths teacher seemed to be a natural fit.*

Just like other participants, his children's education was the primary reason for Kai Meng's decision to migrate:

> *I grew up in an environment with lots of high-stakes examinations. I feel that because of assessment, sometimes it kills off the joy of learning in the early years. My wife and I thought that it might be good for my daughter to enjoy learning at an early age by reducing the high-stake assessments, not formative assessment, but high-stakes ones, which is a form of statistical modelling to differentiate students into different achievement levels.*

Kai Meng's conversation was peppered with professional terms related to teaching pedagogy and assessment. He spoke passionately about his professional work and readily shared his views on the local maths curriculum and how the teaching of maths could be improved:

> *From the perspective of a maths educator, I am able to connect the different ideas in maths at a level that will allow students to appreciate the idea of maths more. It is the subject mastery. Some of the teachers here do not have subject mastery. This is an area of improvement that I hope to see in maths teaching here.*

Kai Meng took pride in sharing with me that he was "handpicked by the maths head" to teach the graduating cohort after one year in the school, which was a testament to his good teaching. However, he seemed to evade my questions regarding his adaptation and relations with the people in the school. He simply said that he had adjusted well and had a collegial relationship with colleagues. On further questioning, he was not able to provide examples of social engagement with his colleagues beyond the casual conversations in the staff lounge. When I tried to delve deeper, he seemed uncomfortable and requested that I moved on to other questions. Kai Meng said that one in three maths teachers in his department are Asians, so in that sense, he felt "less like the odd one out" and "more comfortable" in his workplace. When I requested that he linked me up with his Asian colleagues for this study, Kai Meng was hesitant to, saying that he felt that it was not appropriate to do so.

Beyond his work in school, Kai Meng also offers private tuition in maths a few nights a week and on weekends. He spoke about how his side hustle had gained traction as he is a highly sought-after maths tutor among the immigrant Chinese community. He plans to gain a few more years of experience in his current school before opening a private tuition centre in the near future:

My teaching method is effective. I can guarantee results, which is why Asian parents like me. Many of them have recommended my maths tuition service to their friends, so I hope to start my own tuition business after gaining some teaching experience in the schools here.

4.2.6 Janice

Janice responded to my appeal for participants on social media. In her 30s, Janice taught for 10 years in Singapore before migrating to Melbourne, Australia:

I have always been interested in special needs education, but the support in this area in my country is still very limited. I read that Australia is strong in this area. So, I applied to further my study in this area here, and I applied for PR (permanent residency) so that I can continue to teach here after I finish my course. I feel that this is a better environment for special education teachers.

Janice's initial interaction with the locals was largely with her classmates in her course on inclusive education:

They are not very receptive to Asians. It could be because they think that we don't speak the same language. It was very difficult. Even if we speak the same language, I don't really have local experience. They don't listen to you. For example, when I share, they just ignore me, and then they just stare at me, or they will just talk to eachother.

When I see an empty seat in the class and ask them if this seat is available, they just look at me, and I can just feel that they don't really want me to sit there. So, after a while, you see the Asians in the course congregate together. Not because we want to stick together, but because they don't get the support from people around them. So, when it comes to discussion, it's easier for the Asians to sit together to share our experiences. I guess it may be easier for those from Europe or the US. The locals tend to be more receptive to them because they look the same as the Aussies. We look different.

Janice first came to Melbourne alone, and her husband joined her six months later. Her husband has not been able to secure a job since he arrived a year ago. After completing her course in special education, Janice has worked as a casual relief teacher in the local primary

schools. She too has been unsuccessful in securing long-term employment. To supplement her income, she teaches maths a few evenings a week in an enrichment centre catering mainly to immigrants' children. Our meeting took place in the enrichment centre.

The failure to get a long-term teaching job has caused a lot of distress for Janice. She described how she went out of her comfort zone and took the initiative to build relationships with her colleagues with the hope that it would lead to future job opportunities:

> *The people in my school here are very relational. If you have not penetrated into their circle, even if you ask them if there is anything you can help them with, they will not include you. So, I had to go to the staffroom and just take my meals there and see which group I can actually penetrate and just chat with them. In the morning, I will go into the staffroom early, just to mingle, make small talk and build relationships. I think it is very important here. They emphasise building relationships. It is good. It is not that it is bad. It's just that as an Asian, I need to learn and build that part.*

Janice was frustrated that she was unable to "penetrate the local culture". Despite her effort to join in the conversation in the staff lounge, she felt that her colleagues remained hostile, and their interaction with her seemed "superficial". The failure to establish social connections in school and secure full-time employment may have caused Janice to feel anxious and insecure. She was critical of many aspects of her experiences and complained often throughout the interview. Besides grumbling about her colleagues' hostility, she was also critical of her students' behaviour, the local maths curriculum, and the education system in general.

Janice ended our first interview abruptly, saying that she needed to excuse herself to prepare for her maths enrichment class. She said that she would contact me to arrange for the next interview. I sensed that Janice suddenly felt uncomfortable upon realising that she might have spoken too much. When I did not hear from Janice after one week, I contacted her on the phone. She told me that she would be going back to her home country for good and could not proceed with the second interview.

4.2.7 Rehvinder

Rehvinder migrated to Australia when she was 50 years old. She taught for 22 years in Singapore with short working stints in the United States and China. At the time of our interview, she was in her third year in Australia. Like Anusha, Rehvinder chose to live in a rural town away from the city. Her town has a small population of less than 1500, and is located 500 km

away from the city. The interview took place in her house. Rehvinder came across as highly determined and resilient. She spoke about the challenges of migrating at the age of 50 and her resolution to create a new life in Australia with her two young children:

Even if I have to be a truck driver, I will! I have to put food on the table. We are much older than most migrants, so it is more difficult to get a job. We just have to try harder than most people.

Rehvinder's migration journey was motivated by the desire to give her children "more space and a more enjoyable childhood". This was why she had chosen to reside in a small rural town:

I want my children to enjoy the same childhood I grew up with. I want them to have free time to play and run around.

Rehvinder discovered her talent for teaching at a young age:

I've always wanted to be a teacher. It's a vocation for me. I remember my mom telling me that no one in my family questioned my decision to be a teacher. They all knew I would be a teacher from the age of 5. When I was in primary school, I used to come back from school and make all my cousins, whenever they visited, sit down and I had a board, and I teach them, and I used to correct their work. Yah…teaching has never been a choice. It has always been the thing to do.

Although Rehvinder had a few unpleasant encounters of what she perceived as racial discrimination, she chose to see past them and instead focused on reframing her mentality:

I walked into the school not seeing myself as a race. I see myself as a person. I don't bring my race or ethnicity into my work. When you see yourself as a race, you are open to racism.

After a year in her first school, Rehvinder moved on to teach in another non-government school. She felt welcomed in her new school and was glad that her principal recognised her international teaching experience. Within a year, she was tasked to develop a curriculum for international students as part of the school's outreach effort. More recently, she was tasked to head the school's curriculum development effort to bring about innovation in teaching and learning practices. She was clearly excited about her new appointment and shared enthusiastically about her plan for the school.

4.2.8 Michiko

I connected with Michiko through a mutual acquaintance. She appeared reluctant at first but could have felt obliged to participate in this study as she was approached by the mutual acquaintance who had helped her when she first arrived in Melbourne. Michiko eventually agreed to participate in this research after her principal agreed to include the interview time in the 20-hour professional development requirement for her yearly teaching licence renewal.

Our first meeting took place in a café across the road from her school in the morning. Michiko is in her 40s but looks much younger than her age. She sounded friendly but firm, stating upfront that she only had an hour for the interview, as she needed to meet her teachers to talk about their deployment for the next semester. She explained that that was the only day in the week that she did not have teaching duty, so she had set aside that day for dealing with administrative matters, meeting with teachers, and for our interview.

Originally from Tokyo, Japan, Michiko taught maths in a secondary school for boys for seven years before migrating to Melbourne. Michiko's grandfather was a school principal. While she did not set her mind on being a teacher, she had been exposed to the education industry at a young age and had wanted to work in the field of education publication, either as a textbook writer or as an editor for education magazines. When that did not materialise, she decided to teach.

Michiko met her Japanese husband while she was an exchange student in New Zealand. Since then, the couple had planned to migrate as they liked the idyllic lifestyle in New Zealand. When they were unsuccessful in their visa application to New Zealand, they decided to try Melbourne.

Michiko has been teaching in her current school for 11 years and was appointed as Head of Languages one year ago. She is in charge of the Japanese and Italian languages. She admitted that it was a challenge managing a cross-cultural team of Italian and Japanese language teachers:

> *My strategy is to make decisions, create discussions, and always focus on students' learning. So don't get involved in emotions. So, what are we going to do to improve students' learning outcomes? Are we going to teach this unit? Are we going to do a competition? Are we going to use this resource? Whatever the discussion is, it cannot be emotional. We should always go back to our focus on student outcomes.*

Last year, Michiko had the opportunity to teach maths again after a break of almost 10 years. Her initial excitement was soon dampened when she received several complaints from students:

> *When I first started teaching here, I taught only Japanese. None of the students and parents say they don't understand my English. But when I started teaching maths last year, suddenly I had quite a number of students who complained that they didn't understand me, they didn't understand my accent!*

Michiko was disturbed by her students' comments. The incident reminded her yet again of the challenges she experienced as an Asian teacher in Australia:

> *Just the appearance, little gesture, food...it is just the little things that made it more difficult. Even talking about what you eat is difficult. When I first started, I didn't know what a schnitzel is. I have never seen it or eaten it. And what they do for Christmas and Easter, I knew nothing. I didn't know why they are so excited over these festivals. Although I am more aware now, it's just not the same…*

She remarked that her assimilation into the Australian way of life is an ongoing process. Despite being in Australia for more than a decade, she still feels like an outsider at times.

4.2.9   Kate

Kate is in her 30s and has been in Melbourne for seven years. In the last six years, Kate has taught design and technology in an Islamic college in Melbourne. Our interview took place while she was on a three-month break to care for her toddler son. Like Janice and Renuka, Kate responded to my appeal for participants over social media. She said she wanted to help a fellow educator and sent me her curriculum vitae via email to check if she met my participant selection criteria. Our interviews took place in her house in the late afternoon while her 2-year-old son took his nap.

> *I have so much to say, so much to share, all these years of teaching here.*

Kate was born and grew up in Malaysia but spent much of her life in Singapore. She had a difficult childhood and suggested that her schooling experience could have contributed to her decision to become a teacher:

> *Life was stressful – my parents were going through a difficult time, and my mother was very strict. She would be extremely upset that I scored 98 out of 100 for a test and*

would question in depth how I could have lost those 2 marks. Although I was considered an above-average student, I was also a very difficult student who rebelled against teachers whom I thought were unreasonable. So, I got caned at home when my mom found out. My mom used to come to school and speak to my teachers every day in front of my classmates to get feedback on my behaviour to see if I needed to get a caning again. During this time, I realised that while many teachers made no sense, there were also one or two who discussed issues that mattered and respected me as a person. That was when I realised that I could do a much better job as a teacher than those who just shoved kids around just because they were a teacher. As I grew older, I realised that teachers could do so much if only they could empathise and respond appropriately – not everything 'not good' needs to be smashed down with a sledgehammer.

Kate's migration journey was motivated by love interest and lifestyle pursuit:

My husband is a German. I met him when he was an exchange student at my university. After the exchange, he went back to Germany, and we kept in touch. Then he continued his postgraduate studies in Australia and got a job here. I was already teaching in Singapore by then but would visit him every opportunity that I had. We like the lifestyle here. So, when he proposed, we decided to settle here.

Having taught in her school for six years, and as the department head in the school for the last four years, Kate had much to say about her experience:

There was no guidance, no resources, practically nothing when I first joined the school. The teachers all do their own work and teach their own way. There was no collaboration. I became the department head because I was the one who organised the syllabus, wrote the curriculum, and prepared the teaching resources. Nobody else bothers.

A self-confessed workaholic, Kate prefers being alone and enjoys staying back after school hours to do her work:

Most teachers will leave the school immediately after the lesson ends at 3 pm to do other things or go home to their families. I don't like hanging out at the bar, nor do I like doing that dress-up shopping thing. I like hanging out at school doing stuff. So,

> *it was just me and sometimes a couple of other teachers, one Malaysian-Indian and the other Australian-Lebanese, both workaholics too.*

Although Kate had frequent experiences of being stereotyped, she chose not to dwell on them and took them in her stride:

> *I asked a colleague I had been working closely with what 'students with ESL' means, and she said that that described what I was. I found out that ESL meant 'English as a Second Language', and I roared to my colleague that she just insulted me through and through! She responded that she was always wondering why my English was so good!*

> *On another occasion, two colleagues were busy talking about Chinese policies they disagreed with before realising I was there. They were incredibly apologetic to me. So I told them that I am not from China and had no interest in Chinese politics. So, I guess being Asian in such a context helps people realise that we are not all Chinese nationals and more than the typical stereotype.*

Over the years, Kate has built a reputation as a highly efficient teacher who produces good quality work and student results. She said that she has been offered job opportunities in other organisations in the last two years but she has chosen to stay in her school because she does not want to go through the process of adapting to a new organisation again.

4.2.10 Nara

At 30 years old, Nara is the youngest participant in this study. Nara used to be an English teacher in a high school in Japan but now lives with her husband in Darwin, Australia. Just like Kate, Nara's journey to Australia was shaped by love interest and lifestyle pursuit:

> *I met my Japanese-Australian husband through a mutual friend when he was back in Japan for a holiday. After he returned to Australia, I visited him several times and liked the lifestyle there. So, after we got married, we decided to stay in Australia for good.*

Nara's decision to enter teaching was motivated by her own unpleasant experience learning English in high school as a non-native speaker. As a result, she was determined to be a good English teacher:

> *I experienced great difficulty learning English. My English teacher is fierce and not very helpful. The lessons were not very interesting. I ended up spending long hours studying on my own. I think there should be a better and more interesting way of learning English.*

Nara taught in Japan for three years before migrating to Australia. She was teaching in a government secondary school at the time of our interview but aspired to pursue further study in educational research so as "to contribute to improving the teaching of English language to non-native speakers".

Nara was formal and polite for most of the interview. She appeared reserved, chose her words carefully, and often appeared to offer politically correct responses. This behaviour could be due to the polite mannerisms that the Japanese culture is known for; however, I also realised that she might be uncomfortable having her responses audio recorded, as she immediately looked more relaxed after I turned off the audio-recording device.

Without the fear of her responses being audio recorded, Nara shared more candidly about her experiences. She said that her students' misbehaviour is terrible. They openly eat during lessons and ignore her instructions to put their mobile phones away. She is frustrated that some of her colleagues ignore such misbehaviour and do not seem to care much about their students' learning:

> *I was shocked that many just continue teaching even though the students were misbehaving. Then after the lesson ends, they just leave. It is as though they are just doing a job. They didn't care if their students had learnt.*

Nara appeared disappointed by what she has observed in her school. She did not seem to enjoy teaching in the school and hinted that she was on the lookout for other jobs, preferably in education research.

4.3   An overview of findings

4.3.1   My life before coming to Australia

At the start of the interview, I asked participants to share details about their lives up to the point they came to Australia, which allowed a better understanding of the participants and put their experiences in context in light of the research topic (Seidman, 2006). The questions asked were:

- *Why did you choose to be a teacher?*
- *What was your experience working as a teacher in your home country?*
- *Why did you choose to migrate to Australia?*

Through these questions, I gleaned insights into the participants' lives in terms of their schooling and teaching experiences in their home countries, their decision to become a teacher, and their reasons for migrating to Australia.

4.3.1.1   Participants' motivation to teach

All participants said they had very different schooling experiences compared to their students in Australia. They spoke of strict, disciplinarian teachers and a predominately teacher-centred teaching approach. For several participants, these experiences shaped their decision to enter the teaching profession. For example, motivated by her unpleasant experiences learning English as a student, Nara chose to be a teacher as she wanted to improve the teaching of the language. A difficult childhood, coupled with confrontations with numerous teachers, allowed Kate to appreciate the impact that teachers have on students. These experiences later shaped her decision to go into teaching. Other participants entered the teaching profession for a combination of reasons, including a passion for specific subjects (Angela and Kate), a love for interacting with students (Angela, Anusha, and Kate), and financial rewards (Kai Meng, Janice, and Marilyn). While the desire to become a teacher was a calling that Rehvinder had harboured since she was young, Angela, Kate, and Renuka discovered their talent and love for teaching later in life after working in other fields for several years.

4.3.1.2   Experience working as a teacher in home countries

Some participants described their home country teaching conditions as stressful (Kate and Angela), having to cope with long working hours (Kate, Nara, and Michiko) and a heavy workload (Michiko, Nara and Kai Meng); others were concerned with the low salaries that teachers earned (Marilyn and Renuka).

Participants from Japan (Michiko and Nara) spoke about the long hours of work in school and the hierarchical nature of the school environment:

The principal is a figurehead. He doesn't talk to us. As a junior teacher, it is an unspoken practice that I have to answer phone calls and take messages for my colleagues who shared the same desk phone as me. I was chided one day when I forgot to pass the message to him.

The hierarchy in the Japanese workplace was brought up several times in our conversation. Michiko spoke about the principal being a distant figurehead who did not interact much with teachers, and the culture of respect for authority and people in higher positions was central to the workplace culture. As junior teachers, Michiko and Nara were cautious about locating themselves at the appropriate level in the school hierarchy. Being the youngest teacher in her school, Nara said that she was mindful that she was "only a junior teacher" and was expected to be a quiet, responsible, and diligent worker:

Your opinion is not appreciated. Often, I will just sit through a four or five-hour staff meeting without saying anything.

Several participants cited the stressful working teaching environment in their home countries as a push factor that motivated them to seek a more balanced lifestyle:

Michiko: The workload is heavy, the hours are long. Sometimes we go back to work on Saturday.

Nara: Teaching in Japan was very challenging and demanding. I used to work from 7 am to 11 pm almost every day. Most of the teachers were also working on weekends. I didn't have much time with my family.

For Angela, the stress from the heavy workload was further accentuated by the performance appraisal system:

There, you feel like you are constantly being evaluated. All these talks about performance ranking all the time…especially from the July to September ranking period. It's so stressful. It's like they [the principal and the department heads] are constantly trying to find fault in you.

On the other hand, teachers from South Asia seemed to enjoy their teaching experiences in their home countries. They enjoyed the interaction with students and the camaraderie with their colleagues.

Marilyn: We always sit at the long table during lunchtime to have our lunch together, talking about everything else, including our family and kids.

For these teachers, their main concern was the low wages for teachers in their home countries.

Marilyn: […] they paid us peanuts! Almost all teachers offered their students private tutoring after school to make ends meet.

4.3.1.3   Reasons for migration to Australia

Participants' reasons for migration ranged from the quest for good education opportunities for their children (Angela, Marilyn, Kai Meng, Renuka, and Rehvinder), to a desire to pursue a more balanced lifestyle (Angela, Michiko, Kate, Nara, and Rehvinder) and a love interest (Anusha, Kate, and Nara).

4.3.2   My present experience teaching in Australia

After getting to know about the participants' lives before their migration journey, the participants talked about their lives in Australia. Here, the purpose was to concentrate on the participants' present lived experiences (van Manen, 2016). To put their experience within the context of this study, the participants were asked to talk about their experience with job searching and their relationship with people in the school. Stories about their day-to-day experiences in schools were encouraged as a way of eliciting details. Questions asked were:

- *Why did you continue to teach after arriving in Australia?*
- *How did you get your first teaching job in Australia?*
- *What was your experience teaching in schools in Australia?*
- *How was your interaction with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders?*

All participants continued to teach in Australia, primarily because they "needed a job" (Michiko, Angela, and Kai Meng) to "put food on the table" (Rehvinder and Marilyn). Most of the participants experienced significant challenges in securing their first teaching job in Australia. Many sent out resumes to numerous schools (Kai Meng, Michiko, Kate, Renuka, and Nara), reached out to job placement agencies (Angela and Janice), sought help from friends (Anusha) and served as a volunteer in school before being offered a long-term teaching position (Marilyn). At the time of this study, three participants (Janice, Angela, and Renuka) had yet to secure any long-term employment despite being in Australia for more than a year.

4.3.2.1   Experience teaching in schools in Australia

When sharing their experience teaching in Australia, young, recent immigrants such as Nara, Kai Meng, and Janice were primarily concerned with understanding the local expectations and

teaching practices. As junior entrant teachers who had only taught in Australia for one year, they were eager to be accepted by colleagues in their schools. For example, Janice shared how she engaged in casual conversations with her colleagues to "penetrate the circle" of teachers in her school. As new entrant teachers, participants in this group were still observing and learning about the local practices.

> *Nara: Back in Japan, we stayed back late in school with the students for their after-school activities. In the process, we know more about them personally and their families. Here, teachers just go home immediately after school ends. They do not talk much to their students beyond the classroom. It is strange. Then how do they know their students well?*

Renuka and Kate are in their 30s, similar to Janice, Kai Meng, and Nara, but have been in Australia significantly longer (five and seven years, respectively). Having lived and worked in Australia longer, they appeared to have moved past the initial adaptation period and were more familiar with the local environment and knowledgeable about how things work. Both appeared outspoken and confident during the interviews, offering candid opinions about their workplace. Here, Kate described her experience of "going against the tide to push for change […] to wake up the slow and laid-back culture" in her department:

> *The department was in shambles when I joined them. I didn't know what the teachers were doing. There is no proper teaching plan. A few teachers left before I joined, and there was no proper handover! The culture was slow and laid-back. The teachers went into the class, taught, and they disappeared immediately after school. It was just a job…there was no pride!*

Michiko, Anusha, and Marilyn were considered to be established immigrants as they have been in Australia for more than 10 years. In their 40s and 50s, they have been teaching for close to 20 years, of which more than 10 years have been spent teaching in schools in Australia. They appeared content and reflective, often looking back at their migration journey and career trajectories during the interviews. While Michiko seemed to be the most ambitious and driven of the three, possibly due to her current role as a department head, she was nonetheless content with her life. She spoke highly of her school and her principal and shared with pride how she resolved conflicts among the teachers in her language department, which is a skill that she has honed over the years interacting with people of different cultures.

Due to their maturity and the long years of teaching in school, the participants in this age group could connect better with the students' parents. Michiko shared that after teaching three sisters from the same family, she had established a strong relationship with their parents. Marilyn spoke about the long-term relationships with students' parents that she has built over the years as she has taught many siblings in her time as a teacher. She also spoke fondly of the many ex-students who came back to visit her. In fact, a former student who had just graduated the year before dropped in to see her during our interview.

Although Angela (40s) and Rehvinder (50s) were of a similar age to Michiko (40s), Anusha (50s), and Marilyn (50s), they had only been in Australia for two and three years, respectively. Angela came to Australia after teaching in her home country for eight years, while Rehvinder had taught for 22 years before bringing her family to Australia. The change in the teaching environment due to the recent migration resulted in new challenges and learning. The process had injected new elements of excitement for them as they spoke at length of their classroom experiences. They took pride in their professional practice and spoke with confidence about how they perceived the local curriculum, what was good, and what could be improved. Rehvinder was excited about her new appointment as the head of curriculum innovation in her school. Angela shared excitedly about experimenting with new teaching strategies, teaching students with different characteristics, and learning new subject content. It seems that the migration process and the change of teaching context had injected new excitement into an otherwise stable, uneventful phase in Angela's and Rehvinder's life and career.

Similar to other recent immigrants, Angela and Rehvinder were still trying to find their foothold in the school. While they had some unpleasant experiences with a few colleagues, they chose to take a more self-reflective stance. For example, Angela attributed her negative experiences to her sensitivity:

> *I came across a few teachers who appeared to be quite rude when I spoke to them. After a few more interactions with some of the teachers I misunderstood, or I thought they were trying to act superior, I realised that it is just who they are. They are just not so friendly, and that they also spoke in the same manner to colleagues too.*

Possibly due to their age and experience, Angela and Rehvinder had a more mature mindset. Instead of complaining about their current situation or the people around them, they reflected on their behaviour and actively sought to improve themselves.

4.3.2.2 Strategies of professional adaptation

Given their background and experiences in Japan, Michiko and Nara were mindful about locating themselves appropriately in their school hierarchy in Australia. They worked quietly and diligently, were respectful of authority, and kept a professional distance from their principals. Michiko recounted that she found it unbelievable when her principal started a casual conversation with her in her early years in her current school:

> When I started [working] here…the current principal saw me along the corridor and went, "Hello, how are you?" I was so shocked…because in Japan, the principal never does that. He is the boss. He doesn't come to talk to us. If there is anything, we need to talk to him. He doesn't come into the staffroom to talk. We hardly talk to him. When I first saw my principal here, she was so friendly to the point that I wondered if she was trying to get something from me…whether she wants me to do something or some work. Now I know that she is genuinely nice...and it's normal for her to talk this way here.

Participants from Southeast Asia (Singapore and Malaysia) – Kai Meng, Angela, Kate, Janice, and Rehvinder – spoke at length about their skills and how they have contributed or would be contributing to their school. It appeared that they needed to prove their value to be judged favourably in their workplace. For example, Kate led her department from "trash to become a highly regarded department in her school" by revamping the whole curriculum and pushing her teachers to work hard. Kai Meng spoke about how his good teaching was recognised and that he was deployed to teach graduating classes this year. Angela shared with pride that her department head complimented her for her well-designed lesson plan and that the lesson resources that she developed were better than her local peers. She further stated that she had more good lesson resources in her "treasure box" that she brought from home but would wait until a suitable time to bring them out to "impress" her bosses and colleagues.

The merit-oriented stance exhibited by these teachers from Singapore and Malaysia could have been due to the influence of the meritocratic society that they have grown up in. During the conversation, I sensed that the participants seemed to instinctively feel the need to prove their value to their school. There was also an element of comparison and competition. For example, Angela felt that her lesson resources were better than those of the local teachers because the latter are "just happy with last years' [resources]".

Kate was visibly proud of her achievement. Her merit-oriented and competitive self was evident throughout the conversation:

Fortunately, I teach a subject with artefacts to show. Since I took over the department, we put up an impressive exhibition every year and invite many important people for the event. This has enhanced the reputation of the school significantly. My colleagues were impressed by my efficiency and organisation skills.

Teachers in this group appeared to associate their worth as teachers with the amount of work they did and how much they contributed to the school, which could be the result of previous experience of being appraised and ranked according to their contributions to their schools. With their diligence and enthusiasm, it was therefore not surprising that they were recognised for their value and promoted to leadership positions in their school. Kate, a Malaysian-Chinese, who spent much of her working life in Singapore, recounted her conversation with her colleagues in Australia:

I am told that my biggest assets are my organisational skills and competency. I have no problem managing students or getting results.

Given their experience, it appeared that the strategy for adaptation was to impress their schools with their skills, expertise, and high-quality work and to position themselves as an asset to the organisation.

For the participants from South Asia (India and Sri Lanka) – Renuka, Marilyn, and Anusha – their conversation primarily focused on their students. Marilyn brought me into her classroom for our interview. She showed me her students' work and shared details of each of her students' lives, learning styles, and needs. She spoke fondly of students who had graduated, stories of "naughty boys transformed into pleasant young men", the many siblings she had taught from the same family, and students' parents who had turned into long-time friends. Likewise, Renuka recalled numerous anecdotes and stories of conversations and exchanges with her students. Anusha teaches in a special education school in a rural area and spoke passionately about her students' unique needs.

Interestingly, both Marilyn and Anusha used to be secondary school teachers in India but chose to teach in primary schools in Australia after a rough start with teenage students. Marilyn observed that "primary school students are more forgiving". Renuka used to teach 12 and 13-year-old students in Sri Lanka, but teaches 6 and 7-year-old students in Australia. It appeared that this groups of participants' strategy for adapting was to seek a teaching context that aligned with their disposition, which in this case was one that was aligned with their caring and

nurturing self. Hence, these teachers chose to teach in primary schools, where interacting with younger children meant that they needed to draw on their caring and nurturing self.

4.3.2.3 Interaction with students

Participants reported feeling intimidated when interacting with students when they first started teaching in Australia. Marilyn recalled her early years of teaching in Australia as a "very intimidating and daunting experience" and that just the memories made her "shiver" as "it was a very horrible experience teaching in a secondary school". Anusha described her first day of teaching as her "first initiation into the scary world of secondary schools in Australia … and because I have an accent of sorts, in secondary school, it can really be a substance for some merry-making or laughter".

Many participants expressed concern about managing students' behaviour. For example, Kai Meng maintained that he "can't teach properly" in his previous school because "there were many discipline issues". Janice admitted to feeling stressed when her students were noisy as she "requires a certain level of discipline to teach". Janice added that "the way her students talked to her was sometimes very rude". Anusha felt being "taken lightly at first" by her students because her students considered her to be "an outsider". Marilyn was annoyed that her students openly challenged her instructions and that "even in Grade 2, they have their own opinion!" Rehvinder was horrified that the teachers in her school "don't ever discipline!" Kate said that she "made it a point to ensure discipline in her classrooms so that nothing can get in the way of her students' success".

A few participants (Rehvinder, Michiko, and Kai Meng) who had moved from government schools to faith-based schools suggested that students in the latter were "more respectful because of the strong religious teaching in school" (Rehvinder) and that their "family background placed more emphasis on academic achievement" (Kai Meng).

Despite their initial unpleasant experience, participants' relationships with students improved over time as both parties gradually understood each other's perspectives and positions. Michiko reflected that "now that I am more experienced, I feel more confident and connected to my students". Similarly, Kate recalled that "even my naughtiest students were busy showing off to me how much better they were when I met them at their graduation ball". Rehvinder shared that she had built a "good enough rapport with the kids to discuss racial and discrimination issues such that they do not get offended".

4.3.2.4   Interaction with colleagues

Participants reported that they rarely interacted with their colleagues beyond work. In her first few weeks in school, Nara was shocked that "she couldn't seem to talk to anybody after school as teachers almost disappeared immediately after school". Kai Meng also admitted that he did not interact much with his department teachers after work as "most of them have other commitments and do not stay back after school". Kate observed that the school structure and programs had limited the opportunities for interaction among colleagues after school:

> *Teachers are always busy rushing home or going off to do something else other than work, so there aren't many opportunities where we're all stuck in the same boat toughing it out together. There are camps but no after-school programs. Most teachers will leave the school immediately after the lesson ends at 3 pm to do other things or go home to their families.*

The lack of social interaction has resulted in participants feeling lonely, isolated, and helpless. Angela felt that she was being "treated kinda cold" by her colleagues. She has been in her school for almost a semester and keeps to herself most of the time. She does not know who to turn to if there is an emergency and who to approach for help. She does not have any colleagues' phone numbers:

> *I am not sure if it is appropriate to do so…to exchange phone numbers with my colleagues. I don't even know if they want my phone number.*

Angela rarely joins her colleagues for lunch:

> *I am not sure if I am expected to just walk into the staff lounge to join them for lunch. Often, they will go together, but they never call me along. On one occasion, I had joined them. It was awkward and stressful. I did not catch their jokes, and I had to speak in a proper manner. Nowadays, I just eat lunch at my desk so that I can just relax and chill out.*

The differences in language and accent seemed to be another barrier to participants' interaction with colleagues. Janice suggested that "maybe it's the use of some lingo. So I [she] don't get to hit it off as well as with the local teachers". Marilyn, too, found language and accent to be a barrier in her communication with teachers in her school as "sometimes the accents of the local Australian teachers are so heavy, and the language isn't easy to follow". Looking back, Anusha recounted that "because I [she] was not familiar with a lot of things and the lingo,

I [she] felt a bit lost in the staffroom, and my [her] culture is a bit different. In terms of understanding the language, there were phrases that I [she] picked up over the years".

While participants teaching in schools in the metropolitan area had colleagues and students from Asian backgrounds, those who are teaching in schools located in the rural towns tend to be the only Asian in their schools, which is the case for Anusha and Rehvinder. This situation could make the participants' ethnic differences more visible and result in them feeling isolated. Even participants who teach in schools in the metropolitan area felt more comfortable when they had colleagues and students of a similar ethnicity. This situation is evident from Michiko's sharing below:

> *When I took my students on an excursion, I met Ariel, another Japanese teacher teaching in a school along the bay area. I remembered she said, "You have so many Asian students. I envy you". Her students are predominantly Caucasian. I look at her class; they are all blonde. I say, why, I understand.*

The failure to form social connections in the workplace led Janice, Angela, Renuka, and Anusha to feel like "outsiders" in their school. Angela lamented that "breaking into the culture here has not been easy. I [she] still find myself being an outsider in school after [being there for] more than a semester".

4.3.3   Reflecting on my experience past and present

In the last section of the interview, participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences in Australia. The combination of exploring past events that led participants to where they were and describing the details of their present experience helped to establish the conditions for reflection on their experiences (Seidman, 2006). The following questions were posed to encourage participants to reflect on their transitional experience, the adaptation process, the adjustments they made, and what they believed were their contributions to the local teaching force:

- *What adjustments did you have to make?*
- *What do you think are your contributions to the local teaching force?*
- *How has this transition experience shaped your view as a teacher?*

4.3.3.1   Adjustment

Participants reflected on their migration journey, the adjustments they had to make, and how their attitude towards adaptation had changed over the years.

Kate: Quite often, I am reminded that I am just a mere teacher in this school, so if I want this job, I just have to sing this tune, which kinda makes sense. Everyone is dispensable. I enjoy my role as a teacher here, so I follow the rules as I can work with them, and that's it. Over the years, I have learnt to blend in with the local practice instead of fighting the difference.

Anusha offered an example about how she has changed her communication style to blend in with the local practice:

Over here, I see primary school teachers dropped their voice among their primary kids to get their attention. This is something that I have to relearn. Back in India, I put in a lot of effort to be loud. Over here, sometimes, when I observed teachers, I noticed that they speak very softly. We tend to speak a bit faster. So, after so many years of training myself to speak loudly, now I have to learn to speak softly and at a slower pace.

4.3.3.2   Contributions to the local teaching force

While all participants had undergone some form of adjustment and relearning of new skills, they also felt that they had contributed their skills and knowledge to the local teaching profession. Renuka felt that her unique position had enabled her to connect with Asian students and parents at a deeper level:

I have a Sri Lankan parent who told me this: You are the only one of my colour in the school…my daughter feels very comfortable now that you are here. Some of the parents cannot speak English well, so having somebody who can speak their language makes them feel very much more comfortable and at ease.

Other contributions cited by participants included improving teachers' subject mastery (Kai Meng), development of good lesson resources (Angela), providing exposure and world knowledge to rural communities (Rehvinder), and role modelling of good work ethics and organisational skills (Kate). In some cases, participants' contributions had already been recognised through appointment to leadership positions (Kate, Michiko, and Rehvinder) and deployment to teach the senior classes (Kai Meng).

4.3.3.3   Reflecting on the experiences

Participants compared their teaching experiences in their home country to those in Australia. They said that despite the transitional challenges they faced, the experience had offered them a new perspective on education.

Angela: The understanding of grade and the mentality towards education here is very different. Unlike in my home country, where failing an exam can get you retained in the same grade, over here, everybody will get promoted. There are still tests and exams, but the pressure to score well is not so high. The focus is on the process of learning and the mastery of skills. So, the students and their parents are not so fixated on their exam scores.

Anusha, who teaches children of farmers and entrepreneurs in rural Victoria, gave her take on the differing views of education:

Sports are a big thing over here. Schooling is fun, but it is not necessary. I mean, it's useful, but it's not the end-all. Not everyone is going to university, and there is no need to go to university when you have your family farms and businesses to take care of. Unless you want to be an academic, you don't really need to do that sort of thing. In Asia, study is something that you pay dearly, and it doesn't come easy, and it is competitive, and you kind of make the most of it. Whereas here, the attitudes are different because it's mostly government-funded. You don't have to pay through your nose. If you want to do it, do it. If you don't want to, then it's okay too.

4.4 Presentation of themes

Interpretation of the data gathered from the interviews with the participants revealed three recurrent themes that appeared to be most significant in participants' professional adaptation. These themes were *professional identity, (in)vulnerability,* and *intercultural perspective*. In the following subsections, these themes are unpacked and supported by descriptive findings and representative quotes from participants to offer insights into the nuances and provide a sense of context. Each subsection commences with a description of the theme, then presents how it was experienced by the participants (noting that the experiences may differ for each participant), how it was significant, whether they were enablers and/or inhibitors, and how they worked as enablers and/or inhibitors in professional adaptation.

4.4.1 Professional identity

All participants were practising teachers in their home country before migrating to Australia. While they were aware that their transition into the Australian teaching force would entail significant adjustment and learning, it is inevitable that they would also bring with them beliefs and values associated with being a teacher in their home countries. Compelling evidence from the data suggests that participants' professional identity is an important aspect of their professional adaptation. The following section presents data related to participants'

professional identity as teachers, how it was experienced, negotiated, and reconstructed in response to the new teaching context, and what strengthened and threatened professional identity.

4.4.1.1 Employment status

Participants' professional identity was first and foremost tied to their success in securing a teaching job. All participants desired to continue to teach after arriving in Australia, primarily because they like teaching, "this is the only skill they have" (Janice, Michiko, Anusha), "they didn't think of doing anything else" (Kai Meng, Marilyn), but also because they "needed a job" (Michiko, Angela & Kai Meng) to "put food on the table" (Rehvinder & Marilyn). Landing the first teaching job was tough and took many months. Participants got their first teaching job through the avenues of job placement agencies (Angela & Janice), sending out their resumes to schools (Kai Meng, Kate & Nara), seeking help from friends (Anusha), and serving as a volunteer in a school before being offered a permanent position (Marilyn).

However, the excitement in the initial months of migration was soon dampened by their difficulties with landing a long-term teaching job. As a result, several participants (Janice, Angela, and Kai Meng) spent their initial months teaching in private tuition centres and doing casual relief teaching work. After three months as a casual relief teacher, Kai Meng was fortunate enough to land a permanent teaching contract with a non-government school, Janice was still working as a casual relief teacher after more than a year, while Angela was finally offered a longer teaching stint with her current school to replace a teacher who was on long-term leave, although it is still not a permanent position.

> Angela: I am replacing a teacher on long-term no pay leave. I guess I will have a job here until she comes back. If she comes back next year, then I will be jobless here. Have to find another school again.

The ability to secure stable teaching positions impacts on participants' professional identity. Being employed as a teacher is a prerequisite for acceptance as a member of the teaching profession. Therefore, the lack of job stability offered by short-term and casual employment compromised the participants' professional identity.

4.4.1.2 Skills and knowledge

Participants' skills and knowledge associated with teaching appeared to be a source of pride and closely tied to their professional identity. All participants spoke at length about their teaching skills and knowledge, including classroom management, subject matter knowledge,

pedagogical practices, and general organisational skills as teachers. Angela shared her experience on lesson planning:

> *I believe my IB (International Baccalaureate) experience has definitely helped. Like all the resources that I come out with or the lesson plan that I do, I get very good comments from the teachers such as they like the lesson plan, and it has been planned very well, the resources are very good, very refreshing and engaging for the students. When I plan a lesson, I will think about how the lesson will flow, what activities are to be done. So, I will add in thinking questions, how this lesson could be taught etc. Some of the lesson packages here just have PowerPoint slides, some content inside, and maybe a link to a video clip and some works, that's all. In many cases, they are just content with using last year's.*

Kai Meng offered his strategy to get students interested in maths:

> *From the perspective of a maths educator, I am able to connect the different ideas in maths at a level that will allow students to appreciate the idea of mathematics. For example, I am able to share with them the historical aspect of maths and how and why some definitions came about, the motivation behind the discovery, etc. I feel that going into the historical aspect and the motivation of why people do maths, or discover certain principles, helps to motivate students to learn maths and be more engaged in the learning.*

Beyond lesson planning and teaching pedagogy, participants also related their professional identity with their organisational skills, classroom management, and values and attitudes associated with being a teacher. Kate, who had many years of experience managing challenging, disruptive students, maintained:

> *I have no problems managing students or getting results. Colleagues are always amazed at my organisational skills and my competency. I don't ever submit anything late. I will start writing my students' progress reports weeks before the semester ends and have them all ready before the deadline. Often, I am the first.*

Participants further related their professional identity with their subject discipline. Teaching subject was repeatedly brought up by several participants as an area of importance. Participants observed that they were more readily accepted and respected by students if they taught a more important subject.

> *Anusha: Fortunately, I teach maths. It is regarded as an important subject, so they [students] take me more seriously.*

> *Marilyn: My students will say things like, "Oh, Ms. Marilyn, she knows her maths! You better not fool around with her".*

Teachers who teach in secondary schools also reported being respected not just by students but also by colleagues if they teach a subject of higher status or that is considered to be more important. Kai Meng learnt that his subject mastery in maths, which is deemed an important subject in his school, was well-regarded by his superior and colleagues:

> *Maths is considered an important subject. However, many of the maths teachers in my school are not maths graduates and are not strong in their subject mastery. So, during the department meeting, my department head will ask me to share my lessons with the teachers. It's like a professional sharing session. So my strong subject mastery is something that is valued by my department head and colleagues.*

Participants suggested that the nature of their teaching subjects might influence how they were perceived by colleagues and superiors. Kate teaches design and technology in her school. This was what she said about her subject:

> *I am lucky to be working with a subject that actually has products that can be displayed and looked at. Since I took over the department, I have organised yearly art and design showcases in the school. It's quite a big event in the district and attended by many important people. We have schools in the area coming to learn from us too. I know my principal is very proud of it.*

While the ability to teach more important subjects is associated with greater respect and recognition from colleagues and students, the ability to be flexible opened up more teaching opportunities. Over time, Anusha has taught history, geography, mathematics, and science in mainstream schools and special education schools. For Rehvinder, although her experience lies in teaching English and literature, over the last few years she has taught ancient history, agriculture, and mathematics. Michiko, who is a trained and experienced maths teacher from Japan, was deployed to teach the Japanese language for the last eight years in the school before she finally managed to teach maths again two years ago.

4.4.1.3 Social status of teachers

The data suggest that participants relate their professional identity with their status as teachers in society. Participants come from countries in Asia where teachers enjoy a relatively higher social status and are highly respected. Several participants alluded to experiencing lower social status as a teacher in Australia. They believe that this accounts for the less than subservient behaviour of students and the mistrust from parents. In the abstract below, Marilyn shared about the social standing of teachers in India:

> *They (teachers) are well respected by students, and parents look up to teachers for all kinds of advice, including children's education, courses of study, and career choices: we are seen as the vessel of knowledge. We teach, students listen quietly. No discussion, no questions asked. People tend to associate teachers as someone with wisdom and gives good advice.*

Nara added that in Japan, teachers are authoritative figures feared by students:

> *Compared to here in Australia, teachers in Japan are highly respected. Teachers are called "sinseh". Some students are a little scared of speaking or talking to their "sinseh". As I was still quite young in Japan, my students are not as fearful of me as compared to the most senior teachers. But they still treat me with respect and call me "sinseh". They were never rude.*

Participants relate respect for teachers with how they are greeted by students.

> *Renuka: In Sri Lanka, you treat every teacher with respect. Like in Sri Lanka, when a teacher walks past the classroom, everybody stands up and greets the teacher. It's just that I don't see much of it here.*

> *Janice: Like in Singapore, we get a lot of respect from the students. The students know what they are supposed to do and what they are not supposed to do. But over here, in some schools, the students call you by your first name, then in their mind, they think that you are their friend. So, I insist that my students greet me as Ms Tan. We can be friends when we are out of class, but when I am teaching, work is work, then there is time for everything.*

Just like Janice, who insisted that students greet her as "Ms Tan", Kate instituted ground rules and routines for her students to circumvent the practices in her school:

I am the only crazy teacher who insists that everyone stand up and greet me properly before starting class. Most teachers just swing into class, say hi, and start. I usually leave the class standing till they are quiet and ready. It's pointless to teach to a class that isn't ready. Most teachers in Australia just swing into class, say hi, and start.

From the statements above, it is clear that the participants consider that the respect they get from students is a reflection of teachers' status in society. This respect from students is manifested in students' actions and behaviour towards their teachers. For participants, their professional status or social standing as teachers forms an important aspect of their professional identity.

4.4.1.4 Beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning

Participants observed that students In Australia frequently ask questions, offer their views, and engage readily in discussions. This behaviour is in contrast to the quiet and docile students that participants were used to in their home countries. The differences caused participants to review their classroom practices and learn new ways of interacting with students.

Kai Meng: The students here are very vocal. They are encouraged to ask questions and to ask why. There is often a lot of discussion in class. This is actually a good thing. But it also means that as a teacher, I need to learn to manage the classroom discussion better such that they [the students] are on task and ensure that they learn.

Rehvinder: Students here are a lot more independent learners. Here, there is no rote learning. The teacher isn't the guru. The lessons are a lot more interactive. I like that students contribute their views actively. I feel like I am more of a facilitator here.

While Kai Meng and Rehvinder appreciate the more interactive environment, Janice has found it to be distracting and challenging for her teaching style:

You know, back in Singapore, they don't ask a lot of questions, but over here, they asked a lot of questions. They are quiet, and they just learnt. But over here, they asked a lot of questions. It's mostly good but sometimes bad. I always told them to ask relevant questions. I like that they are curious. But they can be so noisy and ask so many questions, and keep interrupting the lessons. It makes it very difficult to teach.

Several participants expressed surprise at the high level of differentiation in teaching expected in their schools to cater to diverse learners' needs. For many participants, this requirements

entailed learning a new skill set as, according to them, differentiated teaching strategies are not widely used in schools in their home country. According to Marilyn, students in India are treated as homogenous and are taught the same way. *"You teach as though everybody has no issue. In fact, there wasn't the concept of differentiation when I taught in India".* Michiko also maintained that "differentiation is not a big thing in Japan still". Angela observed that even though differentiation is practised in her home country, "the level (of differentiation) expected is nowhere near what you see in the Australian classrooms" (Angela).

Having taught in India and now in a specialised school catering to students with special needs in rural Victoria, Anusha observed that the expectation for differentiated teaching could be influenced by culture:

> *The students all did the same thing, they were prescribed textbooks, and we opened out the textbooks and taught Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 that day. The onus is on the students to learn and follow, not the teacher to cater to individual students' needs. Teachers are not expected to bend backward for the students. The onus is for students to find their ways to learn.*

While teachers were surprised at the high level of differentiation expected in their school, they appreciated the time given to hone their teaching skills. Many (Michiko, Kai Meng, Angela, and Nara) observed that teachers in Australia are more focused on teaching and learning than they experienced in their home countries. Participants unanimously agreed that they spent much more time on lesson preparation and focusing on teaching well:

> *Michiko: Teachers in Australia have a clear focus on curriculum. In Japan, they are still teaching the traditional class of 30 to 40 kids. They sit back and listen, and you teach using the blackboard. Group work hardly, differentiation, forget about it. The pedagogy is very conservative and traditional. Here, kids do more group activities, and differentiation is a big thing. So, developing pedagogy and engaging students using different techniques and group work activities, and developing authentic assessment is a big part of teachers' lives.*

Participants also believe that their work of teaching extends beyond the classroom. Nara sees her work beyond the classrooms as a platform to get to know her students better.

> *Teachers in Japan are responsible for supervising activities after school. I was in charge of the Handball club, so after lessons, I supervised students from 5 to 7 pm.*

So during this time, I have the opportunities to talk to my students. As a homeroom teacher, typically, I have 40 students in the class. The after-school hours is a good time for me to know my students better. Here, apart from the weekly form teacher period, I feel that I don't get much time to get to know my students.

Angela also spoke about her beliefs that the role of the teacher is a holistic one that looks into the overall well-being of the whole child:

I feel that as teachers, we need to look into the overall well-being of the students...and that encompasses everything: their academic results, mental health, social-emotional well-being, advice on subject choice, and career guidance. The idea of holistic development is very ingrained. So, it includes academic, character development, emotional development, and social awareness, and so many. So, although this sounds like a lot of work, it is my belief as teachers that our work extends beyond the classroom.

4.4.1.5 Summary of findings on professional identity

Professional identity is a recurring theme that emerged during the interviews. The data show that participants' professional identity is shaped by their employment status, their skills and knowledge, their perceived social status as teachers, and their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning. The transition to a new teaching context has led to a shift in the participants' professional identity as they reconceptualised what it means to be a teacher in Australia. Figure 4.1 summarises the categories that make up the theme of professional identity.

Figure 4.1

Categories that Make up the Theme of Professional Identity
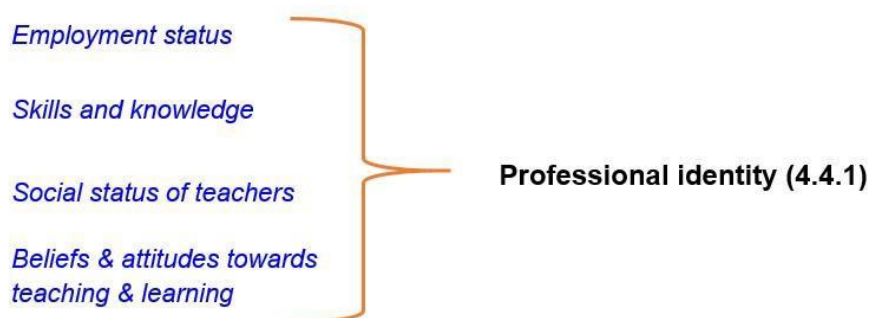
First, the ability to secure stable teaching jobs constitutes an important part of participants' professional identity, as it is a sign of acceptance into the local teaching fraternity. Several participants are working in short-term or casual employment positions, and the lack of job

stability has compromised their professional identity. The ability to secure long-term employment and promotion to key roles in the school has enhanced participants' confidence and sense of self-efficacy, thus strengthening their professional identity.

Second, participants' specialised skills and knowledge as teachers constitute a key aspect of their professional identity. These include skills and knowledge related to their teaching subject, pedagogical practices, and classroom management. Having shared professional skills and knowledge has strengthened participants' professional identity and association with the teaching profession. Conversely, differences in teaching method and class dynamic may mean that participants' past skills and knowledge may be irrelevant, and they have to relearn new ways of teaching and interacting with students. Having to relearn new skills, subject content, and teaching methods reduces self-efficacy and confidence. The mismatch between the expectations of the new teaching context and participants' prior skills and knowledge has threatened their professional identity.

Third, the status and respect for teachers in the society appears to influence participants' construct of their professional identity. The participants in this study come from Asian societies where the teacher's social status is relatively high, and teachers are generally well respected. The perceived lower social status of teachers in their new teaching context has negatively affected their professional identity.

Lastly, the data show that the beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning are another significant aspect of teachers' professional identity. Participants whose beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning differ from those in their school community have found themselves having to adjust their own views, and in the process, reconceptualize their professional identity.

4.4.2   (In)vulnerability

The feeling of vulnerability and invulnerability was expressed by numerous participants in the interviews. The data in this study reveal that participants discussed the notion of vulnerability and invulnerability at both the personal and interpersonal levels. At the personal level, participants related their sense of vulnerability and invulnerability to how their teaching competence and ethnocultural identity are perceived by people in the school community. At the interpersonal level, participants discussed how the same feeling is shaped by their relationships and interactions with people in the school community. The following subsections offer a description of what vulnerability looks like and how it has been experienced by

participants, what made participants feel vulnerable, and what contributed to being invulnerable.

4.4.2.1 Perceived teaching competence

In addition to feeling vulnerable as a result of the difficulties they experienced in securing long-term employment (as described in Section 4.4.1.1), many participants also associated their sense of vulnerability with how their teaching competence was perceived by their superiors and colleagues. As shown in Section 4.4.1.2, participants who were perceived to be competent in teaching, especially in subjects deemed important in the school, felt less vulnerable as they were more readily accepted and respected by students and well-regarded by superior and colleagues. For these teachers (Marilyn, Anusha, and Kai Meng), the sense that their teaching competence is valued gave them a sense of importance and respect in the school, which strengthened their confidence and made them feel less vulnerable. On the other hand, participants' sense of vulnerability increased when they perceived that their teaching competence is not trusted in the school. This situation was described by Michiko:

> Michiko: I applied for a maths teaching position and came for the interview. During the interview, my principal asked if I am okay with teaching Japanese. I agree although I would have preferred to teach maths. I have taught maths for seven years in Japan. So that is what I am good at. But I needed a job, so I just took up whatever that was offered to me. I think she [my principal] wasn't confident about me teaching maths. It was only two years ago, after teaching in this school for nine years, before I was given a chance to teach maths. I was so excited. I guess she [my principal] finally trusted me after seeing how I worked all these years.

Despite having taught maths for several years in Japan and the shortage of maths teachers in her school, Michiko was not deployed to teach maths when she first joined the school. As such, she felt that she was not trusted in her maths teaching competence. Her confidence was dampened as a result, and she felt vulnerable.

Similar to Michiko, Rehvinder also reported feeling vulnerable when her teaching competence was questioned:

> Being Asian, they kinda looked down on you because they are white. So, you can never be good enough. I knew that they didn't want to give me the advanced English class because I wasn't white, I wasn't Australian. This is despite me having taught English and English literature for the last 20 years. So, I was given the lower level classes for English. And sometimes, I will have to take on other subjects such as

agriculture, maths, and ancient history when their teachers are away. Imagine teaching agriculture! Anyway, that just meant that I just have to read up and teach. It's not too difficult really. But it just showed that they did not trust my English teaching!

The above examples illustrate that participants' sense of vulnerability is linked to their superiors' and colleagues' perception and trust in their teaching competence. Participants felt vulnerable when their teaching competence was questioned. On the other hand, when participants' teaching subject and their teaching competence were valued, they experienced an increased sense of importance and self-worth, which resulted in them feeling less vulnerable.

4.4.2.2 Ethnocultural identity

The data show that the participants' perceived discrimination due to their ethnocultural identity has contributed to their sense of vulnerability. For example, Rehvinder felt that she was singled out by her principal because of her ethnocultural identity:

On my first day of work, the principal told me that I wasn't quite white enough. If teachers don't like you [me], I am [she is] going to say that I [she] can't keep you [me]. Of course, I was shocked! I have travelled to and taught in many countries, but was never treated like this! And well...because I was the only Asian in that school, it did feel like everybody was looking at me...

As the only Asian teacher in the school, Renuka felt that she was often stereotyped and judged by her colleagues:

You know, I have a lot of comments like, "oh…you come from Asia, you speak good English!" It's like…you expect me not to speak English just because I come from another country?! I speak better English than you! Don't assume!..and then when they know that you have daughters in school, they ask, so you had daughters in secondary school, how are they managing their English? Oh, of course, they are fine!

While their ethnocultural identity caused Rehvinder and Renuka to feel discriminated against and stereotyped, Renuka has tapped into her Asian heritage to help her connect better with Asian students and their parents:

I have a Sri Lankan parent who told me this: You are the only one of my colour in the school…my daughter feels very comfortable now that you are here. Some of the

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> *parents cannot speak English well, so having somebody who can speak their language makes them feel very much more comfortable and at ease.*

Just like Renuka, Angela spoke about how she has utilised her ethnocultural identity as a way to build relationships with her students, both Asian and non-Asian:

> *So, the first thing that they asked me was where I came from. When I told them that I am from Singapore, those from Malaysia and Singapore will straight away gravitate towards me...especially those who are not born here and their parents are migrants themselves. I guess their parents are still very Asian in their thinking and culture. So when they see me, they think that I would understand their predicament or where they come from because I am also an Asian. So I would be able to understand their difficulties and challenges that their parents expect from them. Then, because the non-Asian students sometimes overheard our colloquial and slang, they got curious about what we talked about. So I used this opportunity to explain to them my background. I think, on the whole, it was an effective way to build rapport with the students.*

Angela discussed how sharing an Asian background with some of her students became a source of commonality, and these students confided in her because she was the only teacher in the school who shared their cultural background. She believes that these cultural similarities help her understand and communicate more effectively with her Asian students. Also, by discussing her ethnocultural identity with her students, she allowed herself to be vulnerable to her students, and that opened up opportunities to build rapport with her students.

4.4.2.3 Interaction with students

At the interpersonal level, participants' vulnerability is most salient in their interactions with people in the school community, including students, parents, and colleagues. Participants, especially those teaching in secondary school, admitted to feeling anxious, intimated, and fearful when dealing with challenging students. Anusha described her first day of teaching as her "first initiation into the scary world of secondary schools in Australia":

> *The students, especially those in Years 11 and 12, are so tall and huge. When I talked to them, I had to literally look up to them.*

Marilyn recalled teaching in a secondary school in Melbourne when she arrived 15 years ago as a "very intimidating and daunting experience" and that "just the memories made me [her] shiver":

I was in a Year 11 class and a Year 9 class. It was just very intimidating. I remember when I called the roll when I first went to a secondary school I pronounced the names differently, and they just started laughing at me. And it was just the first day, and I was made fun of and insulted like that… and I remember they asked me which country I came from. I told them I was from India, and then they went, Oh, tell us something about Gandhi! You know...so cheeky! That completely made me shiver! Hahahahaha! It was a very horrible experience teaching in a secondary school.

Disrespectful behaviour and the lack of discipline are major concerns identified by participants in their interaction with students in Australia. Michiko recounted incidences of fights, frequent use of expletives, vandalism, violence, and attitudes of open defiance:

It was tough when I first started. The students showed a great amount of misbehaviour. I saw a chair flying from this way to that way (she stood up and moved from one end of the room to the other to illustrate her point), students lighting up a fire in the classroom using matches, the F words, students missing classes, not coming to school…there were all kinds of discipline issues. It was scary.

Anusha shared that in India, students were expected to be polite and did not openly challenge their teachers:

I think in my country, you can't be rightly outspoken and rude. They can, behind your back maybe, but not in your face, or when you are in class, that's how we behave as a student, when the teachers were in there you keep quiet and listen, and after the class, you can giggle or make stories about the teacher, but not when they are in the class.

The participants come from countries in Asia where teachers are often authoritative figures and feared by students. Therefore, when students ignored her instructions in her school in Darwin, Nara felt that her authority as a teacher was compromised:

My students would often eat during lessons and play with their phones. When I asked them to put away their phone and food, they would simply ignore me and continue eating and playing with their phone. At times, I felt so helpless.

This perspective was shared by other participants in this study. Janice felt that her students were disrespectful as "the way they [her students] talked to me [her] is sometimes very rude". Rehvinder reported being constantly challenged by students because of her pronunciation.

Anusha felt "taken lightly at first" by her students as they considered her "an outsider". She admitted to feeling embarrassed and vulnerable when her students made fun of her accent "because I sounded different, it can really be a substance for some merry-making or laughter".

The struggle of managing challenging student behaviour led Anusha and Marilyn to leave the "scary world of secondary schools" (Anusha) to teach in primary schools.

> *Marilyn: So when I got a job in primary school, I actually found myself enjoying teaching it! The primary school kids are so sweet and more forgiving. I just didn't look back. It was a daunting experience in secondary school.*

Participants' feeling of vulnerability gradually diminished as they established better relationships with students. Michiko reflected that her relationship with students has improved over time "now that I am more experienced, I feel more confident and connected to my students". Rehvinder shared that she had built a "good enough rapport with the kids to discuss racial and discrimination issue such that they do not get offended", and Kate was delighted that "even my [her] naughtiest students were busy showing off to me [her] how much better they were when I [she] met them at their recent graduation ball".

4.4.2.4   Interaction with students' parents

Participants' relationship with parents is another source of vulnerability. Participants felt that local parents were less accepting of immigrant teachers and felt stressed dealing with difficult parents. Renuka, for example, said that she was "tested by white parents all the time":

> *You get the feeling that some parents, as they speak to you, they test you at the start. Just like when I had my first meeting with one parent, it felt like an interview with me. She asked me…since you come from a Sri Lankan background, how much do you know about the Australian curriculum? What textbooks are you going to use for my daughter? What are you going to do in your classroom? How do I know what's going on in your class? I would need to meet you once a week to find out how my daughter is progressing. Initially, I felt that I was under a bit of a microscope from this parent…but after she saw that I knew what I was doing…she backed off.*

For many years, Michiko felt that her ethnicity has "put me [her] in a vulnerable position as I [she] was the target of complaint among parents".

> *In my first few years of teaching, I wasn't feeling confident enough in my teaching as well as in my language skill. That put me in a vulnerable position. I wasn't attacked*

but was often the target of complaints among parents. They will complain that their girls do not understand my teaching or that they do not understand my accent. It was stressful. Now that through my experience, I feel more confident, know that I do contribute a lot to school and classroom teaching, and I do have a decent relationship with the students. When I feel confident and connected to students, I don't get attacked and complaints from parents.

Recent immigrants such as Angela admitted to feeling anxious around her students' parents and tried to avoid interacting with them:

I am not sure what kind of advice is appropriate. I checked with my colleagues regularly on what I should say or not say to parents. Whether it is appropriate for me to recommend VCE subjects. It seems like teachers here do not give out advice compared to where I come from. So, I tried not to engage parents because I'm afraid I may make mistakes or say the wrong thing.

Being frequently "tested by parents" (Renuka) and "targets of complaints" (Michiko) caused participants to feel vulnerable. They felt that they are not trusted by parents and that their professional expertise and status as teachers challenged them.

The feeling of vulnerability gradually lessened as participants 'proved their worth' as a member of the school teaching community. Rehvinder shared that over the last two years, she has built up a reputation as a good teacher among parents in her rural town. After teaching in the same school for more than a decade, Marilyn counted many of her students' parents as her friends:

Our friendship has developed over the years. I taught the brother, and the sister, and all the kids in the family. Many of the mothers are now my personal friends.

4.4.2.5 Interaction with principals and colleagues

Participants' professional relations in the school are an additional source of vulnerability. Participants reported "being watched" (Kate, Renuka, and Angela) by their principals and "considered as outsiders" (Angela, Anusha, and Renuka) by colleagues, which suggested a lack of trust and acceptance. Angela described an experience that made her feel vulnerable and anxious:

I do get reminded quite a bit about proper behaviour between teachers and students, especially from my principal. Once I said in passing that I gave one of my 'problematic' students a hug on the day when he was quite good. So, my principal reminded me

that I am not supposed to touch the student. So that got me a bit worried after that. I felt that he was always watching how I teach, interact with students, and with people in the school.

Kate, who teaches in an Islamic college, also recalled feeling anxious and vulnerable under the watchful eyes of her principal, colleagues, and even students:

I was the only female teacher in the school not wearing a hijab. The teachers were wary of me, students were curious about me, and the principal kept a close tab on me to make sure that I didn't say or do anything wrong.

The lack of a social network and friends in the school has also contributed to participants' sense of vulnerability. Angela, Renuka, and Anusha felt that they were outsiders and did not belong to the school community.

Angela: Breaking into the culture has not been easy. Even till now, I still consider myself [as] an outsider in the school.

Renuka: The staffs are predominantly white. I am the only Asian. They are people in the principal's camp, and then there are those, like me, who are considered outsiders.

Anusha: They are in their own world. They didn't know much about the rest of the world and are not interested in other cultures. Geography is not a big thing here. I had teachers in my school who didn't even know where New Delhi was. They are not really interested in my culture or where I come from.

Despite teaching in her school for more than five years, Kate's interaction with her colleagues is limited:

During the lunch break, I like to heat up my leftover dinner from the day before and eat at my table and mark at the same time. Some people may eat together at the staff lounge, but I don't join in. There is not much in common to talk about.

The data also suggest that being in a more culturally diverse environment could have made participants felt less like an outsider and more included, as shown in Kai Meng's statement below:

> *Kai Meng: I am glad that my department is quite international. We have teachers from Hong Kong, Malaysia, UK, and the USA. Non-local teachers make up almost one-third of the teachers in the department. So, in that sense, I don't feel too different. So I guess that helps.*

Positive affirmations of participants' work quality were reflected in the form of assignment of an important task such as teaching graduating classes (Kai Meng), leading a school program (Marilyn), compliments on good quality lesson plans (Angela), and appointment to leadership positions (Kate, Rehvinder, and Michiko). These signalled that participants were valued and recognised for their contributions, and led to a decreased feeling of vulnerability.

Michiko explained that she enjoys the positive workplace culture in her school:

> *Somehow, I feel more appreciated here for what I do. People say thank you a lot. Somehow the thank you culture is not common in the Japanese workplace culture. You rarely hear people say thank you in the Japanese workplace. Especially over here, the principal said thank you very often, and she led by example.*

The above examples illustrate that while participants' negative experiences of interaction with members of the school community increased their feeling of vulnerability, there were also some positive aspects of the interactions that diminished their sense of vulnerability.

4.4.2.6 Summary of findings on (in)vulnerability

A sense of vulnerability and invulnerability is the second recurring theme that emerged from the interviews with the participants. Participants' vulnerability can be understood at the personal and interpersonal levels. The former relates to participants' personal characteristics, including their teaching competence and ethnocultural identity, and the latter refers to participants' relationships with students, parents, and principals and colleagues, which were identified as sources of vulnerability. Figure 4.2 summarises the categories that make up the theme of vulnerability.

Figure 4.2

Categories that Make up the Theme of (In)vulnerability

Perceived teaching competence
Ethnocultural identity
Interaction with students
Interaction with students' parents
Interaction with principal & colleagues

(In)vulnerability (4.4.2)
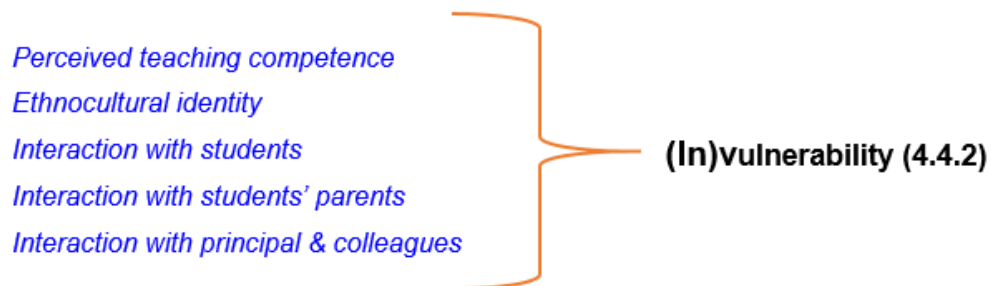
At the personal level, participants' sense of vulnerability is linked to how their teaching competence is perceived by others, as well as their perception of discrimination due to their ethnocultural identity. Participants felt vulnerable when their teaching competence was distrusted and questioned, but this sense of vulnerability diminished when they felt that their teaching competence was recognised and valued by their superiors and colleagues. Participants' ethnocultural identity is another contributor to their sense of vulnerability. Some participants reported feeling discriminated against and hence vulnerable as a result of their different ethnocultural identities, while others tapped into this difference as an opportunity to build rapport with their students.

At the interpersonal level, participants' sense of vulnerability relates to their interaction with students, students' parents, principals, and colleagues. First, students are central to participants' work as teachers. The participants' struggle with managing students' behaviour contributed to their feeling of vulnerability. Disrespectful behaviour from students undermines the participants' authority as teachers, lowers their confidence in their impact on students, and makes them feel vulnerable. Second, parents are important stakeholders in the teachers' work. Being "tested by parents" and "targets of complaints" caused participants to feel stressed and vulnerable as their professional expertise was challenged and their status as teachers threatened. Failure to gain support from and trust from parents made participants feel vulnerable. Thirdly, participants' membership in the school community is contingent on acceptance and approval by their superiors and colleagues. Being "watched by the principal" and "considered an outsider" hinted at being excluded and mistrusted, both of which are sources of vulnerability. The feeling was accentuated by their lack of social networks in the school, which makes them feel that they do not belong to the school community.

Finally, the data show that new immigrant teachers tend to feel more vulnerable in general, but the feeling gradually diminished as they developed better rapport with students, built their

reputation as good teachers among parents, established social networks in schools, and gained recognition for their work and contribution to the school.

4.4.3 Intercultural perspective

The third prominent theme that emerged from the data relates to participants' intercultural perspective. Stories of what it meant to be an Asian living in Australia were woven throughout the interviews as participants recalled their day-to-day experiences working in the school. Data from the interviews reveal that participants' intercultural perspectives and, consequently, their reaction to cultural differences, have in many ways shaped their professional adaptation experiences. The following subsections present data related to participants' intercultural perspectives, how they perceived themselves, and their reactions to cultural differences in their new teaching context in Australia.

4.4.3.1 Ethnocentric view

All participants in this study were born and had lived in Asia for between 30 and 50 years before deciding to migrate to Australia. Except for Renuka, who had spent five years as a student in Melbourne, went back to Sri Lanka for eight years, and then came back to Melbourne again, all the other participants took a one-way journey from Asia to Australia. Living in a new culture entailed adjustment and negotiation between the different cultures. The data from this study shows this process to be filled with tensions and contradictions as participants negotiated their ethnocultural identity in their new teaching context. The following quotes present a range of experiences of being an Asian Australian immigrant teacher, and highlight the complexity around how individuals can both reify and resist racial discourses.

As immigrant teachers, the participants were eager to be accepted and seen as equal to their Anglo-Australian colleagues. As such, a few participants attempted to suppress their Asian identity:

> *Rehvinder: No, I don't bring in my ethnicity in my work. When you see yourself as a race, you are open to racism.*

> *Kate: It generally drives me nuts when people see me walking down the corridor and going 'ni hao' (translated into 'how are you?', a common greeting in Chinese). People on the street try that sometimes too. I always ignore them and pretend not to understand what they are saying – our mode of communication is in English, and that's that. I generally forget that I am an Asian in my school.*

However, the participants' pride in their Asian identity is evident throughout the interviews. In the abstract below, Kate spoke about how she mobilised her Asian identity through her beliefs in "good old Asian values".

> *I sincerely think that local students need to learn more about the Asian resilience and tenacity – to strive for excellence, not just scraping through. The relationship between students and Australian teachers is often very friendly, but I believe in having that professional distance as that gets students to focus better and wastes less time on social relationships. There is no right or wrong style, but this is just the style I am most comfortable with, and I do realise that it is also quite Asian. I am not sure if it's Asian or not, but I am tempted to suggest that the Asian way of work first play later seems to be something that is good to be taught here.*

Janice also spoke with pride about how her Asian values have shaped her beliefs as a teacher:

> *Even if I stay here for long, I think my Asian values will follow me. Parents entrusted their kids to me, and it is my job to teach them as though they are my children. I wouldn't dare to do otherwise. It's just not the right thing to do.*

Participants' strong identification with and positive view of their own culture did, at times, lead to an increased sense of ethnocentrism. The data reveal that, in general, recently arrived immigrants display a more ethnocentric view than established immigrants who have been in Australia longer.

As a consequence of their desire to be accepted into the school community, the recent immigrants appeared to suppress or deny any cultural differences with their host culture. For example, Angela was defensive and denied any differences between the teaching practices in her home country and Australia, stating "There is no difference…whether Singaporean or Australian teachers, we are the same, we teach the same way!" However, she contradicted herself in the later part of the interview when she talked about the teachers' role and how she had to switch to a facilitator style of teaching to cater for her students here. Likewise, Kai Meng tried to downplay his adjustment experience and denial any cultural differences:

> *My school is very multicultural, the staff and students. This is what I experienced in Singapore too. We have teachers from different parts of the world. So I am used to working in a multicultural team. The work culture is also similar. So in terms of teaching and interaction with colleagues, there is not much difference here.*

However, subsequent conversations with Kai Meng and Angela revealed that they experienced significant challenges in their workplace, many of which were associated with the differences in the teachers' role, beliefs, practices, and workplace culture.

The data in this study indicate that the recent immigrants tended to compare their home country practices with those in the host country. Many maintained positive views of their own cultural groups and held negative stereotypes of their host country's culture. They spoke about the high standards of education in their home country (Angela and Kai Meng), good student discipline (Renuka, Nara, and Janice), and diligent teachers (Rehvinder and Kate). This inclination to compare the two cultures and subsequently defend their own culture seemed to solidify their own identities, which could inhibit their adaptation to the school community.

Some recent immigrants also appeared to be defensive of their home countries' teaching practices, perceiving it as superior, and they subconsciously engaged in stereotyping and 'us-vs-them' discourse. Others also seemed anxious and threatened by differences in other cultures. An example of this anxiety was reflected in a conversation with Janice about the education system here:

> *When I look at the NAPLAN. I thought…huh this is maths? A lot of language in the paper, is this really a maths exam? In Singapore, we know that the kids, after going through 12 years of education, we know that they have something in there. But over here, I am really not sure, after 12 years of education, did they actually learn anything, and in the last two years leading up to the VCE, the level of stress is tremendous for the students. Sometimes, I hear people say, wow…Year 10, then they actually start learning. It's good to discipline learning from young. When it comes to Year 10, it may be a bit difficult, then you have to deal with teenagers, then you have to deal with studies…*

Kai Meng was critical of the quality of maths teachers in his department:

> *Many maths teachers [in my department] do not hold a maths degree. Their knowledge of math is quite superficial. Many are just a chapter ahead of their students. I sometimes heard them ask more experienced colleagues in the staffroom about how to solve certain math problems or to clarify certain maths concepts.*

He went on to share his views on how maths could be taught and advocated for a more "real-world application" approach to generate students' interest and bring about better engagement.

Some participants who have been in Australia longer (Rehvinder three years and Kate seven years) continued to advocate about the superiority of their preferred ways of teaching over the locally accepted approach. In addition, Rehvinder and Kate both seemed to judge their local colleagues based on their preconceived view of the appropriate attitude and behaviour that define good teachers.

> *Rehvinder: They walked into the classroom without a unit plan. It's just plain laziness. No doctor walked into the operation theatre without a plan, and no teacher should walk into the classroom without a unit plan. They just teach impromptu. So that's why they don't give homework, and that's why they got it wrong. They teach geography, and they got it wrong; they teach maths, and they got their workings wrong! That, to me, is a cultural hurdle; it's not acceptable. Compared to where I came from, the workload here is maybe 20%...yet they always say that they are very busy.*

> *Kate: Those teachers in my team are so lazy. The day before our exhibition, the artefacts and students' work are not put up yet. But the teachers…they just leave after school. Where is the sense of responsibility? I stayed back after school to do it till almost 7 pm. I was heavily pregnant then. My principal came in and saw me. She looked like she wanted to help but didn't know what to do.*

However, Michiko, who has been in Australia for more than 10 years, has chosen to focus on the commonalities and minimise the differences between the cultures:

> *Wherever you teach, what is most important is your relationship with students. It doesn't matter whether you are in Japan or in Australia or what your culture is. What is common is the need to build good relationships with students.*

4.4.3.2 Ethnorelativist view

The established immigrants were shown to be less judgemental and more accepting of cultural differences. They accepted that there are multiple viewpoints and that theirs was just one of many in the world. Having been in Australia for 15 years, Anusha has come to accept that people of different cultures might have different views of education. She said that *"You don't have to be Australian-centric and Indian-centre. The world is out there, there is no right or wrong. We just look at issues differently"*. The established immigrants also tended to be more competent in communicating with people of other cultures. Marilyn seemed to have adapted well after being in Melbourne for 15 years and teaching in the same school for 14 years. In the

two interviews with Marilyn, she met me at the school's general office and walked me to her classroom. During these short walks, I had the opportunity to observe her interaction with her colleagues. There were a substantial number of Japanese teachers in Marilyn's school due to its Japanese language program.

Marilyn speaks fluent Japanese. It was interesting to see her greeting her Japanese colleagues with a bow and speaking in a softer, calmer voice, and then switching with ease to a more carefree, chatty tone with her non-Japanese colleagues. Marilyn said that she had been coordinating her school's intercultural program for more than a decade. Besides sharing her own cultural practices with colleagues and students, she also familiarised herself with the practices of other cultures. She shared in jest that she has a certificate in advanced Japanese and is now learning Mandarin.

The data show that the sense of ethnocentrism is inversely related to participants' length of stay in Australia. Recent immigrants exhibited the denial, defence, and minimisation of cultural differences. The more established immigrants tended to be more accepting and adapted better to cultural differences. The latter also demonstrated appreciation for cultural differences, were more confident to engage with people from other cultures, and enjoyed intercultural interactions more. However, this general pattern of behaviour was neither linear nor rigid. Participants' attitudes towards migration and prior intercultural experiences could shape their intercultural perspectives. For example, Angela's experience of growing up in post-colonial Singapore could have led her to romanticise Western culture and values as being superior and she therefore tends have a higher regard for Western culture than her native culture. For Renuka, prior experience as a student in Melbourne may have prepared her to be more accepting and adapt better to cultural differences. The discussion on identity and culture often took the form of the 'us-versus-them' binary among the recent immigrants and gradually evolved into a single 'us' as the established immigrants worked towards assimilating into the Australian way of life. However, established immigrants like Michiko suggested that would be an ongoing process:

> *Just the other day, a Japanese friend from another school said that she is so envious of me as I have many Asian students in my class. This friend has been teaching here for more than 20 years! Yet, she still finds herself more comfortable with Asian students. So, I just think this is just something that will not go away.*

4.4.3.3 Summary of findings on intercultural perspective

The third recurrent theme that emerged from the data is participants' intercultural perspective. The data show that participants' intercultural perspective significantly influenced their professional adaptation experience as it shaped their views towards other cultures and practices. The participants' intercultural perspective was situated within the school's context and related to their views of the local education system, teachers' work attitudes, and students' behaviour. In general, participants who held an ethnocentric view exhibited the denial, defence and minimisation attitudes to cultural differences between themselves and that of the host country, while those who held an ethnorelativist view tended to accept and adapt to cultural differences more readily. Figure 4.3 summarises the categories that make up the theme of intercultural perspective.

Figure 4.3

Categories that Make up the Theme of Intercultural Perspective

Participants who are recent immigrants tend to exhibit a more ethnocentric orientation of avoiding the discussion of cultural differences, either by denying its existence, defending their own culture, or minimising its importance. They tend to use their own culture as a frame of reference to judge their host country's education system, teachers' work attitudes, and student behaviour. However, the established immigrants who have been in Australia longer leaned more towards an ethnorelativist orientation of accepting and adapting to cultural differences. They showed greater acceptance and appreciation for cultural differences, and they recognised the validity of different viewpoints that could arise from cultural differences, while continuing to preserve their own cultural identity. Most established immigrants were also more skilful in intercultural communication. Therefore, the data show that acquiring an ethnorelative viewpoint and intercultural competence facilitated professional adaptation.

4.4.4 Sense of belonging as an overarching theme

When the three themes of professional identity (Section 4.4.1), (in)vulnerability (Section 4.4.2) and intercultural perspective (Section 4.4.3) were taken together, they converged to a larger overarching theme of a sense of belonging. At its core, each participant's professional adaptation related to their desire to be accepted and belong to a collective community. All

participants had either explicitly or implicitly expressed their desire to be part of the school community. Hence, the participants, especially those who were new entrants to the school, made efforts to change their behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes to conform to the expectations and norms of the school community. They hoped that by doing so, the stakeholders of the school (students, students' parents, principals, and colleagues) would accept them more readily into the school community. One of these changes that was evident in the data was participants making an effort to foster social relations with colleagues, such as by coming into school earlier in the morning to chat with colleagues (Janice), joining in conversations during break and lunchtime (Angela, Kai Meng, and Janice), and looking for colleagues to chat with after lessons ended for the day (Nara). Others worked on increasing their contribution to the workplace to demonstrate that they are worthy and deserving members of the school community, such as by leading key departments and initiatives in the school (Michiko, Rehvinder, and Kate) and sharing good practices and resources with colleagues (Kai Meng and Angela).

Participants also made an effort to learn and adopt new teaching and assessment strategies that aligned with the expectations of the school (Michiko, Marilyn, Angela, and Anusha), and to adjust to the differences in class dynamic and hence a different way of communicating and interacting with students (Angela, Rehvinder, Angela, Kai Meng, and Anusha).

> *Michiko: Observing students play games is a big part of authentic assessment. In Japan, you still do a paper test, three pages of test, tick tick tick, and that's the assessment. Here, you constantly give them small quizzes, group activities, speaking interactions, listening activities. If you create a reading comprehension test, the text has to be colourful and engaging. That is not going to happen in Japan. I am spending more time on curriculum development and lesson preparation here.*

> *Kai Meng: Here, students here ask a lot of questions. I think they are encouraged to ask questions, to ask why. And they are very responsive to questions too. There is a lot of discussion in class. So I am still learning how to manage this better, how to better facilitate class discussion.*

Over time, many participants had also gradually learnt to appreciate and understand the differences in beliefs and attitudes towards education (Angela and Anusha).

> *Angela: Academic results are not the be-all and end-all. I feel that in general, the focus is more on the learning process and the skills. If you do well in the exam, good. If*

not, it's not the end of the way. There are many pathways to universities here. And many people do well in life without going to universities. Unlike in Singapore, where going to the university is a big thing. You spend your whole schooling life working towards it.

The data in the study indicate that immigrant teachers' professional adaptation is underpinned by their sense of belonging to the school community. The data suggest a positive relationship between a sense of belonging and professional adaptation among participants in this study. Participants who appeared to have adapted well to their school also exhibited a stronger sense of belonging to their school community. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that a sense of belonging to the school community formed the basis for successful professional adaptation. This observation is supported by Michiko's statements below:

After being in the school for so long, I feel that I am now a part of this big community. They people here are nice. I am playing an important role in the school. I am contributing to the growth of the school and my students. I don't think I will go to another school anytime soon.

4.5   Summary of findings: The enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation

This research aimed to explore the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. Through analysing the data, a sense of belonging emerged as the way to describe and conceptualise professional adaptation. I found that a strong sense of belonging enabled professional adaptation while a weak sense of belonging inhibited professional adaptation. The data in this study revealed that the overarching theme of sense of belonging is constructed from the themes of professional identity, (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspective, and each theme is co-constructed from the categories discussed in this chapter. A summary of the categories, the themes, and the overarching theme that emerged from the data is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Overarching Theme, Themes, and Categories Following Individual Interviews with 10 Asian Australian Immigrant Teachers

Overarching theme	Sense of belonging (4.4.4)		
Themes	Professional identity (4.4.1)	(In)vulnerability (4.4.2)	Intercultural perspective (4.4.3)
Categories	Employment status Skills and knowledge Social status of teacher Beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning	Perceived teaching competence Ethnocultural identity Interaction with students Interaction with students' parents Interaction with principal and colleagues	Ethnocentric view Ethnorelativist view

This research is guided by the research question: *What are the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers?* Through analysis of the data, the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation were identified at the thematic and categorical levels to answer the research question.

First, professional identity is positively associated with constructing a sense of belonging. The aspects of professional identity identified in this study were employment status, skills and knowledge associated with teaching, perceived social status of teachers, and beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning, all of which have the potential to enable or inhibit professional identity. A strong professional identity resulting from stable employment, recognition of skills and knowledge associated with teaching, perceived high social status of teachers, and alignment of beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning enabled a sense of belonging. On the other hand, a weak professional identity due to unemployment, the mismatch between participants' skills and knowledge and the school's expectations, perceived low social status of teachers, and differences in beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning inhibited a sense of belonging.

Second, participants' sense of vulnerability and invulnerability relates to how their teaching competence and ethnocultural identity are perceived by people in the school, as well as their relationship and interaction with students, parents, the principal, and their colleagues in the school community. The data showed that participants felt less vulnerable when they are valued for their teaching competence, accepted for their ethnocultural identity, respected by

students, trusted by parents, appreciated and trusted by their principal, and accepted by colleagues. These situations contribute to their sense of belonging to their school community. On the other hand, participants who perceived that they are not trusted for their teaching competence, are discriminated against, stereotyped on the basis of their ethnocultural identity, disrespected by students, distrusted by parents and principals, and excluded by colleagues, experienced an increased sense of vulnerability, which then hindered their sense of belonging to the school community.

Third, the intercultural perspective relates to how individuals react to cultural differences. It is both an enabler and an inhibitor of the sense of belonging, depending on participants' reactions towards cultural differences. An ethnocentric view of denial, defence and minimisation of cultural differences undermined participants' sense of belonging to the school community, while an ethnorelative view of acceptance and adaptation to cultural differences facilitated participants' sense of belonging to the school community.

In summary, the data from this study showed that a strong professional identity, a sense of invulnerability, and an ethnorelative intercultural perspective contribute to these Asian Australian immigrant teachers' sense of belonging to their school community, which is shown to be a key factor that underpins their professional adaptation. These findings are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Summary of Findings in Light of Enablers and Inhibitors of Professional Adaptation

Professional adaptation (4.5) is underpinned by…								
Sense of belonging (4.4.4), which is co-constructed from…								
Professional identity (4.4.1)			(In)vulnerability (4.4.2)			Intercultural perspective (4.4.3)		
Enablers	Both	Inhibitors	Enablers	Both	Inhibitors	Enablers	Both	Inhibitors
Stable employment	Employment status	Unemployment	Recognition and valuing of teaching competence	Perceived teaching competence	Distrust of teaching competence	Ethnorelative views – acceptance and adaptation to cultural differences	Intercultural perspectives (reaction to cultural differences)	Ethnocentric view – denial, defence and minimisation of cultural differences
Recognition and valuing of skills and knowledge	Skills and knowledge	Mismatch between participants' skills, knowledge, and expectations and that of the school	Recognition and acceptance of ethnocultural identity	Ethnocultural identity	Discrimination and stereotype based on ethnocultural identity			
Perceived high social status of teachers	Social status of teacher	Perceived low social status of teacher	Respect from students	Interaction with students	Disrespect from students			
Alignment of beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning	Beliefs and attitude towards teaching and learning	Differences in beliefs and attitude towards teaching and learning	Trust from parents	Interaction with students' parents	Distrust from parents			
			Appreciation and trust from the principal. Acceptance from colleagues	Interaction with principal and colleagues	Distrust from principal Excluded by colleagues			

4.6   Chapter summary

The chapter opened with a description of the 10 people who participated in this study. Participants' unique challenges, experiences, and perspectives were highlighted to give a more nuanced understanding of each participant to help contextualise the findings. The most striking finding is the great diversity in the experiences of participants in Australia. The participants' journey to Australia, their motivations, and their experiences varied considerably. While all participants had endured some form of adversity, they had also experienced much contentment, satisfaction, and joy in their professional adaptation journey. Underneath the surface-level differences of personal, cultural, and professional characteristics, there were also many similarities, including a commitment to make the most of their life in Australia.

The data gathered from this study pointed to the themes of professional identity, (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspective, all of which reflected participants' experience of professional adaptation. Each theme was illustrated using representative quotes from the interviews and described in terms of being enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation. When taken together, the three themes converged to the overarching theme of a sense of belonging, which reflects participants' inherent desire to be accepted and belong to their school community. But why does a sense of belonging matter? What does this mean in terms of professional adaptation? The data showed that there is a need to rethink the notion of professional adaptation. These questions are explored and the findings discussed in relation to the literature examined in Chapter Two. A discussion of this study's findings and how they relate to the research literature is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter overview

The data collection and analysis process, as reported in Chapters Three and Four, led to the identification of 11 categories, the three themes of *professional identity*, *(in)vulnerability* and *intercultural perspective,* and the central overarching theme of *sense of belonging* as the key concepts that underpin professional adaptation. When taken together, these findings answer the research question: *What are the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers?* The findings were summarised in Table 4.2 at the end of Chapter 4.

In Section 5.2, the findings are discussed in relation to the relevant literature, by examining the findings that concur with and are consistent with the other research literature, and in Section 5.3, the findings that appear in the relevant research literature but were absent from the analysis are identified and the possible reasons for such absences of corroborative evidence in this small study are discussed. Section 5.4 presents a discussion of the unanticipated key finding of a sense of belonging that emerged from the data analysis, provides examples of immigrant teachers' performance of belonging and not belonging in school, and argues for the need for a new theory for professional adaptation. In Section 5.5, the justification for the need for a new theory for professional adaptation based on the data gathered from this study is presented, with an outline of the main aspects of the existing theories, how they have helped to explain some aspects of the findings, and their limitations in explaining some other aspects of the findings. In the concluding section (5.6), a new theoretical proposition is offered, along with a detailed explanation of the relationships between the different constructs and their roles in professional adaptation.

5.2 Findings that concur with and are consistent with the research literature

The review of the literature in Chapter Two provided an understanding of the existing knowledge and debate in the area of immigrant teachers, immigrant adaptation, and teacher professional identity. In this section, the focus is on discussing the findings that concur with and are consistent with the research literature on the subject. The discussion is organised thematically according to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two: immigrant teachers (Section 2.2), adaptation (Section 2.3), and teacher professional identity (Section 2.4).

5.2.1 Immigrant teachers: Challenges faced by immigrant teachers are universal across social context

Overall, this study has highlighted the challenges that immigrant teachers encounter when seeking professional accreditation and employment, adjusting to differences in professional practices of teaching, and integrating into the professional teaching community. While the social context of this study may differ from that in the other immigrant teacher literature reviewed in Chapter Two, the findings are consistent with this literature, thus indicating that the concerns of immigrant teachers are ingrained and universal.

5.2.1.1 Seeking professional accreditation and employment

The participants' experiences of seeking professional accreditation and employment resonate with those documented in the previous literature (Collins & Reid, 2012; Fee, 2011; Remennick, 2002). Renuka was upset that her teaching experience in Sri Lanka was not recognised:

> *Here I am, having to go through the whole program for two years and to go for school placement with the undergrads! It's just ridiculous! I have taught for eight years in Sri Lanka and have been teaching the British curriculum, which is very similar to the Australian curriculum. Yet, my experience is not recognised.*

Others such as Janice, Angela, Kate, Kai Meng, and Rehvinder were frustrated that they were required to sit for an English language proficiency test to prove their English language proficiency despite it being the language of instruction in their home country.

> *Rehvinder: Can you believe that they want us to sit for an English test? I have been speaking and teaching in English for the last 40 years! And now I need to prove my English proficiency! This is so humiliating!*

While all participants encountered difficulties securing long-term employment, Anusha and Rehvinder managed to secure employment with relative ease in schools in rural areas. Their experiences are consistent with Sharplin's (2014) observations of immigrant teachers filling teacher shortages in schools in the more rural and remote areas in Australia.

5.2.1.2 Adjusting to differences in professional practices of teaching

The differences in the professional practices of teaching, which are commonly discussed in the immigrant teacher literature, were evident in this study. As discussed in Chapter Two, teaching and learning is an activity that is dependent on context and the socio-cultural environment. In particular, the interaction between the teacher and the student is deeply rooted in the culture of a society (Hofstede, 1986). Students from different cultural

backgrounds have different learning preferences, and teaching and learning take place differently across different cultures (Hofstede, 2010). Therefore, immigrant teachers who are accustomed to the teaching and learning cultures of their home country would have to adjust to new teaching practices when they transit from one cultural setting to another (Caravatti et al., 2014; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004, Seah, 2004). The data in this study suggest that these adjustments are primarily in the area of teacher–student interaction and pedagogical practices.

Concurring with the previous literature (Bense, 2014; Hofstede, 2010; Maylor et al., 2006), this study found that the nature of the teacher–student interaction is shaped by the power distance and social positioning of teachers in the society, which, in turn, influences teacher authority and the respect that students accord to their teachers (Lai et al., 2015). The participants in this research found that their expectations of the teacher–student interaction were constantly reshaped in their new teaching context. The participants in this study are from high power distance Asian countries where teachers are regarded as authoritative figures, viewed as the fountain of knowledge, and are highly respected by students and parents, with parents deferring to teachers for advice. For example, Angela shared that in her home country, parents frequently sought teachers' advice on matters relating to their children's academic progression and subject choices. Likewise, Marilyn said that teachers in India are highly respected by parents and students. Therefore, in their home country, they enjoyed a high social status as teachers and were respected by students and parents both inside and outside the classroom.

As a result of their past experiences, the participants reported encountering various challenges in establishing their teacher authority in the classroom. For example, Marilyn found herself being challenged by her young students, as "even in Grade 2, they [the students] have a mind of their own". Janice was shocked by the students' freedom of expression and that they called her by her first name, which she considered to be rude. She felt that her authority was compromised, and she had a hard time trying to establish a boundary between herself and her students (Gao, 2010). Renuka and Kate were disturbed that their students did not greet them when they entered the classroom, as such behaviour is expected in their home countries.

Furthermore, participants also reported that they have had to adjust to supporting students' learning by facilitating class discussion and encouraging students to critique and voice intellectual disagreement, which is in contrast to the expectations in their home countries that students be well-behaved and listen to their teachers. Those who voice their disagreement aloud are regarded as being disruptive and challenging teacher authority (Gao, 2010; Haley & Ferro, 2011; Hanson, 2013). The participants' experiences resonated with the previous

literature that finds that respect for teachers in low power distance societies tends to be based on equality and cooperation, whereas respect for teachers in high power distance societies stems from hierarchical deference, structure, order, and unconditional obedience (Gao, 2010; Liu, 2012; Nguyen, 2008).

Previous studies have observed that students in different cultures are accustomed to different ways of learning and classroom dynamics (Barmeyer, 2004; Fridland, 2002; Hofstede 2010; Joy & Kolb, 2009; Yamazaki, 2005). Hofstede considers Australia to be an individualistic society, where individuals are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Students in the Australian classrooms tend to be motivated to share personal opinions, to stand out, or to be a leader among their peers. In comparison, students in collectivist societies in Asia tend to be hesitant to participate in ways that cause them to stand out among their peers.

Although these generalized claims may not be applicable to all students in Asia and in Australia, some of the observations in these previous studies were echoed by the participants, who spoke about having to adjust their teaching approach, pick up new skills, and even redefine their role as teachers. For example, Kai Meng observed that his students are very "responsive to questions" and proactive in class discussion and that he needs to learn how to manage the class dynamic "to ensure that effective learning takes place". Michiko also said that she needed to learn new teaching and assessment strategies to keep her students engaged, and Angela said that she had to redefine her role as a facilitator of learning instead of as the subject expert. These findings on the differences in the teacher–student interaction and pedagogical practices reinforce the previous research that finds that in order for immigrant teachers to teach effectively, they need to learn about the cultural norms and practices in their host countries and adjust their professional practices accordingly to meet the expectations of their new teaching context (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Virta, 2015).

5.2.1.3 Integrating into the professional teaching community

The struggles with professional integration that were highlighted in the literature review in Chapter Two are also evident in this study. Despite overcoming the hurdle of getting their teaching experience and qualification recognised and accredited, and even after securing a long-term teaching position, five participants (Kai Meng, Janice, Rehvinder, Kate, and Nara) gave up pursuing a teaching career in school. Although the data cannot be extrapolated for the whole immigrant teacher population, it does justify some concerns, especially in the light of the teacher shortage in Australia. These teachers still like teaching and continue to

contribute to the education industry in different ways, but somehow feel that the effort to integrate into the school is too exhausting, so they have chosen to focus on what they like. It could also be that they feel dejected or do not feel they belong to the school after being repeatedly confronted with negative experiences despite their efforts to integrate.

> *Kate: Now, I work on curriculum development and teaching students online in the distance learning school. It's good. It gives me flexibility, and I don't have to deal with people in school.*

Rehvinder, who now runs a private enrichment centre, said:

> *It is so exhausting…dealing with uncooperative teachers, trying to get them to do things your way, explaining to your bosses etc. Now I just do things on my own, run my enrichment centre the way I like it, no need to deal with all these.*

5.2.2 Adaptation: The process of adaptation for immigrant teachers occurs at both the personal and professional level

The findings in this study indicate that the adaptation for immigrant teachers occurs at two levels, the personal and professional. The participants talked about having to adjust to a "different culture and way of life in Australia" (Anusha, Angela, and Nara), and to the new ways of doing things in school (Angela, Janice, Kai Meng, and Kate). This finding corresponded with the idea of the "double culture shock" described in Austin (2007, p. 253), in which individuals had to deal with both the culture shock (Oberg, 1960) of living in a new country and the adjustment to a new workplace.

Furthermore, it was observed that individuals such as Marilyn and Michiko who showed a genuine desire to learn more about the Australian culture and way of life while still maintaining their own cultural practices (e.g., observant of their own cultural festivals) seemed to adapt most successfully. This finding aligns with Berry (1997, 2005), who posits that immigrants who hold a positive attitude towards acculturation and adopt the integration strategy of acculturation, in which they maintain their own cultural heritage but also learn the culture of the host country, adapt most successfully in their host countries. The same findings also support Bennett's (1986) assertion that intercultural sensitivity is important for the successful integration of immigrants. Individuals who hold on to their own perspective but are also open to learning about other cultures and accept the worldview of others are more successful in enculturating themselves in the host country (Bennett, 1986, 2017).

In describing their adaptation to the workplace, participants mostly talked about their interaction with students in the classroom. The focus on this feature is not surprising as students make up the core of the work as teachers. The participants spoke about how their students' learning needs and preferences had influenced the way they teach. These adjustments involved using a facilitation approach (Angela and Kai Meng), allowing more time for questioning and discussion (Janice, Marilyn), changing assessment approaches to cater for students' learning preference (Michiko), and even changing their communication style (Anusha). These findings support the earlier research observation that students play a significant role in the socialising of teachers as they influence the pedagogical approach, teaching strategies, and patterns of language that teachers use in the classroom (Doyle, 1979; Larsson, 1987; Pollard, 1982).

Interactions with colleagues appeared to be another area of concern for the participants. They spoke about learning the norms and expectations through observing the practices of their colleagues, listening in to conversations, and taking advice from superiors and the more experienced colleagues. These findings align with Pollard's (1982) observation that school colleagues play a significant role in the successful adaptation of teachers into the school environment.

Lastly, interaction with parents emerged as being more significant to the participants' professional adaptation than was expected. The participants cited positive experiences with parents (Renuka, Marilyn, and Rehvinder), as well as negative experiences (Michiko). These interactions led to positive emotions of feeling appreciated (Renuka, Marilyn, and Michiko), as well as negative emotions of anxiety (Angela) and vulnerability (Michiko). It was evident from the interviews that the participants consider the parents' perceptions of them to be an important element in their adaptation to the school. These observations concur with Pollard's (1982) claim about the impact of parental expectations on the socialisation of teachers into the school community, where parental pressure and the expectation of the local community exert a strong influence on the socialisation of teachers and affect the teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches that teachers adopt in the classrooms.

Overall, the above findings support Pollard's (1982) observation that workplace influences on teacher adaptation occur at the interactive level within the classroom, at the institutional level within the school, and at the societal level, which includes the expectations of the parents and the members of the wider community that the school is part of.

5.2.3 Teacher professional identity: Immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identity to align with the teaching context

The participants in this study related their teacher professional identity to their teaching experiences and professional characteristics of the skills, knowledge, values, and beliefs associated with teaching. Many spoke about having to acquire new skills and knowledge to support their teaching (Anusha, Rehvinder, Michiko, Kai Meng, and Angela), and related experiences of having to adjust to some differences in values and beliefs associated with teaching and learning (Angela and Anusha) as a result of their transition to the new teaching context. The participants also spoke about having to modify some previous practices (e.g., Anusha's previous practice of teacher-centred teaching and the teacher speaking loudly in front of the class) and recalibrate their expectations (e.g., Marilyn's expectation of docile and compliant students). Others spoke about having to teach subjects that were new to them (e.g., Rehvinder teaching agriculture and Anusha teaching science) to meet the needs of their school. Often, these changes were accompanied by a corresponding shift in participants' professional identity, which sometimes resulted in feelings of stress and anxiety for the participants (Angela and Janice). The findings support those of the immigrant teacher literature that report a shift in immigrant teachers' professional identity to meet the expectations of teaching and learning in their host countries and to adapt to the cultural norms and practices in their new school (Deters, 2006; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Virta, 2015).

The notion of the teacher professional identity being a fluid, shifting, and evolving construct is well documented in the literature (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005; Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006; Zembylas, 2003). Teachers' professional identities are not just constructed from the technical and emotional aspects of teaching, such as subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and students' academic performance (Hargreaves, 1994; Nias, 1989, 1996; Sumsion, 2002), but are also the result of interactions between the events and experiences in the personal lives of the teachers and the social, cultural, and school environment in which they work (Acker, 1999; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). Thus, it is not surprising that major life events such as migration to another country and teaching in a new educational context have a significant influence on participants' professional identity.

The findings also show that the participants' professional identity as teachers is influenced to a large degree by their interaction with members in the school community, including students, colleagues, and parents, and the emotions associated with these interactions. This finding concurs with earlier findings that the teachers' identity is co-constructed between the teacher, the members of the school, and the broader society to which they belong (Avalos & De Los

Rios, 2013; Smagorinsky et al., 2004), and also resonates with previous research on teacher vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996, 2005, 2009) and teacher emotion (Zembylas, 2003, 2004). In particular, the participants' feelings of anxiety and emotional exhaustion associated with having to meet the norms and expectations in the school resonate with Zembylas' (2004) observation on the emotional labour that teachers engage in in an effort to conform to what is deemed appropriate within schools. This feeling, together with the negative emotions that teachers experience in their day-to-day teaching and interaction with people in the school, has been said to lead to a feeling of vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996; Zembylas, 2004).

5.2.4 Summary of findings that confirm those in the research literature

In summary, this study confirmed three of the findings in the literature: (1) the challenges faced by immigrant teachers are universal across social context, (2) the process of adaptation for immigrant teachers occurs at both the personal and professional levels, and (3) immigrant teachers reconstruct their professional identity to align with their new teaching context.

5.3 Findings that appear in the relevant research literature but are absent from the findings of this study

This section examines those findings that appear in the relevant research literature and were therefore anticipated for this study but were absent from the study's findings. It also presents a discussion of the possible reasons for such absences of corroborative evidence from this small study. Similar to Section 5.2, the discussion here is organised thematically according to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two: immigrant teachers (Section 2.2), adaptation (Section 2.3), and teacher professional identity (Section 2.4).

5.3.1 Immigrant teachers: Customised support strategies are helpful and welcomed by immigrant teachers

The finding in the literature that customised support strategies are helpful for immigrant teachers was found to be incompatible with the needs of the participants in this study. A frequently seen recommendation in the immigrant teacher literature is the call for customised support strategies to facilitate the professional integration of immigrant teachers (Caravatti et al., 2014; Fee, 2010; Hutchison, 2006; Maylor et al., 2006; Sharplin, 2009; Walsh et al., 2011). However, the findings show that Asian Australian immigrant teachers may not welcome such initiatives, and the effectiveness of these initiatives is debatable. While a few participants (Kate and Janice) mentioned that an explanation of the local education system would have been helpful, most were mindful about being seen as different from the local teachers (Angela and Janice), causing "additional work" and "inconvenience" to the school (Angela and Kate), and

appearing "weak" and "needing help" (Kai Meng and Rehvinder). Kate shared her thoughts about a support program for immigrant teachers:

> *We are not beginning teachers. We are just new to the school. So, a generic induction program in the first week that caters to all newcomers to the school will be good enough. I don't want any special program for immigrant teachers. It is difficult. We have been teaching for years, and we know what we are doing. It's good to have somebody in the staffroom that we can ask questions as and when the need arises, but to be put on a mentoring program or any form of customised support program is strange. I don't know…it kind of made us feel like we are beginning teachers.*

In fact, many participants felt that with their experience, they are in a position to contribute rather than be supported. The participants did not welcome the idea that immigrant teachers are deficits and need support. Rather, they want to be "treated the same as everyone else" (Angela). They do not want to be seen as an "additional burden to the school" (Kai Meng), and they want to be seen as contributing to the school (Kate and Rehvinder).

One possible reason for this observation is that the participants have a strong desire to blend in with the teaching community and to be accepted and recognised for their teaching skills and competence. Hence, the idea of being in a customised support program contradicts such a view. In addition, the perception of the participants that they are experienced teachers with many years of teaching experience may have caused them to feel embarrassed to ask for help or to be seen as needing support. Finally, most of the participants (except for Michiko and Nara) come from countries that are ex-British colonies that have education systems that are similar to that of Australia. These participants are competent in English and have used English as their language of instruction in schools in their home country. These similarities may have made the professional adaptation of these participants less problematic compared to studies cited in other immigrant teacher literature where the teachers needed to teach in a new language medium or a vastly different education system.

5.3.2   Adaptation: Immigrant teachers' adaptation is a function of time

The finding in the literature that adaptation improves over time did not apply to all the participants in this study. The participants' length of stay in Australia ranged from two years to 15 years. While it was expected that the participants' adaptation would be proportional to their length of stay in Australia, the data show that this situation is not necessarily so. For example, although both Marilyn and Anusha have been in Australia for 15 years, there is a significant difference in the way they relate to their workplace. While Marilyn appears to be

an integral member of her school community who is well-respected by students, parents, and colleagues alike, Anusha has not established any long-term relationships with people in the school as she decided to move to a different school every few years. She also prefers to keep to herself at work and socialises only with a small circle of friends from her home country. Also, while Michiko and Kate have been in Australia for a shorter period than Anusha, they seems to have adapted to the school much better. Michiko said that her school is now very much a part of her life, and despite not having many friends in school, Kate has a strong attachment to her students and considers herself to be critical to her students' success. Being department heads (Michiko and Kate) and a teacher mentor (Marilyn) gives participants a sense that they are needed and that their work in school is validated, which has enhanced their sense of having adapted well to the school.

While these observations concur with earlier research that shows that adaptation is the interplay of the personal factors of personality (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Ward & Searle, 1991), openness to the host culture (Kim, 2001), desire to interact (Berry, 1997), the amount of interaction (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992), and the receptivity of the host environment (Kim, 2006), it also challenges the view that immigrant adaptation improves over time, as depicted in the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960) and the stress-adaptation-growth model (Kim, 2001). The findings in this study reveal that while immigrant adaptation problems may decrease over time as the immigrants acquire the culture-specific skills and knowledge to function effectively in their host environment, this pattern does not apply to all individuals. Some of the participants (Renuka, Michiko, and Anusha) have continued to experience a sense of being outsiders when confronted with conflicting values and beliefs (Kim, 2001), and lamented that they have not adapted well despite having lived in Australia for between five and 15 years.

The experiences of Renuka, Michiko, and Anusha are not consistent with the adaptation models proposed separately by Lysgaard (1995), Oberg (1960), and Kim (2001). Neither are they consistent with the development stages put forward in Bennett's (1986) DMIS. One reason could be that immigrant adaptation is a complex, multi-dimensional process that takes into consideration the multiple elements that interact at the personal and contextual levels at each stage of the adaptation process. Immigrants' personal characteristics and attitudes, the workplace context, and the greater social-cultural environment all play a role in shaping the professional adaptation process. Therefore, there is a need to conceptualise professional adaptation in a more complex way beyond just looking at the element of time.

5.3.3 Teacher professional identity: Teachers are submissive subjects who change their professional identity to conform and fit in with the school community

The previous literature on immigrant teachers, teacher socialisation, and professional identity tends to portray teachers as passive and submissive subjects who change their professional identity to conform to a set of norms in order to fit in with the culture of their schools, and the professional adaptation process is perceived as the active and domineering agent that is responsible for transforming these teachers. This view does not hold true for some of the participants in this study. The findings show that while participants did experience some changes in their professional identities in terms of adopting new practices, beliefs, and attitudes associated with teaching as a result of the influence of their new teaching context, they also exercised a high degree of agency in their professional growth and adaptation process. A few of the participants were seen to be driven to take charge of their professional growth in the adaptation process, and have also been proactive in wanting to influence the practices of their school community.

Some examples include Angela deciding to tap into her own vulnerability as a new, non-white teacher by sharing with her students her ethnocultural identity and seeking to understand theirs in order to build connections with her students. In doing so, she hoped to build trust and relationships with her students and gain their acceptance and respect, believing that this would facilitate her professional adaptation. Kai Meng also sought to influence the teaching pedagogy of his colleagues by offering to conduct workshops for teachers in his department. Another example is Kate, who decided to control her own professional growth by taking on the leadership in her department and to "wake up the laid-back culture" by putting in place new expectations and practices as the head of the department. As well as influencing the practices in her department, Kate also sought to change the attitude of her teachers and students. She wants her teachers to adopt the belief that "all students can do well, they just need to experience success", and she also wants to set high expectations for her department teachers and students. These actions are examples of how immigrant teachers exercise teacher agency to take charge of their professional growth, as well as influence their immediate environment in their professional adaptation process.

5.3.4 Summary of what was absent from the findings and possible reasons

In summary, the finding in the previous literature that customised support strategies are welcomed by immigrant teachers was absent from the findings of this study. The desire of the participants in this study to blend in with and to be accepted by the teaching community may

have caused them to refuse customised support. Also, the finding proposed in the immigrant adaptation literature that adaptation improves over time did not apply to all participants in this study. It could be that immigrant adaptation involves the interaction between multiple elements at the personal and contextual levels, and the findings of this study illustrated that an individual's adaptation journey is influenced by their personal characteristics and attitudes, the workplace context, and the social-cultural environment that they live in. Hence, they may not conform to a standard pattern of adaptation. Lastly, the idea that teachers are submissive subjects who change their professional identity to conform to and 'fit in' with the school community did not hold true for the participants in this study. A possible reason could be that the notion of teacher agency that was evident in the findings has not been investigated in the previous immigrant teacher research.

5.4   Findings that are not evident in research literature but were found in the analysis

This section examines the findings that emerged in the analysis of the study data but were not found in the research literature on immigrant teachers. A key finding is the notion of the sense of belonging, which emerged as the central construct that underpinned the participants' professional adaptation. The second finding relates to immigrant teachers' performance of belonging and not belonging in a school. These are the two most original and significant contributions of this study. Given that the sense of belonging is an unexpected major finding that emerged from the data analysis (see Section 4.4.4), the following subsections examine this key finding and its relation to the relevant literature. Using data from this study, examples are presented of how immigrant teachers' sense of belonging and not belonging are enacted in schools.

5.4.1   Sense of belonging as the central construct that underpins professional adaptation

5.4.1.1   The desire to belong

The data show that participants relate professional adaptation to their sense of belonging to their school community. All participants in this study had either implicitly or explicitly expressed their desire to belong and to be accepted by members of the school community. The participants spoke about their desire to be part of the school community in several ways: Angela spoke about wanting to "break into the culture" and be "part of the conversation", Janice talked about her effort in "trying to penetrate into the circle of teachers", and Michiko expressed her desire to be "part of the school". Many also spoke about their wish to be "respected" (Marilyn, Rehvinder, Nara, Renuka, and Janice), "valued" (Angela, Kai Meng, and

Michiko), "recognised" (Kai Meng, Kate, and Rehvinder), and "appreciated" (Michiko). Several participants mentioned that they felt like an "outsider" in their school (Angela, Anusha, and Renuka), that they were "ignored" (Nara), "treated kinda cold" (Angela), were "being watched" (Angela and Kate), and felt like they were "under a bit of a microscope" (Renuka).

Others described their professional adaptation experiences with words like feeling "anxious" (Angela and Kate), "lonely" (Angela), "vulnerable" (Michiko), "intimidated" (Kate and Marilyn), and "alone" (Angela and Kate). What is common in the participants' descriptions is a desire to be respected, valued, connected with, and accepted as part of the school community. The notion of belonging was expressed separately by Rehvinder and Anusha in their statements below:

> *Rehvinder: You know, you just feel like they treat you differently… that you are not part of them… that you don't belong here…*
>
> *Anusha: As an outsider, I don't get caught up with the politics of staff. I try not to. I kind of see it as an outsider…maybe because I don't stay in a school for too long, so I don't really feel like I am part of the school…that I belong...*

The participants' desire to connect with and to be accepted into the school community resonates with the literature on belonging. A sense of belonging is defined as the extent to which an individual feels socially connected, respected, accepted, supported, and included by other people in various social contexts (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty et al., 1992). It denotes that one is part of or a member of a particular social group, solidarity, collectivity, or organisation (Halse, 2018). In their review of belonging literature, Mahar et al. (2013) deduced that belonging is not a one-sided relationship but a multi-dimensional concept that involves a reciprocal relationship with the desired group that is built on shared experiences, beliefs, or personal characteristics. It is a dynamic phenomenon that may be either hindered or promoted by interactions between personal and environmental factors.

In Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943), the need for belonging or relatedness comes after physiological and safety needs but before the needs for self-esteem and self-actualisation, suggesting that one's need for belongingness must be met before self-esteem and self-actualisation can be addressed. The idea of relatedness is echoed in Alderfer's ERG theory of motivation (Alderfer, 1969), which suggests that existence (E), relatedness (R), and growth (G) form the core needs of human beings. Likewise, relatedness is also highlighted in Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, which suggests that human motivation

is determined by the pursuit of innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

My participants' desire to relate with and to form positive relationships with people in the school community is consistent with the theories of Alderfer (1969), Baumeister and Leary (1995), and Maslow (1943). As a result of the need to belong, participants were seen to engage in behaviours that enhanced their belonging status in the school. Some examples included Janice's action of coming into the school early in the morning to chat with colleagues, Angela's and Kai Meng's attempts to join in the local teachers' conversation during lunchtime, and Nara's initiative to look for colleagues to chat with after lessons ended for the day. The participants' actions are consistent with Baumeister and Leary (1995), who observe that individuals are driven to engage in behaviours to enhance their sense of belonging in a new environment.

In addition to making conversation, the participants had also offered help to their colleagues, hoping that their actions would facilitate their acceptance by colleagues and thereby enhance their belonging status. An example of this is illustrated by Janice's action below:

> *Over here, I am the one who goes around asking, "Oh, is there anything I can help you with? Or I can do this, or I can do that". When you help them often, they consider you as part of the in-group in their circle of friends. Then they will do the regular small talk with you. They will talk to you about their day, the show they watch, what happened to their children or their dogs.*

Other than Janice, Angela had offered to share her teaching resources with colleagues, and Kai Meng had volunteered to be on the planning committee for school events. Their actions were consistent with the findings in the belonging literature that suggest that individuals seek out social connections by offering to help their colleagues and working extra hard in order to be accepted by the desired group (Maner et al., 2007; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009).

However, the data also identify that not all participants were inclined to engage in belongingness enhancing behaviours. In fact, a few participants displayed behaviour that impeded their sense of belonging. An example was Kate's refusal to join her colleagues for lunch and on their weekly after-school outing.

> *I don't join them for lunch. There is already so much to do. It's stressful having to make polite conversations during lunch. They sometimes asked me to go out after school*

for coffee or shopping, sometimes to hang out at the bar. No, I don't join them. There is nothing much to talk about.

While not as common, Kate's action of refusing to engage with colleagues is documented in the belonging literature (Gerber & Wheeler, 2009), which suggests that individuals engage in behaviours that diminish their belonging status when they feel powerless in their belongingness status because of discrimination or perceived isolation (Mahar et al., 2013). In general, when given the opportunity, individuals are more likely to engage in behaviours that enhance their belongingness status (Maner et al., 2007), such as those of Angela, Janice, Kai Meng, and Nara described above.

5.4.1.2 Belonging and identity

It is clear from the data that my participants relate their belongingness largely to their professional identity as teachers, to some extent their identity as Asians, and the practices, beliefs, values, and attitudes associated with these identities. The data highlight that my participants perceive that their professional identity as teachers is an important aspect of their status of belonging to the school community. My participants cited their ability to gain stable employment as teachers (Janice and Angela), recognition of their skills, subject matter, and pedagogical knowledge (Angela, Kate, Marilyn, Kai Meng, and Rehvinder), and alignment of the beliefs and attitudes associated with teaching and learning (Angela, Janice, and Kai Meng) as elements that they identified with. These affirmed their professional identity as teachers and enhanced their sense of membership and belongingness to the school community.

While having shared professional characteristics (e.g., practices, values, and beliefs) as teachers strengthened my participants' professional identity and enhanced their sense of belonging, a mismatch between the school's demands and my participants' skills and knowledge as well as differences in beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning can erode participants' sense of belonging to the school. This situation is especially so when participants feel that they are different and do not fit in.

This idea was articulated by Hagerty and Patusky (1995), who say that for an individual to feel a sense of belonging to a system or an environment, they need to experience being valued and needed, and also perceive that their characteristics fit into or complement the system and environment. When individuals feel secure and integral to the group and that their professional and/or personal values are in harmony with those of the group, they feel a sense of belonging to the group (Levett-Jones et al., 2009).

My participants also related their belongingness to their identity as Asians and the values and attitudes that they deem to be associated with being Asian. For example, Kate often spoke about her beliefs in "the good old Asian values" of resilience and tenacity, Marilyn talked about the values of respect that are "ingrained in the Asian society", Rehvinder spoke highly of the diligent work attitude of Asian teachers, and Renuka shared fondly about the practices of Asian students standing up to greet their teachers at the start of each lesson. These data corroborate Yuval-Davis' (2004, 2006) idea that belonging is associated with the different social location of the individual (e.g., race, ethnicity, profession) and how individuals identify with and are attached to particular social groups, such as through common practices and behaviour and through shared beliefs and values. This idea is echoed by May (2011), who views belonging as "the process of creating a sense of identification with one's social, relational, and material surroundings" (p. 368), and Youkhana (2015), who observes that belonging is not just about the "relationship between people, but also between people and the flow of values, ideas, and social practices" (p. 11).

It was observed that the migration process had resulted in the participants in this study losing some aspects of their professional identity as they needed to discard some previous beliefs and practices and take on new skills, knowledge, and practices in the new teaching context. A few participants also felt that they had lost some aspects of their Asian identity due to the loss of their native language, cultural traditions, and practices. Angela lamented that she sometimes felt that she is "starting all over again as a teacher", and Marilyn also observed that her daughters are "not very Asian" and are "very different from me [her]". The loss of identity, coupled with the limited personal and social ties with people in a new environment and the uncertainty of their economic and residency status in the host country could have compromised the participants' belongingness status and led to the sense of loneliness and displacement (Antonisch, 2010) that was evident in the participants' adaptation stories.

5.4.1.3 Belonging and emotion

My participants' emotions appeared to play a critical role in constructing belonging. My participants felt vulnerable when their teaching competence was questioned (Rehvinder) and when they were singled out and stereotyped based on their ethnocultural identity (Marilyn, Anusha, Renuka, Rehvinder, and Kate). They spoke about their interactions with people in the school community (students, students' parents, principals, and colleagues), which seemed to define their feeling of belonging and not belonging. My participants' statements revealed that belonging was enacted when they felt appreciated, respected, and valued by people in the school community, and not belonging was associated with negative emotions of feeling

disrespect, distrust, and being ignored (refer to Section 4.4.2). These emotions were played out in Rehvinder's experience in her school:

> *On my first day of work, the principal told me that I wasn't quite white enough. If teachers don't like you, I am going to say I can't keep you. Of course, I was shocked! And because I was the only Asian in that school, it did feel like everybody, the students, the teachers, everybody was looking at me throughout my stint there…*
>
> *Being Asian, they kinda looked down on you because they are white. So, you can never be good enough. I knew that they didn't want to give me the advanced English class because I wasn't white, I wasn't Australian. This is despite me having taught English at the senior level for the last 20 years. So I was given the lower level classes all the time.*

The data in this study show that the sense of vulnerability is the core emotion in participants' interactions with members of the school community. They felt fearful and intimidated when confronted with disrespectful students (Anusha, Kate, Marilyn, and Michiko), anxious when challenged by students' parents (Michiko and Renuka), worried about being watched by their principals, and distressed when excluded by colleagues (Angela and Janice). The participants appeared to be deeply affected by these emotions. For example, Nara's sense of not belonging led to her feel lonely and caused her to start doubting her ability as a teacher:

> *It is so difficult to make friends. I tried to look for them to talk to, but most people just leave school immediately after the last period. I have teachers with who I co-teach. I assume that we will discuss the lesson planning together, but that didn't happen. They just gave me what they have prepared; usually, it is just something from the file, then they told me which section I should teach. That's all. There was not much communication. Maybe they think that I am new to teaching? Or they didn't think that I am able to contribute ideas? I am not sure. I feel so lonely that sometimes, after school, I go to the library to talk to some students.*

The feeling of not fitting in and not belonging can mean being marginalised or excluded from one's desired social group or community (Yuval-Davis, 2011), which can result in individuals feeling isolated, inferior, and excluded (Halse, 2018; Wright, 2015), as shown in the case of Nara.

On the other hand, my participants felt a sense of belonging to the school community when they felt appreciated, trusted, and valued by their principals and colleagues. Similarly, being

assigned an important task (e.g., to teach graduating classes) or appointed to a position of responsibility (e.g., as mentor teacher or department head) made participants feel needed, trusted, and important, which enhanced their sense of belonging. This aspect of the sense of belonging is consistent with Wright's (2015) findings of the role of emotions in constructing belonging, and is aligned with earlier studies that found that feeling respected or receiving respect satisfies individuals' core need for belonging (Huo & Binning, 2008; Huo et al., 2010). It also supports Bollen and Hoyle's (1990) argument that a sense of belonging is made up of both cognitive and affective elements, and that besides identities, experiences, and characteristics, the feelings that arise from interaction with members of the group constitute an important aspect of belonging.

5.4.1.4 Teachers' sense of belonging to their workplace

My participants' experiences at their workplace constituted an important aspect of their feeling of belongingness. It is apparent from the interviews that the participants who feel they belong to their school community (e.g., Marilyn and Michiko) experience a higher level of job satisfaction, and are more motivated, committed to their work, and more content with their work life. However, those who do not feel that they belong to their school community (e.g. Janice, Angela, and Rehvinder) feel anxious, distressed, and at times frustrated with their situation. These feelings are encapsulated in Janice's statement below:

> This is just so tough…so tough…I have been a CRT (casual relief teacher) for almost a year. Because I don't do the relationship-building thing, I don't get a call back to the school regularly for work. You have to build relationships with your so-called potential colleagues. Then they would think that you are a team player. If you don't, then even if you do a good job and produce good outcomes, you will not be called back. 'Cos they feel that you are not someone whom they feel that they want. So it can be very frustrating. I don't know if I will have a job next week, I don't know how long I will last here.

On the other hand, the participants who reported a feeling of belonging to their school appeared to be more motivated at work and displayed a positive attitude when faced with challenging situations. For example, Michiko's sense of affinity towards her school and her positive attitude towards work is demonstrated in her statements below:

> I was offered the headship last year to manage the Japanese and Italian languages unit. It was tough leading a cross-cultural team of teachers. Everybody has something to say at the meeting. They all want their voices heard. It was difficult

managing the teachers. I am working hard to improve my communication with them. I am doing better now. Things have improved this year, but I am still working on it.

Michiko's commitment to her work and determination to improve herself is consistent with the literature that suggests that people who feel they belong to their workplace perform better, are more willing to challenge themselves, and are more resilient (Shakespeare-Finch & Daley, 2017; Waller, 2020).

Beyond work performance, a sense of belongingness and connectedness with people in the school appeared to improve job satisfaction and enhance the general pleasant feeling of well-being and camaraderie at work.

Marilyn: I have been here [in this school] for 15 years now. It has been a long time. Many of the people here, the principal and the teachers, have known each other for so long. It's a good relationship, a strong bond that has been built over many years. Even my students' parents, many have become friends long after their children have graduated. I will probably work here until I retire… [I] can't imagine myself going to any other schools.

Marilyn's feeling of satisfaction and contentment at work resonates with research that shows that individuals seek pleasant working relationships with co-workers, peers, and others in the workplace through feelings of belongingness and connectedness, integration into the work community, and acknowledgement by colleagues and other members in the organisation (Ryan & Deci 2000). Teachers who feel they belong to their school also display higher job satisfaction and commitment to their profession and experience a higher level of well-being (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018; Juvonen, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The literature also indicates that having a sense of belonging to the school community encourages mutual support and pedagogical collaboration among teachers (Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012), a more collegial co-teaching relationship, and more effective teaching (Pesonen et al., 2020).

Both Marilyn and Michiko's sense of belonging to their school were apparent as they spoke with pride about their school curriculum, their values, and the people in the school. During the interview, Marilyn took me on a walk through the school, introduced me to the teachers and students we met, and explained to me the school values that she has proudly displayed in her classrooms. Likewise, Michiko is proud of her school. Her affinity for the school is evident in her statement:

The school is a good one. We have a strong curriculum and provide our girls with many opportunities. My principal is really good. She is a good role model for all of us. Whatever she wants us to do, she demonstrated through her own actions and words. She is very hands-on. The teachers work hard, and the girls are good and well behaved. I have been here for 11 years. School is an important part of my life. I am happy here. I don't see any reason to go anywhere else.

Michiko and Marilyn's behaviour is discussed in the teacher belonging literature. This literature states that teachers' sense of belonging is the extent to which they feel they are part of the school and its values (Goodenow, 1993; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), the feeling of being accepted and respected by school staff and students, and feeling proud of belonging to the school as a workplace (Goodenow, 1993). Teachers feel a sense of belonging to their school when their values are congruent with that of the school (Juutinen, 2018), when they feel respected by their students and colleagues (Goodenow, 1993), when they are valued, trusted, and accepted (Hagerty et al., 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), and when they are supported by their principal (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). Some research claims that teacher belongingness has a positive influence on students' sense of belonging to the school (Cortina et al., 2017; Juutinen, 2018; Pesonen, 2016), although there is no evidence in this study that supports this finding.

This section has discussed the construct of belonging, which is a major finding that was identified in this research on immigrant teacher professional adaptation. The review of the belonging literature shows that the existing theories on the sense of belonging do not sufficiently capture the lived experiences of belonging, and in particular, it does not capture the immigrant teachers' feeling of belonging to their school community. The literature on belonging appears to be lacking in real examples of what belonging means to immigrant teachers, how it is constructed, what it looks like in practice, its effects on individuals and for the school, and how it can be undermined and undone. While this research is not able to address all these questions, the data gathered in this study seek to address this gap in knowledge by providing real examples of how immigrant teachers enact and experience belonging and not belonging in their school context (see next section).

5.4.2   Immigrant teachers' performance of belonging and not belonging

To Angela, belonging means to be considered "the same" as the local teachers. The idea of sameness was brought up in our first interview. Angela insisted on perceiving herself as being no different from the local teachers, as she stated that "We are the same, there is no difference, we teach in the same way". However, as much as Angela wanted to consider

herself the same as her local colleagues, she soon realised that this is not the case. In subsequent interviews, Angela talked about how the views towards education are different:

Back in where I come from, doing well in exams and getting promoted to the next grade level is a big thing. But it is not so here. Everybody will get promoted. So, there are still tests and exams, but there is no pressure to perform well. So, it is a lot of self- motivation to score well. So, it really has to do with themselves or their parents' expectations of them to score well, but there's no consequences if they don't do well either. I think it affects their learning a lot…their learning is more genuine and more self-motivated.

As Angela became more comfortable in the subsequent interview, she revealed that she felt lonely, that she did not belong, and that she often considered herself to be an "outsider". While these feelings came from the numerous day-to-day experiences of interacting with people in the school, one particular incident struck her:

One morning, on my way to school, my car broke down on the freeway. I had a first period lesson that morning, and I didn't think I would make it to school on time. I wanted to call somebody in school to tell them. Then it suddenly dawned on me that I did not have the phone number of my department head. Of course, later, I decided that I could call the general office, and that was what I did eventually. Another time, I needed somebody to help me collect something from my desk as I have already left school for the day. Then I realised that I do not have any colleagues' phones. The feeling is quite sad; I realised that I have no one to call to for help.

Angela also shared that she had always been the one to take the initiative to join her colleagues for lunch:

Nobody would come and ask me for lunch, so whenever I see them go to the staff lounge for lunch, I would bring my lunchbox to join in. It was quite tiring actually, trying to make conversations with them. After a while, I just gave up and ate lunch at my desk. This is just so hard. I don't remember it being this hard in Singapore. We just talk and chit chat easily. But over here, it's different. I have been in the school for almost one semester, but I still don't feel comfortable there. You know, this feeling that you are not really [part of] them.

For Renuka, to belong means to be included, trusted, and respected. She recalled an incident in which her first year teacher colleagues went ahead to attend a workshop together without asking her along when she had told them earlier that she would like to go together. Renuka said that she felt hurt and perceived that her colleagues had intentionally excluded her. She was also upset that her principal doubted her and was sceptical about her health condition.

> *After my back operation, the AP (assistant principal) was sympathetic and arranged for me to stagger my yard duty so that I do not have to stand up for too long. I didn't request it. She did it out of her goodwill. But one afternoon, after most of the teachers had left the school, my principal came into my classroom and shouted at me again. He said that I shouldn't expect any sympathy or request for any special arrangement. If I am able to come back to work, it means that I can function just like any other teachers in the school and that it was unbecoming of me to expect them to make special arrangements for me. He didn't even check with the AP and assumed that I had requested, and he didn't even want to hear my explanation!*

The data show that not belonging can be imposed, for example, when immigrant teachers have their job applications rejected (e.g., Janice's inability to get a teaching job), are shunned by colleagues (e.g., Renuka's experience of alienation by colleagues), are openly told that they are different (e.g., Rehvinder was openly told by her principal that she is not white enough, and will not be able to stay in the school if her colleagues do not like her), or when they are belittled:

> *Nara: When I first approached the administrative staff in the general office, the lady wasn't very nice. She continued chatting casually with her colleagues for a long time even as I was standing in front of the counter, then when I asked her questions about my timesheet and how to go about applying for leave, she appeared that she is too busy to explain to me. Then she asked me to send her an email, and she will reply to my email. I find it so strange. When I didn't respond to her immediately, she asked if I understood English, and then she explained her instructions about sending an email again. This time, she deliberately spoke slowly and accented her words. I find that so humiliating! I don't think she speaks to the local teachers this way.*

Even for participants who have worked in the school for some years, certain events can trigger a feeling of not belonging. Examples of such occurrences include Renuka being told that her English is very good almost every time she meets a new colleague:

You know, I have many comments like, "Oh, you come from Asia, you speak good English!" It's like…you expect me not to speak English just because I come from another country?! I speak better English than you! Don't assume! And then when they know that you have daughters in school, they ask, "So you had daughters in secondary school, how are they managing their English?" Oh, of course, they are fine! Come on, we have been here for years, and people assume that just because we are not white, we don't speak English?

Kate also feels singled out whenever her white colleagues try to greet her in Mandarin with *ni hao ma* (how are you).

It generally drives me nuts when people see me walking down the corridor and going 'ni hao'. I always ignore them and pretend not to understand what they are saying – our mode of communication is in English, and that's that. When things like that happen, it makes me think about whether I really belong here, whether I am really accepted here. It's strange actually. Most of the time the people are nice and welcoming, then once in a while, you have encounters like this. Anyway, maybe I am just too sensitive…

Michiko described her experience of feeling as if she belonged and then feeling that she did not belong:

After being here for 11 years, I feel that I am actually part of the school, part of the community. Then that day, when my friend said that she envied me because I have many Asian students in my class, I suddenly realised that I am actually more comfortable teaching classes with Asian students. So, it seems that after so many years, I still have not fully adapted to teaching here.

Michiko chose to use the word 'adapt' to describe her emotions and ideas of being part of the school. To her, adaptation is associated with the feeling of being part of the school. So, at one point, she felt that she had already adapted to teaching in her school; however, the conversation with her friend made her realise that she may not have become fully adapted after all, and that she is not as much a part of the school community as she had imagined herself to be. This sudden realisation undermined the extent of her feeling of belongingness to her school community.

Renuka, Kate, and Michiko's experiences illustrate that the sense of belonging is a fluid construct that exists on a continuum. It can move forward and backwards. One may feel one belongs at some point and then feel that one does not belong at another when triggered by certain cues. It also shows that a sense of belonging is the sum of participants' day-to-day experiences of living and interacting with people and the emotions associated with these experiences. The data in Chapter Four illustrate that the feeling of belonging and not belonging is not simply the result of interaction with any single person or group of people (students, colleagues, principal or parents), but rather a multi-dimensional construct that takes into account the interactions between multiple personal and contextual elements that accumulate over a period of time.

5.4.3 Summary of new findings

In summary, the study reveals that immigrant teachers' professional adaptation is underpinned by their sense of belonging to the school community. The desire to belong is an innate, adaptive need that shapes participants' actions, and participants' belongingness relates to their identity and affects their emotions. For immigrant teachers, a sense of belonging to the workplace is associated with a positive feeling of job satisfaction, contentment, and a desire to take on new challenges at work, while the lack of belonging leads to distress, a feeling of inferiority, and low self-esteem. Examination of participants' performance of belonging in school reveals that it is a fluid and dynamic construct that is an aggregation of individuals' day-to-day experiences of living and interacting with people and the emotions associated with these experiences. The next section argues for a new way to conceptualise the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers by offering a theoretical proposition derived from my interpretation of the data gathered in this study.

5.5 Justification for a new theory to explain professional adaptation

The above findings illuminate the key role played by the sense of belonging in professional adaptation. The data show that developing a sense of belonging to the school community is a significant influence contributing to participants' positive perception of their professional adaptation experience. However, the notion of a sense of belonging is largely ignored in the immigrant teacher literature. The data gathered in this study further suggest that immigrant teachers' sense of belonging to their school community is influenced by their professional identity, sense of vulnerability, and intercultural perspective. As discussed in Section 5.2, some of these findings can be explained by the theories of cross-cultural adaptation, teacher socialisation, and professional identity as presented in Chapter Two and the belongingness theory discussed in Section 5.4. While each of these theories helps to explain the findings to

a certain extent, none of the existing theories alone can provide a good explanatory fit for all the aspects of the findings in this study. In this section, the main aspects of each existing theory are outlined, as well as the extent to which the theories have helped to explain the findings and their limitations in explaining some aspects of the   findings. An outline of the discussion for each section is presented in Tables 5.1 to Table 5.4, and the details are further elaborated in Sections 5.5.1 to 5.5.4.

5.5.1   Cross-cultural adaptation theories

As shown in Table 5.1, the major theories associated with cross-cultural adaptation discussed in this study are Berry's (1997) model of acculturation, the notion of psychological and sociocultural adaptation proposed by Ward and her associates (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 1996; Searle & Ward, 1990), the U-curve model of cultural adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960), the stress-adaptation-growth model of adaptation (Kim, 2001), and Bennett's (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS). The following subsections discuss the aspects of the findings that these theories help to explain and the findings that they are unable to explain.

Table 5.1

Comparing the Findings with Theories Related to Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Theory	Aspects of the findings it helps to explain	Aspects of the findings it does not help to explain
Berry's (1997) model of acculturation	Helps to explain the behaviours of some participants (e.g., Angela and Kai Meng).	Does not explain participants' differences in attitudes towards cultural maintenance and cultural acquisition.
		Does not consider the influence of external factors (e.g., receptivity of the host environment, immigrants' experiences of interacting with people in the host country) on participants' attitudes towards acculturation.
		Does not explain participants' adoption of different acculturation strategies under different situational context, which, according to the findings, have been shown to affect participants' acculturation strategies.

Theory	Aspects of the findings it helps to explain	Aspects of the findings it does not help to explain
Ward and Kennedy's (1992) psychological and sociocultural adaptation	Helps to explain the differences in individuals' acculturation attitudes and degree of adaptation among migrants with seemingly similar characteristics.	The theory has been used to explain the adaptation of short-term sojourners such as students and expatriates; however, it appears that there is little research on its applicability to long-term immigrants in the workplace setting, which is the focus of this study.
Lysgaard's (1955) and Oberg's (1960) U-curve of cultural adjustment	Provides an overall description of the adaptation process of some participants.	This model does not offer a good explanatory fit for the participants' adaptation experience. The findings show that not all immigrants experience the initial honeymoon stage depicted in the U-curve. For many, the stress level is the highest in the initial months but gradually decreases over time.
Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model	Helps to explain the finding that participants' adaptation is an ongoing cycle of overcoming setbacks and then bouncing back to find a new equilibrium (e.g., Michiko and Kate).	The model fails to explain that although one can learn and follow the rules of a new culture and appear to adapt to the host culture at a superficial level, one can still feel like an outsider on a psychological level. The model is unable to explain the feeling of being othered or regarded as outsiders that is prevalent even among participants who have been in the host country for many years.
Bennett's (1996) developmental model for intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)	Helps to explain the behaviours of participants, including their critical attitude, sense of superiority, and defensive stance, and their behaviour and views towards accepting and adapting to cultural differences.	Bennett's model assumes a linear, unidirectional movement in which individuals move from the ethnocentric stages to the ethnorelative stages as they become more interculturally sensitive. However, the findings show that this flow might be bidirectional as participants move back and forth along the different stages on the DMIS continuum.

The DMIS does not consider factors that could affect an individual's intercultural sensitivity and competence, such as participants' personality, motivation to migrate, and prior intercultural experience.

It appears that the majority of the applications and research on the DMIS were conducted in the academic and organisational context of sojourners (e.g., students and expatriates), and there is limited research on the model's applicability to long-term immigrants. |

5.5.1.1 Berry's (1997) model of acculturation

Berry argues that an immigrant's choice of acculturation strategies is dependent on their attitudes towards maintenance of their home culture and their desire to interact with the host culture. Immigrants who desire to adopt the cultural norm of the host country and are less concerned with maintaining their own culture tend to adopt the strategy of assimilation. Those who desire to maintain the culture of their home country while also adopting the cultural practices of their host country tend to choose the integration approach. Immigrants who cherish cultural maintenance and reject the host country's culture are more inclined to adopt the separation approach, while marginalisation occurs when the immigrants do not identify with or participate in either their own or the host culture. He maintains that those who adopt the integration strategy are likely to enjoy more success in cross-cultural adaptation.

As shown in Table 5.1, Berry's theory does, to some extent, help to explain some of the participants' behaviour. For example, Angela was seen to adopt the assimilation strategy, as evident in her eagerness "to blend in and be seen as the same as the local teachers". During the interviews, she spoke about the classroom management practices commonly adopted by the local teachers and how she has tried to emulate them. She also spoke about her admiration for the attitudes of local teachers towards learning and is keen to adopt a similar mentality:

> *I like that here, the focus is on the process of learning. Of course, the outcome is still important, but I like it that they [the teachers] really focus on the learning process. And because the promotion to the next year level is not dependent on your exam results, there is not so much pressure to do well in the exam. Students work hard because they want to, not because they are afraid of being retained in the same grade. I feel that this is the attitude that we should all have.*

On the other hand, Kai Meng seems inclined towards the separation strategy of acculturation. While he had initially desired to assimilate into his school, he seemed to have given up on doing so. He has not made any friends at work and only had "superficial conversations" with teachers in his department. In a recent conversation, Kai Meng told me that he has left his teaching job at the non-government school after eight months and decided to start his own tuition business. His business targets providing tuition to migrant students from China, many of whom are new migrants or have limited English language competency. Kai Meng's circle of friends is made up of those who are migrants, just like himself. When not at work, he and his friends head out to hunt for eateries selling Southeast Asia food.

Sometimes I don't feel like I am living in Australia. My life doesn't feel too different from that in Singapore. Now that I am running my own business, I have more autonomy to decide what and how I want to teach. I believe that my teaching is good. I have helped students get good results in maths, and they are happy. Many of my students' parents have referred their friends' children to my tuition centre.

While Berry's (1997) theory is widely adopted in the migrant literature to explain immigrant acculturation in general, it is not able to explain all aspects of the findings of this study. For example, Berry's theory is not able to explain the difference in participants' attitudes towards cultural maintenance and cultural acquisition. The difference in immigrants' attitudes could possibly be due to their prior experiences with people in the host country. For example, Janice's negative experience when interacting with her classmates while at university may have influenced her attitude towards cultural maintenance and cultural acquisition. Likewise, Rehvinder's prior experiences of working in cross-cultural settings, Renuka's experiences as a high school student in Melbourne as a high school student, Kate's marriage to a German, and Angela's post-colonial mentality may have shaped their attitude towards cultural maintenance and interactions with people in the host country.

Berry's (1997) model also does not consider the influence of external factors on immigrants' attitude towards acculturation, such as the receptivity of the host environment and the cultural distance between the home and host country. The model appears to be too generic and simplistic to explain the complexities of the acculturation process. For example, some participants may have adopted some of the practices of the host countries on a superficial level in order to conform, fit in, or for survival purposes but held on to the attitudes of their home country. For example, Marilyn seems agreeable to most of the practices in her school but is clearly disturbed when her students challenge her decisions, which she perceives as her students displaying a lack of respect. Then there are participants who choose to adopt only some aspects of the host culture but reject others. For example, Kate has decided to conform to the more conservative dress code expected in her school but rejected what she perceives as the disengaged work attitude of her colleagues.

Finally, Berry's model is not able to explain either the participants' behaviour of adopting different acculturation strategies in different situational contexts or the fluidity and movement between the acculturation strategies. For example, Janice appears to lean towards the integration strategy initially, as evident from her action of going to school early to make small talk and join in the conversation and also to volunteer for projects in school while also wanting to maintain her home culture; however, her inability to "penetrate into the circle in the

staffroom" causes her to later shift towards a separation strategy, where she decided to focus her attention on her home culture and reject the host culture.

5.5.1.2 Ward and Kennedy's (1992) psychological and sociocultural adaptation

Ward and her associates discuss cross-cultural adaptation in terms of psychological and sociocultural adaptation. They observe that psychological adaptation is largely influenced by an immigrant's personality, social support, and life change variables (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Ward & Searle, 1991), while sociocultural adaptation is more strongly affected by cultural distance, length of stay in the host country, language ability, the amount of interaction with the host culture, and cultural distance knowledge (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). This theory helps to explain the differences in individual degrees of adaptation and acculturation attitudes among migrants with seemingly similar characteristics. For example, the findings show that Anusha and Marilyn differ significantly in their level of adaptation even though they show many similar characteristics, such as having the same country of origin, a similar length of stay in the host country, and strong English language proficiency. According to Ward and Kennedy (1992), this difference could be due to the migrants' personality (Anusha appears to be introverted and reserved), presence of social support (Marilyn's extended family members are in Australia), the amount of interaction with the host culture (Anusha keeps mostly to herself and does not have local friends), and cultural distance knowledge (Marilyn had been in New Zealand for two years before coming to Australia, so she may be more knowledgeable about the dominant aspects of culture in the Australian context due to her prior experience interacting with people in this region).

As presented in Table 5.1, while Ward and Kennedy's (1992) theory is applicable to the findings in the general sense in that all the participants have undergone some form of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, the majority of their research was carried out on short-term sojourners such as students and expatriates. There is limited application of their theory to long-term immigrants in the workplace, which is the focus of this study.

5.5.1.3 Lysgaard's (1955) and Oberg's (1960) U-curve of cultural adjustment

Another area related to the research on migrant adaptation is that of the adaptation process. The U-curve model of cultural adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960) describes immigrant adaptation as a four-stage adaptation process, from the initial honeymoon stage to the stage of culture shock, then adjustment, and finally attaining mastery.

As shown in Table 5.1, while the U-curve may provide an overall description of the adaptation process for some immigrants, it appears to be an oversimplification of the immigrant adaptation process as it does not consider the huge array of factors (e.g., the immigrant's

backgrounds, context of the receiving countries, etc.) that have been shown to affect the adaptation process. The model may be applicable to some sojourners, such as students and expatriates who do not need to seek employment in the new country, but it does not offer an accurate view of the adaptation experience of the participants in this study. For example, while the participants were excited when they first migrated to Australia, they were not exactly filled with the elation and optimism described in the 'honeymoon' stage. Many reported feeling anxious and stressed about the job search, learning about new practices, and adjusting to new routines and life in a new country. To them, the adjustment problems were greatest at the entry point but slowly decreased over time as they settled into their new environment.

> *Angela: The first year was really tough. I was doing casual relief teaching, moving from school to school. There was no job stability. One day here, another day there. You don't know when you will get your next job. Of course, it was stressful when you have a whole family to feed.*

While researchers agree that individuals eventually settle down and adjust to their new culture, the adjustment period and pattern varies depending on a range of circumstances. Also, the model depicts adaptation as a one-way process and that everybody will reach the mastery stage as the endpoint of the adaptation process. The findings in this study hint that immigrant adaptation itself could, in fact, be an ongoing process with no specific endpoint. Hence, the findings seem to be more aligned with Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model, which is discussed in the next subsection.

5.5.1.4 *Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model*

Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model conceptualises migrant adaptation as a continuous and cyclical "draw-back-to-leap" pattern (p. 5) that moves forward and upwards in the direction of greater adaptation and growth. Kim (2001) argues that individuals experience stress in a cross-cultural setting as they strive to retain some aspects of their old culture while also attempting to integrate into the host country's culture. This situation may cause them to withdraw or even regress into their pre-existing habits to eliminate the discomfort in the new environment before embarking on the process of adaptation and growth again. Therefore, Kim (2001) argues that migrant adaptation is not a linear process but one that is cyclical, where one moves two steps forward and one step back in the direction of adaptation and personal growth.

As described in Table 5.1, Kim's (2001) model helps to explain some of the findings. For example, the notion that adaptation is a continuous and cyclical "draw-back-to-leap" pattern

is evident in Michiko's experience when she felt that she had failed to "blend in" after she received several complaints from her students that they did not understand her accent:

> *I actually felt hurt and upset for several days. After being here for more than 10 years, I thought I have blended in well and spoke like the local teachers. Then suddenly, you have these girls who complain that they don't understand your accent! It makes me feel like I am a new migrant all over again. So to me, this feels like a setback. It's like I am moving one step backwards. That I still have a long way before I am considered an Aussie.*

Michiko also remarked that she feels that her assimilation into her school community is an ongoing process. Despite being in the school for 11 years and appointed as the department head, she sometimes still feels like an outsider.

Another illustration of Kim's "draw-back-to-leap" pattern is evident in Angela's experience of building relationships with her colleagues. Angela tried joining her colleagues for lunch at the start of the term but then decided to withdraw from them to "chill out" at her desk and eat lunch alone as she felt awkward interacting with them. It was only after a few months that Angela decided to "give it another shot at interacting with them again" by joining them for an after-school shopping trip. Likewise, Kate's experience of bouncing back from her initial culture shock and then moving forward to establish an outstanding art department that is well recognised in her school district is another case in point of the "draw-back-to-leap" pattern.

On the whole, the stress-adaptation-growth model seems more sophisticated and offers a better explanation of the migrant adaptation process than the U-curve. It also alludes to the role of the environment in influencing adaptation. The findings show that people in the host environment play a significant role in the adaptation process as they contribute to variables such as host receptivity and conformity pressure, which means that while a receptive host culture can help immigrants to feel welcome in the new culture, the pressure to conform helps the new immigrants to learn the rules of the new culture.

What the model fails to explain is that although one can learn and follow the rules of a new culture and appear to adapt to the host culture at a superficial level, one can still feel like an outsider on a psychological level. This circumstance is evident in the statements of Anusha, Angela, and Renuka, in which they consider themselves outsiders or feel that they are perceived as outsiders by the host society. Therefore, while Kim's model shows that immigrants experience increased growth and adaptation over time, it is unable to explain the feeling of outsiderness that was prevalent among the participants.

5.5.1.5 Bennett's (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)

Bennett's (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) describes the ways in which people view and react to cultural differences as a developmental process in which a person moves along a continuum from the ethnocentric stages of denial, defence, and minimisation of cultural difference to the ethnorelative stages of acceptance, adaptation, and integration of cultural differences. The model is underpinned by the assumption that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's intercultural competence increases and is, therefore, better adapted to the new culture (Bennett, 1986, 2004).

Bennett's DMIS helps to explain the behaviours of some of the participants. For example, when questioned about the differences between the culture of teaching in Singapore and Australia, Angela retorted somewhat strongly, "There is no difference! Whether Singaporean or Australian teachers, we are the same; we teach in the same way!" Likewise, Kai Meng, a new immigrant teacher who has been in Melbourne for a year, said:

> *My school is very multicultural, the staff and students. This is what I experienced in Singapore too. We have teachers from the UK, Malaysia and Hong Kong. So I am used to working in a multicultural team. In terms of teaching and interaction with colleagues, there is not much difference here.*

However, despite this statement, subsequent conversations with Kai Meng and Angela revealed that they experienced significant challenges in their workplace, many of which were the result of differences in the culture of teaching and learning. While the experiences of Kai Meng and Angela differed due to differences in their teaching context, their responses resonate with the stage of denial in the DMIS. Bennett (1993) maintains that individuals in this stage often fail to see or are not interested in cultural differences and could be in denial of other people's culture.

The DMIS also helps to explain the critical attitude, sense of superiority, and defensive stance of some of the participants. For example, during the interview, Janice was quick to express her criticism of the local education system as well as the local students:

> *The maths [test] paper is a joke. Are they testing maths or English? The students here are very rude…the people here value human rights…the students think that they have the rights to do this and to do that…I don't think they understand what human rights is.*

Also, Kai Meng was critical of his maths teaching colleagues:

> *Many maths teachers do not hold a maths degree. They do not know enough of maths to teach properly. Many are just a chapter ahead of their students. I heard them asking more experienced colleagues in the staffroom about how to solve a certain maths problem or to clarify certain maths concepts.*

Other examples are Rehvinder, who found it unacceptable that the teachers here go into a class without a lesson plan, Kate, who grumbled that her teaching colleagues are lazy, and Nara, who complained that her students here are not as disciplined and polite. These participants developed a positive stereotype of their own cultural groups and held a negative stereotype of their host country culture as they perceive that the education system, students, and teachers in their home country are better.

Bennett (1993) observes that immigrants in the 'defence' stage of the DMIS regularly feel that their own culture is superior to others. They feel threatened by other cultures, are critical of other cultures, and tend to hold a narrow view of what is considered appropriate behaviour and culture (Cushner et al., 2012). According to Bennett (1993), for individuals to move out of this stage, they need to demonstrate tolerance and patience for people of other cultures and learn to manage anxiety about other cultures.

Other participants tried to minimise the cultural differences and assume that their beliefs and worldview are relevant across all cultural contexts. This particular approach is evident when the participants who come from home cultures where formal education is held in high regard and where all students aspire to go to university assume that their students in the schools in Australia also harbour the same aspiration. An example of this was exhibited by Nara, who had assumed that all her students aspire to go to university and was surprised to realise that they have other plans:

> *It was sometime later that I realised that not all my students are planning to go to university. Some plan to pick up a vocational skill. Then there are others planning to take over the family businesses. So unlike in Japan, where everybody is fighting for places in the universities, here people are open to many other options. So it looks like going to universities is not so important anymore. This is something that is really new to me.*

Renuka, Kate, and Anusha, who have been in Australia longer, typically are more accepting of the cultural differences. For example, Anusha has also come to realise that the Asian mentality that success is about "studying hard, going to a good university and getting a respectable job upon graduation" may not be the only worldview. She has grown to appreciate that there are other perspectives of schooling and success and that these perspectives are influenced by the culture and society of the host country. Anusha's statement above demonstrates her more ethnorelative view of accepting cultural differences.

Bennett (1993) observes that individuals who accept and adapt well to cultural differences are often curious about other cultures and have a desire to learn about the language and customs of another culture. Marilyn's behaviour appears to align with these stages in the DMIS. She values preserving her own culture but is also actively learning about the Japanese culture and language as it is an important bilingual focus area in her school. Marilyn communicates effectively with the people in her school, serving as a mentor for teachers and conducting workshops for parents, and is popular among students. As a well-respected member of the school, she is often called upon to advise or lead in multicultural events and activities.

While the participants' behaviours can be understood by the different stages in the DMIS, they cannot necessarily be classified into the different stages in the DMIS, as many participants were seen to exhibit behaviours that range across the different stages. For example, Renuka appears to adapt better to cultural differences, possibly due to her prior experience as a student studying in Melbourne; however, at various points in the interview, she demonstrated behaviour that is more aligned with the 'defence' stage in the DMIS. Likewise, Kate's behaviours are shown to range from defence, to minimisation and then acceptance of cultural differences, depending on the situation.

As detailed in Table 5.1, while Bennett's (1986) DMIS is able to explain many aspects of the findings, it is inadequate for explaining all aspects of the findings in this study. Bennett's model assumes a linear, unidirectional movement in which individuals move from the ethnocentric stages to the ethnorelative stages as they become more interculturally sensitive; however, the findings reveal that this flow may be bidirectional, as participants move back and forth along the different stages of the DMIS. Moreover, similar to Berry's (1997) model of acculturation, the DMIS also fails to consider that an individual's intercultural sensitivity and competence is affected by a variety of factors, including the participants' personality, motivation to migrate, and prior intercultural experience. A case in point is Angela, whose sense of inferiority towards the 'whites' may have prevented her from taking the defensive stance that is evident in other participants. In fact, she was full of praise for the host culture. Bennett (2004) calls this a sense

of reversal, which is holding the host country culture in higher esteem based on stereotypical knowledge (in this case, Angela's view that the 'whites' are always better) compared to their native culture.

Finally, as the DMIS was developed and applied to the US culture, its applicability in other cultures is still questionable. The way that cultural differences are perceived may vary across cultures, and there is a possibility that the developmental pattern of some people does not follow that of the DMIS continuum (Yamamoto, 1998). Also, the majority of instances where the DMIS has been applied in research has been in academic and organisational contexts of sojourners – students and expatriates. There is limited study of the model's applicability for long-term immigrants.

In summary, while the above theories of cross-cultural adaptation have helped to explain the findings to some extent, they are not able to explain all aspects of the findings. Austin (2007) suggests that professional immigrants often go through a "double culture shock" (p. 253) as they adjust to living in a new country and adapt to the new norms and expectations of their workplace. Thus, their adaptation process may be more complex and multifaceted. While the cross-cultural theories discussed above help to explain the findings that relate to participants' adjustments to living in a new country, they are limited in their ability to explain the participants' adaptation to their workplace. For immigrants who spend a substantial amount of their time at work, it is expected that workplace socialisation and adaptation contribute a significant part of their adaptation experiences. The next section looks at how the findings relate to the theories on teacher socialisation and the workplace influences on teacher socialisation.

5.5.2 Teacher socialisation theories

The main theories associated with the professional adaptation of teachers are that of teacher socialisation. These are the work of Lortie (1975), Edgar and Warren (1969), and Pollard (1982), as shown in Table 5.2. For immigrant teachers who had first been socialised into the teaching profession in their home country, the change in teaching context in the host country would necessitate some form of re-socialisation, as their prior experiences of schooling, teacher training, and organisational socialisation are different from that of the local teacher in the host country. This re-socialising process would involve some form of organisation or workplace socialisation to understand the norms and expectations of the local education system, the school, and the general societal expectations of teachers in the host country.

Table 5.2

Comparing the Findings with Theories Related to Teacher Socialisation

Theory	Aspects of the findings it helps to explain	Aspects of the findings it does not help to explain
Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation	This theory explains the early life influences on participants' beliefs and values about teaching.	The theory does not consider other factors that can also influence participants' beliefs and values about teaching, for example the influence of the teacher education program, the workplace, the societal expectations of teachers, and the education policies and system.
Edgar and Warren's (1969) power and autonomy in teacher socialisation	This theory helps to explain the tension experienced by participants in trying to fit in and be acknowledged (e.g., Angela), and their resistance to the influence of socialisation (e.g., Kate and Rehvinder).	The theory does not explain the influence of other members of the school community (e.g., students and parents) on participants' socialising experience.
Pollard's (1982) workplace influences on teacher socialisation	This theory helps to explain how the participants change their role perception and teaching practices to meet the learning expectations of their students. It also helps to explain the differential socialisation experienced by the participants teaching in different school types and localities.	As Pollard's (1982) theory is limited only to workplace influence on teacher socialisation, it does not explain the influence of teachers' prior experiences, personal factors, beliefs, and values in the socialisation process.

5.5.2.1 Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation

Lortie (1975) maintains that the socialisation of teachers occurs early in life through the "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61), where students observe their own teachers teaching and decide what to emulate and what to avoid when they become teachers themselves. In addition, one's personal experience as a student and the influence of significant others, such as family members, are said to influence teachers' views of teaching and perception of themselves as teachers. Lortie's (1975) theory offers an explanation for why the participants' beliefs and values about teaching and learning differ from that of their local teaching colleagues.

> *Marilyn: Teachers are well-respected and fearful figures. If we were to talk or*
> *make any noise in class, straightaway, you would see chalk or a duster flying at*

you. There is no such thing as asking questions. You just listen and absorb everything that the teachers say. Looking back, I grew up thinking that I don't want to be a teacher like that. But I also kind of have that expectation that my students will be quiet and respectful in class, and that was how it was when I first started teaching in Kerala.

However, as indicated in Table 5.2, Lortie's theory only explains the early life influence on the teacher socialisation process and does not consider the many other aspects that can also influence the process, including the teacher education program, the workplace, the societal expectations of teachers, and the influence of the education system and policies.

5.5.2.2 *Edgar and Warren's (1969) power and autonomy in teacher socialization*

Edgar and Warren (1969) argue for the role of power and autonomy in teachers' on-the-job socialisation experiences. They found that organisational evaluation and the affective relationships between the teachers and their evaluators are significant influencing factors in teacher socialisation. The extent of these influences is directly related to the degree of positive interpersonal relationships between new teachers and their evaluators and inversely related to the skills, abilities, and experience of the new teachers.

Edgar and Warren's (1969) theory helps to explain the participants' anxiety over how they are perceived by their superiors. For example, Angela was concerned about how her department head evaluates her.

Because I am on a short-term contract employment, so of course I am worried about how I will be assessed. Fortunately, the new department head likes me. She is very pleased with my lesson packages and always compliments me, so that makes me feel good. Of course, I have my own idea as to what is good and what is the best way to teach. But since I am still relatively new here, it is safer to check with my department head and follow what she wants. I will probably bring out my own resources when I am more confident at a later stage.

Edgar and Warren's (1969) theory also illustrates that participants who are skilful and experienced are more resistant to the influence of socialisation. For example, Kate insisted upon certain practices (e.g., students standing up to greet her when she enters the class and that students are to engage in reading while attendance is taken). Likewise, as a newly appointed department head, Rehvinder insisted that all teachers submit their teaching plan before the start of the term even though it is not a norm in her school.

However, the findings show that beyond the evaluators, such as the principal and the department heads, the participants' socialising experience is also strongly influenced by their interactions with students and the expectations of the students' parents. These areas are not explained by Edgar and Warren's (1969) theory but have been described by Pollard's (1982) theory on workplace influences on teacher socialisation, which is discussed in the next subsection.

5.5.2.3 Pollard's (1982) workplace influences on teacher socialisation

In considering the limitations of Edgar and Warren (1969), Pollard's (1982) theory seems particularly relevant for explaining the findings in this study. Pollard (1982) identifies the workplace influences on teacher socialisation at three levels: (1) the interactive level within the classroom, (2) the institutional level, and (3) the societal level. Pollard (1982) maintains that at the classroom level, students are said to have the greatest influence on the socialisation of teachers. At the institutional level, the influence tends to be from fellow teaching colleagues, and at the societal level, teacher socialisation has been linked to the local school community, the type of school, and parental expectations.

Pollard's (1982) theory helps to explain the findings that show that participants change their role perception and teaching practices to address the learning expectations of their students.

> *Angela: I realised that over here, I am expected to be more of a facilitator in the classroom. Instead of teaching my students new knowledge, my job is to facilitate their learning by pointing them in certain directions, resources, and get them excited about the topic and wanting to find out more about it. So in that sense, the way I teach is quite different. I don't give them study notes that are content-heavy because they can find out the information themselves from books and online. Instead, I prepare prompting questions, scenario-based questions, and real-world problems. It's a bit like the problem-based learning that I used to do in Singapore, but it's a lot more here.*

Kai Meng also shared that because his students are very proactive in class and ask a lot of questions, he has changed his teaching approach to better address their learning preference.

> *So, instead of just being interested in solving math problems, some of my students are actually quite interested in how certain formulas are derived and the historical development behind certain mathematical principles. I think this is really good. So I will make it a point to share with them.*

At the institutional level, other than the influence of those in positions of power (e.g., the school principal and the department heads) as suggested in Edgar and Warren (1969), peer teaching colleagues are also said to play an important role in teacher socialisation (Pollard, 1982). This influence is evident from Anusha's statements about her emulating the way her colleagues communicate with their students and Angela's statement about following her colleagues' approach to communicating with parents.

Pollard's (1982) theory also supports the findings on the differential socialisation experienced by the participants in different school types and localities. For example, because Michiko and Kai Meng both teach in non-government schools that serve the higher socioeconomic populations, there is an implicit expectation from parents that teachers deliver good academic outcomes. The effect of parental influence on teacher socialisation is also reported by Anusha:

> *Because I teach in a school that caters to students of special needs, there is the expectation of providing specialised individualised learning support for every student. Every now and then, we have parents who join in to support the lessons. When this happened, I will need to see how I can get the parents involved in the teaching and learning process of their children. I will also have to explain to parents why I do certain activities with one child but not the other. I feel that my role here is very different. Although I still teach, my focus is quite different. It is not about preparing students to do well in examinations, but it's about teaching students life skills so that they can function more or less independently in society.*

Pollard's (1982) theory is not an all-inclusive theory as it only considers the workplace influences on teacher socialisation and does not consider how these influences interact with the teachers' prior experiences and personal factors, beliefs, and values in the socialisation process. Personal factors play a part in the socialisation process, for example the preconception about teaching and learning, beliefs, and values, which is especially relevant for immigrant teachers who come with prior experiences and may hold different beliefs about what teaching and learning should look like. Pollard's (1982) theory also does not explain the extent and magnitude of the influence at each level, and whether one is more significant than another. Therefore, using it alone will not be adequate to explain all aspects of the findings. Using the three theories of teacher socialisation together, that is Lortie (1975), Edgar and Warren (1969), and Pollard (1982), would have provided a more comprehensive explanation of the findings in this study.

In summary, the teacher socialisation theories discussed thus far are commonly applied in the context of beginning teachers. None of the theories has been applied to study the re-socialisation of immigrant teachers who have crossed international and cultural borders to teach in a different country. Moreover, all the theories discussed thus far come from the perspective that teacher socialisation is a unilateral process in which the passive, powerless teacher is pressured to conform to a set of norms in order to fit into the social structure of the education system and the school. These theories are in contrast to the dialectic view of teacher socialisation, which perceives the individual and the socialising agent as mutually influencing each other such that both worldviews change and move closer towards one another in the process (Schempp & Graber, 1992). While it was not apparent in this study that this dialectical exchange between the participants and their schools took place, the findings hint that the participants' presence had generated greater interest and awareness of immigrant teachers in their schools. This view is particularly relevant in the cases of Renuka, Rehvinder, and Anusha, who were the only Asian teachers in their schools.

The findings also reveal that some immigrant teachers are subjected to conformity pressure in order to keep their job and/or be seen as fitting in with the culture of the school. This situation was evident when Angela, Nara, and Kai Meng suppressed their views and adopted those that are deemed acceptable by their schools. Then, there are other participants who decided to assert their agency and resist socialisation by insisting on certain practices that differ from the expectations in the school (e.g., Kate, Rehvinder, and Janice). These findings have so far not been explained by the theories of teacher socialisation.

5.5.3   Teacher identity theories

The field of teacher identity has gained increasing interest in the last few decades. While there is no single, all-encompassing theoretical framework that fully explains and links together all aspects of teacher identity, several theories have emerged to describe and explain the phenomenon (see Table 5.3). When put together, these theories offer a fairly comprehensive view of the phenomenon. The theories on teacher identity generally focus on the nature of the construct (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sachs, 2005; Walkington, 2005), the elements that shape teachers' identity (Day & Kington, 2008; Rogers & Scott, 2008), and the role of teachers' emotions in the construction of teacher identity (Hargreaves 2001; Kelchertmans, 2009; Zemblyas, 2003).

Table 5.3

Comparing the Findings with Theories Related to Teacher Professional Identity

Theory	Aspects of the findings it helps to explain	Aspects of the findings it does not help to explain
Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), Beijaard et al. (2004), Day and Kington (2008), Hargreaves (1994), Nias (1996), Sachs (2005)	Help to explain participants' differences in beliefs and values, pedagogical practices, and views towards education.	Besides their identity as teachers, the findings show that the participants' identity as Asians and as immigrants, which relate to their intercultural perspectives, also have a significant impact on their professional adaptation. This aspect of the findings is not addressed by the teacher identity theories. .
Day and Kington (2008), Rogers and Scott (2008)	Help to explain the shifts in participants' teacher identity in the professional adaptation process.	
Hargreaves (2001), Kelchertmans (2009), Zemblyas (2003)	Help to explain participants' emotions and feelings of vulnerability in their interactions with members of the school community.	

Research in teaching and teacher education regularly conceptualises teacher identity as an unstable, shifting, and evolving construct (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004) that is shaped by personal and contextual factors (Beltman et al., 2015) and formed in relationship with others (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). As such, the emotions that result from interaction with others have been shown to influence teacher identity (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2003). While the initial teacher socialisation process would have shaped the identity of beginning teachers, research has shown that their identities continue to shift and evolve throughout their career as a result of influences from social-cultural and policy elements, workplace elements, and personal elements (Day & Kington, 2008). The theories of teacher identity provide the basis for understanding and explaining the challenges experienced by the participants in the professional adaptation process.

5.5.3.1 Teacher identity is shaped by personal and contextual factors

The findings show that the participants' identity as teachers is the product of teacher socialisation that is shaped by their own schooling experiences, the dominant views on education, the beliefs and values espoused by the teaching community in their home country, the skills and knowledge that they learnt through pre-service and in-service teacher development programs, and the pedagogical practices that were encouraged in their home country education context.

The differences in education context between the host and host countries would have led to differential socialisation, different beliefs, values, and views towards education and the adoption of different pedagogical practices. Some examples of these differences that emerged in the findings are Anusha's comments on the differences in views about education, Angela and Kai Meng talking about the need to adjust their teaching practices, expectations of student behaviours, the class dynamic, and Nara and Marilyn sharing about the differences in the nature and expectations of the teacher–student interaction.

In addition, participants also noted a difference in the social perception of teachers between their host and home country:

> *Janice: Somehow, I feel that teachers are not as well respected here. They gave me the feeling that teaching is just like any other job. They don't celebrate Teachers' Day here. The relationship between teachers and students…I don't know…it feels transactional.*

Another case in point was Michiko's sharing that she has had to earn the respect of the students in her host country, as, unlike in her home country, respect from students is not a given:

> *Being a teacher in Japan, you kind of automatically get respect from students. It's kind of a default thing. Whereas here, especially in my first school, you need to work hard to be accepted by the students, to get respect from your students.*

Theories on the personal and contextual (social-cultural, policy, and workplace) influence on teacher identities such as those of Day and Kington (2008), Nias (1996), and Hargreaves (1994) seem particularly relevant for explaining the above findings. The participants' teacher identity is shaped by the education policies and the societal and workplace expectations of teachers in their home countries. What is perceived as the norm and the desired values, beliefs, and practices in their home country may be seen as an exception in the host country. Many of the problems faced by the participants in their professional transition process involved them negotiating their previous beliefs and practices with the expectations of the new teaching context in the host country.

5.5.3.2 *Teacher identity is formed in relationship with others*

Next, the findings reveal that participants' regard their interactions with people in the school community as being a critical aspect of their professional identity as teachers. A number of participants reported negative emotions in their interactions with people in their schools. These

included feeling intimidated by students (Marilyn) and feeling vulnerable when they were targets of complaints by parents (Michiko) and when they perceived that their teaching competence is not trusted by their principals or superiors (Rehvinder and Renuka). These negative experiences appeared to undermine their professional identity.

The emotional aspect of teacher identity is explained by Kelchtermans (1996), who posits that teachers feel vulnerable when their professional identity is questioned by parents, superiors, and colleagues. Zembylas (2004) also observes that the emotional labour that teachers engage in when they try to conform to what is deemed appropriate within schools, coupled with the negative emotions that they experience in their day-to-day teaching and interaction with people in the school, may lead to feelings of vulnerability.

5.5.3.3   *Teacher identity is shifting, unstable, and multiple*

The theories of teacher identity also help to explain the tension that the participants encountered in their professional transition process. The participants' professional identity is challenged when they are unable to secure employment as teachers, when their social status as teachers is challenged, when their teaching competence is questioned, and when their beliefs and values as teachers are not congruent with that of their school. This situation makes them feel vulnerable and threatens their identity as a teacher.

Research on immigrant teachers suggests that in order for immigrant teachers to teach more effectively, they need to develop an understanding of the expectations of teaching and learning in their host countries and learn about the cultural norms and practices in their new school, which is a process that entails a reconstruction of their professional identity as teachers. This process is evident in the findings as the participants come to terms with the dominant views, values, and beliefs, as well as the teaching practices that are encouraged in their schools. However, as discussed in Section 5.3.3, participants do not simply just drop their previous beliefs and practices to fit in with the culture of the school. Many are shown to exercise a high degree of agency in taking control of their professional adaptation process.

So far, the theories on teacher identity have helped to explain the findings associated with the participant teachers' beliefs, values, skills, knowledge, and practices, the shift in some aspects of their professional identity in the professional adaptation process, and the emotions associated with this process. However, the participants' identities are multiple. As well as their identity as a teacher, the findings show that their identity as Asians and as immigrants have also had a significant impact on their professional adaptation. These other influences on professional adaptation are not addressed by the teacher identity theories.

In summary, while the teacher identity theories account for some of the major findings in relation to immigrant teachers' professional adaptation in schools and the emotions related to this experience, there are also areas that are left unexplored, such as the participants' identity as Asians and as immigrants, and the influence of their intercultural perspectives on their professional adaptation experience. The next section presents a discussion of the notion of belonging, which is an unanticipated key finding that has emerged from the data.

5.5.4   Belongingness theories

The major overarching theme that emerged from the data collected in this study is a sense of belonging. One of the most commonly cited and influential theories in the field of belongingness is Baumeister and Leary's (1995) belongingness hypothesis (see Table 5.4). The theorists suggest that the need to belong is an innate, adaptive need that is characterised by regular contact in the context of an interpersonal relationship that is stable, affective, and ongoing. A failure to satisfy this desire to belong can result in individuals suffering from mental distress and loneliness. As such, individuals are motivated to engage in behaviour that enhances their sense of belonging.

Table 5.4

Comparing the Findings with the Theory of Sense of Belonging

Theory	Aspects of the findings that it helps to explain	Aspects of the findings that it does not help to explain
Belongingness theory (Baumeister and Leary, 1995)	The theory explains the participants' desire to belong, the actions they took to enhance their belongingness, and also accounts for the emotions associated with their success and failure to establish their sense of belonging to the school community.	Baumeister and Leary's (1995) theory is based on the assumption that the need to belong is innate and universal. It does not explain the differences in the desire to belong that were expressed by different participants in this study. These differences could be due to many factors, including differences in participants' personality, past experiences, length of stay in the host country, the society and culture that they originated from, and other circumstances.

Baumeister and Leary's (1995) theory helps to explain many of the findings, as discussed earlier in Section 5.4.1. Their theory explains the participants' desire to belong and the actions they took to enhance their belongingness, and also accounts for their emotions associated with their success and failure to establish their sense of belonging to the school community. These actions and emotions include the participants' desire to "fit in" (Angela),

to "break into the culture" (Janice), to be "part of the conversation" (Angela), "to be respected" (Marilyn, Rehvinder, Nara, Renuka, and Janice), to be "valued" (Angela, Kai Meng, and Michiko), to be "recognised" (Kai Meng, Kate, and Rehvinder), and to be "appreciated" (Michiko). It also accounts for their negative emotions when they felt like an "outsider" in their school (Angela, Anusha, and Renuka), and when they are "ignored" (Nara), "treated kinda cold" (Angela), "being watched" (Angela and Kate), and felt "under a bit of a microscope" (Renuka). Baumeister and Leary (1995) theorise that the failure to satisfy the need to belong can result in individuals suffering from mental distress and loneliness, as is evident in the participants' descriptions of feeling "anxious" (Angela and Kate), "lonely" (Angela), "vulnerable" (Michiko), "intimidated" (Kate and Marilyn), and "alone" (Angela and Kate).

Participants' actions of taking the initiative to join in their colleagues' conversations (Angela, Janice, Nara, and Kai Meng), volunteering to help (Janice), and sharing of teaching resources (Angela) are also explained by Baumeister and Leary (1995) as actions that are engaged in to enhance the sense of belonging. Therefore, it is clear that a large part of the participants' emotions and actions can be attributed to their sense of belonging or the lack of it.

However, while Baumeister and Leary's (1995) theory is applicable to many of the findings, it is not able to explain all aspects of the findings. Baumeister and Leary's (1995) theory is based on the assumption that the need to belong is innate and universal. It does not explain the differences in the desire to belong expressed by the different participants. For example, Janice and Angela appeared to be more concerned about fitting in than Kate and Michiko. These differences could be due to many factors, including differences in participants' personality, past experiences, length of stay in the host country, the society and culture that they originated from, and other circumstances. For example, there is research that suggests that people in collectivist cultures are more motivated by the satisfaction of belongingness than those who live in individualistic cultures (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003; Nevis, 1983). One may also reasonably assume that participants who have been in the host country for longer are less concerned about the need for belongingness compared to newly arrived immigrant teachers, as the former would likely have established their belonging to the school community.

Section 5.5 has discussed in detail the major theories in each field. While each of the theories discussed above helps to explain some aspects of the findings, no single theory alone offers a good explanation for all the aspects of the findings. Hence it is argued that there is a need for a new theory of professional adaptation to explain the research findings.

Therefore, in the next section, a new theory is proposed to explain the professional adaptation of the participants. This theoretical proposition is developed from analysis of the data in this study. It is referred to as the sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation in order to acknowledge the central role of the sense of belonging in immigrant teachers' professional adaptation journey. This theory takes into consideration the key aspects of the existing theories (e.g., cross-cultural adaptation and teacher identity theories), as well as interpretation of the data gathered from the participants in this study.

5.6 A theoretical proposition for the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers in the context of this small study

The data collection and analysis process employed in this study suggest that the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers is underpinned by their sense of belonging to their school community, and that this sense of belonging is co-constructed from their professional identity, sense of (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspectives. This analysis culminated in a substantive theory to explain the professional adaptation of the Asian Australian immigrant teachers who participated in the study. In the following subsections, discussion is presented on the relationships between the constructs of professional identity, sense of (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspectives, how each of them relates to the overarching theme of the sense of belonging, and how the latter relates to the notion of professional adaptation. This theoretical proposition is depicted in the theoretical model in Figure 5.1. Then, to illustrate the applicability of this theory, the theoretical model is further elaborated to demonstrate how changes in the circumstances within each of the constructs can lead to the inhibition and enablement of immigrant teachers' professional adaptation.

5.6.1 Relationship between professional identity, (in)vulnerability and intercultural perspective

As reported in Chapters Three and Four, the data collection and analysis led to the identification of the three themes of professional identity, (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspective and the central overarching theme of a sense of belonging as the key concepts that underpin professional adaptation. The findings reveal that these constructs are interrelated (see Figure 5.1). The next subsection describes the constructs and their interrelatedness.

Figure 5.1

The Interrelatedness of Professional Identity, (In)vulnerability, and Intercultural Perspective
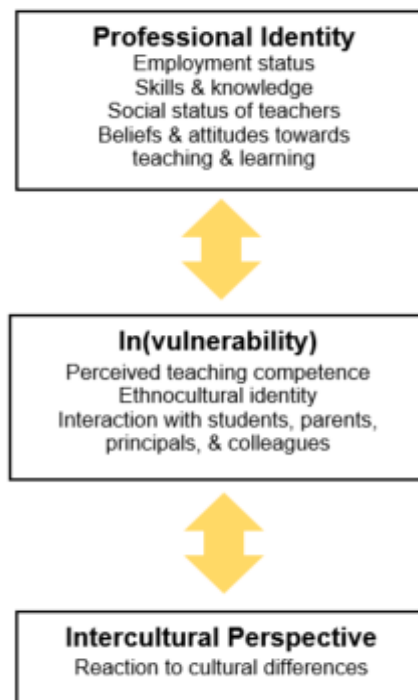
Professional identity is manifested in the form of professional skills and knowledge, the social status associated with the teaching profession, and beliefs and values towards teaching and learning. Individuals with a strong and established professional identity view themselves as being members of the teaching profession in general. For the participants, having a strong professional identity translates to increased confidence, a sense of self-efficacy, and a reduced risk of vulnerability. The data from this study show that the transition into a new teaching context threatened the immigrant teachers' professional identity in several ways and led to an increased sense of vulnerability. In some cases, the failure to gain stable employment implied that participants' prior experience, credentials, and training were not given credence by the school administration. Also, a mismatch between the participants' skills, knowledge, and expectations and the requirements of the new teaching context meant that some of the participants' skills, knowledge, and practices may no longer have been applicable, and they would need to relearn new skills and knowledge. Further, the perceived lower social status of teachers meant that participants may no longer enjoy the privilege and respect that they had in their country of origin. Differences in beliefs and attitude towards teaching and learning also meant that participants needed to disregard their preconceived notion of teaching and relearn what it means to be a teacher in the new teaching context.

The above experiences caused participants to feel a sense of disequilibrium as they struggled to reconcile their existing professional identity with the expectations of the new teaching

context. The participants' vulnerability was further accentuated when their teaching competence was questioned and when they were discriminated against and stereotyped on the basis of ethnocultural identity. In addition, negative experiences of interacting with people in the school community, including disrespectful behaviour from students (e.g., Marilyn, Anusha, Michiko, and Nara), complaints from parents (e.g., Michiko), mistrust from principals (e.g., Kate and Angela), and exclusion from colleagues (e.g., Janice, Angela, and Rehvinder) caused participants to feel vulnerable.

The link between professional identity and teachers' emotion of vulnerability is discussed in the previous literature (Hargreaves, 2001; Kelchtermans, 1996; Zembylas, 2004). These scholars observe that emotions that result from the interaction between teachers, students, colleagues, school administrators, and other stakeholders in the schools have a significant impact on teachers' professional identity (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas 2003). Teachers feel vulnerable when their professional identity is questioned by parents, school administrators, and colleagues (Kelchtermans, 1996), and experience emotional exhaustion when they are confronted with the pressure to conform to certain expectations that are deemed appropriate within their schools (Zembylas, 2003).

The data in this study show that when the participants felt vulnerable, they tended to adopt a more ethnocentric view towards cultural differences. This approach is evident when Janice, a highly experienced teacher, struggled with managing her students' behaviour in class. This situation caused her to feel vulnerable as her competence and professional identity as a teacher was threatened. During the interview, Janice remarked that students in her home country are well-behaved and those in her host country are rude. Similarly, Kate and Rehvinder were observed to be critical of the work ethic of their teacher colleagues.

The literature shows that individuals often take on ethnocentric behaviour as a self-protection strategy when they feel that their identity is threatened (Grant, 1993; Hooghe, 2008). The term ethnocentrism was first coined by the American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840–1910) to describe the view that one's own culture is considered central and superior to those in other cultural settings. Individuals who display ethnocentric views tend to perceive their own culture to be superior to others and judge other cultures from the perspective of their own. Ethnocentrism is said to be closely related to prejudice, stereotype, and in-group behaviour (Allport, 1954; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Tajfel, 1982). Determinants of ethnocentrism include a strong identification with the in-group, which automatically leads to negative feelings towards and stereotyping of members of the outgroup, perceived conflict between various groups competing for scarce resources in the society (e.g., living space, jobs), and individual factors

such as one's personality, education attainment, and religion (Hooghe, 2008). In the example of Janice cited above, it is clear that her threatened professional identity caused her to feel vulnerable and ultimately led to her adopting an ethnocentric stance. As for Kate and Rehvinder, the lean towards an ethnocentric orientation could stem from a desire to strengthen their professional identity due to an inherent feeling of threatened professional identity.

5.6.2 Relationship between professional identity and sense of belonging

Data from this study indicate that the participants' professional identity contributes to their sense of belonging to their school community (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2

Relationship Between Professional Identity and Sense of Belonging
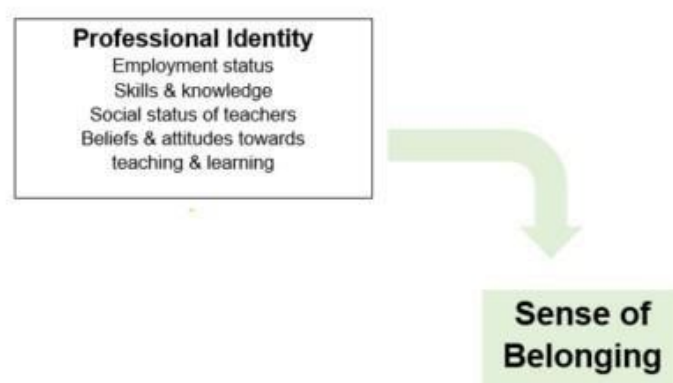
The data show that all participants had undergone some form of change in their professional identity in order to adapt to and fit into their new teaching context. Besides altering their views and beliefs towards education (Anusha and Angela), they also adjusted to new ways of teaching (Angela and Kai Meng), different ways of relating to students (Angela, Anusha, Janice, and Marilyn) and parents (Angela), and new norms and expectations (Kate), and they also learnt to teach new subjects (Rehvinder and Anusha). Implicitly, the participants believed that these changes would allow them to gain acceptance into their school community.

The influence of teaching context on professional identity has been widely documented (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005; Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006; Zembylas, 2003). As a fluid, dynamic, and evolving construct, teachers' professional identity is constantly shaped and reshaped through their interaction with the teaching context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beltman et al, 2015; Day & Kington, 2008). As events and experiences in the personal lives of teachers are intimately linked to the performance of their professional roles and identity as teachers (Acker, 1999; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996), it is therefore reasonable to expect that a major life

event such as migration coupled with a change in the teaching context would lead to corresponding changes in participants' professional identity as teachers.

This idea of shifting one's professional identity in order to be accepted and fit into a new environment is articulated by Hagerty and Patusky (1995), who say that for an individual to feel a sense of belonging to a system or an environment, they not only need to experience being valued and needed but also need to perceive that their characteristics fit into or complement the system and environment. When individuals feel secure and integral to the group and that their professional and/or personal values are in harmony with those of the group, they feel a sense of belonging to the group (Levett-Jones et al., 2009).

Therefore, the change in the socio-cultural context of a new country, the new workplace context, and the desire to gain acceptance into the new school community have motivated immigrant teachers to shift their professional identity to align with the expectations of their school community. In doing so, the participants are in a better position to foster a sense of belonging to their school community, which the data in this study show to be a central construct that affects professional adaptation.

5.6.3 Relationship between (in)vulnerability and sense of belonging

The data show that the participants' sense of (in)vulnerability is a core emotion that defines their feeling of belonging and not belonging (see Figure 5.3). Being vulnerable is largely defined as a state of being open or susceptible to harm or attack. As a core human experience and a psychological construct, vulnerability is influenced by the interaction between individual attributes and one's external context (Lasky, 2005). Teacher vulnerability refers to the way in which teachers experience their interactions with other people in the school community and is said to encompass not only emotions but also their perception and interpretation of the experience (Kelchtermans, 1996).

Figure 5.3

Relationship Between (In)vulnerability and Sense of Belonging

While a feeling of vulnerability is generally the result of unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge about the norms and expectations of the new teaching context (Hargreaves, 1998), the data

show that the immigrant teachers' sense of vulnerability was compounded when their teaching competence was questioned (Rehvinder), when they were rejected on the basis of their ethnocultural identity (Marilyn, Anusha, Renuka, Rehvinder, and Kate), and when they experienced negative emotions when interacting with people in the school community, which included feeling intimidated when confronted with disrespectful students (Anusha, Kate, Marilyn, and Michiko), anxious when challenged by students' parents (Michiko and Renuka), anxious when being watched by their principals (Angela and Kate), and distressed when excluded by colleagues (Angela and Janice).

On the other hand, when the participants felt appreciated and valued for their teaching competence, when their ethnocultural identity was recognised and accepted, and when they were respected by students, trusted by parents, and appreciated and accepted by their principals and colleagues, their sense of belonging to the school community strengthened. Similarly, the assignment of an important task (e.g., teaching graduating classes) or appointment to a position of responsibility (e.g., as a mentor teacher or department head) made participants feel needed, trusted, and important, and therefore decreased their feeling of vulnerability and enhanced their sense of belonging.

This aspect of the data is consistent with research that shows that teachers experience vulnerability when their professional identity is questioned (Kelchtermans, 1996) and negative emotions occur as a result of interaction with people in the school (Zembylas, 2004). It also corroborates Wright's (2015) findings on the role of emotions in constructing belonging, and aligns with earlier studies that found that feeling respected or receiving respect satisfies individuals' core need for belonging (Huo & Binning, 2008; Huo et al., 2010). It also attests to Bollen and Hoyle's (1990) argument that a sense of belonging is made up of both cognitive and affective elements, meaning that as well as the shared experiences and characteristics, an individual's feelings that arise from interaction with the members of the group constitute an important aspect of belonging.

5.6.4   Relationship between intercultural perspective and sense of belonging

As well as professional identity and (in)vulnerability, the data generated from this study reveal that immigrant teachers' sense of belonging is shaped, in part, by their intercultural perspective (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4

Relationship Between Intercultural Perspective and Sense of Belonging
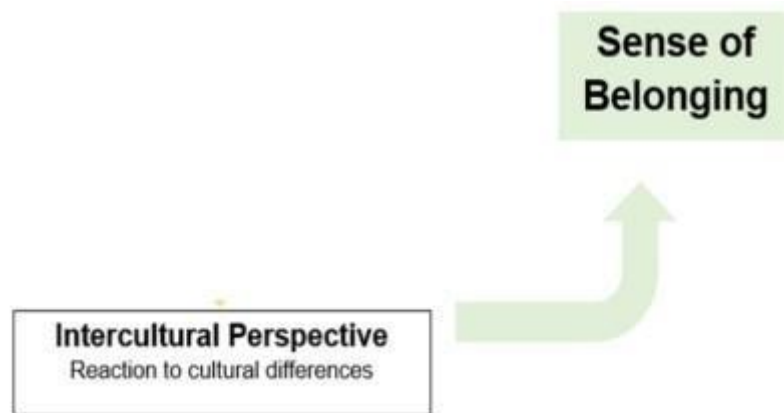
It appears that the participants' intercultural perspectives influenced how they negotiated their new teaching context and their desire and attitude towards cultivating a sense of belonging to their school community. In the context of this study, the participants' intercultural perspective is evident from their views on the local cultures and practices related to teaching and learning. These views include their views on the local education system, the local teachers' work attitudes, and the students' behaviour. The data reveal that some participants have maintained a more ethnocentric orientation of denying (e.g., Angela), defending (e.g., Janice), and minimising cultural differences, perceiving that the education system (Janice), teachers' work attitudes (Kate and Rehvinder) and students' behaviour (Nara and Janice) in their home countries are superior. These same groups of teachers who have maintained the more ethnocentric view also appeared to experience more obstacles in establishing their sense of belonging to their school community. On the other hand, the immigrant teachers who have embraced a more ethnorelative stance of accepting and adapting to cultural differences appear to have established a stronger sense of belonging to their school community. An example is Marilyn, who demonstrated skilful communication with people of other cultures and has become the go-to person in the school for advice on cultural matters.

It should be noted that a sense of belonging is characterised by self-determination, meaning that an individual has control over whether they want to belong or not (Mahar et al., 2013). Unbelonging can also be an act of an individual or group agency and a conscious choice or a deliberate attempt not to identify with people in a particular group (Halse, 2018). An individual may fit the criteria for having a sense of belonging to a group through shared experiences or a sense of value and respect but they may not be interested in belonging or choose not to belong for various reasons. For example, Anusha's deliberate choice to move

to a different school every one to two years and her act of not engaging in casual conversations with colleagues in the staffroom show a conscious decision not to be part of the group. Another example is Kate's resistance to joining her colleagues in their weekly after-school coffee and shopping trip. In both cases, Anusha and Kate made a conscious decision not to be part of the group.

On the whole, the data suggest that the participants who are inclined towards being accepting and adapting to cultural differences have developed a stronger sense of belonging to their school community, which has helped them to adapt more successfully in their professional work life, while those in denial of cultural differences or defensive of their own culture have tended to have a weaker sense of belonging to the school community and thereby have experienced more obstacles in professional adaptation.

5.6.5   Relationship between sense of belonging and professional adaptation

Finally, the data show that participants regularly related their professional adaptation to their sense of belonging to the school community, showing that participants' sense of belonging to their school community constitutes a core aspect of their professional adaptation (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5

Relationship Between Sense of Belonging and Professional Adaptation

All participants had either implicitly or explicitly expressed their desire to be acknowledged, to be part of, and to be accepted as members of the school community. It was noted that participants described their professional adaptation in several ways. Many spoke about their desire to be part of the school community using phrases such as "breaking into the culture" (Angela), "trying to penetrate into the circle of teachers" (Janice), wanting to be "part of the conversation" (Angela), and wanting to be "part of the school" (Michiko). Many spoke about wanting to be "respected" (Marilyn, Rehvinder, Nara, Renuka, and Janice), "valued" (Angela, Kai Meng, and Michiko), "recognised" (Kai Meng, Kate, and Rehvinder), and "appreciated" (Michiko). Several participants mentioned that they felt like an "outsider" (Angela, Anusha, and Renuka), "ignored" (Nara), being "treated kinda cold" (Angela), "being watched" (Angela and Kate), and "under a bit of a microscope" (Renuka). Others described their professional

adaptation experiences with words such as "feeling anxious" (Angela and Kate), "lonely" (Angela), "vulnerable" (Michiko), "intimidating" (Kate and Marilyn), and "alone" (Angela and Kate). At its core, each person's description of their professional adaptation experience seems to denote a desire to connect with people and be accepted, respected, and valued by the school community.

The idea that adaptation is linked to a sense of belonging is not new and has been widely discussed in the migrant literature (Antonsich 2010; De Miguel & Trammer, 2010; Gilmartin 2008; Huot et al., 2014; Lueck & Wilson, 2010; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Often, newcomers seek to "become part of the social, cultural, and institutional fabric of the host community or society while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity" (Frideres, 2008, p. 80). Fostering a sense of belonging to the host countries is often associated with successful migrant adaptation and integration (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; Fontana, 2003; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz. 2017). Therefore, how migrants negotiate their sense of belonging in the host countries affects their experience of adaptation (Huot et al., 2014). Due to the close relationship, the sense of belonging is often used as an indicator for measuring migrants' identification with their host countries and the success of migrant adaptation (Harder et al., 2018; OECD/EU, 2018).

5.6.6   A sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation

The process of coding and data analysis led to identification of the themes of professional identity, sense of (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspectives. By applying the inductive and abductive nature of the constructivist grounded theory research method (Charmaz, 2014) and comparing and abstracting the data, a sense of belonging emerged as the key construct for understanding the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. The processes of memoing, diagramming, and theorising culminated in a substantive theory to explain the professional adaptation of the Asian Australian immigrant teachers who participated in this study. The sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation is illustrated in the theoretical model in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6

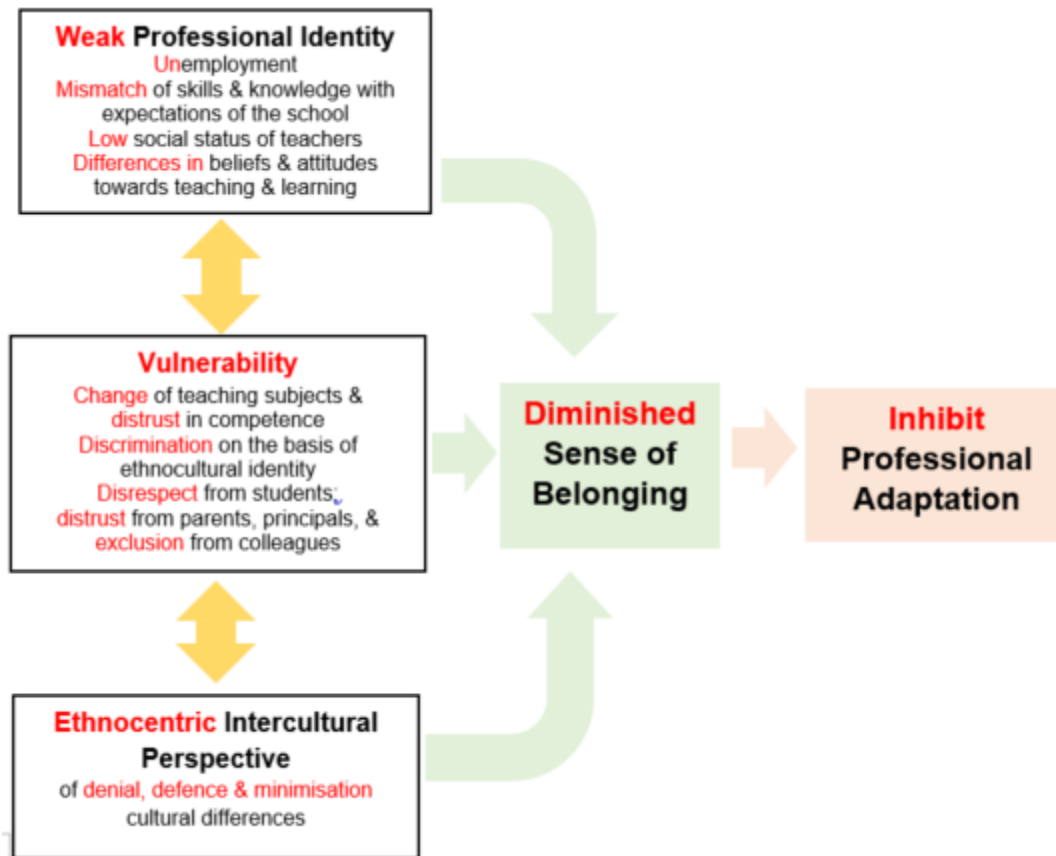*A Sense of Belonging Model of Professional Adaptation*
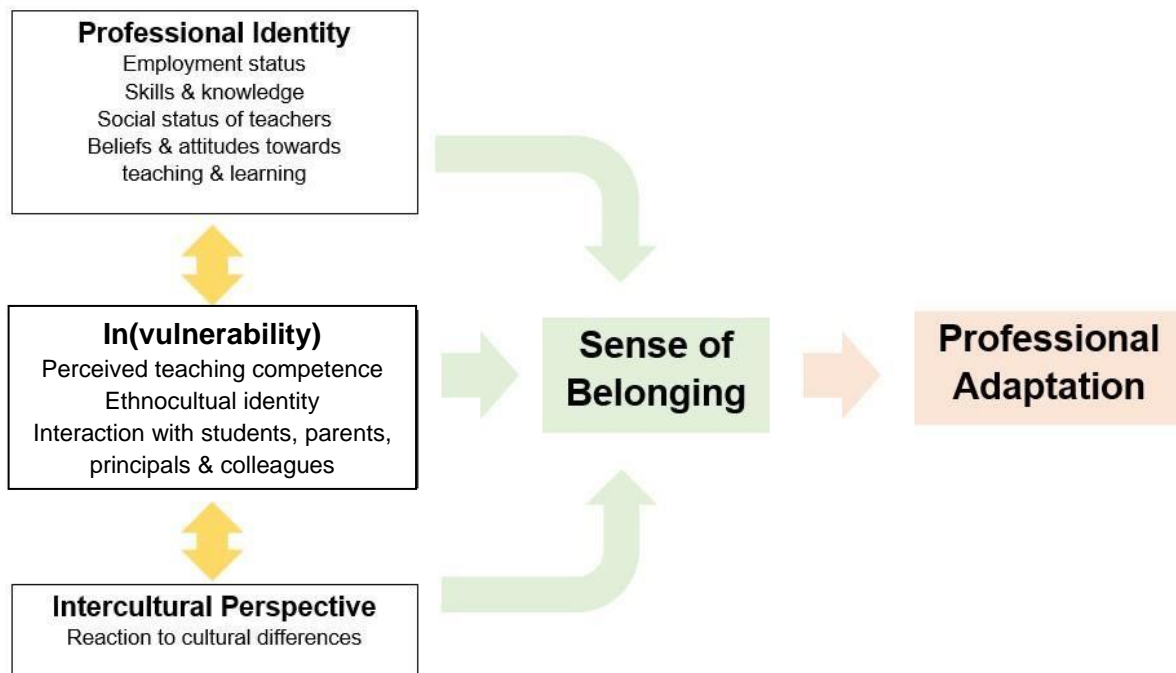
The model shows that the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers is underpinned by their sense of belonging to the school community. This sense of belonging is co-constructed from their professional identity as teachers, sense of invulnerability, and intercultural perspective. First, immigrant teachers' professional identity is based on their employment status, skills and knowledge, perceived social status as teachers, and beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning. Second, participants' sense of invulnerability is linked to others' perception of their teaching competence, whether they are accepted for their ethnocultural identity, and their experience interacting with students, parents, principals, and colleagues in the school community. Third, participants' intercultural perspective relates to how they react to cultural differences.

While these three constructs of professional identity, invulnerability, and intercultural perspective contribute to immigrant teachers' sense of belonging, they are also interrelated in that an individual's professional identity affects their sense of invulnerability and their intercultural perspective. Together, these three constructs work in tandem to support immigrant teachers' sense of belonging to their school community, which then affects their professional adaptation. The Figure 5.7 below elaborates on the sense of belonging model of professional adaptation to illustrate the circumstances that inhibit immigrant teachers' professional adaptation and Figure 5.8 illustrates the circumstances that facilitate immigrant teachers' professional adaptation.

Figure 5.7

A Sense of Belonging Model of Professional Adaptation Illustrating the Inhibitors of Professional Adaptation


As seen in Figure 5.7, certain circumstances can diminish an individual's sense of belonging and thereby inhibit professional adaptation. A weak professional identity diminishes an individual's sense of belonging and is a barrier to professional adaptation. The data from this study suggest that a weak professional identity is the result of unemployment, a mismatch between participants' skills and knowledge and the expectations of the school, the perceived low social status of teachers, and the differences in beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning between the teacher and their school. A sense of vulnerability also negatively affects an individual's sense of belonging and thus inhibits professional adaptation. The participants feel vulnerable when they have to adjust to changes in teaching subjects, when they are not trusted for their teaching competence, when they are discriminated against on the basis of ethnocultural identity, and when they are disrespected by students, distrusted by parents and principals, and excluded by colleagues. Lastly, an ethnocentric view can affect an individual's sense of belonging. This ethnocentric view is manifested in the form of denial, defence, and minimisation of cultural differences. As these three co-constructs are interrelated, when the participants' professional identity was weak or threatened, they were

more vulnerable and adopted an ethnocentric orientation as a self-protection mechanism. Overall, a weak professional identity, a sense of vulnerability, and an ethnocentric view diminishes an individual's sense of belonging and inhibits professional adaptation.

In contrast, as shown in Figure 5.8, a strong professional identity enhances an individual's sense of belonging and enables professional adaptation.

Figure 5.8

A Sense of Belonging Model of Professional Adaptation Illustrating the Enablers of Professional Adaptation
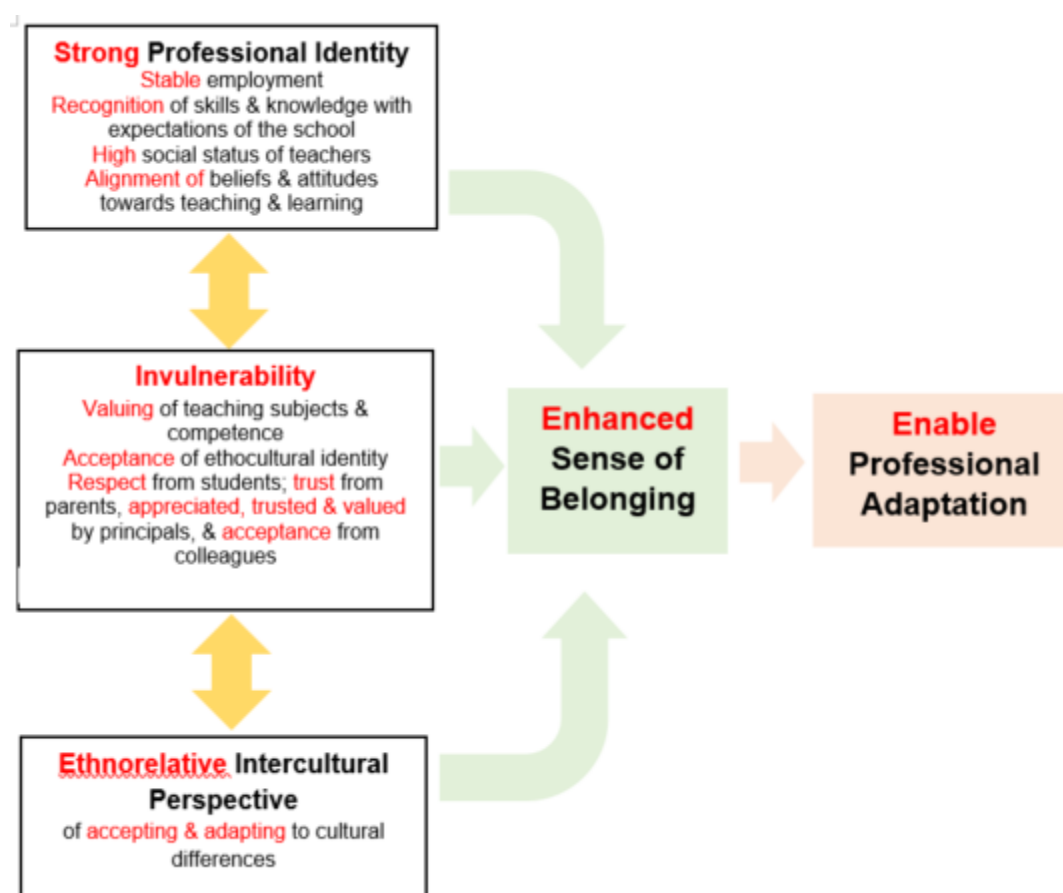
The data from this study suggest that a strong professional identity is based on stable employment, recognition of skills and knowledge by members of the school community, the perceived high social status of teachers, and an alignment of beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning between the immigrant teacher and the school that they teach in. A strong sense of invulnerability also enhances an individual's sense of belonging and enables professional adaptation. An increased sense of invulnerability is the result of participants feeling valued for their teaching subjects and competence, accepted for their ethnocultural identity, respected by students, trusted by students' parents, appreciated, trusted, and valued

by their principals, and accepted by colleagues. Lastly, an ethnorelative intercultural perspective has been shown to help in fostering a sense of belonging, which then enables professional adaptation. Individuals adopt an ethnorelative perspective when they demonstrate greater acceptance and adaptation to cultural differences. These three co-constructs also appear to be interrelated in that a strong professional identity can translate to an increased sense of invulnerability, which leads to participants embracing a more ethnorelative view of accepting and adapting to cultural differences, which overall leads to an increased sense of belonging, and has been shown to facilitate professional adaptation.

5.7   Chapter summary

This chapter discussed how the findings reflect, challenge, and extend existing theories and studies in the field, and also contextualised and provided a unique understanding of professional adaptation through the sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation, which is a theoretical assertion that was derived from interpretation of the data in this study. The theory that was developed from the data in this study reflects, connects, extends, and contextualises several existing constructs that suggest that professional adaptation for immigrant teachers is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Chapter overview

This final chapter summarises the thesis as a whole. It reiterates the original and significant contributions that the sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation makes to knowledge, particularly in relation to the field of immigrant teachers. The implications and limitations of the theory are explored, as well as the recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with reflection on my research journey.

6.2 Thesis summary

The aim of this study was to develop an understanding of the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers; specifically, to identify the enablers and inhibitors of professional adaptation. The study was situated in Australia, and data were obtained from the insights and experiences of 10 Asian Australian immigrant teachers (eight in the state of Victoria, one in the Northern Territory, and one in New South Wales) with a range of personal and professional characteristics. This goal was achieved through a qualitative research approach that adopted aspects of the constructivist grounded theory research method. A sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation was developed directly from data obtained from the participants. This theory suggests that professional adaptation is underpinned by a sense of belonging, which is co-constructed from professional identity, a sense of (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspectives (see Figure 5.6). A weak professional identity, a sense of vulnerability, and an ethnocentric intercultural perspective diminish immigrant teachers' sense of belonging and inhibit professional adaptation (see Figure 5.7), while a strong professional identity, a sense of invulnerability, and an ethnorelative intercultural perspective enhance immigrant teachers' sense of belonging and enable professional adaptation (see Figure 5.8). The theory further demonstrates that a sense of belonging and consequently professional adaptation exist on a continuum. Individual's sense of belonging and the degree to which they adapt varies according to the strength of their professional identity, their degree of vulnerability and their intercultural perspective (see Figure 6.1). This theory reflects, connects, and contextualises existing theories on cross-cultural adaptation, teacher socialisation, and teacher professional identity by providing its own unique understanding of the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers.

Figure 6.1

A Sense of Belonging Model of Professional Adaptation Illustrating the Phenomenon on a Continuum
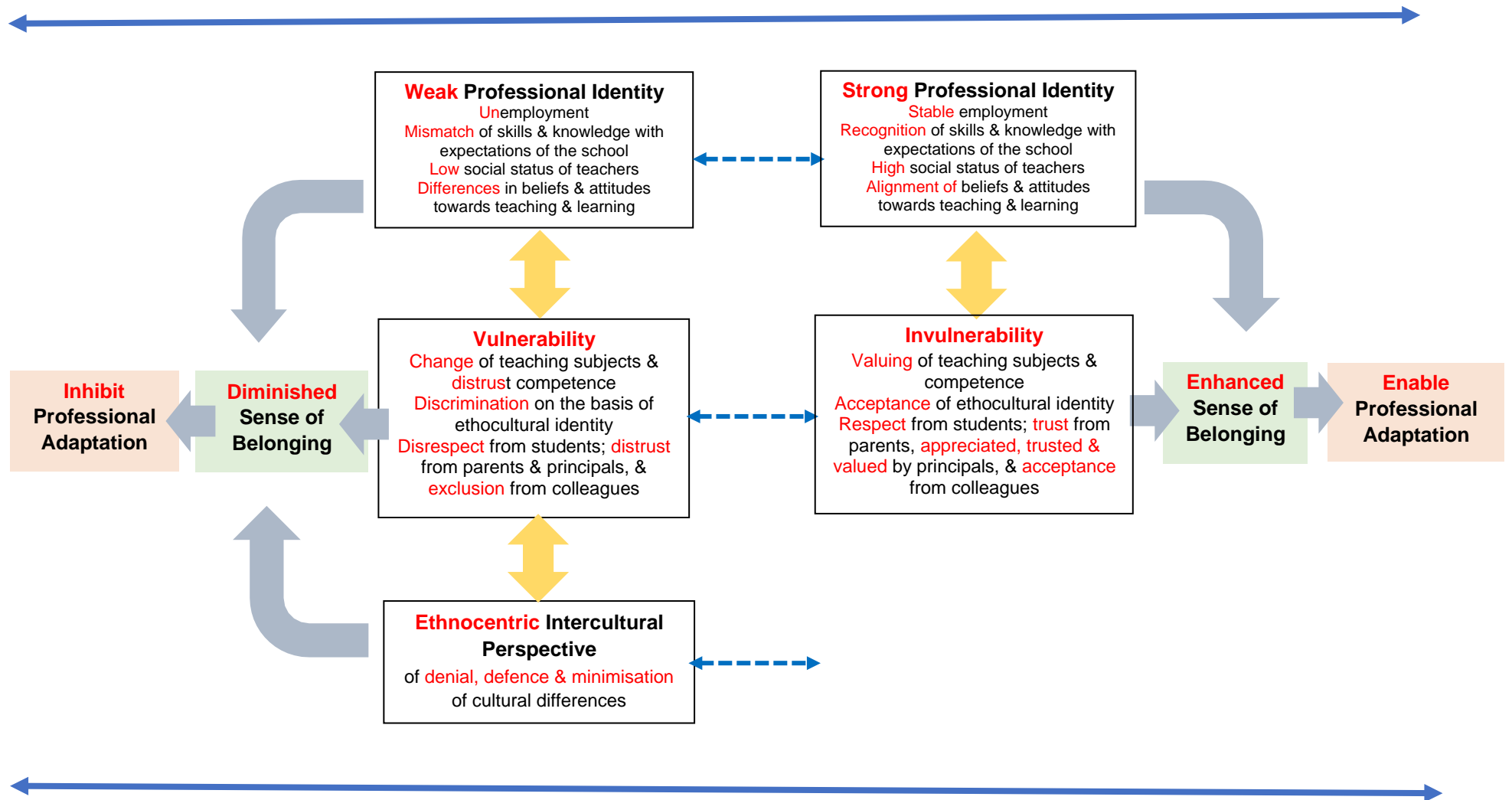
6.3 Strength, originality and significance of the theory

This study's theoretical findings align with the four criteria for evaluating grounded theory proposed in Charmaz and Thornberg (2020): originality, credibility, resonance, and usefulness. The originality of this theory is demonstrated throughout this chapter, which highlights how this theory of professional adaptation extends and contextualises previous works, and provides a new understanding of the phenomenon that could set in motion similar research and ignite conversations on the role of immigrant teachers and their unique strengths and talents in supplementing the current teaching workforce. Credibility is demonstrated through the depth and breadth of the data collected and analysed, the efforts to show how the theoretical findings were systematically developed from the relevant data, and the inclusion of a wide range of quotes to illustrate what each part of the theory could look like in practice, bearing in mind that some descriptive findings are unique to relevant participants. Resonance is addressed by documentation of the fullness of the participants' professional experience, as Charmaz and Thornberg (2020) state that to gain resonance, researchers must ensure that their data-gathering strategies illuminate their participants' experience. Hence, interview questions were limited to a few open-ended probing questions to encourage deep thinking and sharing from the participants' standpoint. This theory also appears to be useful for describing professional adaptation in terms of a sense of belonging, professional identity, (in)vulnerability, and intercultural perspective. Conceptualising professional adaptation through the four constructs of belonging, professional identity, (in)vulnerability and intercultural perspective allows the possibility of addressing the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers using a multi-dimensional approach. This way of understanding professional adaptation could help to complement existing strategies that support immigrant teachers and address their needs by affirming their professional identity, addressing their vulnerability, shifting their intercultural perspective, and fostering their sense of belonging to the school community. Such a strategy could also contribute to improving the overall school climate and cohesion.

6.4 Contribution

This theory presents a rich exploration of the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. Through the qualitative and subjective methodology employed, this study provides a deep understanding of participants' experiences of professional adaptation and illuminates the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural consequences of that experience. The grounded theory method helped to unearth participants' core concern – that of the desire to belong. Instead of simply presenting descriptive findings, the study developed a substantive theory that provides insights into the relationship of the different constructs that affect the sense of belonging and consequently professional adaptation. Doing so shows the interrelationship and interdependent

nature of the constructs that contribute to professional adaptation, and allows for a greater and more insightful understanding of the phenomenon.

The sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation that was developed from the data in this study provides an original, significant contribution to the literature. It addresses the issues and gaps in the many cross-cultural adaptation theories discussed in this study: Berry's (1998) acculturation model, Ward and Kennedy's (1992) notion of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, Lysgaard's (1955) and Oberg's (1960) U-curve, Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model, and Bennett's (1986) developmental model for intercultural sensitivity. It also adds to Lortie's (1975), Edgar and Warren's (1969), and Pollard's (1982) theories on teacher socialisation, and reinforces the theories of teacher identity, such as Day and Kington (2008), and the belongingness theory proposed by Baumister and Leary (1995).

This study is the first to provide a theory to explain the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers. While there are other studies on the professional transition of immigrant teachers, they mainly highlight the issues and challenges faced without providing an in-depth theoretical understanding of the constructs that contribute to this experience. The current study contributes to the literature on immigrant teaches by conceptualising professional adaptation as a complex and multifaceted construct that involves the interactions of the cognitive (professional identity, intercultural perspective), emotional (sense of vulnerability) and psychological constructs (sense of belonging), and the behavioural consequence of these interactions (professional adaptation). Each of these constructs is further supported by specific attributes (e.g., professional identity is supported by employment status, skills and knowledge, social status of teachers, etc.) as illustrated in the sense of belonging model of professional adaptation (Figure 6.1). A change in any of the attributes has a ripple effect on the construct, which then affects other constructs and, ultimately, professional adaptation. This theory is comprehensive in that the constructs and relationships explored in the study are broad and encompassing.

6.5 Implications

At the national level, this theory has the potential to improve the quality of the teaching force. The increasing interest in the complex qualities that immigrant teachers can offer to their host countries means that countries are looking at how they can tap into the latent strength of the immigrant teachers to improve the overall capacity of the teaching workforce. In the context of Australia, immigrant teachers from Asia offer a pool of readily available resources to drive the national imperative of engaging Asia and to broaden and deepen Australian understanding of Asian cultures and languages. An understanding of the constructs that shape professional adaptation

helps to inform strategies and programs related to the recruitment, retention, and development of immigrant teachers.

At the school level, to translate this theory into action means paying attention to immigrant teachers' professional adaptation by engendering a sense of belonging. School leaders can play a fundamental role in creating and maintaining a positive work environment that is built on trust, respect, and recognition, which helps to strengthen the professional identity and resilience of immigrant teachers and subsequently reduce their sense of vulnerability. Within the school, an understanding of this theory could ignite conversations on immigrant teachers and the talent development of teachers, and also the broader issue of school culture, policies, and practices, all of which could lead to the development of a more inclusive workplace culture and an overall positive school climate.

At the personal level, the theory heightens immigrant teachers' awareness of what affects their professional adaptation and motivates them to take steps to take ownership of their own professional adaptation. One way immigrant teachers can work towards fostering a sense of belonging is by reflecting upon themselves and to look for ways in which they are similar to others in the school community instead of focusing on the differences. An active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures will potentially lead to greater intercultural competence and communication, and consequently, better adaptation and integration.

6.6   Limitations

The study has, so far, looked into the professional adaptation of immigrant teachers in schools from the perspective of the immigrant teachers. What is unknown is how the presence of immigrant teachers has affected the culture and practices of their school, students' outcomes, and the school climate in general. It is also unclear how this study relates to any existing measures on professional adaptation and sense of belonging of immigrant teachers. More research is required in these cases.

The sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation is partial and contextual, in line with the spirit of the substantive theory developed using the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014). This theory is partial in the sense that it does not account for every aspect of the professional adaptation process, and it may not apply to all immigrant teachers. It is noted that Asia is a large supra region and that the participants came from different regions in Asia characterised by social and cultural diversity. Likewise, the Australia teaching context is also highly diverse and heterogeneous. Hence, the participants' experiences cannot be generalised for all Asian Australian immigrant teachers. While the decision to define Asia exclusively based on

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geographical boundaries in accordance with the approach taken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2017) is a potential limitation in this current study, it provides the starting point for establishing a baseline study that will evolve into future research lines of enquiry to deal with the complexities of the broad 'Asian' classifier.

The theory is contextual in that it is based on the current study with 10 participants, all of whom were Asian teachers who have relocated to Australia. A larger data set, together with a more fine-grained approach that focuses on the professional adaptation experiences of immigrant teachers in specific regions and teaching in specific educational settings, would have the potential to bring out more generalisable conclusions, as well as to add multiple perspectives to the theory proposed in this study. The small qualitative data set means that it is necessary to be cautious when applying the results to other contexts. Thus, a more comprehensive and larger data set in future research will be needed to complement and replicate the findings of this study and to validate the theory proposed. Furthermore, the theory does not consider that there might be a difference in belongingness needs for different people in different circumstances. These variations in the participating teachers' backgrounds and school context need to be considered when interpreting the findings and planning for future studies.

6.7   Direction for future research

The research could be replicated with other immigrant teacher populations using the sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation as an analytical frame. This framework could help to determine whether there may be differences in the professional adaptation for different people in different circumstances, whether belongingness needs differ for people with diverse backgrounds, and whether this substantive theory is generalisable to a range of populations.

A potential line of inquiry could be to examine the variations in the lifeways of Asian immigrant teachers with different ethnocultural backgrounds and/or national identities, particular aspects of identities and identification, and how these variations could account for the particular dynamics that we experience in Australian education and broader social contexts. We could also compare the 'Asian' experience of professional adaptation with experience of other nationality or ethnic group. Yer another potential research area is to examine the professional adaptation experience of immigrant teachers from countries with similar historical context as Australia, for example, immigrant teachers from commonwealth countries that share a common colonial history as Australia. In doing so, we will be able to establish a more nuanced understanding of professional adaptation experience and whether this substantive theory is generalisable to a range of populations.

An extension of this study could be to investigate the extent of relatedness of the constructs that make up the sense of belonging, the impact of each construct, and how they balance each other out to bring about professional adaptation. This research could be carried out using a mixed-method research methodology that employs survey questionnaires and interviews to gather data about professional adaptation experiences. A nationwide survey would provide a large sample size for regression modelling to examine the relationship and relatedness between the different constructs. Also, the use of statistical methods such as regression analysis to complement the interview data would help to provide an additional dimension to the findings and yield interesting insights.

The current study only utilises the interview approach with participants to gather their insights into the phenomenon of professional adaptation. Another way to gather more data would be to interview the students, colleagues, and administrators of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. These interviews about Asian Australian immigrant teachers would add another layer of complexity that could contribute to understanding the professional adaptation of Asian Australian immigrant teachers. This approach could also lead to a deeper understanding of immigrant teachers' contributions and the influence that immigrant teachers have on the school and the overall schooling culture, which is another gap in the current immigrant teacher literature.

6.8 Concluding statement

This study started with a sense of curiosity about the work and life of immigrant teachers. My initial contact with immigrant teachers years back and my current situation as an immigrant teacher prompted me to find out more about what is it like to be an immigrant teacher in a foreign country. This desire to find out more led to the interviews and conversations with the 10 Asian Australian immigrant teachers who volunteered for this study.

The participants' professional adaptation experience has been articulated in this thesis as a sense of belonging theory of professional adaptation. The theory is supported with extensive interview quotes to illustrate the participants' professional adaptation experience, what belonging in professional adaptation looks like, and what unbelonging looks like. This theory demonstrates that the immigrant teachers' sense of belonging to their school community is central to their professional adaptation, and that their sense of belonging is dependent on their professional identity as teachers, their sense of (in)vulnerability, and their intercultural perspective. It is anticipated that this theory will provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex and multifaceted professional adaptation process.

While some readers may perceive this study as advocacy to create awareness of the plight of immigrant teachers, this thesis sought to go beyond just that. It hopes to provide a springboard for conversations about diversity in the teaching workforce. Many a time, conversations on diversity and inclusion tend to centre on students, hence the many research projects and programs for inclusive education; however, rarely are the discussions centred on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) teachers.

Instead of viewing immigrant teachers from a deficit perspective whereby it is necessary to help them fit in with the Australian teaching force, it is hoped that this study ignites conversations and ultimately leads to structural changes within the school organisation and the education sector that manage and harness the diversity by mobilising the strength of CALD immigrant teachers to enrich the teaching workforce and the education sector.

On a personal level, developing the participants' interviews into narratives has taught me much about my own professional adaptation journey. I tried to answer the interview questions that were prepared for the participants and was surprised to see the many similarities in our professional adaptation experiences. Clearly, I also wrestled with the discourses around belonging, professional identity, vulnerability, intercultural perspectives, and a sense of belonging. Writing this thesis has been an act of self-exploration and identity development. Berger and Quinney (2005) state that:

> … lived experience can be understood through the stories people tell about it. Stories are ways not merely of telling others about ourselves but of constructing our identities, of finding purpose and meaning in our lives. (p. 5)

In the same way, the narratives in my thesis tell the stories of constructing identities and of finding purpose and meaning - both those of my participants and of myself.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview question

Optimising the Professional Adaptation of Asian Australian Immigrant Teachers (Project ID: 17878)

Housekeeping - Present teacher with explanatory letter and informed consent form. Explain the sequence of the interview questions. Answer any queries that participants may have.

Introduction

Background questions

i)   Which country are you from?
ii)   What is your ethnic group?
iii)   How long have you been in Australia?
iv)   How long have you been teaching?
v)   What subjects and level do you teach?
vi)   Do you teach in a government school or a private school?

1   Interview One: My life before coming to Australia
   a) Why did you choose to be a teacher?
   b) What was your experience working as a teacher in your home country?
   c) Why did you choose to migrate to Australia?
   d) What was your own schooling experience in your home country?

2   Interview Two: The details of my present experience (in Australia)
   a) Why did you continue to teach after arriving in Australia?
   b) How did you get your first teaching job in Australia?
   c) What is your experience teaching in schools in Australia?
   d) How is your interaction with students?
   e) How is your interaction with colleagues, and other stakeholders?

3   Interview Three: Reflection on meaning
   a) Given what you have shared about your work as a teacher in your home country and now as a teacher here in Australia, how do you feel about the whole experience?
   b) What adjustments did you have to make?
   c) How has this transition shaped your view as a teacher?
   d) What do you think are your contribution to the local teaching force?
   e) Where do you see yourself going in the future?

Appendix B: Letter of approval from ethics committee

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee

Approval Certificate

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project ID: 17878
Project Title: Optimising the Professional Adaptation of Asia Australian Immigrant Teachers
Chief Investigator: Professor Zane Ma Rhea
Approval Date: 07/01/2019
Expiry Date: 07/01/2024

Terms of approval - failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

1. The Chief Investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. Amendments to approved projects including changes to personnel must not commence without written approval from MUHREC.
7. Annual Report - continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report.
8. Final Report - should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected completion date.
9. Monitoring - project may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
10. Retention and storage of data - The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

Kind Regards,

Professor Nip Thomson

Chair, MUHREC

CC: Assoc Professor Zane Ma Rhea, Dr Eisuke Saito, Ms Sun Yip

List of approved documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Explanatory Statement	Explanatory Statement	19/11/2018	1
Consent Form	Consent form	19/11/2018	1
Supporting Documentation	Interview Questions	19/11/2018	1
Supporting Documentation	Recruitment of Participants	09/12/2018	1
Supporting Documentation	9916_Expansive_OHSRiskAssessment.aspx	09/12/2018	1

Appendix C: Recruitment advertisement

MONASH University

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

My name is SunYee Yip, a doctoral research student in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. I am undertaking a research project on the "Professional Adaptation of Asia Australian Immigrant Teachers" under the supervision of Associate Professor Zane Ma Rhea and Dr Eisuke Saito.

The aim of this research is to understand the professional adaptation of Asia Australian immigrant teachers in secondary schools in Victoria, to analyse what the factors that facilitate and inhibit their professional adaptation and how these shape their identities as teachers. The project findings are expected to inform the professional development of the increasing number of Asia Australian immigrant teachers in schools in Victoria.

The project involves a 30 to 40 min interview with the participant at a time and venue most convenient for him/her.

If you:
- *are currently teaching in a government or non-government school in Victoria*
- *had arrived in Australia from any Asia countries*
- *were trained as teacher in Asia before arriving in Australia*
- *had practiced as a teacher in Asia before arriving in Australia*

I am inviting you to join me in this research project. You response is strictly confidential and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time during the research process.

To indicate your interest or to find out more about the project, please contact me by phone: **0478132629** or email: **sunyee.yip@monash.edu**

Thank you
Sun Yee Yip
Faculty of Education
Monash University
Victoria, Australia

Appendix D: Professional teacher associations and social network groups contacted

List of professional teacher associations contacted for the study

1. Geography Teachers' Association Victoria
2. History Teachers' Association Victoria
3. Science Teachers' Association Victoria
4. Chinese Language Teachers' Association of Victoria
5. Modern Language teachers' association of Victoria
6. Australian Education Union
7. Asia Education Foundation
8. Australian Education Union Victoria
9. Monash Education Research Committee
10. Asian Australian Studies Research Network
11. VCE Business Management teachers
12. Teachers in remote communities (past present and future)
13. ESL teachers – Melbourne
14. Melbourne teachers
15. Beginning Teachers' Lounge
16. Singapore teachers in Melbourne

List of social network groups for migrants contacted for the study

1. Indians in Melbourne
2. Malaysians in Melbourne
3. Pinoys in Melbourne
4. Singaporeans and friends in Melbourne
5. Vietnamese professional community in Melbourne

MONASH University

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Project ID: 17878
Project title: Optimising the Professional Adaptation of Asian Australian Immigrant Teachers

Zane Ma Rhea	Eisuke Saito	Sun Yee YIP
Chief Investigator	Co-investigator	Student Researcher
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
Email:	Email:	Email: Sunyee.Yip@monash.edu
Zane.Marhea@monash.edu	Eisuke.Saito@monash.edu	Phone : 0478132629

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?
The aim of this research is to understand the professional adaptation of Asia Australian immigrant teachers in secondary schools in Victoria, to analyse what the factors that facilitate and inhibit their professional adaptation and how this shape their identities as teachers. The project findings are expected to inform the professional development of the increasing number of Asia Australian immigrant teachers in schools in Victoria.

The project involves a 30 to 40 min interview with the participant at a time and venue most convenient for him/her. The interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate analysis. Interview transcripts will be make available to the respective teacher participant for verification.

Why were you chosen for this research?
Participants are chosen those who have responded to the advertisement to recruit teacher participants for this research project.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

The consent process involves the signing and returning the consent form enclosed with this explanatory statement. You participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose to withdraw from participation at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Possible benefits and risks to participants
The participants will be asked to respond to questions which will actively engage them to reflect on their professional adaptation experiences. This could motivate them to gain a deeper understanding of themselves through appreciating how their personal biographies inform their teaching in Australia, respond constructively to their experiences in teaching and learning in a new environment and grow in their capacity as teachers. For the larger Asian Australian immigrant

teacher population, the findings are expected to surface their voices regarding their experiences negotiating the education landscape. The project findings are expected to inform the professional development of the increasing number of Asia Australian immigrant teachers in schools in Victoria and to contribute towards to the national imperative to nurture an Asia literate population.

Confidentiality

Any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics. The student researcher will be transcribing and analysing the data herself, no third party services will be engaged.

Storage of data

All data will be accessible only to the chief investigator, co-investigator and the student researcher. The digital data will be stored on password-protected computers, external hard disk and Google drive provided by Monash University. The hard copies of any related documentation will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigators' office. The information will be retained for a period of 5 years and will be destroyed thereafter.

Results

Interview transcripts will be made available to the particular teacher for verification. A summary of the research
Findings will be made available to the participants upon request.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

> Executive Officer
> Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
> (MUHREC)
> Room 111, Chancellery Building D, 26
> Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
> Research Office
> Monash University VIC 3800
> Tel: +61 3 9905 2052   Fax: +61 3 9905 3831
> Email: muhrec@monash.edu

Thank you,

Zane Ma Rhea

CONSENT FORM

Asian Australian Immigrant Teachers

Project ID: 17878

Project title: Optimising the Professional Adaptation of Asian Australian Immigrant Teachers

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Zane Ma Rhea Co-investigator: Dr Eisuke Saito Student Researcher: Sun Yee Yip

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement, and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
1. I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.		
2. I agree to allow the interview to be audio-recorded.		
3. I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required.		

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature   : _____

Date   : _____

Appendix G: Coding tables

Coding Table 1 – First impression codes
Coding Table 2 – From initial codes to focused codes to categories
Coding Table 3 – Organising categories into themes

Coding Table 1: First impression codes

1	Reasons for migration
2	Reasons for choosing Australia/Melbourne/region
3	Own schooling experience
4	Reasons for entering teaching
5	Home country teaching experience
6	Reasons for teaching in Australia
7	Job search experience
8	Early years teaching in Australia
9	Interaction with students
10	Interaction with students' parents
11	Interaction with colleagues
12	Interaction with school leaders
13	Overall experiences
14	Views of education
15	Workplace culture
16	Role perception
17	Teaching practice
18	Challenges/difficulties
19	Learning and adjustment
20	Contribution to the teaching workforce
21	Asian ethnicity – how it has influenced their role as teacher in Australia
22	Asian ethnicity – how it has influenced their experience in Australia
23	Future career plan

Coding Table 2: From initial codes to focused codes to categories

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
1. Earn a living 2. Put food on the table 3. Need a job 4. Love for teaching 5. Teaching is the only skill I have	1. Need for jobs	1. Employment status
6. Placement agencies 7. Friends 8. Very hard 9. Volunteer	2. Difficulties associated with job search	
10. Over here, I see among primary school teachers dropped their voice among their primary kids to get their attention. This is something that I have to relearn.	3. Teaching practices here	2. Skills, knowledge
11. Open-ended questioning and learning. 12. They are encouraged to ask questions, to ask why. 13. They are very responsive to questions. 14. There are lots of discussion in class. 15. They have their own opinion. 16. They ask a lot of questions. 17. I always told them that they need to ask relevant questions. 18. Students here are a lot more independent learners. 19. Here, there is no rote learning. The teacher isn't the guru. It is a lot more interactive.	4. Asking questions	
20. You never taught as though they had a spectrum, there was no differentiation in India. 21. Here, you can do more for each kid in the class. You can differentiate more. In fact, there wasn't the concept of differentiation when I was teaching in India. 22. Differentiation is a not a big thing in Japan still.	5. Differentiation	
23. Subject mastery 24. Improvement to lesson resources 25. My organisational skills and my competency	6. Competencies /skills/knowledge	

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
26. I have no problems managing students or getting results. 27. Exposure, world knowledge. 28. I actually feel more valued here. 29. My contribution here is very much valued and affirmed here. 30. I feel more appreciated here for what I do. 31. Recognition, affirmation, people say thank you a lot.		
32. Fortunately, I teach maths, it is regarded as an important subject, so they take me more seriously. 33. They will say, "Ms Marilyn knows her maths!" 34. I think she [my principal] wasn't confident about me teaching maths. 35. I knew that they didn't want to give me the advanced English class because I wasn't white, I wasn't Australian… So I was given the lower level classes [for English]. 36. Fortunately, I teach a subject with artefacts to show…My colleagues were impressed by my efficiency and organisation.	7. Teaching subject	3. Perceived teaching competence
37. We are seen as the vessel of knowledge. 38. People tend to associate the teacher as someone with wisdom and gives good advice. 39. When a teacher walks pass the classroom, everybody stands up and greets the teacher. 40. Teachers in Japan are highly respected. Teachers are called *sinseh*. Some students are a little scared of speaking or talking to their *sinseh*.	8. Respect for teachers in home countries	4. Social status as teachers
41. The role of teachers here is really skewed towards the teacher focusing on teaching and learning. 42. I can really be more of a facilitator.	9. Teachers' role	5. Beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
43. It was just very intimidating. 44. It was a daunting experience. 45. …completely made me shiver! 46. It was a very horrible experience teaching in a secondary school. 47. My first day of teaching …my first initiation into the scary world of secondary schools in Australia. 48. It was tough. 49. Students were curious about me. 50. They kind of take you lightly at first.	10. Experience with local students	6. Interaction with students
51. The discipline in the public school is really bad. 52. There were lots of discipline issues. 53. The students are not very well-behaved. 54. The students do show a great amount of misbehaviour. 55. I require a certain level of discipline to teach. 56. I ensure discipline so that nothing can get in our way of getting there (success). 57. […] they don't ever discipline. 58. The way they talked to the teacher, it is sometimes very rude.	11. Bad discipline/ behaviour	
59. The principal kept a close eye on me. 60. The principal kept a close tab on me.	12. Being watched	7. Interaction with principal and colleagues
61. I don't know who to turn to if there is an emergency. 62. I don't know who to call for help. 63. I don't have much interaction with them.	13. Feeling helpless / isolation	
64. I do get treated kinda cold. 65. The teachers were wary of me. 66. They are just being polite. I find them superficial.	14. Hostility	
67. I don't know if it's normal or not [on exchanging phone numbers]. 68. I don't know if it's the norm or not. Do they expect me to just walk in to join them? I tried to but it feels a bit awkward.	15. What is the norm?	

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
69. As an outsider, I don't get caught up with the politics of staff. I try not to. I kind of see it as an outsider. [Anusha on staffroom politics] 70. As an outsider you feel they kind of take you lightly at first. 71. The staff was predominantly white. They are people in the principal's camp and those that are the outsiders. 72. So breaking into the culture here has not been easy. 73. I still find myself being an outsider.	16. Outsider	
74. Difficult to break into the culture. I keep more to myself most of the time. 75. Breaking into the culture here has not been easy. 76. It is difficult to penetrate into the culture. 77. 'Closed' environment; difficult to penetrate.	17. Break into culture	
78. Because we have an accent of sorts, in secondary, it can really be substance for some merry making or laughter… 79. 'Cos you are not familiar with a lot of things and the lingo…maybe you feel a bit lost in the staffroom …and your culture is a bit different. 80. In terms of understanding the language, there are phrases that I picked up over the years. 81. The language barrier. Sometimes the accents are so heavy. 82. I struggled with making small talk with the teachers in the staffroom. 83. They didn't understand my accent. 84. I try to be more careful with the way I speak. 85. Maybe it's the use of some lingo. So we don't get to hit off as well as the locals.	18. Accent/language/lingo	
86. I feel inferior towards the Anglos. 87. I was brought up in my culture, the Anglos are always seen as better, smarter and it doesn't help that I cannot speak as quick-witted and as vocal as them. 88. I speak better English than you! Don't assume.	19. White superiority	
89. They [parents] test you at the start. 90. That put me in a vulnerable position.	20. Feeling vulnerable	8. Interaction with students' parents

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
91. No, I don't bring in my ethnicity in my work. 92. I generally forget that I am Asian in my school. 93. I could easily be identified as that strict Chinese teacher. 94. Just the appearance, little gesture, food...it is just the little things that made it more difficult. 95. My friend from another school was so envious of me when they saw that I have many Asian students.	21. Asian identity	9. Ethnocultural identity
96. I speak better English than you! Don't assume. 97. I will go into the staffroom early, just to mingle, make small talk and build relationships. As an Asian, I need to learn and build that part.	22. Asian stereotype	
98. You are the only one of my colour in the school…my daughter feels very comfortable now that you are here. 99. The principal asked me to be in charge of the Harmony Day. 100. I try to share with them some Asia cultures and festivals.	23. Asian pride	
101. Many are so lazy that they will leave the school immediately after the lesson ends at 3 pm. 102. It's shocking that teachers almost disappeared immediately after school at 3 pm. 103. Can't seem to talk to anybody after school. 104. Most teachers leave the school quickly at 3 pm so that they can do other things, or go home to their families. 105. They walked into the classroom without a unit plan. It's just plain laziness! That to me is a cultural hurdle, it's not acceptable. 106. They are just content with using last year's resources. 107. Things generally move very slowly, there's quite a lot of free time and there's room for errors. 108. The NAPLAN maths paper is a joke. Are they testing maths or English? 109. The students here are very rude. The students think that they have the right to do this and to do that. I don't think they understand what is human rights. 110. They are more in their own world. Geography isn't big here. 111. They didn't know much about the world and the different cultures. 112. I had a teacher who didn't know where New Delhi is when he was asked by a student!	24. Sense of superiority	10. Ethnocentrism

Initial codes	Focused codes	Categories
113. It doesn't matter whether you are in Japan or in Australia, or what your culture is. 114. You don't have to be Australian-centric and Indian-centre. The world is out there. 115. There is no right or wrong. We just look at education differently. 116. The understanding of grade, is very different. 117. The mentality towards education is very different.	25. Accepting differences	11. Ethnorelativism

Coding Table 3: Grouping categories into themes

Categories	Themes
1. Employment status 2. Skills and knowledge 3. Social status as teacher 4. Beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning	**Professional identity**
5. Perceived teaching competence 6. Ethnocultural identity 7. Interaction with students 8. Interaction with students' parents 9. Interaction with school principal and colleagues	**(In)vulnerability**
10. Ethnocentrism 11. Ethnorelativism	**Intercultural perspective**