

Female Punjab International Students' Perceptions of Safer Acclimatisation to a
Southern Ontario, Canada College: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

This thesis examines the perceptions of female Punjab, India international students' safer acclimatisation to the new culture and systems at a Southern Ontario College. It uses their recommendations to create a safer future. Adapting to a new culture significantly negatively impacts students' ability to focus on learning in the classroom. While orientation is provided for the adjustment to the learning, the acclimatisation to a new culture and external systems is neglected. The legal system, banking, transportation, housing, and health care require attention for the students' safer adjustment outside the classroom. A conceptual framework was developed from the literature. Safety climate and Feminist theory are the to focus and guide the research. A mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative methods is utilised. The data sources included 17 online survey responses and 11 one-to-one telephone interviews. The findings suggest that housing was the most considerable safety concern. The safety ranking was followed by safely navigating banking and employment, adjusting to the Canadian laws and consequences of the law, transportation, and health care. An emerging factor included trust and mistreatment by others from their community. The students' perception was that previous generations of their community, who immigrated to Canada, lacked awareness of Punjab society's current and progressive nature in Punjab. It is recommended that students have pre-arrival and post-arrival orientations in the presence of influential and trusted community leaders.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Context

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, female Punjab international students' perceptions of acclimatisation to Southern Ontario college. I will explain the purpose and aim of the research from the college, global and personal perspectives, the study's aims, and my personal philosophy as the researcher. I will also discuss the critical adjustment challenges of domestic and international students, explore the research setting, and share some perspectives on why international students choose to attend the College in Canada.

1.1 Research Context, Aim and Knowledge Gaps

This research aims to explore the notion of physical, emotional, and financial safety through the experiences of international female Punjab students, newcomers to the College and Canada. As a result, reflect on current induction processes for these students and provide safer passages for acclimatisation, which will support less stressful opportunities for study.

The study focuses on safety climate rather than safety culture. The difference between these terms is that safety culture is built and sustained over time whereas safety climate is a snapshot of the students' perceptions during their time at the College (Deng et al., 2020; Zadow et al., 2019; Zohar, 2014). The safety climate approach uses the student experience in a proactive approach to prevent safety or risky incidences from reoccurring (Antonsen, 2017; Bara et al., 2017; Roughton et al., 2019; Vierendeels et al., 2018). The female participants lived experiences will inform a preventative safety climate approach within the College.

The terms 'safe', safer, and safe are emotive terms that may trigger protective and defensive positions amongst communities and individuals. One's personal and community safety

are also defined based on a person's agency. Each group may interpret safety differently. Often the risks people take are based on a few variables including their needs, desires and the consequences of being caught. Their risk level will impact their level of safety. However, the term safer is an intentionally selected word as it implies safety within reason (Watts & Hodgson, 2019).

The term safe is a noun that means to be or feel secure (Le Coze, 2019a; Le Coze, 2019b). The term means an absolute, without risk or harm (Watts & Hodgson, 2019). The use of the word 'safer' can be defined as being secure from relative or reasonable liability to harm, injury, danger, or risk (Antonsen & Almklov, 2019). In contrast, a safer place can imply a setting almost free from hurt, injury, danger, or risk or with little chance of mishap, or error. A safer approach allows international students to experience new situations cautiously, make minor errors, and learn from their mistakes.

However, 100% safe acclimatisation is an unrealistic and unachievable outcome, goal, or expectation in terms of acclimatisation. The term safer allows for variables or variations in how the person can achieve or experience a safer adaption to the new culture (Le Coze, 2019a; Watts & Hodgson, 2019) by reducing potential risks or dangers and protecting the student from being exposed to danger or risk or being harmed or lost (Le Coze, 2019b).

1:2 Research Setting and Why International Students Elect to Attend the College

The Institution chosen for this research study will be called the College. The College was selected as the research setting because I have multiple associations with the Institution: I am an

alumna and work and live locally to the College. The College, in this case, study, is situated in an urbanised environment in Southern Ontario, close to the international airport.

In Canada, the designation of a college denotes a post-secondary institution, following high school with grade 12, typically above the age of 17 years, which offers technical, trades, college of applied arts or applied technology, or an applied science school. The post-secondary establishments grant certificates, apprenticeships, diplomas, and degrees (Trotter & Mitchell, 2018). Canadian universities focus on professional and academic programs, whereas colleges focus on career training and the trades. Traditionally students in college follow these professional pathways of manual skills, sciences, and the creative arts.

Although the Canadian colleges are publicly funded, students are charged a tuition fee to attend (Schuetze & Archer, 2019). International students pay four times the domestic students' tuition (Team, 2019). There is no age limit; all persons eligible to enrol in Canadian Colleges can upgrade their knowledge and skills. To be eligible to study in Canada, International students must prove they have enough money to pay for their tuition fees, living expenses for themselves and any family members who join them, including additional funds to return to their home country (Canada, 2021).

The College is in the Southern part of Ontario, west of Ontario's capital city of Toronto. There are three campuses, each located in this area, which is very urban and populated.

International students may seek to study abroad for personal growth, intercultural development, education, and career attainment. With globalisation, many Punjab female students chose to get higher education in Canada (CIC, 2020; Grant & Robertson, 2018; Root et al., 2019). The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) research shows that international students choose to come to Canada for the country's robust quality of education (El-

Assal, 2020). In Canada, the international students' overall expenses remain more affordable and less than the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom (El-Assal, 2020). India has a large middle-class population with high levels of English proficiency which increases the students' ability to study in Canada. Jackson, Ray, and Bybell (2019) found that students who spoke the same language as the host country had a more relaxed and positive experience (Arkoudis et al., 2013; Marangell et al., 2018; Telbis et al., 2014). By understanding the language, students could clarify questions about how the systems operate, which impacted their ability to adjust. Furthermore, Scott et al., (2015) concur that Indian international students are excellent candidates for permanent residency within Canadian, based on their English language proficiency, and their Canadian field placement work experience which can assist them with integrating easily into the Canadian labour force upon graduation.

Sixty per cent of international students surveyed by the CBIE (2019) stated that they are interested in becoming permanent residents of Canada once they have completed their studies (El-Assal, 2020). International students can apply for a post-graduation work permit to work in Canada while awaiting their permanent residency (CIC, 2019). Indian students are well-positioned to obtain Canadian permanent residence due to their high English proficiency, education and 1 and professional experience gained in Canada.

International students include students who plan to come to the College to obtain an education with the ultimate plan to return to their home country (Xin et al., 2017). According to the CBIE (2019), this may include forty per cent of the students. The international students obtain their degrees and return home with new knowledge and seek opportunities within their home country. The terms sojourners and international students will be used interchangeably.

Many international students find the location of the College suitable for accessing international transportation, as well as it is located in a significant hub where multicultural activities, celebrations, and places of worship take place (Government of Ontario, 2015). Due to the college's location, many international students select the Institution to take their studies.

The College is ranked as the number one college in Canada for international student experience. Over 7,500 students from 100 diverse countries attend the College (SC, 2020e). The most significant number of international students at the north campus are from Punjab. Sharma (2019), the College's Associate Dean of the Student Services, states that 90% of the international student population is from Punjab, India with approximately 48% of Punjab students being female. The female Punjab students who attend the college all speak and understand English as they are taught English as a second language in school. Also required to take an International English Language test with a minimum score of 75% for admission. Most students have graduated high school and coming to Canada is their first experience with higher education. Many of the students arriving in Canada are predominately Sikh, followed by Hindi and Muslim (Chari & Maertens, 2020).

Punjab, India, is a highly rural agricultural area, and many families own the land that they farm, although their wealth is tied up in the land. As a result, Punjab students at the College have limited or no experience of city life and their perceptions are based on social media and films.

Punjab students arriving at the College are not a homogenous group. Each student is an individual with unique perspective based on their life experiences including their family, social and societal exposures, and influences. Although they may have similar religious or cultural experiences, they may perceive their experiences differently. The population should not be

interpreted as a homogenous group as this can eliminate the unique features which will enrich their lives and thus the research.

Punjab students come to Canada for a variety of reasons including the potential to immigrate to the country. Due to the assumed young age group, it may be their first time travelling and away from the country (Sharma, 2019). It is a big financial investment for the parents to send their daughters to another country for education. Progressively, Punjab parents believe higher education for their daughters will provide more financial and economic opportunities for the daughters and their family.

Canada's perceived cultural diversity and acceptance of others make the country a very exciting place for sojourners to study due to the access to diverse ethnic foods, religious intuitions, and multicultural events (Carter, 2016; King, 2019). Several Punjab students may have chosen the College because of family connections or the same socio-economic background. It is a popular urban destination of study for many international students who find the location of the College suitable for accessing international transportation. It is located in a significant hub where multicultural activities, celebrations, and places of worship occur (Government of Ontario, 2015). The diverse places of worship provide spiritual support to others of a similar, faith, and belief systems. Rajani, Ng, and Groutsis (2018) researched the importance of sojourners' shared values and found the collective unity or social solidarity of a group and the sense of belonging to a new community is important to the sojourner. Creating the support system include surrounding oneself with persons of like-mindedness, a sense of fellowship, belonging and kinship assists in their settlement (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019).

The College's campus is in the city of Mississauga, where many other colleges are located. Mississauga encompasses a land area of 292.43 square kilometres, a much smaller area

than the Punjab state. The city's population density was 2,467.6 people per square kilometre (Stats Can, 2019). Although the city is densely populated, the entire province of Ontario has a population density of 14 persons per square mile. Southern Ontario houses most of the population of the province (World Population Review, 2020b). Students are often surprised by the vast area with little density of population when compared to Punjab.

As shown in Figure 1, geographically, Punjab, a state of India, is in the north-western part of the subcontinent. The state covers 50,362 square kilometres, which equates to 1.53% of India (Pragati, 2018). The population density of the Punjab state is 551 per square km (World Population Review, 2020a). As per the map on page 7, the students travel over 11,000 kilometres to attend College in Canada.

Figure 1

World Map: Distance between Punjab India and Southern Ontario, Canada



The College is particularly popular with Punjab students as an extensive and established Punjab community surrounding the institution. Ninety per cent of the international student population is from Punjab, India (Sharma, 2019). Approximately 48% of those Punjab students are female (Sharma, 2019). With such a large community of international students from Punjab,

India, there are adjustment issues that can sometimes lead to students' unsafe situations. Sharma (2019) states that many of the female students are leaving home for the first time, and this overseas move may present challenges in their understanding of the cultural or societal norms of the host country. There is recognition that these female students are not a homogeneous, but an intersectional group based on multiple life experiences. However, the experiences of newcomer female international students and particularly female Punjab participants have been very little explored in the literature. The few studies focused on female international students centred around Australia and the U.S.A. (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016). There is further discussion about gaps in research around female international students in 1.3.

While the College is ranked second in Canada for international student attainment (SC, 2020a), which makes it attractive to international students and provides all new students with first-year onboarding, the safer acclimatisation of international students can be improved to assist all international students in managing the newly encountered Canadian systems safely. The limited literature identifies challenges that international female students may have in comparison to male peers in terms of heightened concerns around physical safety (Lostetter, 2010) and the need for 'gender security' (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016) to counteract challenges they may encounter as they adjust to the more liberal Canadian environment in proactive ways. Adjusting to new freedoms and independence at times can lead to dangerous or vulnerable situations. The challenges may be similar for domestic students, but the cultural adjustment is an additional variable that these minority Punjab students face. Minorities are defined as the person who is deemed different from the mainstream persons (King, 2019), particularly in the context of this research being a female from Punjab, India, and an international student. The difficulty or failure to acclimatise to different external conditions impacts confidence, safety, success, and

their ability to gain an education at a cost to the family and can be detrimental to the school's reputation (Miotto et al., 2019). The complex nature of acclimatisation may also reduce academic achievement (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019).

As the College has accepted the students' application to study in Canada, there is a dual responsibility, accountability and culpability between the college and community to keep the students as safe as possible. This study will explore specific external systems in which the college and community will be able to collaborate and make changes to support these newcomer students further. Research around developing inclusive and safer classrooms, teaching and learning concerning international Punjab students are abundant (Arkoudis et al., 2013; Bell et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2019; Kennett et al., 2019). However, the required sociocultural adjustments transcend education (Adisa et al., 2019). There is limited research focusing on those broader considerations that international students who may not live on campus have. I am interested in focusing on these background systems that can support international students to feel safe and ready to concentrate on their studies. These systems include understanding the legal system, banking, transportation, housing, and health care. As an allied member of the College community and regional community member, I selected these external systems to explore the stories of lived experiences of the Female Punjab students to obtain the student perspectives on what is happening and how, together, we can make their stay safer by facilitating change and transformative support for a more inclusive and safer community (De Welde et al., 2019). Such considerations can also empower student voice and as a result inform further culturally responsive developments at institutional level. Enabling international students to share their lived experiences of settling in the new country can help unmask oppressive systems and critique discourses around power. Culturally relevant education works beyond the classroom setting in

the active pursuit of social justice in the wider society and aims to engage students in critical reflections about their own lives and societies (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Dover, 2013). Such opportunities can support students' contemplations on their own and other cultures and help them make connections to wider social and political issues (Aronson & Laughter, 2015) while feeling empowered to engage in collective resistance against the status quo (Duncan-Andrade, 2007). Support programs and practices that may result from these exchanges and reflections are good for all students (Lee, Williams, & Kilaberia, 2012).

The research aims to reduce vulnerability and empower future students to acclimatise more safely. Many of the Canadian federal and provincial constitutions, laws and policies govern a just society. A just society includes justice and is rooted in societal fairness and equity (El Shaban, 2019). It is essential to state that the actual risks discussed in the literature review did not involve the College Students. It is not my intent to sensationalise any of the incidents or discredit any institution.

Globally, Canada was ranked as the 8th most peaceful country in the world in 2016 (Global Peace Index, 2016), while in 2019, Canada was ranked sixth by the Global Peace Index; India was ranked 141 (Global Peace Index, 2019).

Peace implies life without conflict, and safety is one portion of the peaceful nation ratings. However, when dealing with humans, there are uncontrollable factors of individuality, behaviours, and personality in social interactions, which can significantly impact personal and organizational safety (Ford, 2019; Kaushik et al., 2018). The study further explores what international students feel about safety and how can their experiences be made safer?

The term 'safer' is purposefully selected as it is impossible to provide a person with a 100% safe acclimatisation, where there are no issues, concerns or misunderstandings or be in

complete control of persons and events (Bond, 2019). Stating or suggesting that 100% safety can be achieved is misleading or potentially gives false reassurance of an uncontrollable state (Desselle et al., 2020). Safer means as safely as possible, which is more likely to be a more achievable outcome. The term will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

The word acclimatisation is also intentionally chosen to highlight a more student-centred approach to exploring safety. The focus is on helping the students understand the host country's societal norms, adjust, integrate, and gain personal growth as they reflect on their own beliefs, culture and practices. Acclimatisation focuses on students' awareness of the differences in the social and academic climates between their native and host countries without abandoning their own identity favouring the dominant culture (Gordon 2005). A thorough exploration of the term acclimatisation will follow in Chapter 2.

1.3 My Positionality and Philosophical Lens

As the College Program Co-Ordinator and Professor, my interest in safer acclimatisation is derived from anecdotal stories where female international students are isolated, endangered, and left vulnerable due to their lack of awareness of Canadian culture, including values, behaviours, norms, and systems. The College offers a non-credit bearing induction programme for international students where the focus is on curriculum understanding and andragogy to ensure that they feel included in the classroom. I became passionate about cultural acclimatisation and the potential benefits of in-depth conversations with students in the classroom and during support sessions about cultural differences. I saw the confusion some students experienced when they encountered a new situation, such as the use of and value of

Canadian money, awareness of unsafe housing or work conditions, and lack of understanding of Canadian laws. I have observed the uncertainty students experience in the classroom and the community and their reluctance to interact and have meaningful discussions, reinforcing the need to facilitate an atmosphere of trust and sincerity within the institution's culture.

It is essential to have a clear understanding of my positionality and philosophy to better understand the purpose and aim of my research. While I am a female academic researching this topic, I acknowledge that being a female is the commonality I share with the international student population. I am a Southern Ontario Canadian college professor and program coordinator, where I have encountered international students who have shared that they have been taken advantage of financially, sexually, intellectually, and physically. Although my colleagues and I have heard the students' experiences, it is essential and empowering to communicate the female international students' stories. As an ally and an advocate, it is important to me to share the students' experiences and provide them with a voice or to utilise their voices to create and collaborate for recommendations to improve the future experiences of other female international students. Although the students are coming to the country where I was born, educated and live, I am conscious and aware of my Westerner's dominant stance in many things, including education, and do not wish to dominate the process of collecting those experiences but ensure that I take an inclusive and multiculturalist approach to support newcomer international student.

The 2020 protests for Black Lives Matter (BLM) bring further awareness to the inequitable treatment of minority populations (Edmondson et al., 2019) and make this research even more timely and significant. The protests have motivated me to continually reassess myself, actions and self-awareness regarding my work and approaches with all. While the BLM

movement brings a greater awareness to the need for intercultural communication, diversity, leadership, and social justice, which have resulted in civil discourse, these issues can also impact the Female Punjabi Population. With the inequity of treatment and the need for sustainable, impartial treatment of all, changes to inclusive policies and approaches are required. As well, Gender equality is one of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals (Durbin et al., 2017). While I understand the issues are very complex and multi-layered, the changes brought forth from the participants and those that I have influence over will be created and discussed in this research.

My paradigm and thoughts significantly influence my thinking and my approach for this writing; thus, I want to use my positional power as an allied professor to influence and advocate for change alongside the collective students' voices (Rasmussen & Raei, 2020). As an ally, I will support, listen, and relay the concerns, challenges, and adjustments during their time at the College within our community. As a result, I adopt a constructivist lens to my study and learn from the participants.

My self-awareness leads me to define how my beliefs, perspectives, position, and roles are my reference points. My daily values and practices are immersed in feminist theory, where I believe and value, as Norander (2019) states, to advocate for equity, fairness, safety, and opportunity for all. As a feminist, my concern is about the mistreatment of all women regardless of culture or country. While respecting the complex nature of conditions, exposures, and the background that many women encounter, I also believe any violation of any woman's safety or human rights should be prohibited worldwide as per the Declaration of Human Rights (De Schutter, 2019). I have a shared vision to advocate ridding the cultural excuses for any oppression of women.

My feminist mindset determines how I formulate my research problem and the investigation into the research. I am passionate about the empowerment, equal opportunities, and fair treatment of female students from Punjab and, therefore, the active role that I want them to share their experiences while providing them with a safe space to do so. I also acknowledge my predisposition regarding my lived experiences as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, where I conduct forensics exams on survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. I am aware that my perception is created and potentially skewed by my exposure to examining multiple survivors, including international students who were made vulnerable due to the misplaced and uninformed trust that put them in danger.

The feminist ideologies for this research are rooted in the liberal feminism theory (De Welde et al., 2019). Liberal feminists create and advocate for changes in the political, legal, and educational realms where any form of discrimination against women may exist and lobby to allow all genders the same opportunities (De Welde et al., 2019). The changes are created by examining students' stories (Crossley, 2017; Crossman, 2018) and discussing whether equal opportunities and safer treatment of female Punjab students occur or not.

Although I hold an awareness of my white privilege, and I am continually learning about how the colour of my skin may put me at the forefront of privilege. When examining the concept of white privilege, Bell, Funk, Joshi, and Valdivia (2016) define white privilege as being born into the racial 'norm', another kind of advantage or privilege purely determined by the pigmentation of one's skin colour. Being born white means that I was born into a system that validates and reaffirms that I am socially included, which is a precious privilege (Bhopal, 2018; McIntosh, 2018). Unjustly, this may be a system where white people are the dominant ethnicity within society, thus privileged (Sullivan, 2019). However, as a woman from a working-class

background, I also appreciate that it is important to acknowledge the holistic and intersectional nature of a person, where ethnicity and race may be factors that disadvantage individuals. Other characteristics, including, for instance, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or social background, can also contribute to a lack of equal opportunities.

Collins and Bilge (2020) define intersectionality as the interconnected and overlapping of social categorizations such as class, race, and gender as they apply to an individual or group, regarded as creating an interdependent system of discrimination and thus puts the person or group in a disadvantaged position. Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in 1989 as a critical analytic framework through which feminist scholars discuss the structural identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality and the impact of their agency has on their sense of self and adjustment to newer situations. International students experience the intersectionality of their combined race, gender, status, and roles. Female Punjab students have multiple layers of their intersectional agency, once again gender, race, role, status, and life experience (Cooper, 2016; Crenshaw, 2017).

Advocacy and allyship are ongoing and continuous processes where learning and reflecting upon cultural biases, racism, sexism, the unfair treatment of international students, and potential changes that the unified group can create (Kirkpatrick, 2020). As a white ally, I acknowledge the limits of my knowledge about international students' experiences. As an ally, I seek to deconstruct it institutionally and live in a way that challenges systemic oppression.

As a community leader, a feminist, an educator, and a mother, I am compelled to do more than research the problem; I want a safer environment for all the College's Community. Fairness and equity are core to my lived values as I was raised and worked in the college's region. Not only do I work at the College, but I also graduated from the College. As an alumna and resident,

I have life experiences as a resident, colleague, classmate, and professor and have seen the impact on Punjab female students who have ill-adjusted to the Canadian culture. I am mindful of the potential insider bias (Chavez 2008), which could have influenced how I planned for, collated and analysed student experiences, and I discuss these decisions in Chapter 3 and especially in Chapter 3.8. I also feel that the insider background gives me a unique perspective in the college and community history and culture and, as a result advancing support for international students grounded in a firm understanding of how students, community, and educational stakeholders can work together.

While I am well versed in Canadian culture, I rely upon the literature to further explain both the Canadian and Punjab cultures and expand my self-awareness of both cultures. My knowledge of the Punjab culture has evolved through work with people from the culture and reliance on the available and printed literature (Booth et al., 2012; Fink, 2019; Machi & McEvoy, 2012). It is at the forefront of my thinking to share the current printed literature as an initial review to identify the gaps in addressing the female Punjab concerns; the literature review will also pose as a standard of the written word of the known culture. Not all norms and beliefs are documented in literature as they can differ between individuals and groups, or the practices may not be acceptable legal practices (Birukou et al., 2013; Neil, 2019; Nieguth, 2015; Pieterse, 2019). In other words, the student's authentic voice will be heard, and there is a need to understand the sub-cultural nature of the students' experience and use this evidence to create a safer environment for them to study and live while they are in Canada.

This research desires to empower the participants to share their experiences and use their experiences to create changes to Punjab female students' safer settlement to the College. This study will examine students' perspectives of their adjustment to the Southern Ontario culture. It

is essential to the research to examine the students' perspectives, so that meaningful recommendations to create safer acclimatisation to the College can be attained (Holtkamp et al., 2019). The research collects the ideas and practices of current international students' acclimatisation experiences and current academic research and cultural adjustment to ground this research in a sound theoretical framework. The students' perspectives are purposefully sought to provide the authentic voice from the student compared with the printed and available literature. By collaborating with the international student and utilising the literature, meaningful and relevant recommendations can be created.

1.4 The Significance of the Female Gender for the Research

Female students are intentionally selected to participate in the research. Women are generally under-represented in research, as many researchers claim it is more biologically and logistically challenging to utilise female subjects (Amin et al., 2018; Berman, 2020). For instance, in scientific research, men are preferred for subjects as they lack monthly hormonal fluctuation and changes that women experience (Berman, 2020). In some cultures, males may be more accessible for research depending on where the research is conducted (Sarseke, 2018) due to more privileges that men may have in these contexts around participating in social interactions and sharing their voice. The female perspective is also under-represented in the extensive international student research literature reviewed (Amin et al., 2018; Berman, 2020; Sarseke, 2018). Many studies are conducted and published exploring the international student experience, adjustments, and support (King, 2019; Lin & Scherz, 2014; Marom, 2022; Rashid, 2019; Strauss et al., 2014). However, there are persistent population gaps of minimal gender-specific studies to

provide the female student with their empowered voice, the opportunity to express their situation, and a platform to share their experiences to enhance future students' acclimatisation (Page & Chahboun, 2019). Population gaps include a lack of research not adequately represented or under-researched in prior research, such as gender, race, or ethnicity (Miles, 2017).

When exploring international students' perspectives on safety climate, the perception of safety can differ between males and females (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016). Females of most cultures have been raised to be aware of their surroundings to identify unsafe situations. Sen, Kaur, and Zabaliūtė (2019) research show that globally safety awareness becomes an innate behaviour for females. Both, Ikävalko and Kantola (2017) and Marceno and Pera (2017) research support that women develop a sense of personal safety awareness with long term consequences. For example, a sexual assault on a female can cause lifelong trauma and result in pregnancy, whereas a sexual assault on a male may cause lifelong trauma without the fear of pregnancy. Furthermore, the added trauma can include the cultural belief that the survivor is not a virgin, which can shame many Indian families (Behl, 2019; Cooney, 2019; Imtiaz et al., 2019).

Ghosh (2018) suggests, as compared with Canada, there is a more defined gender power structure in India, where women in that structure accept and respect their positions. It also suggests that relations between those higher up and those lower down on the power structure are formal. The female gender role plays a significant, diverse, yet similar role in Canadian and Punjab cultures. The printed literature stated that women are stereotypically submissive, demure, polite, and quiet (Eltahawy, 2019; Ganesh, 2018; Haslanger, 2017; Ylivuori, 2018). However, interpretation of the female characteristics and the role expectations remain varied. Midkiff (2019) states the diversity exists with cultural, social, and familial driven expectations, characteristics, and assumptions. Women's actual treatment, status, and roles are often unwritten

or unacknowledged rules and secrecy of a culture or society (Clarke et al., 2017; Ulusoy & Firat, 2018).

Ganesh (2018) acknowledges that the women from Punjab do not have equality in roles, status, and opportunities within their Punjab communities. The women who attend higher education may be from families who have the ability to send their daughters abroad to access education. 'Ability' is defined as the means or skills to access finances and a supportive network to allow their daughter to apply and attend the College (Amin et al., 2018).

Ganesh (2018) and Haslanger (2017) explored the complex social constructs that create female role expectations and behaviours and often portrays women in a generalised, rote, and definitive manner; however, individuals do not always fit into societally defined boxes. Socially constructed norms create role division according to the members within the society or family. The socially constructed roles and behaviours can benefit the group, not necessarily the individual (Ganesh, 2018; Haslanger, 2017). The social constructs restrict and limit the females' control or power of reality (O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017). It is recognised that each female has unique life experiences and perceptions of their experiences that impact and create their individual agency.

Written literature regarding Canadian culture states that women are treated as equals; however, within the economic stream, it is recognized that equity does not exist. Women are continued to be paid a lower wage than males (Beaudoin & Demeyere, 2018; O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017). A few establishments continue to exist with male-only membership (Seabrook, 2017). More women are participating in decision-making roles such as leadership and politics; however, the male-to-female ratio is not equal (Cowper-Smith et al., 2017; Ferguson, 2019;

Thomas, 2017). Based on the printed laws, policy, and literature, it is believed that women are in parity with males in Canada; it is not reality now.

While India and Canada are becoming more inclusive and progressive with regards to the roles of women, both societies are rooted in a patriarchal family system (Asri & Hayati, 2019; Bhopal, 2019; Bini et al., 2019; Ghosh, M., 2018; Kaur & Kaur, 2018). Patriarchal society gives more social, political, and economic power to men. In addition, there are multiple controlling and influential variables such as cultural subtleties, familial dynamics, and gender socialisation influences which reinforce the female submissive gender stereotypes and gender bias which exclude women, and thus women are treated as second class citizens with no power (Durbin et al., 2017; Zinn et al., 2016).

Historically, men were given all the power, which was achieved with backing from the research community. Women have predefined roles created and influenced by both biology and culture. While biologically, women have the reproductive organs to produce, many researchers have disputed the reproductive belief that reproduction is women's sole purpose (Choudhry et al., 2019; Disch & Hawkesworth, 2018; Grady, 2018; Hortle & Stark, 2019; Kasper, 2019; Wass, 2017; Weaver, 2018).

There is no biological evidence to support that women's bodies have less ability or acumen for learning, skill development, or achievement of career or goals (Pulkkinen, 2017; Rammohan & Vu, 2018; Saini, 2017). Consequently, liberal gender reform focuses on women's capacity for equality through their actions and decisions beyond their procreative differentiation (Choudhry et al., 2019; Grady, 2018; Riley, 2019). Furthermore, the liberal gender reform focuses upon equal rights and opportunity for women rooted in the underlying philosophy that preassigned or predetermined gender roles limit freedoms, liberties, and equality (Kumar &

Gautam, 2019). Women are not restricted or confined to the sole role of reproduction, and their confines have been shaped by their cultural influences, limiting where and how their talents are expended (Deshpande, 2018; De Welde et al., 2019; Marceno & Pera, 2017). However, historical research significantly impacted how women were viewed and set the foundational patriarchal support for women to be treated as second class.

According to Bhopal (2019), in Punjab, women's traditional role is to unconditionally support their husbands and families. A woman's role is purely defined by her relationships with the men in her life, her father, brothers, and husband; thus, her status is secondary to men's (Asri & Hayati, 2019; Bhopal, 2019; Kaur & Kaur, 2018). Women and daughters may have less value and, therefore, less power due to the belief that sons continue the family lineage (Eltawhany, 2019). Daughters are seen as less valuable, with their primary roles being to serve their husbands and husbands' families. Historically and possibly currently, women are used to exchanging dowries when married (Chari & Maertens, 2020; Salim, 2017). Women's roles are to support their husbands because traditionally, men were the primary providers. Therefore, women are not expected to receive an education or work outside the home and instead are expected to place their husbands before themselves when fulfilling their cultural gender role expectations (Eltawhany, 2019). As well another gender norm includes when males including brothers take on the financial role in families, as money is deemed powerful (Joseph et al., 2022). Although recently and very slowly, Punjab is becoming a more progressive province by providing educational opportunities to their daughters, notably by sending them to other countries to gain higher education, even at the cost of selling their land to pay for the daughters' tuition (Sharma, 2019).

Universally, sexism causes females to be treated differently from males, which causes unique risk elements that males may not be concerned about. Although each potential risk and concern is expanded upon when discussing the cultural systems, sexism is defined as prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender (Ahmad, 2019). Sexism can impact anyone; however, this study explores how attitudes like sexism may affect female students and create less safe environments for them. Moreover, sexism can include stereotypes about gender roles and the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another (Khan & Khalid, 2019; Rammohan & Vu, 2018). Gender equality is one of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals (Durbin et al., 2017) because gender inequity can put women at risk of sex-related violence (Vicente et al., 2020). In both Canada and Punjab, women are at risk of intimate partner violence (Bhuyan & Bragg, 2019; Cooney, 2019; Dey, 2019; Seabrook, 2017). Female international students may have the cultural belief that they are inferior to men, thus less worthy, and violence may occur as they do not feel the ability to stand up to others (Sen et al., 2019; Vicente et al., 2020). Therefore, they have developed an instinctive stance of personal safety when in the presence of men.

Again, this is cryptic knowledge of feeling unsafe is not published widely, particularly for women. Cryptic cultures can include knowledge or behaviours that society is aware of but is not proud of or able to print without a backlash (Parent & Parent, 2019). It may include the cultural or societal expectations of the way a woman may dress or behave. For example, it may be unacceptable to wear shorts or short dresses or wear makeup or use profanity. The persons within the culture understand the meaning behind the behaviour and know that the larger society may not approve or accept what is happening within the culture. A cryptic culture can also include covert or hidden values, beliefs, and attitudes that the members adopt for example

superstitions, treatment of others deemed less worthy by the group or even gender role assignment. These behaviours are not transparent or found in printed literature due to the potential negative image or portrayal of the culture (Clarke et al., 2017). Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, and Roberts (2017), along with Storey (2018), agree that the cryptic culture, the idiosyncrasies and sub-groups in all higher education institutions are not well-documented.

1:5 The International Student/Sojourner

According to multiple research resources, the phrases 'international student' or 'sojourner' represent any student who studies in another country other than the country in which they are born (Adriansen, 2020; Heigl et al., 2019; Shields, 2019). Both Shields (2019) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019) define international students as students who receive their education in another country and are not residents of their current host country of academic study. In Canada, the term sojourners include persons who are temporary residents with study permits or refugee status (CIC, 2020). Applicants may choose to study at Canadian institutions for various reasons, including specific academic programmes, affordability, and the perception of Canada as safe (Shields, 2019; Usher, 2018). Colleges and Universities recruit international students to enhance their profiles, reputation, and global contacts, respond to international students' needs, and, in developed countries, provide a revenue source as the Canadian domestic enrolment declines (Usher, 2018).

The misunderstanding of the word 'international' separates students from the host country, indicating they are different and require specialised treatment. In this research, the female international student is from Punjab, India, their home country, and Canada will also be

referred to as the host country. The phrase 'international student' is not intended to impose a power imbalance between home and international students but bring to the spotlight challenges that they may face. It is felt that the recommendations of the study can provide inclusive and safer solutions for all students. In the research context, the term international student or sojourner will refer to Punjab female students who come to Canada to study.

1:6 Personal Agency and Critical Challenges for the International Student

Few studies explore the physical or psychological safety of international female students. Jamaludin, Sam, and Sandal (2018) claimed limited knowledge about how the international experience impacts the international students' perception of safety. Currently, the impact of sojourners' safety and adjustment to a new culture has remained minimal, predominantly for female sojourners (Babacan et al., 2010; Jackson et al., 2019; Jamaludin et al., 2018).

Zohar (2014) states a distinct yet clear relationship between psychological and sociocultural adaption to a new environment. The psychological adjustments include students' perception of their safe wellbeing and balanced mental health status (Babacan et al., 2010; Li et al., 2019), which can improve by retaining their sense of agency (Dollard et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Schachner et al., 2014). At the same time, the sociocultural adjustment refers to students' ability to safely navigate everyday systems within the societal systems and live within the new culture (Brunsting et al., 2018; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Sondhi, 2019).

Biserova and Shagivaleeva (2019) state that one must consider the entire student as a person, not only their ability to attain education. A person's holistic well-being considers the whole person and how they interact within their given environments. Holistic wellbeing and

agency include physical, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, and financial well-being (Mesidor & Sly, 2014; Zadow et al., 2019).

The attention to different aspects of wellbeing is not always given equal consideration due to competing priorities (Brunsting et al., 2018; Jamaludin et al., 2018). The area requiring the most attention can require increased attention at any given time, thus causing decreased attention in the other aspects of the person's well-being. For example, if a student has emotional maladaptation to the new environment, the emotional aspect will prevail, occupying more of the student's attention, energy, and time. As a result, it will leave less attention, energy, and time for other aspects such as intellectual development. As the stressor in the emotional aspect lessens, space expands, leaving less room for attention, energy, and time for another aspect (Biserova et al., 2019).

Multiple subsections will be unique to the individual student and their agency when looking at a whole student. An example under the physical variable may include a congenital disability impacting the person's capacity to move, hear or see. The variations within the individual and their external influences of cultures create the individual's sense of agency, being, and personhood (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Page & Chahboun, 2019; Reisberg, 2019).

A person's agency is the individual's ability and behaviours that are demonstrated or performed on a day-to-day basis (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Ganesh, 2018; Haslanger, 2017; O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017; Tran & Vu, 2018). The students' behaviours influence and are designed by individual belief and values systems (Tran & Vu, 2018). Personal agency implies that persons are autonomous beings capable of behaving or making informed and voluntary decisions based on their current level of knowledge, exposures, and interactions with others within the restrictions of their beliefs. Individuals' social exposures dictate their conditioned

societal practices and behaviours (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Ladum & Burkholder, 2019; Tran & Vu, 2018). When entering a new institution and country such as Canada and the College, what influences and behaviours the students had were influenced by their experiences from their home country and they may not always transition safely into the new country (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Ladum & Burkholder, 2019). Johnson (2019) found evidence that students may experience conflict around personal agency within the adjustment period to the new country as the social constraints are different.

There are interactions and intersectionality between wellness aspects, which can become more complicated when considering the person's academic abilities, access, achievements, and restrictions. A student may be naturally versed with learning and memory yet be depleted in access to learning and thus achieve high grades, bursaries, or awards, which would restrict their living or future opportunities. Baas (2019) points out that the student's gender or race may restrict their ability to develop or further develop their skills due to role expectations and perceived status constraints. Moreover, the international student is challenged further when adapting to the different cultural environments (Reisburg, 2019; Sondhi, 2019).

It is generally agreed upon that the international experience can lead to diverse multinational collaborations, improving and enhancing innovation and developing new knowledge that would address the world's most pressing problems and ultimately improve quality of life everywhere (Reisberg, 2019; Sondhi, 2019). Strengths-based practise is a collaborative process between the international student supported by the College's services and those supporting them. The collaboration allows them to work together to determine an outcome that draws on the international students' strengths, assets, and experiences. However, Bhopal (2019) openly questions whether the holistic international student's challenges and the known or

unknown complexities with adapting to a different cultural environment, the international student remains at a disadvantage. The international student does not begin their studies with the same foundational understanding, awareness of services, and flow as students who have previously adjusted to Southern Ontario and the College cultures.

It is acknowledged that with the multitude of influencers, the international student cannot be conclusively generalised or homogeneously grouped and placed into one category. However, the Punjab female international student may experience similar challenges around safety, and thus in the context of this research, the female Punjab student is the group explored.

The complex and multi-layered reasons for these gender-specific differences may be cultural, role model related, or perceptions around the value of females to the population (Kumar, 2018; Kumar & Mitra, 2019). As the study will be centred around a single educational setting in Canada, there is the acknowledgement that the findings may not be generalizable to the whole female sojourner student population but will give indications of themes that can influence positive action around safety.

1:7 Challenges for Domestic and International Students Adjusting to the College

When all students attend university or college for the first time, domestic and international students experience many changes and adaptations different from their previous learning environments (Forbes-Mewlett & Sawyer, 2019; Hong & Cui, 2020; Sharma, 2019). All higher education students undergo a transition period that may include moving away from home, becoming oriented to a new campus, programs, accessing school supports, and attending classes (Hong & Cui, 2020; Oladipo et al., 2018). Hong and Cui (2020) and Luo, Wu, Fang, and

Brunsting's (2019) research points out that domestic students, though not a homogenous group, have the inherent advantage of knowing and practising Canadian systems, cultures, norms, and behaviours. Based on where the domestic students have lived in Canada, they may take for granted the everyday norms such as the use of transit, Canadian money, and the Canadian laws and understanding of the consequences of breaking legal or social norms. Although the domestic student may need to adjust to the new way of learning due to attending a new institution, the awareness of the environment's norms and practices can add comfort or familiarity for the domestic student.

International students have additional and more layered challenges and stressors (Oladipo et al., 2018). The international student must manage the transitional stressors along with the novel and compounding adaption and acclimatising stressors of the entire new Canadian individualistic culture which can create a systemic disconnect and maladaptive interplay between the academic and non-academic difficulties (Hofstede, 2017; Jurcik et al., 2019; Ladum, & Burkholder, 2019; Meyer, 2019). The added pressure between maintaining their cultural qualities and experiencing newfound independence and navigating the systems can have detrimental effects, particularly if they are misled by others sharing of ill-advised information (Meyer, 2019). This international experience may also be the international students' first time away from home, coming to Canada, and potentially even the first time leaving their state of Punjab (Forbes-Mewlett & Sawyer, 2019; Hong & Cui, 2020; Sharma, 2019). The added pressures of navigating through new social systems and familiarising themselves with social norms can impact the international students' ability to safely adjust to the new environment and impact their ability to concentrate on academic work.

Domestic students are also intersectional, and they can also face challenges like racism, but this aspect may be more prevalent in international students (Fitch, 2012; Jackson et al., 2019) as unawareness of the host country's societal norms may place them in a more vulnerable position. In the context of this research, being a female international student puts the person in greater need of safer measures.

Additionally, the host country's lack of foundational understanding and awareness can put the international student at a disadvantage for many complex situations (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Franco et al., 2019; Meyer, 2019; Newman, 2013; Oladipo et al., 2018). While the entire academic cohort ideally should be focusing on the academic lessons, assignments, and studies, the international student may be preoccupied additionally by learning, adjusting, and following the host country's cultural norms, rules, and systems. As a result, they may be anxious or even distracted and appear disinterested in the classroom or lack commitment to group work (Shafaei et al., 2018). The international student has many competing priorities and requires a person to trust and help guide or safely sponsor them to adjust to the new culture (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Mesidor & Sly, 2014). Although international students may face more complex psychosocial challenges and situations than domestic students, according to the research, very few international students will seek mental health services that are available on campus (Dollard et al., 2019; Lieb, 2016; Sharma, 2019). The cultural differences may impact the students' ability to seek and access resources; this will be deliberated further in this chapter.

When considering domestic and international student interactions, the international student may feel judged because they are from another country and may feel less valued in the classroom or group work setting because they are hesitant to speak out and contribute (O'Reilly et al., 2013). Grant and Robertson (2018) add that cultural identity is a core component of the

student's self-concept. Language and communication skills may also act as barriers to fostering relationships, thus impacting their ability to acclimatise to Southern Ontario and the College (Kuo, 2011; Mesidor & Sly, 2014).

Cultural differences with student interactions will impede future collaboration or communication between students. The conflict may result in resentment, distrust, or an avoidance environment, which is not conducive to an inclusive and supportive learning environment and can damage the College's reputation (Arkoudis et al., 2013). Strauss, U-Mackey, and Crothers (2014) contend that some domestic students have a false perception that the quality of their education is lowered with the presence of international students or that the entry requirements are altered to enable international students by giving them an advantage. This false notion and stereotyping can lead to apathy, and lack of engagement of all students and is a myth that should be addressed. The international student will have an altered perception of the content discussed from a strengths-based approach, and their perspective is relevant and worthy (Owen et al., 2019). Further discussion of psychological stressors will be explored in chapter four.

Domestic and international students have the agency and autonomy to either enhance or impair working relationships. However, there tends to be more onus on the host country students, particularly with Canada's multicultural code, to make the international students feel welcome and part of the School's Community (Abu-Laban, 2018; Kwak, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018).

The safety climate approach allows the College's leadership and decision-makers to learn from other's unfortunate events where international students did not feel welcome and had encountered challenges due to cultural changes (Roughton et al., 2019). Furthermore, the climate safety approach is proactive (Lee et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019; Tear et al., 2020). Being

proactive can enhance the institution's reputation as positive, inclusive behaviours will increase student engagement, commitment to their studies, and sense of belonging (Jackson, 2020; Sharma, 2019).

1:8 Internationalization and College Safety Policies and Procedures

Internationalisation has become part of the strategic plan in universities across the world including Canada (G). In Canada the number of international students is increasing, at the College level in particular (erudera, 2022), and their presence and input provides revenue of around “\$21.6 billion on tuition, accommodation and other expenses (Global Affairs Canada, 2019). Over 135 public higher education institutes and colleges exist in Canada (Curaj et al., 2020). 50% of Canada’s international students come from India and China, with India the country with the highest number of international students (Global Affairs Canada, 2019:2). The Canadian International Education Policy 2019-2024 (Global Affairs Canada, 2019:2) is set recognizing the need to diversify and innovate around internationally informed curricula and services across all phases of the education sector. Such policy is particularly important for Canada that in the ‘social imaginary’ (Guo & Guo, 2020) is presented as a “Just Society” Fleras (2018) with “fair, open, and tolerant people” (Fleras, 2018: 319). As it was the first nation to have an official multiculturalism policy (Watt, 2016), this “mythical Canadian narrative of inclusivity and diversity” (Henry, 2017) is widely believed within the country and the outside world, masking at times the need for exploring Canada’s deeply racialized roots (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013).

Internationalization at Home (IaH) has been one of the terms used to describe “activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills” (Curaj et al., 2020). It has been contested against the term ‘Internationalization Abroad’ though both terms aim to engage in conversations around the importance of developing international understanding despite the place of study. Internationalization is recognized as a “a complex, chaotic and unpredictable edubusiness...” (Luke, 2010, p. 44) influenced by two drivers: market-driven and ethically-driven (Guo & Guo, 2017). Both drivers emphasize the global citizenship outlook and social responsibility that higher education institutions should have towards all students (De Oliveira Andreotti, 2014; Guo & Guo, 2017). Such approach should influence changes on both the formal and informal curriculum on offer (Guo & Guo, 2020). While formal curriculum refers to the educational syllabus and planned activities that students undertake to complete their degree programmes (Leask, 2015), informal curriculum “refers to the various support services and activities organized by the university that are not formally assessed but may support learning” (Leask, 2015 as cited in Guo & Guo, 2017). This study is focusing on that informal curriculum and the importance of engaging with the wider external community that international students inhabit to support acclimatization.

As part of the informal curriculum the College policies aim to provide a safe and welcoming space to all students and staff while on campus. While some policies extend to the community, many community systems are not governed by the College. As the context of my research is focusing on the safety of the systems outside the College, I am discussing policies that function to keep the students safe that relate to the College as well as the City and regional laws and by-laws.

The College recently disbanded the International Student department and aligned with the Student Support department in an attempt to follow an inclusive and intersectional approach around student support. The alignment allowed for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to policies that support student learning and wellbeing. The Student Support department also works with the College Security to obtain reports of any students who may be feeling unsafe at its premises or on the way to the site or incidents of harassment or bullying, behaviours that contravene the College policies. The data is used to enhance awareness training around onsite safety and to develop resources to support student safety and wellbeing further, such as exposures to unwanted attention. However, currently College support does not extend to cultural-specific resources even though there are identified ethnic student groups, like our students from India.

The College's Office of Risk Management (ORM) offers a framework and procedures for identifying, assessing, prioritising, mitigating, and monitoring risks to the College community (S.C., 2022). The ORM mission is to reduce any known incidents or losses to the College student resource team, physical property, financial and reputational assets. The ORM Team includes Campus Security, Compliance, Emergency Management, Enterprise Risk Management, Fire Safety, and Insurance.

The College offers various governing safety policies and procedures within the campuses, including campus fire safety resources and emergency evacuation procedures, Security and campus safety maps and reporting systems. The Campus security officers are visible to all people as they walk throughout the campuses and speak with the visitors, students, and employees. Campus Security Officers are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to provide

escorts to anyone within the campus community. A campus officer has authority over incidents that occur on the campus grounds.

The fire safety protocols cover and support the campus and students staying in residence. The College offers cycling safety workshops to help create a safer environment for persons who bike to College during the weather permitting months. The campus officers also provide students with personal safety and car safety tips. The College uses a digital safety application to announce any acute safety concerns and shares those announcements on the website and across the College student mailing list.

The College Safety team has community member working groups with local citizens, professionals, and government officials to monitor and address off-site incidents such as fighting which may involve the College students. However, currently the collaborative community team does not focus explicitly on safety issues of reported overpopulation of housing, thus unsafe fire by-laws, employment safety standards, laws around reporting, understanding of deportation or processes around students accessing health care and what their insurance will cover.

There is a Sikh Association club for males and females at the College. However, there are no Punjab female specific policies or clubs. A female centric club allows for the women to speak freely, be supported, and collaborate on ideas for safety.

At orientation, the City bylaws and policies are not explained to the international students, and this lack of knowledge is a potential risk for the new students. This information and knowledge of the City bylaws and policies is particularly important for international students who are not staying in-residence onsite. The focus of this research project is to explore perceptions around a safer settlement outside the College, therefore the system laws will be discussed, such as banking fees, employment standards, work permit and hours of work, housing

fire by-laws, transportation, health care and use of 911 in an emergency. The aim of the project is to support further discussions and collaborations between the College and the City departments to assist in safer acclimatisation. Such collaborative approach can support students feeling safer and enable them to concentrate fully in their studies without worrying about safety.

1:9 Chapter Conclusion and Organisation of the Thesis

In summary, the purpose and aim of the research from the college, global and personal perspectives include the desire to create a positive and safer experience for the female Punjab students. From my feminist perspective, the study explores the critical adjustment challenges of international students and how they differ from the domestic student experience. International students chose to attend the research setting of the College to gain opportunities, experience, and potentially become residents of Canada. This study will narrow the gap in research with the undocumented student experiences compared to written policies and procedures, plans, and outcomes of support by exploring their ability to access the required services and experiences. It aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the internationalisation field, emphasising safer acclimatisation for Punjab female students outside the College. There are no Punjab Female clubs to provide support and a sense of belonging. The topic is particularly timely with the current and ongoing protests worldwide regarding the treatment of minority populations.

This thesis is organised into five chapters. The first chapter is this introduction, in which I have introduced include my positionality and philosophical lens, the significance of the female

gender for the research, the international student/sojourner and critical challenges for the international student, the critical challenges of domestic and international students adjusting to the College and finally the research setting and why international students are electing to attend the College. In the second chapter, I aggregate and critically analyse the literature on the safety climate and acclimatisation of female students and evaluate the literature related to the student's adjustments to Canadian systems. In the third chapter, I discuss the methodology I utilise and justify the sequential, explanatory research design with mixed methods used for this case study. I also explore the ethical considerations related to this real-life study. In the fourth chapter, I present the findings from the data and provide the data analysis.

Further discussion of the finding is in Chapter five. Finally, I share the student-led recommendations and potential implementation in Chapter six. In conclusion, I summarise the research's contribution and impact on the higher education profession/institutions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 will aggregate the existing literature on female Punjab International students' acclimatisation to the College. The chapter divides the potential risks from the literature into three parts—first, a review of the terms selected for the context for this research. The selected terms *safer* and *acclimatisation* will be explained and why the terms were selected for the research—secondly, exploring the Punjab and Canadian cultural norms and the potential risks to the international student with the Canadian systems.

The literature review begins with a critical account exploring the currently available international literature to provide the overview and working definitions of the following key terms for the study: *Canadian culture and systems* and *acclimatisation*. The information is reviewed, collated, and analysed in the context of the study. The list of the various search terms used to explore the literature is available in Appendix A (page 246).

The literature review provides an in-depth discussion of the international students' safety issues that helped expand my position and perspective (Booth et al., 2012), identified gaps in knowledge and practice, and informed my research questions. The available sources helped develop a well-defined understanding of the Punjab culture, subgroups, and ways of thinking. A variety of published peer-reviewed scholarly studies and articles were chosen and critically discussed to minimise researcher bias (Machi & McEvoy, 2012). The literature review included empirical evidence specific to Female Punjab International students acclimatising to Canada by reviewing quantitative and qualitative studies. There is recognition that issues around safety are common for all international students (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016; Marom, 2022). Therefore, the study chose to focus the literature on studies around Punjab students rather than other international students.

Literature was ideally sought that was published from 2010 onwards unless no other source was available on the topic, such as further and precise particulars of unfortunate incidents, including house fires or assaults.

The literature sources were evaluated to determine their rigour, suitability, relevance, and current perspective to explain and understand acclimatisation for the female Punjab international student population (Fink, 2019). The importance of exploring opposing data, such as reviewing male acclimatisation, allowed me to remain open-minded to other's thoughts, approaches, and perspectives, compare the ideas (Booth et al., 2012; Fink, 2019; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Machi & McEvoy, 2012) and define the parameters for my study. White papers from the Canadian and India Federal governments were also utilised to provide supportive data to the research, such as empirical data. As well as the use of news articles were selected from respected published sources, and the sources were only utilised to support an issue or concern by way of example.

Words have power (Colladon et al., 2019; Williams, 2019). Words can alter one's perception through assessment, shape beliefs, create judgment, and influence behaviours. It is crucial to this study that there is a consistent and clear understanding of the meaning of the terms selected (Diab et al., 2019) so there are no assumptions and presumptions about the meaning and use of the selected terminology.

The following section discusses the key terms used in this study and the working definitions adopted in this research.

2:1 Defining Acclimatisation versus Acculturation

I will explain why I selected the term acclimatisation versus a more commonly used term and theory of acculturation. Currently, there is a great deal of interest, research, and printed literature about acculturation. Acculturation has been defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as "the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other" (p. 149).

John Berry (2008) is credited with developing the acculturation theory with four strategies that international students can utilise when coming to a new host country. Most of the research on acculturation suggests that international students change their agency to 'fit' in or assimilate with the new country's citizens. Many scholars generally agree that when entering a new culture, there will be challenges.

Acculturation is indeed a popular research topic. For instance, Schwartz and Unger (2017) explored the topic by examining acculturation research from the 1920s to 2014 (Table 1). The results from two research search engines: PsycINFO and MEDLINE, indicated that research focusing on acculturation has increased from nine articles published in 1920 to 9,667 articles in the decade of 2014. However, acculturation is not an exact fit for this research. I will explain the importance of the comparisons in popularity, use, and significance.

Table 1
Increase in Research Conducted on Acculturation

10-year intervals	r articles found by the truncated search term <accultura*>		f articles found by the truncated search terms <accultura*> <Punjab> <female>	
	PsycINFO	MEDLINE	PsycINFO	MEDLINE
1925-1934	9	---	0	0
1935-1944	43	0	0	0
1945-1954	91	9	0	0
1955-1964	134	46	0	0
1965-1974	203	179	0	0
1975-1984	577	347	0	0
1985-1994	1,422	901	0	0
1995-2004	3,233	1,635	0	0
2005-2014	6,010	3,657	0	0

Note. Adapted from Schwartz and Unger 2017.

First, using Schwartz and Unger's results from Table 1, I have built upon the original data and added the results of a new literature search looking for articles explicitly published specifically about female Punjab students during the same time frame between 1920-2014. The additional information was added to demonstrate that zero published research was conducted on female Punjab students and acculturation during that time. The comparison was made first to support the popularity of acculturation theory and secondly to identify research conducted on the female Punjab population. The results may indicate broader social and cultural trends such as

the lack of mobility and the lack of educational opportunities for female students in general in the past. The zero results support further the need for current research on female Punjab students.

More importantly, for this research, I have chosen to use the term acclimatisation instead of acculturation. Acclimatisation is a term made popular by science research, referring to the process in which an individual adjusts to a change in its new environment while allowing one to maintain their performance across a range of environmental conditions (Banjong, 2015). It is synonymous with accommodation, adaptation, and adjustment (Ayers, 2019; Banjong, 2015; Singh, 2021).

Many academic researchers studying international students' settlements use the terms *climate* and *culture* interchangeably (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Dernowska, 2017). However, the literature distinctly distinguishes the two inter-related concepts. The climate describes the shared perceptions of the people in a group or organisation, and climate refers to the feel of the school environment. The culture includes how people feel about the organisation and the beliefs, values, and assumptions that provide the identity and set the standards of behaviour. Deal and Pearson (2016) state that culture refers to 'how things are done here.'

Both terms impact the group members' behaviours. The climate is how others perceive their settlement experience within the host country, where culture results from the historical relationship and a school's influence within the host country.

When looking at a person's safer acclimatisation to a new environment, many factors must be considered. As Ghalayini (2014) states, for an individual to maintain their performance, they can adjust to the environmental factors and therefore are not required to assimilate or adapt to the new culture as their own. The person may utilise their current understanding of the world

to navigate systems; however, educating a person before their arrival can create a safer adaptation to the new environment (Oladipo et al., 2018; Tran & Vu, 2018; Van Froelich, 2018).

In the acculturation phases, many sojourners realise that they cannot adjust or adapt to the new country (Toth-Bos et al., 2020; Trotter & Mitchell, 2018). Where acculturation theory discusses the need to assimilate within the culture, the definition of acclimatisation expands upon the current acculturation theory because it includes respecting one's culture and maintaining the person's individuality (Johnson, 2016; Toth-Bos et al., 2020). Acclimatisation is inclusive of the adjustment period where the international student develops an understanding of the host country's norms, characteristics, and values as governed by the country's policies and laws once again, without the need to change the students' agency (Oladipo et al., 2018; Tran & Vu, 2018; Van Froelich, 2018).

Although acclimatisation and acculturation align with the desired adjustment and settlement with the newness of differing cultures, the significant difference of acclimatisation is that the person coming to the new country can maintain their agency within the laws of Canada (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Ganesh, 2018; Haslanger, 2017; O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017; Tran & Vu, 2018). There is no expectation of changing their beliefs or values unless they do not align with Canadian laws. More importantly, acclimatisation looks at the international student's perception, through the lens of the individual, not through the historical lens of expected behaviours.

Nevertheless, although there is a considerable body of research on acculturation, it remains a narrow theory, framework, and term when applying it to the settlement experiences and perceptions of female Punjab international students in Canada. As previously stated, acculturation focuses on adjustment or assimilation to the new culture. The acculturation theory

does not address the individuals' perception or desire to maintain their agency, home values, beliefs, and thus culture as a strategy for moving to a new country (Van Froelich, 2018). The limitations of acculturation are increasingly apparent given the global ability to travel and settle into other countries, creating a multicultural dynamic (Ghosh, 2018; Rashid, 2019; Salingaros, 2018). I have chosen to use the term acclimatisation as a more inclusive term as an extension of the acculturation framework.

Secondly, when a further search was conducted, guided by Schwartz and Unger (2017), using more comprehensive search parameters and search engines, and replacing the term *acclimatisation* with *acculturation*, the data revealed an increasing number of articles that are utilising the term *acclimatisation* even though the term *acculturation* remained popular, as per Table 2. Of note, many of the articles published in the later years were dissertations (Ayers, 2019; Deshpande, 2018; Johnson, 2016; Leinonen, 2018; Van Froelich, 2018; Weller, 2012). Therefore, academia is starting to utilise and accept the term acclimatisation. I want to add to the growing and expanding body of current knowledge on acclimatisation and its more inclusive connotations.

Table 2
Increasing Research Using the Term Acclimatisation, 2020

10-year intervals	f articles found by the truncated search term <acclimatis/z*>		f articles found by the truncated search terms <acclimatis/z*> <Punjab> <female>	
	PsycINFO	MEDLINE	PsycINFO	MEDLINE
1925-1934	0	---	0	0
1935-1944	0	0	0	0
1945-1954	0	0	0	0
1955-1964	0	0	0	0
1965-1974	0	0	0	0
1975-1984	0	0	0	0
1985-1994	0	0	0	0
1995-2004	3	3	0	0
2005-2014	22	26	0	0

Note. Adapted from Schwartz and Unger 2017.

Acclimatisation is a relatively newer, more current, and professionally recognised and acknowledged term for transitioning into a new culture (Burleigh, 2021; icentapp, 2020; EShip Global, 2021; Leinonen, 2018; Raghavendra & Shetty, 2018; Rivas et al., 2019; Van Froelich, 2018). Acclimatisation literature is currently being utilised in studies where personal agency within the context of the laws of a new culture is accepted, such as in studies in Canada (Adenekan, 2020; Erickson, 2017; Heshmat, 2017; Singh, 2021). Professional settlement

agencies are also using the term acclimatisation to assist sojourners, newcomers, and specifically, sojourner students with safer onboarding and avoiding potential culture shock issues, conflicts in the process of adjusting safely (icentapp, 2020; Xin et al., 2018).

Whereas with acculturation, Berry (2008) emphasises the significance of the international students' core beliefs and intrinsic values, which shape their approach toward their acculturation to a new country. In 2013, Berry (2013) further posited the international student must consider two potentially competing positions. The first is the degree to which the sojourners' value is maintaining their identity with their heritage cultures while living in a new host country. The second is the degree to which the international student desires to interact and participate with the host society, thus assimilating within the new country where they adopt its practices, values, and beliefs. The sojourners' values of preserving cultural identity and interacting with the host society strongly influence their approach towards acclimatisation (Berry, 2013; Jamaluden et al., 2018). Thus, if the international student wishes to maintain and practice their heritage agency in Canada, based on Canada's values and beliefs and, more significantly, Canada's multiculturalism policy, individuals may experience minor challenges and acclimatise more safely within Canadian laws and culture.

Finally, in the context of this research, acclimatisation refers to adjusting to a new country's culture while maintaining one's own culture. Acclimatisation of female Punjab students is expected to maintain their sense of self and agency while safely acclimating to the Canadian culture (Raghavendra & Shetty, 2018).

2:2 The Impact of Acclimatisation on the Student

The risk of maladaptation or inappropriate acclimatisation can result in a culture shock (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Szabo et al., 2016). The Ontario University Student Association (OUSA, 2017) reports that many incoming international students have acclimatisation and culture shock challenges. Culture shock is the adjustment to an unfamiliar foreign culture that can cause an additional burden to the international student. The literature shows that it can lead to student disorganisation and a lack of preparation for academic life, potentially inhibiting their academic success (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019). OUSA states that culture shock can result from a variety of issues, including:

“Ignorance or lack of understanding of cultural norms, the unfamiliarity with socioeconomic/political systems; problems organizing living arrangements; transportation concerns; failure to understand the pedagogical differences and academic expectations” (OUSA, 2014 p.5).

Each of these issues or systems will be explored further in the following chapters.

Cultural norms are imbedded into the group and all norms are dictated from childhood (Joseph et al., 2022). When the norms are challenged the international students experiencing culture shock may demonstrate a wide assortment of emotions, including helplessness, discomfort, fear, frustration, insecurity, uncertainty about how to acclimatise, a sense that their cultural beliefs and values are being disrespected or challenged, and a sense that things are not predictable, and increasing feelings of stress (Bredesen & Ayala, 2019; CIC, 2019; Guo et al., 2019). The College International Student Research project (May 2011) reports that 54% of International Students indicate being homesick, feeling alone, depressed, and isolated (Baba &

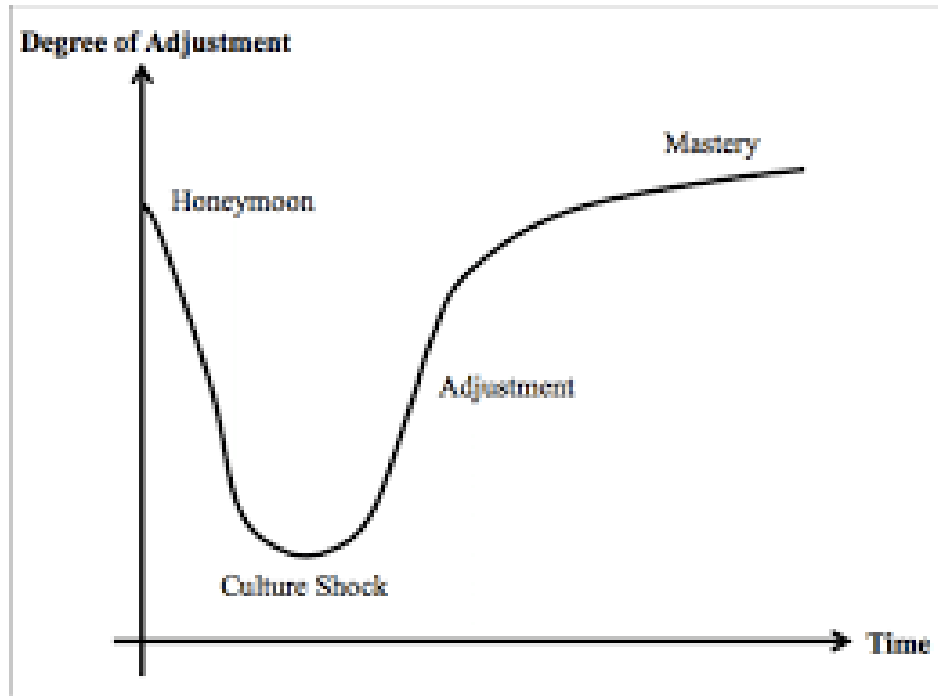
Hosoda, 2014; Bartosik, 2017; Frank & Hou, 2019; Kunin, 2016). These negative feelings are common as they encounter a different culture and may feel discriminated against, lose social support, and experience feelings of alienation (Frank & Hou, 2019; Martinez, 2019; Xin et al., 2018). Xin (2018) explains further that the negative experiences may influence the sojourner to return home even before completing their studies.

The 2020 protests for Black Lives Matter (BLM) provided a platform to raise again issues around inequitable treatment of minority populations (Edmondson et al., 2019). Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an international social movement formed in the United States in 2013 following the murder of a black youth by a white police officer. The movement goals are to dismantle Black stereotyping, racial discrimination, and violence (Clayton, 2018; Tillery, 2019). The BLM movement brings greater attention to the need for intercultural communication, diversity, leadership, and social justice, in civil discourse; these issues also relate to the needs of the female Punjabi population (Ferguson, 2019). With the inequity of treatment and the need for sustainable, impartial treatment of all, changes to inclusive policies are required. The discrimination and stereotyping issues are complex and rooted in historical situations and conditions (Volpone et al., 2018). It is not the intent of this writer to break down all the barriers and transgressions but to mention the timeliness of the BLM movement to be influential in creating positive changes for other oppressed groups. At the time of the research around June 2020 in India farmers from Punjab and Haryana were involved in months of protests against three farm laws that the government planned to introduce. These laws would worsen the already difficult farming conditions they have to work with by introducing more private involvement, removing state protection and regulatory support (Jodhka, 2021). Farmers Protests brought to the forefront inequalities that farmers and rural workers had been facing for years and the

importance of activism to make changes (Behl, 2022). In the background, these protests would have affected the already challenging financial position for many Punjab families who are making the decision to send their daughters abroad to study. The social unrest could also impact the emotional state of the College students who are being so far away from their families. The protests may have also acted as a springboard for action for students to see the importance of having a voice and defending your beliefs.

It is a widespread phenomenon for female newcomers to a country to experience culture shock due to discrimination, inequity or negative role and racial stereotyping. The psychological adjustment to living away from home, the change in relationships, including parental structure, the safety, comfort, support from a familiar person is not with them as they settle in Canada (Yu et al., 2019). Since culture shock is exceptionally prevalent with international students' experience, students need to be made aware of the stages so they can seek assistance when needed. However, much onboarding focuses on curriculum priorities rather than these broader considerations.

According to Neuliep (2017), the four stages of culture adjustment include honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment, and mastery, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Culture Shock and Re-Entry Shock*

Note. Neuliep, J. W. (2017).

The Honeymoon stage or holiday phase is considered the euphoric stage (Bredesen & Ayala, 2019; CIC, 2019; Guo et al., 2019). Although the experience varies between students, the excitement of being in a new country overrides the differences in culture during this stage. Students tend to have ‘rose-coloured’ lenses during this stage, where they view the newness with excitement and are cognitively curious about a new culture, and emotionally excited to meet new people (Martinez, 2019; Xin et al., 2018). Neuliep (2017) states the international student does not experience inner conflict and is keen to learn fresh cultural experiences and see innovative sights.

The second stage is when culture shock occurs. Bredesen and Ayala (2019) say it is a period of disillusionment, disenchantment, or dissatisfaction with one’s expectations and

misaligns with reality. The further cynicism results from the overloading of unrecognised stimuli, encountering different forms of life and ways of doing work, asking questions, and understanding the responses (Lee, 2018). Neuliep (2017) states that the student must adapt and learn new ways of doing and being, such as communicating with a nod versus a head shake. The student develops a general downturn in mood, a disenchantment, and may feel frustrated and seek consolation from others experiencing similar circumstances (Guo et al., 2019). The culture shock starts to develop from realising that one does not possess enough knowledge to manage in a different cultural setting. The symptoms of disillusionment can be demonstrated as a physical illness from the strain of trying to adapt and change to their new environment (Xin et al., 2018).

The next stage is when the international student attempts to adjust to the cultural changes; however, they may continue to feel psychologically frustrated and long to be at home. Neuliep (2017) asserts the student may feel depressed and have a psychological response to agency and changes such as status, supports, social network, or family. If culture shock remains unaddressed, it can negatively impact international student experiences and result in a negative feedback loop such as failure or program withdrawal that could damage the College's reputation and future recruitment efforts (Frank & Hou, 2019; Martinez, 2019; Xin et al., 2018). Cultural shock can negatively influence any intercultural interactions or communications where the responses may be interpreted as anger and frustration against others. Lee (2018) indicates that a lack of social integration amongst international students results in further isolation and the formation of negative feelings about their international experiences (Frank & Hou, 2019; Lee, 2010; Martinez, 2019; Xin et al., 2018). Neuliep (2017) believes the more prominent the cultural variances between the international student and the Canadian and the College communities, the more severe the cultural shock experiences are, and there is a decrease in cultural interactions.

Additionally, ignoring the emotional difficulties associated with culture shock may give rise to clinical mental health problems, which can be risky as many persons from Punjab do not acknowledge mental health issues and therefore do not seek support or assistance. Finally, the fourth stage is the mastery stage, when the international student reaches the adjustment phase and feels more accepted and can integrate with enough information to navigate the norms and systems of the new culture safely (Damanhour, 2018).

Again, the cultural maladaptation symptoms may be divided into physical and psychological (Jackson et al., 2019). Physical symptoms may include fear of physical contact with anyone in the new country, and may result in alcohol and drug abuse, or a decline in academic performance (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Jackson et al., 2019). Psychological symptoms may include the inability to sleep, fatigue, self-isolation, loneliness, frustration, criticism of Canada and the College, nervousness, self-doubt, depression, and anger (Frank & Hou, 2019; Guo et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2019).

2.3 Defining Safer and Safety Climate

The meaning of safety is the state of being 'safe.' It is the condition of being protected from harm or other non-desirable outcomes (Le Coze, 2019b). Safety is the circumstance of a "steady state" of which one expects all persons in Canada to perform, act or behave or what one is supposed to do as set by norms, beliefs, and public codes and standards (Dupont & Karpoff, 2019; Le Coze, 2019a; Watts & Hodgson, 2019). There is less of a surprise when one assumes a person or institution to behave in a manner; however, mistrust or danger can develop when the rules are not governed or followed.

Safety also implies a guarantee or a standard of insurance to the quality and unharmed function (Watts & Hodgson, 2019). The term is used to ensure that the system will do exactly what it is meant to do. Le Coze (2019b) says it is essential to realise that safety is relative, and it is impossible to eliminate all risks or control all influencing variables. Therefore, a safer situation is one where psychological or personal injury risks are low and potentially manageable. The research examined the psychological and physical safety (Dollard et al., 2019; Zadow et al., 2019; Zohar, 2014) for international students coming to the College. There are several types of student safety explored in this study under psychological and physical safety. Psychological safety includes emotional, mental, social, cultural, and spiritual safety. In contrast, personal or physical safety is the freedom from physical harm or threat of physical harm and freedom from hostility, aggression, harassment, and devaluation by members of any part of the community, including homelessness and finances (Root et al., 2019). It also includes the incessant worry or threat of being psychologically or personally victimised as well as the actual incidents (Reader, 2019).

Normative safety is achieved when a law, policy, or expectation meets applicable cultural standards and conforms to cultural practices, regardless of the actual recorded safety history, such as the use of celebratory fireworks during region-approved holidays (Fruhen et al., 2019). International laws govern both India and Canada, each country as national and provincial and state laws. Dodek (2018) states that when a person is in another country, all visitors and citizens are expected to follow the host country's laws, enforcement, and consequences of breaking the laws.

As well, one must consider security, also known as social or public safety. Fruhen, Griffin, and Andrei (2019) say public safety looks at the risk of harm with intentional criminal

acts, including assault, robbery, or vandalism (Fruhen et al., 2019). Antonsen and Almklov (2019) state that the moral code of a community drives the behaviour of the culture. One's personal security may be unique to the individual based on their life experiences or encounters such as intimate partner violence. The law protects the survivor; however, the person's security of housing may be at stake. The category of public safety may fall under both psychological and physical safety.

A Safety Climate is primarily concerned with preventing unsafe incidents within the workplace or global environments to identify any potential or reoccurring incidents where harm or even potential harm can occur (Antonsen, 2017; Reader, 2019). There does not appear to be one standardised and consistent definition of safety climate in the literature, which will be discussed further under the theoretical framework. However, the main principles of safety climate include relying on persons' perception and ability to report an incident to help prevent a past incident from reoccurring (Antonsen, 2017; Reader, 2019; Zadow et al., 2019). Reader (2019) adds that addressing the near misses and helping to foster a safer environment is preventing the incident from happening in the future. An example of a near-miss may include reporting a suspicious person in a parking lot. Others' behaviours can influence safety, and other persons may always take risks regardless of rules (Antonsen, 2017; Roughton et al., 2019; Vierendeels et al., 2018; Zadow et al., 2019). The Safety Climate's goal is to identify the risks and ensure the person taking any risks are aware of the consequences of their actions under the assumption there will be less risk to the person's autonomy and agency, such as smoking (Reader, 2019; Vierendeels et al., 2018). Smoking can lead to a physical risk of developing cancer or lung disease. A person may be aware of the risk; however, they autonomously choose to smoke.

Not only can the root causes impact the international student's decisions, behaviours, and experience, but they can also affect the College's reputation, both positively and negatively. A person's physical and psychological safety is a positive value to impact any institution's status (Jackson et al., 2019). The known safety value prevents injuries, saves lives, and improves productivity, thus student success. When the college's safer environment is demonstrated, showcased, and advertised, it can bestow a sense of student confidence and reassurance for both the students and their families in Punjab.

Any organization's long-term safer environment is the result/product of individual and group norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours governed by rules and policies. When exploring the climate, including the systems, a safer environment will emanate from the ethical, moral, and practical considerations and regulatory requirements of civil and criminal laws, including the College's code of conduct.

In the context of this study, the two main areas of safety to be considered include both *psychological* and *physical* safety for female international students (Babacan et al., 2010). Psychological safety includes emotional, mental, social, cultural, and spiritual safety (Dollard et al., 2019; Zadow et al., 2019; Zohar, 2014). Reader (2019) adds that it can also include the incessant worry or threat of being psychologically or personally victimized and the actual incidents.

Further, psychological safety is the absence of harm or threat to mental well-being that a person may experience (Jackson et al., 2019). It is the safe environment where a person can freely demonstrate oneself or agency without fear of negative consequences, which could cause potential damage to their self-image, status, or being (Biserova & Shagivaleeva, 2019).

Psychological safety also includes the persons' sense or perception of belonging and the ability to

contribute to their environment, where they feel accepted and respected (Gray et al., 2019; Le Coze, 2019b).

An essential antecedent of psychological safety is the value and demonstration of trust (Ammigan et al., 2019; Biserova & Shagivaleeva, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019). Without trust, the perceived risk of danger or harm may be heightening, impacting the students' ability to understand and utilise the systems appropriately (Dupont & Karpoff, 2019; Reader, 2019). Developing trustworthy relationships within the College, their community or their housing can enhance their experience by helping to reduce the risk element and fear of decision-making, such as how to correctly navigate the health system to get care or the legal system to access required vehicle licensing (Deng et al., 2019). Plus, the taking of one's possessions, documents, or valuables such as passports and credit cards can be rooted in the psychological control of the person. Emotional safety refers to the students' emotional state balanced with their ability to cope and contribute to their daily lives (Deng et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Reader, 2019).

In contrast, physical safety is the freedom from physical harm or threat of physical harm and freedom from hostility, aggression, harassment, and devaluation by members of any part of the community, including homelessness and finances (Ammigan et al., 2019; Root et al., 2019). De Schutter (2019) says moral and legislative laws and culture often govern physical safety. When considering cultural values, the laws are created to protect them (Dupont & Karpoff, 2019), such as multiculturalism and discrimination. Physically, the laws consider assault of any form on another human is a crime. Following the Universal Human Rights Declaration, it is an offence to cause harm or threaten another individual's harm (De Schutter, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Patel, 2019). Not only does this imply physical harm such as sexual or physical assault, but it includes the physical safety in housing, thus homelessness or threat of becoming homeless

and the threat of unauthorised control or access of one's finances, which can leave one without money to survive.

According to Patel's (2019) human rights approach, it is a human desire to feel safe as feeling unsafe is a universal phenomenon where there is a negative emotional sense of impending doom or danger, such as a severe storm or a positive feeling where one does not anticipate either harm or hurt, emotionally or physically. Reader (2019) states that the feeling of 'safe' is also unique to the individual, their setting, and agency. One may feel safer in their locked house, whereas another may feel exploited in their home and feels safer at work. The potential risks will be explored further with each of the selected systems and when exploring published student issues in this chapter.

It is important to note, when an international student feels unsafe, they may panic, become scared and anxious, which also impacts not only their ability to cope, function, and study but also their ability adjust to the new cultural systems (Barnes, 2019; Gray et al., 2019). If the expectation is for the Punjab female international student to come to the College for an education, how can one expect students to attend classes and achieve success when they feel emotionally or psychologically unsafe? This research will further explore the student needs within the Canadian Culture and Canadian Systems.

Ford (2019) and Grant and Robertson (2018) posit that female Punjab students will benefit from an understanding and awareness of the country's characteristics and the community culture to assist with their acclimatisation and increase the safety of their students' experience. After reviewing the extensive academic literature on culture, it is determined that there are multiple, diverse, and complex definitions of culture. A singular inclusive definition of culture is essential to explain the female Punjab student's acclimatisation to Canadian cultures (Berry &

Ward, 2016; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Ford, 2019; Storey, 2018). In this research, culture is defined as a pattern of beliefs and expectations which organization members share. They create the norms that influence and thus impact how a community behaves and, in this context, how this affects international students transition to their new communities and place of study. The cultural norms are the group standards enforcing appropriate behaviours; Pazzanese (2020) calls these the socially created constructs or expectations that help one interpret and evaluate their own and others' behaviours. To cultivate a productive culture, every organization member is responsible for their leadership and work (Hobson et al., 2016; Pazzanese, 2020).

According to Storey (2018), societal culture defines a way of life that a group accepts, defines themselves, and conforms to society's shared values and conventions. It is a set of assumptions that guide a person's behaviour (Ford, 2019). Newman (2013) says it involves the individual and accepted characteristics and idiosyncrasies that guide behaviours. Ford (2019) adds that the societal culture for students will include their learned pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour, norms, and values, customs, traditions, arts, social institutions, social structures, symbols, celebrations, and achievements shared by a particular nation, people, civilisation, or their social group (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Ulusoy & Firat, 2018). The societal culture in the research context will include the urban community in which the College resides. Through community collaborations, changes for international students can be discussed, created, and adopted as best practices to attain safer acclimatisation.

The College is a large three-campus higher education institute with 150 program areas across five faculties, including 26-degree programs (SC, 2020d). The institution's organizational culture is dependent on their values of acceptance, diversity, and inclusiveness, as evident in their vision statement of the College "... is the epicentre for ground-breaking, standard-setting

higher education that unleashes everyone's full potential and empowers people to flourish in and shape an ever-changing world" (SC, 2020e). The leaders of the College lead by example and expect the entire College community to behave in a standard-setting respectful manner.

The College's mission is to "Cultivate resourceful...people and communities through cross-pollinated, active learning and the relentless incubation of new ideas" (SC, 2020e). The College's culture cultivates a "curiosity, a passion for growth and learning, ...fun and a sense of purpose" (SC, 2020e). The mission and culture were adapted to assist with the anonymity of the College. The on-campus culture is evident by displaying student work, athletic clothing, symbolic of the school mascot, diverse musically in the hallways, and various country flags hanging in the entranceways.

Johansson and Herz (2019), Storey (2018), and Ulusoy and Firat (2018) posit that organizations also have very different cultures as well as subgroups within the culture. Although Canada may demonstrate as a united environment, significant socially created dynamics and determinants direct the person's behaviour through laws, rules, and acceptable norms and behaviours (Kramer & Dailey, 2019). Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, and Roberts (2017) concur that there can be co-existing or conflicting subgroups linked to issues of influence, power, or even competition between different geographical locations, groups, departments, or programs within educational organisations. Storey (2018) reinforces that subgroups often have their own set of standards, rules, and norms not written in the printed literature; thus, there is no evidence to make the occurrence or norm explicit (Kramer & Dailey, 2019). However, it calls into question if the incidents that impact safety are not disclosed, made transparent and addressed; the secrecy will continue to harm and create unsafe situations for individuals, groups, and reputations, whether printed or not.

2.3.1 Canadian Culture

As the female Punjab students reside in Southern Ontario, it is vital to explore the meaning of Canadian culture, inclusive of subcultures and, more specifically, in Southern Ontario. Historically, Canadian culture has been primarily influenced by the United States of America (USA), European cultures and traditions, and Canadian Indigenous persons (Loue & Sajatovic, 2011). Based on the geographical proximity, Canadian culture has also been influenced by the United States of America regarding languages, media, and migration shared between the two countries (Storey, 2108). The combination of Canadian values and various European and Indigenous influences have created culturally rich Canadian traditions, celebrations, and events (Loue & Sajatovic, 2011; Storey, 2018). At this point, it is acknowledged that Canada has ongoing reconciliation agreements and practices to repair relations with the indigenous populations; however, reconciliation is not within the scope of this paper (Abu-Ladan, 2018).

In keeping the alignment with the Canadian core values of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism, international students attending higher education in Canada are sought and expected to maintain their core cultural identity from their values, norms, and beliefs (Grant & Robertson, 2018; Mooney-Cotter, 2011). Burkett (2018) states that diversity is the liberal state of understanding and recognizing that individuals are unique and possess an intercultural understanding. Where Ulusoy and First (2018) add it is the recognition that persons and, as previously stated, their agency is multifaceted with a variety of dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

Likewise, the demographics of Canadians are pretty diverse and assorted, and at times dependent on immigration trends, Canadian culture is more civic than ethnic (Abu-Laban, 2018; Berry, 2019; Grant & Robertson, 2018). There is no one particular Canadian ethnicity or 'way of life' but rather a united allegiance that supports the country's social order (Grant & Robertson, 2018). Although the collective norms and values are guided by the laws created and implemented based on fairness, equity, and inclusion, Canadian culture cannot be adequately defined without exploring Canada's multiculturalism policy.

Although most countries are now culturally diverse, Canada has public Multiculturalism policies, departments, and programs to accept and promote diversity. Mooney-Cotter (2011) depicts Canadian culture as valuing progression, diversity, and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism creates an image of a mosaic of people with various cultures (Grant & Robertson, 2018). Cultural diversity and variation lead to the ideology of multiculturalism (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Burkett, 2018). The fundamental principles of the policy include respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

Since 1971, Canada has adopted multiculturalism as an official policy (Ghosh, R., 2018). The three guiding principles of Canadian multiculturalism policy include: "to build an integrated, socially cohesive society; to improve the responsiveness of institutions to meet the needs of diverse populations and to actively engage in discussions on multiculturalism and diversity at an international level" (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018. P1). The engagement of many cultures functions together to promote civic responsibility in Canada's democratic society (Lakshman, 2019).

Multiculturalism is defined in various perspectives, including language, cultural awareness, identity, assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours (Fitzsimmons et al., 2019; Ghosh, R., 2018). Godley (2018) adds that sociologists define multiculturalism as persons from diverse

racial and ethnic backgrounds coming together. From an individual perspective, it is the degree to which they know, identify with, and internalize with more than one culture. Hence international students will have added exposure to another culture than their own while entering a diverse culture such as Canada (Fitzsimmons et al., 2019). Multiculturalism aims to acknowledge and accept diversity and create equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race or religion (Grant & Robertson, 2018; Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). Multiculturalism practices with an acclimatisation approach allow the international student to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while studying at the College (Weller, 2012).

Overall, the federal government in Canada played an instrumental role in the multicultural ideology based on the combined social importance of international students, immigration, and economy (Johnson et al., 2018). International students contribute more than \$15.5 billion in GDP to the Canadian economy (Blatchford, 2019). Canada is now the third-highest ranking for international student attraction (El-Assal, 2020). Considering the extraordinarily enormous and significant monetary contribution to the current Canadian economy and what Canadian experiences and education can offer international students, international students remain a vital element of the College Strategic plan's enrolment model. "We will continue the focus on international enrolment to help diversify the culture of our student population and global citizenship" (Filken, 2013, p. 6).

The desire and direction for Canada are to attain and retain international students while aligning with the College's plan to provide high academic standards (SC, 2019). The social importance for the country includes the opportunity for job creation, attaining global intellectual property, and relevant research and advancement in professions and industry (Kwak, 2019). Laws and policies and global partnerships exist to encourage settlement or immigration to

Canada, such as the immigration laws, support graduate students with obtaining residency (Burkett, 2018).

The multiculturalism within the community can also be dependent upon the geographic location of the international student's residence and the host school. The values in Southern Ontario, where the College resides, are similar to the Canadian core values of societal progress, diversity, and multiculturalism. Whereas in northern Ontario, the communities tend to be more homogenous in ethnicity.

In keeping with the principle of institutional responsiveness to meet the needs of a diverse population, the College has enrolled international students from over 110 countries. With such a vast number of countries represented, they blend into the variety of skin colours of persons throughout the entire community (SC, 2020e). In Southern Ontario, people of different skin colours are not easily identifiable or prominent because of the extensive diversity (Kaushik et al., 2018). The various skin tones may comfort the international students because they are not visually seen as a visible minority (Ghosh, R., 2018).

Although the Canadian stance of multiculturalism focuses on positive implications, multiculturalism can have adverse outcomes (Berry & Ward, 2016; Hobson et al., 2016; Pazzanese, 2020). While acclimatisation allows one to continue with their agency and values in Canada, Canada enforces Canadian policies and laws. Canada does not support extremist or violent behaviours; however, the country is not immune to cryptic behaviours (Bhuyan & Bragg, 2019; Bonistall Postel, 2020; Hobson et al., 2016). The multicultural policy and laws are in existence and generally positively accepted; at times, the misunderstanding, disconnect, or misuse of the rules can result in international students' challenges, isolation, discrimination, and maladaptation experiences. Brunner (2022) queries the benefit of Canada's immigration policies

towards the international students. Brunner (2022) looked at the Canadian immigration policies over a ten-year time frame to explore the realities of the international student experience where they experienced ethical tensions and the additional pressure to graduate and succeed so the family can then immigrate to Canada. The international students experience discrimination and not the open arms of the multicultural policy they expected. Often, discrimination may be hidden or subtle; nevertheless, discrimination is punishable by law and is unacceptable (De Schutter, 2019). Berry and Ward (2016) acknowledge that when there is no acceptance of multiculturalism, marginalization, exclusion, separation, or segregation can put the female Punjab student in a precarious position and at times be endangered.

In contrast to the Punjab culture, the Canadian culture appears to be a liberal and independent society. Whereas, when examining the Punjab students' lifelong exposure and influence of their home values, including a family focus and societal acceptance, they come from a collectivist society (Ghosh, 2018). Collectivist cultures accentuate the needs of an entire group over the needs and desires of an individual (Ghosh, 2018). The interdependence and interconnectedness of familial and societal relationships, play a pivotal role in governing the individual's core values and identity (Cooney, 2019; Eltahawy, 2019; Ghosh, 2018). In comparison, Canadian culture values individualism.

In summary, the culture shock impact with acclimatisation, this research explores the Punjab female international students' perceptions of how safer acclimatisation to the College in Southern Ontario can provide a smoother transition for sojourners and focus on their academics while enjoying the international experience. While there are many complex aspects of culture to explore, I have selected specific Canadian systems with a safety element contributing to potential danger or discourse including, weather and climate, language and communication, policing

including laws and violence, banking and employment, transportation, housing, and health care (Volpone et al., 2018). It is acknowledged that many other cultural aspects exist, such as religion and politics, which significantly impact a person's agency; however, they will not be discussed in the scope of this research.

The following six sections discuss key safety factors that affect both psychological and physical safety. All five factors were identified in the literature as areas that international students find unsafe in their acclimatisation to the host country.

2.4 Weather and Clothing Acclimatisation

A reoccurring theme is the international students' preparation for the host country's diverse weather patterns. While it may seem obvious or insignificant, many students do not know much about Canadian winters other than what they have seen in movies or on the internet. The main concern with acclimatising to weather is for the student to dress according to the weather differences and seasons. Sharma (2018) shares in the state of Punjab, there are three main seasons. There is a hot season, between the middle of April until the end of June. The rain season, from July to the end of September. And the cold season from December to the end of February (Sharma, 2018). Whereas the weather in Southern Ontario has four distinct seasons: (1) Summer between June-August, (2) Fall September to November, (3) Winter December to March, and (4) Spring April to June. The temperature fluctuates between 30 degrees Celsius and is humid in the summer to below 20 degrees Celsius in the winter (Climate-Data, 2019). Persons visiting Canada must be aware of the fluctuating temperatures to plan their dress or attire (Climate-data, 2019). The weather-related physical risk to the international student is heatstroke in the summer and frostbite in the winter, which can cause death. When the weather patterns are

severe, there are school and transportation closures, and the international student must be aware of how to access the warnings via the internet, television, or local news.

Mesidor and Sly (2016) state that weather patterns in Canada primarily determine clothing selection. Since the largest cohort of International Students arrives at the College during the winter term, students must be prepared to purchase winter coats, boots, mittens, and hats to keep them warm during the potential below 20 degrees Celsius. Sharma (2019) shares students from Punjab may experience their first look at snow, wind chill, and freezing temperatures and can be at risk of frostbite if they are ill-prepared. Frostbite can be prevented with adequate clothing when worn in layers (Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

Students should expect to cover up their skin from the hot sun and prevent sunburns or sunstroke from exposure to the hot and humid sun in the summer months. Sunstroke can be deadly. Many buildings, including the College's classrooms, have air conditioning to allow for comfortable temperatures indoors (Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

Weather patterns will dictate clothing to prevent physical risks of frostbite, hypothermia, sunstroke, sunburn, and even death. At the same time there are gendered expectations of dress code that force newcomers to the country such as the 'Sikh chic' movement (Khamisa, 2020) that centres around blending traditional male fashion and women are depicted as invisible as they may not be donning the traditional dress.

2.5 Policing and Legal System Including Violence Impact Acclimatisation

Studies of international students reveal consistent conclusions regarding the need to be aware of the host country's laws to maintain safety. When comparing the legal systems, Rajani,

Hg, and Groutsis (2018) share that Punjab state's law and order are upheld and enforced by the Punjab Police service. Like Punjab, the policing in Canada is governed by local police services. The federal and provincial policing and laws govern all visitors and residents of Canada, although the laws may vary amongst the provinces. However, the federal laws and consequences are consistent across the province, as upheld by the local police services (Parent & Parent, 2018). The literature shows that both Punjab and Canada abide by international laws, a set of rules, norms, and standards generally accepted for inter-nation relations (Grahl-Madsen, 2019).

O'Connor (2017) posits that Canada's Legal system is trustworthy where police members are involved in community building and events, fostering respect and collaboration amongst the police associations and citizens. Researchers agree that upon arrival in Canada, International Students' first encounter with law enforcement is presenting the several required documents to an immigration agent for verification (CIC, 2019). An international student requires the original post-secondary Designated Learning Institute (DLI) acceptance letter and a Canadian study permit (CIC, 2019). The immigration officer will ensure the students' understanding that they will not stay back in the country after completing their studies unless they apply for a work permit. They will be asked if they have a criminal record and should have a police certification verifying the person does not have a record; otherwise, they will not be admitted to the country without a pardon of wrongdoing (CIC, 2019).

As Sharma (2019) has stated, many students have left home for the first time; some have left their home country for the first time and may be fearful of the laws and position of power that immigration agents possess. O'Connor (2017) researched why students may be fearful and concluded that they might be basing their judgement upon their past experiences or learned stories of how custom agents function in their home countries. However, Parent and Parent

(2019) noted that the risk to international students' physical and psychological safety occurs due to broken laws. It is essential to know the law when entering the host country, and ignorance of the law is not an excuse for breaking its laws.

Kiedrowski, Ruddell, and Petrunik (2019) examined the role of Canadian police patrols, which are assigned areas to maintain public safety, enforce laws and regulations—control traffic during emergencies, including road work as well as investigate crimes and accidents. Through their research within communities and public opinion, O'Connor (2017) found evidence that the Police personnel in Canada are to be trusted, and the public's physical safety is at the forefront of their work. While Police must also obey the law themselves (O'Connor, 2017), they cannot, for example, accept money in return for dropping charges against someone.

It is crucial to consider that not all Canadians abide by the federal, provincial, and by-laws. Gray (2019) noted that there is a discrepancy between the policy, laws, and practice; however, the laws are set and imposed to manage societal behaviour and control yet foster the fair treatment of all persons. Scott et al., (2015) comment further to state there is a disconnect between policy maker and the international student experience. There are consequences to unlawful behaviours such as fines, incarceration, or community service, of which the international student may not be aware.

Previously, Storey (2018), Ulusoy and Firat (2018), and Johansson and Herz (2019) claimed that there are multiple subgroups within an organization. Mallea (2017) used the example of a subgroup norm or adaptation to the law to include the Canadian law of jaywalking legislation and enforcement. Jaywalking is walking or crossing the street or road unlawfully or without regard for approaching traffic. Battista and Manaugh (2019) define the term 'Jaywalking' as various pedestrian offences, such as crossing at an intersection against a red light or crossing a

street in the middle of a block without using the crosswalk or corner. The jaywalking law was created to reduce harm and foster safety on the roads with a usual punishment of a \$250 fine (O'Connor, 2017; De Schutter, 2019). However, persons living in a country setting with minimal traffic will not be concerned with crossing the street at traffic lights like persons in an urban environment. The law exists; however, it is unlikely that the law would be enacted or enforced within the subgroup of the college. The unwritten rules of the subgroup that one cannot obtain from the printed literature; therefore, qualitative research from the persons living their experience enriches the research (Clarke et al., 2017).

Storey (2018) described that the College is also considered a subgroup and governs its security service within the institution. When an incident occurs on campus, the College's security team informs the College community through email communications and sends memos to students to ensure their safety (SC, 2020c). O'Connor (2017) concludes that subgroups can govern and create policies and laws to ensure safety within the group.

Most researchers working in the field of violence agree that the risk to one's physical safety could include harassment, physical or sexual, or intimate partner violence (Bhuyan & Bragg, 2019; Bonistall Postel, 2020; Clarke et al., 2017; Godley, 2018; Parent & Parent, 2018). International students should know as victims of violence; they are not at risk of being deported (Bhuyan & Bragg, 2019; Bonistall Postel, 2020). However, they are at risk of being deported if they are the perpetrator of any crime. Victims of crime can safely report the incident without fear of reprisal or being mistreated by the police services. Parent and Parent (2019) have written extensively about community policing based on the belief that positive police interactions further build trust and confidence in the police service. Therefore, community policing is viewed as a proactive approach to trust and safety.

The literature states the fact that in Canada, discrimination is a crime. Godley (2018) describes discrimination as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of others. The Canadian legislation prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, sex, ethnic origin, age, marital status, physical disability, and pardoned conviction (Clarke et al., 2017; Godley, 2018). Female Punjab students may experience the unfortunate event of being discriminated against within a multiplicity of these categories. Ghosh (2018) noted that being a female is the most significant risk category, which encapsulates a gender of all races, yet females are at the most considerable risk of violence.

Most research on female students' sexual orientation suggests that Canada is a safe and accepting culture for all sexual orientations (Ahmed, 2019; Godley, 2018). The international student should feel psychologically and physically free from discrimination or harassment based on their sexuality, as harassment is also a criminal offence (Ahmad, 2019; Clarke et al., 2017). The law states, "No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2) that causes that other person reasonably, in all the circumstances, to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them" (CCC, 2020., P. 264).

As with many other laws, one can be arrested once one has been caught breaking the penal code. Discrimination can be demonstrated in many ways, including language, verbal abuse, body posturing, images, and reinforcement of role stereotypes (Clarke et al., 2017; Godley, 2018; Mooney-Cotter, 2011; De Schutter, 2019). Cobb, Branscombe, Meca, Schwartz, Xie, Zea, and Martinez Jr. (2019) found evidence that everyday discrimination when acclimatising to a new country was strongly associated with depression, impacting international students' psychological and physical state.

According to Bonistall Postel (2020), there is an identified gap in the published literature regarding the potential physical violent situations for international students. Mazowita and Rotenberg's (2019) research suggests there may be multiple reasons for the lack of available articles and printed literature, including the potential damage to a school or country's reputation, political or social implications, economic implications, and lack of reporting. However, students and their families have a right to know if they are in potentially dangerous situations. When a war, disease, or criminal activity occurs, the government reports the risk level for visitors to access before visiting a country or territory. For example, in Canada, Health Canada provides updates to all internet users to access the information. The information is transparent and accessible to anyone who has access to the internet (Health Canada, 2020). Therefore, when an unsafe incident occurs, the community should be informed.

Zinzow and Thompson (2011) researched international students' risk of sexual harm, including sexual assaults, discrimination of sexuality, and sexism. Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted sexual act done by one person to another, including any sexual touching that is unwanted or coerced, such as kissing or groping (O'Dwyer et al., 2019). Rape is defined as being forced to have vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse against one's will or without one's full consent (Muldoon et al., 2019). These violations that affect a person's integrity can be considered sexual assault (Ee, 2019), thus impacting both their psychological and physical safety.

Although sexual assaults occur globally, Scholl, Cogan, Micol, Steward, Hancock, and Davis's (2019) and Ali (2020) research concluded that female international students are at a higher risk of assault when they are separated and away from the known community and family members who may be protecting them. It is widely published that women between 18-to-25 years are at a much higher risk of being sexually assaulted on higher education campuses

(O'Dwyer et al., 2019; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Many researchers agree that the students need to establish trust with the new people while settling in the host country. To establish trust, persons shed their inhibition and become vulnerable (Amegbe et al., 2019; Baas, 2019). However, it is the vulnerability and letting their guard down that may lead to risky situations. Naturally, a person will gravitate to someone from their home culture, as they have similarities and believe share values (Kwon et al., 2019). The lack of a common first language and presumed understanding of the newly arrived students challenges acclimatisation. At the same time, familiarity with others can create a level of trust and comfort for the student (Kwon et al., 2019).

Consequently, McCann's (2018) research shows that in Canada, often, the students can be misled by persons within their cultural communities, who state they will take the international student under their wings and show them the Canadian way. This statement is not to imply that other communities will not mislead or take advantage of the students; however, it is to point out that when a student lets their guards down to establish trust with someone, they think they can trust, they may not be able to (Baas, 2019). Unfortunately, some persons can take advantage of the trust and deceive the student into unsavoury situations (Jackson et al., 2019). When incidences occur, it leaves the student less trusting of all persons and impacts their ability to adjust to the new Canadian culture. Soundararajan, Yengde, Rao, Brown, and Patterson, (2020) spoke at the Sustaining Solidarities conference and discussed the lack of global awareness of the mistreatment of Punjab women by their own community. Jangam (2020) a Canadian professor writes about the lack of global awareness of the gender control of Punjab women even when they leave India. Although the Punjab woman are aware of the ongoing restrictive treatment, control, oppression and the inequity of women, the newer countries are not aware that this continues to exist within the new country, as it is not discussed by the Punjab as it is an understanding within

their culture. Patel (2016) who teaches at the University of California has written extensively about how the caste systems continues to play a controlling societal role for Punjab women even when they have left India. She has also stated that the phenomena need more attention and awareness due to the ongoing oppression of women, their freedoms and safety (Patel, 2012; Patel, 2016). Ambedkar's (2014) book discusses the far-reaching and innate belief systems of castes and the oppression of Indian women regardless of where they may reside, and the global silence attached to the concept. Therefore, there is limited printed literature or research available to support the phenomenon.

Although the College's students were not involved, recently in the region, a domestic Punjabi male was arrested for sexual assault, uttering a death threat, extortion, and voyeurism of female international students from Punjab (Bañar, 2019). He had coerced the females into believing they were in a romantic relationship with him and took compromising pictures of them in sexually suggestive poses. He proceeded to blackmail the women and threatened to tell their families back home unless they agreed to have sex for money with other males. In the Punjabi culture, the threat of the female student's family finding out they have a relationship, or any sexual contact is deemed disgraceful, shameful, and disrespectful to the family (Kaur & Kaur, 2018). Ali (2020) explains that in the Punjab culture, to bring dishonour to the family is the ultimate shame and can separate families. Bañar (2019) published that the police investigating the incidents believe more international victims are impacted by this scam and have asked anyone involved to contact the police. However, with the stigma, embarrassment, and humiliation of being portrayed as a vulnerable victim, many women may not come forward to report the incident (Pinciotti et al., 2019; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Spencer et al., 2017). The female Punjab student may not understand the Canadian laws thus falsely fear deportation; thus, it was

explicated detailed in the publication that the international victims would not be at risk of deportation if they disclosed an incident (Bañar, 2019; Kim & Kwak, 2019).

Ali (2020) and Behl (2019) explain that typically, in Punjab, females are expected to stay home after dark. The belief is that the females are safer at home with their families, and their virginity 'is saved' until marriage (Ahmad, 2019; Behl, 2019). The opposite suggests that if the females are outside after dark, they are at risk of being sexually assaulted (Ali, 2020). The numbers are relatively low when researching sexual assaults in Punjab, leading one to believe that sexual assault does not exist. However, the rates appear small, and this is due to the lack of disclosure and police reporting (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014; Paul et al., 2019; Pinciotti et al., 2019; Sabina & Ho, 2014). Reporting an incident would cast shame on the family, for not only their daughter losing their virginity but for the family's inability to keep their daughter safe and 'pure' (Ahmad, 2019; Behl, 2019). The consequences to the daughter bringing the family shame or disrespect can result in honour killing or acid attacks (Cooney, 2019; Imtiaz et al., 2019).

Most people in Canada are safe walking alone outside after dark. Riley (2019) explains that natural socialization and adaption have taught the females what parts of town and when they can walk safely. Women are generally not afraid of being assaulted when they go outside after dark; however, they remain cautious. Lee and Wong's (2019) research shows that many Canadian women are socialized to develop situational awareness and perceive potential threats of harm, such as a person walking too close to them or walking down a dark alley. When international students arrive in Canada, they have a new sense of freedom and independence; they do not have the naturalized socialization helping them to identify harmful situations or environments (Riley, 2019). The international student may also be a little shocked because now they are autonomous and responsible for themselves. In comparison, they had a whole family in

their home countries that looked after them and protected them, particularly after sundown (Ahmad, 2019; Behl, 2019).

In Canada, sexual assault is considered power over another and is deemed a violent criminal act (Riley, 2019). Although not all incidents are reported again due to stigma and embarrassment, it is a criminal act with a public court process and repercussions of imprisonment (Kehayes et al., 2019; Lee & Wong, 2019). Media, social media disclosures, and public scrutiny risk victim exposure and ostracisation in both India and Canada (Dey, 2019). The ostracisation leads to further vulnerabilities and marginalisation. Lee and Wong (2019) suggest that international students need to develop an awareness of the health, support, and legal services available to all survivors of sexual assault.

In sum, while violence can occur globally, the research demonstrates that international students still need the trust and reassurance of security and safety at the College and in the community. The emotional and physical impact of violence can result in lifelong traumas and recoveries. Notably, an international student who is a perpetrator will be deported, and most importantly, an international student who reports a crime or is a victim of crime will not be deported.

2.6 Banking, Finances, and Employment

According to Ford (2019), all international students need to know the Canadian currency where Canada uses the Canadian Dollar (C\$ or CAD). All Canadian purchase totals are rounded to the nearest nickel. Ford (2019) states that the transition into Canadian banking can confuse many Punjab students accustomed to the Indian currency, the rupee, and pricing. The

equivalency of one Canadian Dollar is 54.36 India Rupee (Currency Converter, 2020). Ford (2019) believes the money conversion can create an unsafe situation for the international student if they are unaware of the value of both the rupee and Canadian dollar, which can put them at risk of being taken advantage of and result in them being without funds.

Furthermore, Baba and Hosoda (2014) suggest that the female international student has not been responsible for their spending, earning, and saving due to living with their families. In that case, their newfound independence may require them to learn how to balance the spending and convert the money value into Canadian currency (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). According to the American College Health Association (2019) survey, 39% of international students found finances were very challenging to manage. The College's International students responded that the expense of tuition, textbooks, food, and transportation added to their financial strain (Sharma, 2019). In 2016, the College's International students reported that about 40% had difficulty settling into life in Canada due to shopping and banking, while approximately 67% had difficulty dealing with money and financial pressures (Sharma, 2019).

It is generally agreed that the newfound independence can create some financial concerns and safety issues with international students, including the inability to balance their money, where they can run out of funds before the end of the academic program (ACHA, 2019; Baba & Hosoda, 2014). Proper budgeting is an essential skill required by all students (Baba & Hosoda, 2014) to cover their basic needs such as books, food, water, and housing require the student to save money to pay for the expenses throughout their academic years. Rashid (2019) adds that international students are not living at home with their parents who had covered the tuition costs and now incur housing, food, and transportation expenses.

Both Punjab and Canada offer banking services. Bordo and Siklos (2019) offer that some prominent Canadian banks offer specialized services designed to meet the needs of recently arrived Canadians. An additional safety strategy is to remind all persons not to share their personal banking information, PINs, and accounts with others (Immigration Peel, 2016).

Both India and Canada collect taxes on goods and services. Sales tax in Canada is between 5% and 15%, depending on the province, whereas sales tax in India is 18% (Rao, 2019). Ontario combines the goods and service tax with the provincial tax and calls it the Harmonized Sales Tax (Bird & Gendron, 2019). Employment or income taxes are deducted from paycheques in both Canada and Punjab. Bird and Gendron (2019) explain that tax is also applied to prepared food if purchased in a restaurant or grocery store in Ontario. Students unaware of the taxation systems can risk underpaying on income taxes or overpaying on consumer items.

International students on study permits are regulated only to allow them to work a maximum of 20 hours a week (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Kennett et al., 2019; Sondhi, 2019). They require funds to pay for their expenses. When considering the Canadian student minimum wage is \$13.15, working twenty hours a week only provides an income of \$263 before mandatory provincial taxes, leading to financial vulnerabilities (Dionne-Simard & Miller, 2019). Finally, Foreign Admits (2022) posits that the cost of living in Canada 168% more expensive than in India.

Based on the expensive cost of living including housing, and limited income, the students stress will increase significantly. Baba and Hosoda (2014) acknowledge that students face the additional challenge of obtaining and securing a job that will schedule them around their school hours, particularly when they are only allowed to work 20 hours and have many new or unexpected expenses.

The 20-hour workweek policy puts students at risk where they may seek unsavoury money-making opportunities. Sondhi's (2019) research reports that many students may be swayed to earn more money by job offers to work under the table at cash jobs for less money, more hours, yet uncontrolled working conditions. The uncontrolled working incentives and conditions leave the student vulnerable to injury, unsafe shift work, working in dangerous situations, and the potential for lack of recourse (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019; Sondhi, 2019). Sondhi (2019) voiced concern that some students are willing to put up with exploitation in exchange for payment, as well as the employer is profiting from the international students' labour, where dangers can exist.

According to Baba and Hosoda's (2014) research, the worker who is illegally employed under the table has no recourse if the fraudulent employer does not pay them their wages or abide by the minimal standards of employment, including safety requirements. Current research indicates that illegal employment puts the student at risk of physical and financial dangers. The students are exploited and not being paid accordingly and unknowingly provide free and unsafe labour (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Sondhi, 2019). Sadly, Ali (2020) and Eltahawy (2019) points out that female students are at risk of sexual exploitation. This can occur when students are desperate for money and have relied upon unsavoury, deceptive, and untrusted perpetrators. The students have been told that the work is a 'one time' situation and find out the perpetrator have taken pictures and use the photos to further blackmail the student. The threat of exposing the females' behaviour to the others can result in stigmatising and shunning from their community. Although this activity is unlawful, the female student from the collectivist culture is more concerned about the impact of their behaviour on the family shame and being labelled as a societal outcast (Eltahawy, 2019).

On the other hand, if students are caught working more than their study work permit allows, they can be deported, as with the publicised case of Jobandeep Sandhu, an international student who was arrested in Ontario for working too many hours (Haysom, 2019). He may be deported back to Punjab once the ongoing case goes to court. Although this is reported as a rare incident, it is the consequence of not abiding by the work permit.

In summary, several scholars have discussed the risk to international students when it comes to their finances or lack of understanding of budgets or the consequence of not abiding by the laws in Canada. While recent research has attempted to address the problem, more research is required to assist the students with their financial management and increase their psychological and physical safety.

2.7 Transportation Safety with Acclimatisation

Travel behaviour adaptations for international students is an understudied area in spite of its increasing relevance for the students need to get to school or work (Monteiro et al, 2021).

According to Pragati's (2018) publication, there are multiple modes of public transport in Punjab, including buses, auto-rickshaws, Indian railways, and an international rail that connects with Pakistan. Punjab has six civil airports, including four domestic airports and two international airports that ease global travel. In Southern Ontario, there are multiple modes of public transportation, including bus and train, which connect with subways and access to other local cities. The Pearson International airport is easily accessible to the College campuses. All students will be required to commute to school and possibly to their work and field placements. These can include local transportation such as buses, cars, walking, and summer cycling.

According to Cottrell (2019), Canadian public transportation via buses can be a cheaper mode of transportation. Students may be required to purchase bus tickets or transit passes and know the schedules and transfer systems. International students should be informed that there are intercampus shuttles to transport students from one campus to the other, which are incorporated into the students' tuition fees, thus already paid by the student. Although there is minimal published data on the safety of transportation for international students, the few researchers agree that knowledge of the available transport systems in the host country is an essential safety measure, as getting a ride with an unknown person or mode can lead to unsafe situations (Jackson et al., 2019).

Another transportation option available is the local taxi services. Taxis have meters that use set rates to calculate the cost of the trip, and the rates are non-negotiable. Taxis are expensive and should be used when the students do not have another option. The taxi drivers have an official identification card to show that the city licenses them; the picture should match the driver for safety. The drivers must be Canadian citizens, landed immigrant status, or have a valid work permit issued by the Government of Canada (Mississauga, 2020). The licencing of the taxi drivers assists in ensuring the passenger is safer than an unlicensed ride such as Uber or Lift, which are cheaper options; however, the security detail is not as stringent.

Pragati (2018) found that if the international student is financially positioned to purchase a car, they will be required to become familiar with the host country's driving laws, such as driving on the right side of the road and wearing seatbelts. In Punjab, drivers drive on the left side of the road. In Ontario, all drivers require a mandatory driver's license and car insurance, which adds cost. Drive-in Ontario (2020) reports that new residents with a valid foreign licence can only drive 60 days after first arriving in Ontario. After the 60-day grace period, all

international drivers must exchange their licence for an Ontario licence or apply for a new Ontario Driver's licence (Drive in Ontario, 2020). In the winter months, the student should purchase snow tires for their vehicle due to the ice and snow in the Ontario climate. The College parking lots will charge parking fees, and cars may be ticketed or towed if the fees are not paid (SC, 2020c). Once again, this supports the financial burden of owning and utilising a vehicle, leading to additional psychological stress.

Mainstream media in Canada often reports on motor vehicle accidents. There have been multiple reports of speeding, vehicular homicide, and car accidents involving international students (Jarvis, 2019; Joshi, 2020). Police reported a vehicle collision where three international students from Punjab had died in October 2019 (Jarvis, 2019). The car was travelling at a high rate of speed and left the road on a sharp curve. None of the deceased persons was wearing seat belts; an Ontario seatbelt law strictly enforces seat belts for all persons in a vehicle. Joshi (2020) also reported that in January 2020, two international Punjab students were killed in a truck accident in Ontario. Investigators stated that the three men who died were not wearing seatbelts and were ejected from the vehicle during the crash. The Canadian law states that all motor vehicle operators and their passengers must wear a seatbelt securely fastened and properly adjusted for the person's size and height. As a driver of a motor vehicle, one will face a financial fine if the driver or anyone under the age of 16 is not wearing a seatbelt or secured in a proper child car seat (O'Neill & Mohan, 2019; Ontario, 2020b).

The unfortunate incidents are not intended to blame any accidents but to demonstrate the value and safety of knowing and abiding by Ontario traffic laws. According to O'Neill and Mohan (2019), the national and provincial laws control, manage and implement drunk driving, speeding, and the use of seatbelts. The laws are intended to assist with the safety of all drivers

and their passengers. When one applies for their driver's licence, they are tested on their knowledge of the laws, vehicle safety, and control. There is a written learner permit, a graduated licensing format that involves taking an instructor on a trial drive to demonstrate the applicants' ability to control the vehicle while abiding by the laws (Ontario, 2020b).

When driving in an unfamiliar area, mainly where there are sharp curves in the roadways and speed limits signs are posted for the maximum speed, the driver is expected to drive (Ontario, 2020b). According to Ontario Speeding (2021), if a driver drives 40 kilometres per hour over the posted limit in Ontario, their car will be impounded, and their licence will be suspended.

In summary, Parent and Parent (2018) state that driving in Ontario has deemed a privilege, not a personal right, where a person must abide by the laws created for the driver and passenger and pedestrians' safety. The laws are created to manage the person's behaviour; however, there will always be a subgroup where persons do not follow the laws, and if caught, there are consequences. The minimal literature identifies a gap in the literature for research on safer transportation options for international students requiring a closer collaboration with the College for promoting clear and accessible public transport information as an essential need (Monteiro et al, 2021).

2.8 Safer Housing Impact Acclimatisation

International Students arriving at the College will require adequate and safe housing. In the 2014 Canadian Bureau for International Education International Student Survey, 46% of international students indicated they were very concerned "about paying for accommodation

during their studies" (CBIE, 2019), adding to their financial burden. Marangell, Arkoudis, and Baik (2018) point out that having safe housing is a fundamental requirement for an international study experience to thrive. Higher education institutions must recognize that unsafe living situations can lead to additional stress, risk, and danger for all students.

The College's North Campus population is around 12,000 students, forty per cent of these students are international students. It should be noted that 90% of the north campus' international student body comprises students from Punjab, and 48% of the Punjab students are female (Frisque, 2019; Sharma, 2019), creating a large influx of residents into the community; thus, I am reasoning that the College and surrounding community has a higher level of culpability than they currently demonstrate.

Calder, Richter, Mao, Kovacs Burns, Mogale, and Danko (2016) stressed the importance of the decision-maker where the international student and their families ultimately decide if the student will be living on-campus or off-campus and collaborate to select a suitable residence. There are currently 350 on-site residence spaces available at the College, which students from abroad mostly occupy, with only 22 beds occupied by students from Punjab; it is unknown if these students are male or female (Frisque, 2019; Sharma, 2019). According to the American College Health Association survey (2019), only 3% of international students who responded utilised on-campus housing. Zhou and Zhang's (2014) Canadian Study reports that international students enjoyed living in residence due to the opportunity to meet other students, and they perceived they felt safe in the secure building.

According to the College website, the College residence offers private sleeping and bathing quarters. For added security, each resident's room has a locked door with two keys, the student has one, and the Residence Hall Director has the other as an additional safety measure.

The residence's outer doors are locked, and visitors must sign into the building when visiting, thus extra security (Frisque, 2019b). There are security officers on-site, and a safety walk to campus is also available if required.

On-campus housing offers occupancy at the beginning of the school year, and students are required to sign a rental lease agreement for the duration of the school year. Although on-campus residences can be closed over the Winter break period from mid-December to early January, international students can ask for assistance and advocacy from the International Office if they need assistance with accommodation arrangements during times of closure (Ontario Immigration, 2016).

Sharma (2019) research shows that many Punjab students may choose not to live in the residential environment while preferring to live within the comfort of 'knowing' their cultural community. The College's north campus has a surrounding community with a large population of Indian descent. According to Peel (2020), after English, the following four most common languages spoken in this area are Indian dialects. Most scholars seem to agree that students feel more comfortable when communicating and understanding, speaking and writing a common language (Calder et al., 2016; Sharma, 2019). Many students from Punjab, mainly female students, will take advantage of their cultural networks, and according to Sharma's (2019) report, 24% of Punjab females at the College live with distant family or friends, many of whom the students call Uncle or Auntie. A cultural difference for Canadian's is that an Uncle or Auntie is a biological relative who is the brother or sister of the parent, whereas, in Punjab culture, an Uncle or Auntie is the label given to a relative or family friend. Tencer (2019) explains that families feel more secure when sending their daughters to Canada when housing is provided with a distant relative or acquaintance to guide them. For the families with less expendable funds, the

daughters will often exchange domestic work for rent. Many times, the female students will cook, clean, and provide childcare. These demanding factors impact the safety of the international female Punjab student and their opportunity to achieve academic success. The family acquaintance is assumed to be a safer environment because the uncle and auntie can report back to the family if there are any concerns which is not always the case. Sometimes the accommodate is less than favourable for the student to balance their study time with the demanding domestic expectations and hours. Alternatively, the exchange of domestic duties may become over and above the family's agreement and time impacting the student's ability for academic success (Telbis et al., 2014). Rarely would a male international student be asked to perform domestic duties in exchange for room and board (Ali, 2020).

Furthermore, Tencer (2019) offers that students may lack guidance from home to navigate the known or unknown safer housing issues. They are looking for accommodations at a bargain rate as many students follow a strict monetary budget. As previously discussed, it is expensive when moving to a new country and paying international tuition fees, tuition, utilities, and transportation (Team, 2019).

Many researchers have pointed out that off-campus housing costs vary and depend upon multiple variables, including the distance to school, public transportation, food accessibility, and prices, utilities, facilities, furnishings, lease, payments, subletting, safety, noise, outdoor access, and maintenance (Anderson, 2020; CIC, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Tencer, 2019). Anderson (2020) states that for international students living off-site, the housing may be their only option as they may not have local references or referrals from reputable known persons who know of well-maintained accommodations. Well-maintained housing may also be unaffordable, as higher-end housing is often more expensive. Some families may rely upon agents for housing

information, and at times the information provided by the agent is misguided (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Sharma, 2019). Calder, Richter, Mao, Kovacs Burns, Mogale, and Danko (2016) state that the agent is being paid to assist in the residence search and may focus on completing the search and may not attain the most suitable and safe accommodation.

The local City's governing Councillors have voiced serious concerns about ongoing student housing problems as the College continues to enrol an increased number of international students. One city councillor, Jeff Bowman (2019), stressed, "The area around [the] College represents an opportunity for student housing, but it also represents a huge opportunity for unsafe student housing in some of these homes" (Frisque, 2019b). Frisque (2019) reports that international students are often housed in a substandard living environment, such as many persons sleeping in one room with little or no privacy as well as unsafe conditions caused by not abiding by the Ontario building codes, increasing the risk of fire, lack of fire escapes, and smoke detectors putting the students' safety and well-being in jeopardy; primarily due to the lack of abiding by the safety bylaws (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2016; Tencer, 2019). There is no one enforcing the rules if the officers are not aware that a building is being utilised for multiple residences, and therefore, the safety concerns are not preventable. Sharma (2019) agrees that many international students are not aware of the housing and fire bylaws.

A landlord can get more money from multiple residents who are paying rent. The landlords tend to get the money as student accommodations are in demand and in short supply. The housing shortage and issues are not unique to the College. Unfortunately, student accommodations tend to have a 'lousy' reputation worldwide (Anderson, 2020).

Concerns with excessive partying, overcrowding, damage of the premises, health and safety, getting stuck with the bills or rent, landlord issues such as being charged unjust rental fees, getting the initial deposit back, mice, fleas, and other pests, and neighbour complaints and noise the issues tend to be a global problem (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Tencer, 2019). In 2017, Melbourne, Australia, reported overcrowding and unsafe living conditions where four or six students lived in two-bedroom units (Knight, 2017). Marangell, Arkoudis, and Baik (2018) posit that students consciously accept overcrowded living situations because they do not have any other options.

More recently and locally, a house fire injured several international students; one was hospitalized in critical condition. The fire officials stated that six to 10 international students occupied the residence, and the building was not known to be an adequately approved or configured rooming house (Turner, 2019). The overcrowding can also put an unknowing or unpredictable strain on community resources such as accessible transportation, health services, and perhaps garbage pickup (Frisque, 2020). Although many cities have limited residential bylaws in place, knowing about or discovering the breaches can be challenging given some landlords' needs and cryptic nature (White, 2019).

Many off-site accommodations do not provide leases, mainly if the homes are offered at a reduced rate or with other residents in the house (Frisque, 2019). The lack of a lease, which Provincial Law requires, can put international students in a vulnerable situation where they are at risk of illegal raises in rent or sudden evictions with any repercussions for the landlord (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Tencer, 2019).

The Ontario Residential Tenancies Act (2019) is a law that applies to private residential rental units, including single and semi-detached houses, apartments and condominiums, and

secondary units such as basement apartments (Ontario Rental Laws, 2019). The law states that rent cannot go up by more than the government-controlled rent increase guideline for each year. This rule applies to all international students living in rented houses, semi-detached houses, basement apartments, and condominiums. The rental bylaws trigger several safety mechanisms, including inspections by the fire department and multiple city departments to ensure that the location meets local safety and building code standards (Calder et al., 2016). Landlords may not have had their buildings inspected or approved by the city.

There are strict renter and landlord laws and bylaws to protect the renter and the owner in Ontario. International students have reported that they have been discriminated against where landlords will post in the rental ad, stating that no international student should apply (Guardian, 2020). Students who overcrowd rental units to share money or to stay with people they deem are safer persons would be hesitant to report their housing situation due to the risk of eviction and becoming homeless (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Tencer, 2019). Students have been told that the rent they are paying has increased without notice. Some students live in rooms without windows which violates the fire safety code (Kodur et al., 2019).

In summary, scholars agree that taking advantage of persons based on their vulnerability, such as being a newcomer to Canada and not following the laws, is discrimination and unacceptable behaviour that is punishable by Canadian law. However, landlords get away with this behaviour because international students do not know the laws or may not have any other place to stay, and they are not versed in rental laws and agreements or leases (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019). Many international students are reluctant or fearful to speak out about illegal housing practices for imagined fear of their student visas being removed, evicted, and becoming homeless (Calder et al., 2016). There is plenty of research regarding the dangers of unsafe illicit

housing; however, there is a gap in the knowledge for making accommodations safer for female international students.

2.9 Risks with Adjusting to the Canadian Health Care System

Newcomer's transition and adaptation to a healthcare system is understudied in relation to international students (Tang et al., 2018) with few exceptions in areas of refugee and populations (Talhok et al., 2016).

According to Bahuguna, Mukhopadhyay, Chauhan, Rana, Selvaraj, and Prinja's (2018) research, Punjab Healthcare is mainly financed through private out of pocket expenses, and households spend 52% of the wages on medicines (Dwivedi & Pradhan, 2017; Kumar et al., 2016; Najam, 2018). Saikia (2019) studied the health disparities between men and women in Punjab. Saikia (2019) concluded that women did not seek or access health care due to the cost. The financial burden of private health was expensive and usually reserved and utilised for the male members in of the household. However, international students coming to Canada require immunisation and health screening prior to their departure (CIC, 2109). Parents who wanted to support their child's journey to come to Canada had to paid for the services.

Canada's health insurance system is taxpayer-funded and intended to ensure that all residents of Canada have access to health care. To access health care, one must have a health card issued by the government of the province or territory (Ellis-Boldshot, 2013; Harbige & Calder, 2018). However, it is a requirement for all international students to have health insurance coverage. The international students are covered International Guardme insurance Plan. The cost of the Guardme insurance premium is incorporated into the students' tuition fees, therefore ensuring the student has coverage. The coverage will only pay for new and urgent illnesses or injuries; thus, any pre-existing conditions may not be covered, such as high blood pressure

treatments are not covered (Guardme, 2020). The coverage is discontinued if the student decides to take part-time studies.

Before arrival to Canada, all international students should receive any preventative-disease immunisations as recommended by Health Canada. Harbide and Calder (2018) report that being sick or concerned about paying for health care can stress international students. Sharma (2019) explained that international students are not accustomed to the Canadian currency as previously discussed or navigate the health care systems (CIC, 2109). According to Guardme (2020), one in 10 students will experience a serious safety or health incident while studying abroad. With such a high incidence of potential harm, an international student would be expected to seek health care. The coverage is only reimbursed after the student pays for the service adding to their financial and psychological stress. The student must also call the insurance provider if they are admitted to the hospital, have major diagnostic tests such as CT scans or MRI, or require surgery. Guardme will determine if the student is covered for these services limiting the student's health care autonomy and decision-making to what Guardme deems are essential.

In the local hospital's emergency department, a payment notice is posted stating, "Do not have a Canadian Health Plan? Your care at this desk will cost you \$450, even if you leave before seeing a doctor". The exchange of 450 Canadian dollars is the equivalent of 24429.28 rupees (Currency Converter, 2020). The cost is significant to the student who can only work in Canada for a total of 20 hours a week, possibly earning the student minimum hourly wage of \$13.15 per hour (Ontario, 2020a); therefore earning \$263 a week. While Health care in Canada is excellent, progressive, and available, it is not easily accessible to international students. Another hospital notice states, "Do not have a Canadian health plan? You must pay a minimum of \$1000 for your Emergency or Urgent Care visit. Payment is required in advance." The exchange of 1000

Canadian dollars is the equivalent of 54284.66 rupees. Forbes-Mewett and Sawyer (2019) report that when international students adjust to the combined academic and Canadian cultures, accessing and financing health care can impede their adjustment. Although health care is expensive, in Canada, the cultural value is that health care is accessible and available to all residents and visitors within the country, however at a cost.

If an international student is required to stay in the hospital, the cost of the hospital bed stay overnight is 842 Canadian dollars or 45,701.90 Rupees (Home Care Ontario, 2020). Medication costs, diagnostic services, consultations with specialists, or additional services incur additional fees per diem. The cost and lack of coverage may inhibit the student from seeking appropriate care.

Mental illness is an ongoing concern with the health of all students. Anxiety is often caused by the unknown (Szabo et al., 2016). Scholl, Cogan, Micol, Steward, Hancock, and Davis (2019) and Ali (2020) state that many international female students come to the College as teenagers and, often without their immediate families, deemed their emotional support network in their home country. The students are entering an unknown country, program, and situation. When compounded with the multiple issues of acclimatisation, students may be suffering from homesickness and not be aware of the local support available.

Ali (2020) states that often, the Punjab community does not discuss mental illness. Mental health tends to be embedded within their culture, with spiritual meditation practices, multiple and frequent social and familial gatherings, and spiritual support through their religious institutions. However, the culture tends to deem mental illness as a weakness, mislabel it, and do not tend to seek medical or counselling assistance (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019). Some sub-cultures even consider mental illness a taboo topic or a curse placed on the family (Chavan et al.,

2018; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019); thus, mental health or mental illness are not discussed openly or understood.

Sharma (2018) reports that some drugs, vitamins, or treatments students could easily access at home may be harder to obtain in Canada. In Canada, the student may be required multiple visits to diagnose an ailment or attend multiple appointments. The health care system has some clinics with integrated services; however, many clinics do not. This means the student may require a doctor's appointment, an appointment at a diagnostic testing centre, attend a specialist appointment with consultation, and then attend a pharmacy with a prescription to obtain medications. Scholl, Cogan, Micol, Steward, Hancock, and Davis (2019) acknowledge that navigating the health care system can be confusing and time-consuming, requiring repeated visits to different clinics where the newness is compounding to the students' psychological stress.

The impact of acclimatisation stress as part of the settlement process has been discussed. It remains a common concern in the international student literature as it contributes to difficulties adjusting to the new environment and concentrating on educational priorities that all students need to be focusing on. The available research consistently implicates several complexing, compounding, and contributing factors of stress for international students (Liu, 2019). Personal factors and individuality, such as the persons' values, beliefs, and cultural background, can all impact the female's ability to adjust to their new culture (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019). One may experience challenges can develop complex, intertwined, and vary between individuals. Often the difficulties arise from the lack of understanding or misguided trust of others.

In sum, there is comprehensive research and printed literature discussing the health care adaptation for international students. However, more research is required to understand the international students' immediate health care needs, navigation, and access to coverage.

2.10 Summary of Literature Review and emerging Research questions

There seems to be an abundance of research on various aspects of the experiences of Higher Education international students. Prior literature highlights the international students' challenges due to cultural barriers, norms and behaviours, transportation, finances, laws, and health care systems and the risks that these may pose for their emotional and physical wellbeing. However, there is limited academic literature and research on female students' perspectives and the unique concerns of their experience in general and, more specifically, research on Punjab female international students' safer cultural acclimatisation, particularly in Canadian culture.

While this study cannot consider all the individual entities of the international student experience, it focuses on the six common themes identified in the literature as relating to student physical and psychological safety in the broader community. The literature, including media, white papers, and news reports, emphasized the importance of students' voices and further research, including student perceptions of their safety.

Again, it is essential to restate that the actual risks discussed are not intended to sensationalize any of the incidents or to discredit any person or institution. The incidents are shared to demonstrate the need for safer acclimatisation of Punjab female students; the risks of other international students and institutions provide an opportunity to explore the situations and have been used as examples to help identify potential issues and to establish a safer adjustment to Canadian culture for international students (Hong & Cui, 2020). Additionally, as stated

previously, the College needs to protect its international reputation by dispelling myths or alterations in these stories that may implicate the College's community and allow the institution to highlight a proactive safety climate approach. By utilizing a proactive position, the College can increase safer incidents which may result in minimal impact on both the students and the institution.

Students can experience both physical or psychological harm or risks. Physical harm involves the bodily neglect, abuse, or injury experienced by a person from an object or practices such as another person, or unsafe culture, work school environment (Ammigan et al., 2019). Psychological harm involves the harm from neglect, abuse or mental, emotional abuse or cognitive impairment, including control, the result of threats of harm, being left alone, humiliation, intimidation, causing distress, verbal abuse, bullying, blaming, constant criticism, controlling, or depriving contact with others (Lau et al., 2019). At times, the harm or risk are interconnected resulting from an incident that causes both physical and psychological damage.

From the literature assessment, I was able to identify essential variables of the Canadian culture compared to the Punjab culture. Through the knowledge gained, themes were extrapolated, and the focus on the vital areas to create relevant questions, concepts, and situations will be explored, compared with the data from the international students' perceptions.

Furthermore, the literature review provided a theoretical base, a comprehensive summary, a knowledge foundation to expand upon, and provides direction with reducing the gaps and clarifying any inconsistencies, which will be discussed further in the post-literature view at the end of this chapter (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Kumar (2020) defines a research gap as missing or inconsistent in the literature or weaknesses from past findings, thus allowing the researcher to contribute to the research with a conceptual map or theory. In order to advance

the research on female Punjab students' perception of acclimatisation to Southern Ontario, additional research is required. This study will assist in filling the persistent gap and increase the awareness and understanding of safer acclimatisation factors essential to the Punjab female students' need to thrive and flourish at the College and Canada.

As a result of the literature review, the following research questions are drawn to explore the concept of safer acclimatisation further:

- What are the safety concerns of female Punjab students with Canadian culture and systems?
- What are the perceived challenges female Punjab students have experienced when acclimatising to the College and community?
- How does acclimatisation align with female Punjab's experiences?
- What suggestions are provided by the participants to create safer acclimatisation to the College for the female Punjab Students?

2:11 The Theoretical Framework

Theories are framed to explain, forecast, and understand phenomena and question and expand the existing knowledge. The theoretical framework presents and describes the theory, which explains the purpose of the research problem and the need for this research (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Salingaros, 2018). Utilising theoretical constructs from other interdisciplinary perspectives provides a broader view of the interconnected yet isolated concepts. The theoretical framework specifies that the key variables influence a phenomenon of interest (Cottrell, 2019). The international student focus remains the critical central component that ties the theories

together. When considering the safer acclimatisation of the female Punjab Student's adjustment to Canadian culture, one must consider the safety climate to the Canadian systems and the College and the students' need for psychological and emotional safety.

The role of an underpinning theory as a principle will provide the framework of the approach, design, and epistemological position. Higgins (2004) states that a theory should be testable, coherent, economical, and generalisable and explain the findings to generate new ideas and discoveries. The theoretical frameworks for the research include the safety climate through the liberal feminist lens. Constructivism, intersectionality, and feminism are my theoretical drivers. I am aware that I may be limiting the possibilities within the particular positional approach and desire. However, the research will contribute to the knowledge, and the research's outcomes may also advance future research.

First, I will explain the safety climate theory which has been utilised extensively in health care, law, and legal enforcement Law professions. Safety climate examines a snapshot of the international students' perceptions of their psychological and physical safety during their time at an educational institution (Dollard, 2019; Deng et al., 2020; Zadow et al., 2019; Zohar, 2014) explicitly. The safety climate approach uses students' past experiences in a proactive approach to prevent or minimise negative incidences from reoccurring in the future, (Antonsen, 2017; Bara et al., 2017; Roughton et al., 2019; Vierendeels et al., 2018). As a result, the educational institution safety culture can be enhanced. Stone, Hughes, and Dailey (2008) express that climate is more malleable and open to change than embedded cultural behaviours. Thus, the focus of this research will be the safety climate, the here and now. Such a focus can influence policy changes and community engagement between the College and its partners.

Stone, Hughes, and Dailey (2008) initially defined safety climate as the current landscape of perceptions and attitudes about psychological and physical safety, such as current safety initiatives and safety behaviours. They discuss the importance of the safety climate as a shared responsibility between the organisation, the participant (thus the student), the external community and the host country's systems. Graystone (2018), while researching the nursing profession, confirmed that there is a link between healthy environments and individual psychological and physical safety, satisfaction, and quality outcomes. In the case of international students, these safety considerations around their wider environment will support them in their studies and can result in higher student satisfaction as well. Barbaranelli, Petitta, and Probst (2015) examined the cross-cultural impact of the safety climate theory. Their study demonstrated that the safety climate theory was relevant and adapted in most cultures. However, the risk of reporting unsafe concerns varied between cultures. Due to the diversity in Canadian liberal environments (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016) and Punjab's more conservative nature (Rai, 2018; Salim, 2017), safety risks can be greater, especially for those College students who move abroad for the first time. Underreporting is also significant due to the perceived threat to the individuals who may fear retaliation (Salim, 2017), especially as the College students usually live within Punjab communities or with extended family members.

While there is not a single, universally accepted definition of safety climate, there is relatively broad agreement around the safety climate theory principles (Bara et al., Barbaranelli et al., 2015; Dollard, 2019; DeJoy et al., 2004; Graystone, 2018; Stone et al., 2008; Zohar, 2014). In particular, DeJoy, Schaffer, Wilson, Vandenberg, and Butts (2004) conducted quantitative research with 2,208 participants responding to a questionnaire regarding the variables of a safety climate. The research identified three key safety climate factors: environmental conditions,

safety-related policies, and policies to manage psychological and physical safety concerns. Bara, Chandrakantan, and Ali (2017) agree with the principles and concur that a safety climate describes individuals' perceptions about safety within their environments. The individual's perceptions and narrative are essential to identify concerns. The female Punjab students' experiences could provide further insights into safety considerations that may go unreported because they may feel worried to report them anonymously and drive change in College policy and community support. The international students' perceptions provide great insight into the safety mechanism required to improve their adjustment to the host country. At the same time, Zohar (2014) posited that safety climate is fundamental to improving proactive safety indicators as it represents the students' perceptions of safety-related policies, procedures, and practices.

When applying the Safety Climate approach for safer acclimatisation of female Punjab students, the proactive and preventative principles of minimising the risks will assist with identifying unsafe practices that may be part of reported or cryptic culture and inform students of risks, which will ideally result in safer outcomes. For example, the suggestion to a student not to live in an area due to a known high crime rate can support safety; even though the data is not published, it is known. The students can be provided with factual information around unsafe regions, However, the decision and behaviours to live in a specific area are also within the students' agency. White (2019) states that some students may choose to live in the area due to various reasons such as cost savings, proximity to school or work, or support in the community. The outlining variables of their informed decision-making will impact the area where they choose to live. Furthermore, when examining the known variables of cost and proximity, the institution will need to explore viable options to create a safer climate and perhaps safer housing options (Bourrier, 2018).

A trustworthy safety climate takes safety seriously, remaining watchful and avoiding compromises, which means that all operations are conducted in a safer, reasonable manner, reducing individuals' risks (Lee et al., 2019). International female students are at particular risk due to being away from their support systems, entering a new and diverse culture, and relying upon new persons for advice and information (Jackson et al., 2019). Antonsen (2017) claims the risk increases when the person sought out is not trustworthy or forthcoming with accurate information. The unfortunate incidences are rarely reported due to embarrassment and shame; therefore, action is not taken to inform other students of potential risks such as a poor employer, the untrue threat of deportation, or even the risk of becoming homeless for not abiding by ill-advised practices of unscrupulous landlords (Jackson et al., 2019). Therefore, ensuring these occurrences are acted upon reasonably and justly when disclosed can improve an organization's overall safety environment (Lee et al., 2019). However, students may not know what to report, to whom, or fear unrealistic consequences. One does not know what they do not know. So, until an incident is reported, it may challenge a proactive approach in putting together an encompassing support programme.

Dollard, Dormann, and Idris (2019) point out that revised and previously unwritten practices can take time to implement and improve. One does not want to rely on an outlier situation or incident that may not repeat itself; at times, these incidents may be rooted in folklore versus factual evidence, such as a cobra snakebite in a Canadian park, when in fact, in Canada, cobras are caged in zoos, not found in the environment.

For this research, safety climate is defined as the shared perceptions of international students regarding the importance of safety during acclimatisation to a new country and is concerned with safer outcomes by preventing injuries, exposures, and works while in compliance

with the host country's laws, policies, and practices. Therefore, I argue that a safety climate is a shared responsibility between the student participants, the College, the community and their systems.

In addition to the safety climate theory, this paper was written informed by a liberal feminist theoretical lens. Liberal feminism developed as a theoretical background to foster women equality and adopts the position that both men and women are of equal worth. It derives from ideas around individual freedom and autonomy and the responsibility of the state to ensure such freedoms to be pursued by individuals as endorsed by philosophers like John Locke and Adam Smith (Brunell & Burkett, 2021). It places emphasis on reforms that the state can make around inequalities that exclude women from ownership, education, participation, and activity (Maynard, 1995). Through an anti-oppressive advocacy lens, the liberal feminism framework focuses on the practical approaches of law and policy reforms to achieve fairness and equity. Liberal feminism is rooted in expressing and valuing women's points of view about their own lives. It provides the female experience, viewpoint, and voice. In other words, through autonomous agency, one can create choices and decisions to direct and empower one's behaviours and allow for meaningful and influential engagement with others.

Weaver (2018) adds that liberal feminism emphasizes laws, political institutions, education, and working life and considers the denial of equity as the main obstacle to safety and equality. As such, liberal feminism requires advocacy for the oppressed, who may feel they do not have a voice within a culture (Sharma, 2018). Advocating for others is also a principle utilized in the liberal feminist approach where the ability to give the oppressed a voice to understand their situations and seek safer outcomes and opportunities. Hortle and Stark (2019) found that liberal feminist theorists such as Betty Friedan view women as an oppressed group.

Like other oppressed groups, they must struggle for their liberation against their oppressors to focus on consciousness-raising.

According to Cooper (2016), Crossman (2018), Disch and Hawkesworth (2018) and Pulkkinen (2017) the four main principles of liberal feminist theory are to seek gender fairness (social justice), female equity, female autonomy, and empowerment for all humans, particularly women, by developing a thorough understanding of a person's situation and empowering them to address their unequal and oppressive circumstances within the liberal democracy framework (Weaver, 2018). Liberal feminist theory evolved to include strategies, actions, and practices that actively challenge systems of female oppression on an ongoing basis. Oppression uses personal, political, and social power to disempower, marginalize, silence, or otherwise subordinate one social group, and in the case of liberal feminism, women (Hortle & Stark, 2019). As such liberal feminism is interested in 'basic societal organization rather than on any kind of revolutionary change' (Jinnah, 2022).

Liberal feminism has been criticised by other feminist movements for trying to change existing institutions and policies rather than trying to liberate and remove themselves from them (Bailey, 2016). In its premise for equality between men and women, critics have advocated that liberal feminism may mask equity and how having the same treatment could disadvantage women if they are not situated in similar conditions to men (Baehr, 2020). Liberal feminism is the chosen lens for this research as it places this emphasis on regulatory and policy changes for women equality and anti-discriminatory treatment to women that the study is hoping to highlight.

It has also been criticized for looking at autonomy as self-sufficiency and not relying on others, particularly by other feminist groups such as Marxist, Radical, Lesbian feminism (Safia, 2022) though in recent years liberal feminism emphasizes autonomy as relational and the

importance of those relationships to make changes in practice and policy (Baehr, 2020). Critics have suggested that its premise supports middle and upper class women (MacKinnon, 1991) and has “often been critiqued for ignoring questions of race, class and sexuality, to mention a few” (Salem, 2018, p 407).The Intersectionality framework (Crenshaw, 2017) was developed as a way to address such criticisms that liberal feminism presented and throw a spotlight in considerations around race in reflecting on women’s rights. Liberal feminism has adopted an intersectional lens as it explores identity and legislations that can support women’s equal rights.

I am aware and enlightened by the critics who believe that western feminist approaches are egocentric and should not push their views onto other cultures (Botting & Zlioba, 2018; Taylor, 2019). Feminism in North America developed in response to many Western traditions that restricted women’s rights in employment, voting, and life opportunities. Feminist theories also have global indicators and variations in application between cultural groups and subgroups and are not developed solely by North Americans. For example, many other groups, such as Sikhism philosophy, are rooted in matriarchy and worship female goddesses (Sharma, 2018) but that focus may not be reflected in equal gender policies and social practices.

The three main safety theory principles in collaboration with Liberal feminist theory focussed on without harm, without oppression, and without danger. Often the oppressed are in precarious positions, such as when coming to a new country or college and being exposed to an unfamiliar culture (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019). Furthermore, the two theories seek cooperation, collaboration, and accountability from the members creating the change towards a safer experience—Solidarity where mutual trust, respect, and inclusion are essential values. Leaders within the group are relied upon to follow up with stated actions to establish and maintain trusting relationships.

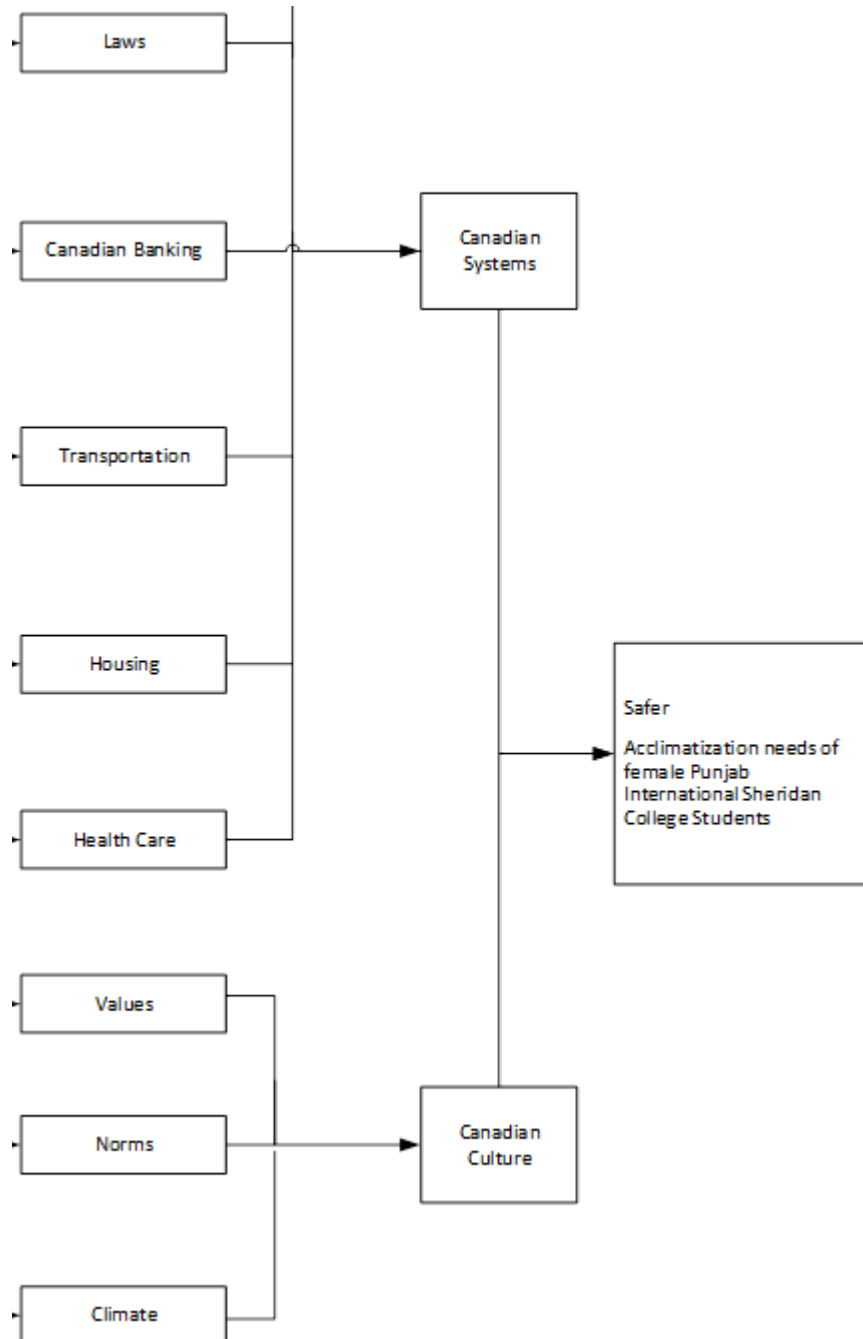
The two theories of Safety Climate and Liberal Feminism are linked by their principles of advocacy for safety and the importance of personal and political autonomy in making decisions. For these principles to be preserved, disabling conditions and arrangements that fail to respect women's rights and needs must be identified through collaborations with all players and representation of women in decision making processes. Thus, using a feminist safety framework, where conditions are examined through a safety anti-oppression lens, inclusivity with the direct advocacy approach is important. Both theories also rely on participant self-disclosure and exposing vulnerability in order to identify issues and support change. In the case of international female students creating safe spaces for participation need to be considered and again considering safety climate using the liberal feminist approach can support those conversations.

2:12 The Conceptual Framework

A conceptual map or framework includes drawings or diagrams created from the literature review and is used to assist in the organization and integrated representation of the knowledge gained on a particular subject (Verdonck et al., 2015). The conceptual model backed by the Safety Climate is thus suggested for future experimental endeavours seeking to expand the international students' voice in the safety climate literature.

The conceptual map is designed by starting with the research question of the female Punjab international students' perception of acclimatisation, and then from the literature review, I worked on branching out and breaking down the research into specific topics from the literature.

The topics selected were further broken down into multidimensional subtopics identified from the literature review, which allowed the researcher to highlight and examine explicit experiences where safety may become a concern, thus ultimately allowing for the creation of recommendations when aligned with the research, to improve the student's acclimatisation to the College and Canada. As displayed in Figure 3, the framework provides the visual map and flow of the research (Booth et al., 2012). The following conceptual framework was created from the literature review data and will guide the research.

Figure 3*Conceptual Map*

2:13 Chapter Summary

The literature review highlights the need by supporting the gap in international students' perception for safer navigation of Canadian culture and systems. It also underscores how the term acclimatisation is becoming more current and inclusive in academic research. Finally, the above literature review has shown how important it is to research the safety of the Punjab females' frequent exposures to finance, legal, housing, and health care while attending the College. I have discussed the theoretical frameworks for the research, including the safety climate and liberal feminist lens, and created and outlined the study's conceptual framework. In the next chapter, I will introduce the research methodology that I utilise to research to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the internationalisation field while emphasising safer acclimatisation for female Punjab students.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the approach taken to the research, including the research purpose, research questions, and research design. The chapter is divided into the testing of the pilot questions, the population criteria, the data collection and limitations, and delimitations of the research. Furthermore, the chapter shows the impact of the changing global environment on the study and discusses the transferability of the research.

3:2 Epistemological considerations

The focus of my research questions was to learn and explore the perceptions of female Punjab international student experience of the College's Culture. Through my feminist lens and position as an ally, I wanted to learn from the stories of these students' experiences and situations to collaboratively create recommendations to enhance the safety of their experiences at the College and Canada. This collaborative paradigm aligns with social constructivism, where my learning from the students' stories aims to create new levels of understanding (Rahim & Ali, 2020). Aligning nicely with feminism and intersectionality, (as described on pages 15, 99, 101 and 106) social constructivism highlights the importance of the diverse cultures and the context of being an international student in learning about the female Punjab students' experience. Social constructivism ties cultures together through social interactions, learnings, and respecting others without violence or power over another (Rahim & Ali, 2020). While the feminist approach provides an allied approach to share the persons' experience.

3:3 Research Design

After reviewing several research methods, I selected the case study which best suited the objectives of the research problem to obtain the actual experiences which could implicate unsafe situations and how to create a safer environment for the students. When selecting a research method, it is essential to align the method with achieving the desired outcomes.

A case study was selected for the study, and it focused on a specific student group attending the same College. The case was defined as the College and considered as a single-case study research. The rationale for selecting the case study approach was based on the exploratory approach the researcher felt that was needed to address the research questions. On a practical level the researcher wanted to focus on the local level of the College she was situated and as a result a case study approach was appropriate to investigate the topic.

The case study focuses on observing and analysing the phenomenon in question (Yin, 2012), in this case female Punjab students. From a constructivist approach, the researcher is observing and interpreting the situation (Stake, 2013) and as a result builds and incorporates new information from the participants' experiences into the pre-existing knowledge about their phenomenon (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). As such a case study approach would also allow to examine the multifaceted components that participants face (Dooley, 2002). The explanatory case study design was selected to explore the participants' perceptions using a set of variables (Yin, 2012), in this case a set of themes where implementation of interventions could be possible by the College, such as addressing housing bylaws with the students. A thematic approach was selected as a result of the pre-determined themes. The explanatory case study design also allowed for the study of causal relationships among those themes in relation to student safety.

While there is a focus on lived experiences that would favour a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018), a range of data collection methods were used to address the research problem. A phenomenological approach would focus on interviews as a way to explore perceptions. In the case of the current study, if that was the sole data collection method, it may have limited participation from students who would prefer to remain anonymous in reporting issues or unwilling to reveal themselves when talking about challenges. Creswell and Clark (2017) state that the case study design allows for a mixed-methods approach to gain comprehensive perceptions and experiences. Similarly, a grounded theory approach would focus on developing a theory from the data and studying a process (Yin, 2018) rather than the reflections of participants at a moment in time. Such an approach would not fit the current study as the theoretical framework of a feminist safety culture approach was already selected as the most appropriate lens.

An action research approach would involve an intervention by the researcher and focus on observing changes in acclimatisation (Bowen et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). The aim of this study was to identify the concerns of the participants and share their stories with a focus on using their expertise to identify future interventions to create and empower change. It was important for the study to empower students to share their lived experiences and perceptions before proposing changes.

Prior to the implementation of the methodological design, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were to be used in the collection of the data. The sequential, explanatory research design with mixed methodologies is used for the case study. The sequential explanatory design includes collecting the participants' data in two consecutive phases (Bowen et al., 2017). During the first phase, the data from the questionnaire is collected and analysed. The survey

presented the questions based on the systems/themes discovered from the literature review as illustrated in the conceptual map (Figure 3, page 104).

In the second phase, the interviews were conducted, and the quantitative data was used to clarify relevant topics further. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) state that the rationale for collecting the sequential quantitative and qualitative data into one study is to align the two types of information to provide greater insight and thus understand the students' perceptions, which may not have been obtained when analysing the data separately. Furthermore, mixed methods strengthen the results as each approach solicits more extensive evidence from two different data gathering techniques (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Holtkamp et al., 2019).

Creswell and Clark (2017) explain mixed methods, or the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology advances the data from a single case study as each approach solicits complementary evidence from two different data gathering techniques (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Holtkamp et al., 2019). Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018) define the principles of mixed methods as the collection and analysis from both qualitative and quantitative data rigorously in response to research questions, utilises both data sets and the outcomes forms of data and their results, organizes each specific research design to provide a process for conducting the research and create the process within the theoretical framework.

Harrison, Reilly, and Creswell (2020) profess that a limitation of mixed methods is the length of time the researcher will be conducting both the questionnaire and the interviews. The mixed-methods approach also requires that the researcher knows both data collection methods, is clear about potential ethical concerns, and is aware of processes for analysis for each method.

In keeping with the mixed-methods approach, this research design was organised into two parts. The quantitative research approach was an online questionnaire (Appendix F), and the qualitative approach included a 1:1 interview (Appendix G) with each participant. It was decided that the quantitative part will take place first to allow for the participation of a wider number of Punjab female students, who may have also felt more comfortable participating anonymously in the research. Participants would be invited to interviews as a follow up to explore some of the ideas from the questionnaire in more detail. It was important to follow such a QUAN-QUAL approach and allow

The quantitative data from the research provided an opportunity to participate but did not explain in depth the students' circumstances. The advantages to the quantitative online survey also included considerations around language and culture. If students were self-conscious about their language skills, they could answer the survey without being concerned about interaction or communication mishaps (Baines & Nahar, 2020). The online questionnaire also provided the option to use a translator engine if the participant wanted to understand the questions in their first language. Culturally, the student may have been uncomfortable verbalizing concerns, whereas they could take the time to write out their thoughts (Luo et al., 2019) as well as share their thoughts anonymously.

The questionnaire was completed online, wherever the students could access the internet. Survey Monkey was used to collate and plot the quantitative data. The quantitative data provided how the students responded to questions, using a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1- representing strongly disagreeing with the provided statement and 5- strongly agreeing with the provided statement. The premeasured scales were collated to provide the empirical data for the study (Chyung et al., 2017). Scaling allows students to share their perceptions without leading them to

the desired response (O'Neil, 2017). The questionnaire is rated at a Flesch Reading level: Grade 9.1. The Flesch rating indicates that the language used was at a reading age of 13 to 15. The Flesch Reading level is based on the participants' ability, aptitude, and capacity to read and understand English (Antunes & Lopes, 2019; Xia et al., 2019). The participants are over 18 years of age and expected to have passed English at Level 12 as English is taught at school in Punjab.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain the multiple qualitative methods commonly used by doctoral students, including fundamental qualitative, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, phenomenology, and qualitative case study. The fundamental qualitative research focuses on opportunities for participants to share their experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Many approaches are designed to understand a phenomenon or to generate a theory. As my research was to learn from the students' perspective, interviews were the most appropriate qualitative research approach.

The semi-structured interviews utilized open-ended questions, which assisted in identifying further concerns that students may be unable to voice from the sole use of the quantitative questionnaire (Harrison et al., 2020). 1:1 telephone interviews were conducted to gain greater insight and support, expand, and strengthen the quantitative data (Holtkamp et al., 2019; Kumar, 2019; Umanailo et al., 2019). The crucial information transfer depends on the researcher's expertise who is asking the questions utilizing prompts and the ability and understanding of questions by the interviewee. There also needs to be the essential element of trust between the two parties. The trust was increased through the reassurance of the preservation of confidentiality. The response is essential to obtain the participant's reality and is essential for the reliability of the data (Kumar, 2019).

Interviews were scheduled upon receipt of participants' acceptance to participate. According to Elsbach and Stigliani (2018), conditions, incidents, and experiences need to be examined and reflected upon by the participant to add authenticity and value to their perspective and their information shared. The stories are told by the individuals themselves, who have undergone the international student experience and acclimatisation (Holtkamp et al., 2019; Umanailo et al., 2019). From a strengths-based approach, utilizing the personal voice will further empower the student by using their stories as an evidentiary resource to create positive changes (Lichtenstein, 2018; Mejia et al., 2018). The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded (with the participants' permission) and transcribed to avoid any potential research bias, such as the filtering of the data and through reliance on notetaking (Holtkamp et al., 2019; Ketokivi, 2019; Kumar, 2019; Umanailo et al., 2019). The participants signed a consent for the audio-recording (Appendix C). The flow allows for a semi-structured interview where the student can share and guide the information they identify as most pertinent than an interviewer-directed discussion (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018). The transcripts were shared with the participant to review and verify the accuracy of the discussion.

While it is recognized that focus groups would be a more convenient manner of accessing multiple students at one time, the 1:1 interview allows the individual to participate fully and share their experiences without the influence of other participants (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Kumar, 2019; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). The realness of the research will rely upon the students' ability to recall and share their acclimatisation stories (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018). When individuals are in a group setting, they may not feel comfortable being vocal and may rely on others to take the lead and direct the conversation, resulting in missed or novel experiences (Mitchell, 2020).

Test Pilot of Questions

Before distributing the quantitative online survey and the interview questions to the participants, the documents were shared and piloted with two colleagues from the Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity office at the College to assess inclusive language and readability. The feedback received reinforced the use of inclusive language and was in agreement with the use of the direct open-ended questions used to solicit adequate and appropriate information sought for the research. One mock interview was conducted with a co-worker to determine, assess, and decipher the ease and flow of the interview questions when prompts were utilised. The mock interview was deemed successful as the questions' order was adjusted for a natural flow in conversation and addressed, avoiding any nuances of the interview language. It is acknowledged that the prompts elicited further discussion, which can provide novel data from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3:4 Participating Students

A purposeful sampling technique was used to recruit College participants who are easily accessible for this case study research (O'reilly & Parker, 2013; Wagenaar et al., 2020). Posters advertising the research and inviting participants were placed in the College and areas where the students frequent to make participant recruitment convenient due to the visual displays. However, the plan changed due to the sudden Coronavirus Disease Variant19 (COVID- 19) restrictions, including remote learning and no onsite classes. The research sample from the College population was recruited on a volunteer basis via emails sent to international students, with the assistance of members of the College's Student Union, Student Services offices, and

some faculty. The rationale for using the Student Union, Student Services, and faculty to send emails was that the trust of the personnel's had been previously established; thus, the participants were more likely to respond to someone they had trust and familiarity with versus a random email from an unknown person.

Testing the entire female Punjab international students is impractical for a single researcher; therefore, the goal was to receive at least 15 survey responses and conduct 15 interviews, which was an approximate number to reflect the population of 48% of the female Punjab students. Although it is acknowledged that the population is not homogeneous, the responses were similar and redundant, and no new information was discovered, thus reaching data saturation on the topic (Creswell & Clark, 2017). It is felt that 15 would reflect the female Punjab international student populations' experiences and a manageable workload for the single researcher. It is unknown how many emails were sent to students, although it is known that 17 online questionnaire responses were received, and 11 interviews were conducted. An uncontrollable factor of the sample size was the dependence on the participants' interest and availability.

Purposeful sampling was sought. The inclusion criteria included female, international students from Punjab, India, over the age of 18 years who are students at the College. There was no restriction on age or marital status. The students self-identified if they met the research criteria, including exclusion criteria such as any student taught by me to eliminate any potential for power imbalance, influence, and thus researcher bias (Kumar, 2019).

The students were given a minimum of 48 hours after receiving the email to consent to the 1:1 interview. The additional time was provided to allow the participant to seek clarification of any questions and fully reflect and consent to participate in the research (Kumar, 2019). The

participants were verbally asked if they received the email a minimum of 48 hours and asked any clarifying questions. The participants were advised that they could recall their consent at any time, without any penalization or consequences.

The informed consent (Appendix B) and Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) outlined the study's criteria and focus. Both documents explicitly stated that their consent and participation were voluntary, and the research purpose was also clearly outlined in the documents.

The participants were also informed in writing that, under the Canadian Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, they could at any time request access to the information and could request the destruction of shared information. The online survey was anonymous; therefore, individual data would not be retracted after submitting their responses.

A table was utilised to manage and keep track of the completed documentation from the participants (Appendix E).

The questionnaire method was selected to access the participant's input in a private forum at a convenient time and location of their choice. The researcher could review the questionnaire results quickly as the access to the data was in real-time and therefore available to analyse. The responses were immediate, and therefore, the researcher could quickly gain a snapshot of what was happening within the participants' community (Holtkamp et al., 2019).

Another benefit of the research design being conducted online was that the participants were already working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic social isolation policy. The participants already have their laptops and have internet access; thus, other accommodations did not need to be created.

The qualitative interviews are conducted in two methods. One approach is the one-to-one telephone interviews, and the second option is through Skype interviews. Each method was selected based on the participants' preferences.

3:5 One-on-One Interviews

One advantage of the interviews is to solicit specific examples of the students' experiences or situations in their own words, narrative, and expression. The online interviews were easy to conduct and at a suitable time for the participant. The interviews allow the participant to explain for a better understanding of the situations and provide the opportunity for both the researcher and participant to further probe for clarity, opinions, behaviours, and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). The interview questions were open-ended so that in-depth information would be collected. Prompts were utilised to encourage the participant to clearly explain their meaning of the situations (Holtkamp et al., 2019).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, interviews are not held in person. However, the data content remains appropriate as the conversations provided adequate details of the students' experience (Mitchell, 2020). All the students selected telephone interviews to conduct the interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed. Although the set goal was to conduct 15 interviews, 11 were conducted. Due to the reoccurring themes and common experiences obtained, the eleven interviews would suffice the transferability of the research. Although the participants are not considered a stereotypical homogeneous group, their experiences and challenges were similar, and therefore the data had reached a level of saturation. Data saturation is attained when enough information is obtained to either replicate the research or obtain new or

additional information. This is also called information redundancy, where the responses are categorized into similar codes, and thus no new knowledge is gained (Braun & Clarke, 2019b; O'reilly & Parker, 2013).

Following the recorded interviews, the participants were transcribed and provided for authenticity and accuracy (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Mitchell, 2020). The participants reviewed the transcripts for accuracy and authenticity, which were sent via email. The participant returned the transcript with their signature indicating the transcript was reviewed, changes made, and if required, returned for change, and finally signed to indicate the transcript accurately reflected the interview.

3:6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is utilised to identify the patterns, concepts, or trends from the qualitative data to interpret the data versus describing the interview's contents (Braun & Clarke, 2019a; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it can be both inductive and deductive to explore known and unknown themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019b). During the interviews data analysis, deductive reasoning was utilised to move from the more generalized themes to more specific experiences (Armat et al., 2018). Although Braun and Clarke's (2019b) thematic analysis process is utilised, the process was not linear, as there were several reviews and revisions of the process to ensure the transparency and authenticity of the data.

The analysis process includes Braun and Clarke's (2019b) initial phase of familiarisation with the data, which included the transcription and validation of the transcription by the

interviewees. The transcripts were written directly from the recorded oral interviews. The dictation feature within Microsoft Word was used to record the interview. The transcription was conducted verbatim, including slang, filler terms, repetition, and prompting questions. The aim was to obtain an actual account or testimonial and thus gain an understanding from the participant. The transcription included verbatim everything that was said during the interview to provide and allow for broad and exploratory analysis. Due to the use of telephone interviews, body language was not visualised or assessed.

The second step includes coding the data. To preserve confidentiality, the participants' names are not included; however, in keeping with the Punjab culture, female Punjab names were randomly selected from a list of common female names via a Google search and assigned to the interviews (Appendix D). The coding or name assignment makes for ease when understanding and reading the participants' statements (Chandra & Shang, 2019).

The Braun and Clarke (2019b) third step involve searching for the emerging themes generated by the initial systems derived from the conceptual research map. Deductively, the qualitative data from the interviews was methodically collated and thus organised under the initial research design, including the grouped the categories of safety, including norms, values, behaviours, and the specific pre-selected systems including climate, laws, transportation, housing, banking, and health care, in a logical order. Each interview transcript was meticulously reviewed, and the selected comments were highlighted when copied and pasted into the selected theme, thus systems (Appendix H). The highlighting coding system allowed a quick look at the data to identify any outlier, novel or inductive data which did not fit in with the initial systems from the conceptual map. The novel experiences necessitate attention and further examination of any emerging themes, patterns and connections obtained and remain pertinent to the international

student experiences (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018; Mitchell, 2020). The unanticipated themes that emerged were concepts that were not previously considered or explored in either the literature review or questionnaire; however, they provided beneficial information about the authentic experience and contributed significantly to the research (Friese, 2019). However, the research remained open to see where the students' experiences led me. The interviews provided valuable information through the lens of the female student.

The fourth step of the thematic analysis included reviewing the themes to ensure the data is inclusive and captures the true essence of the student's experience. All the data will be utilised to be comprehensive and honour the participants' stories. The sharing of the student's straightforward narrative is vital and assists in the validation of their experiences and in creating recommendations, which will be discussed in Chapter four.

Methodological triangulation involves using more than one method to research the area of interest, thus safety concerns for the female Punjab students. Moon (2019) found triangulation beneficial in confirming findings with more comprehensive data, increasing the validity and enhanced understanding of studied phenomena.

Confirmability

Rigour of the data was maintained by emphasizing confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Wagenaar et al., 2020). Confirmability is about reliable data (Yin, 2012). Both the survey and the interview relied on student volunteers and self-reported data. The assumption for the confirmability of the quantitative data includes that the participant is being honest and sharing authentic experiences. To ensure quality from the quantitative data, the reliance on the Survey monkey program's secure system as stated in their contract agreement, all respondents' information is securely "stored in their SOC 2 accredited

data centres that adhere to security and technical best practices” (Survey Monkey, 2021). The same assumption for the qualitative data assumes that the participant is honest when sharing their perception. To maintain the rigour of the qualitative data, the transcriptions are fact-checked with the participant to ensure accurate transcription of the discussion.

Transferability

When considering the limitation of the selected one specific College and particular College services that are provided, many other colleges may be experiencing safety concerns of female Punjab students with Canadian culture, including norms, values, behaviours, and systems such as climate, laws, transportation, housing, banking, and health care, which they may choose to explore.

The method may be replicated to identify specific concerns of other international students in other Canadian communities. Although female safety differs from male experiences, many international students may experience issues with acclimatisation.

3:7 Ethical Considerations

Although safety can be an emotive topic of discussion, the potential risks for the participants participating in the research are explored. One consideration was the impact on their mental or emotional health, such as triggering homesickness. All participants were advised that if they were affected by participating in this study, they could access the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or use the online chat feature, college counsellor. The participants are aware that they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

As well, ethical clearance was obtained by both the College and the University of Liverpool. The two institutions required specific requirements to receive permission to conduct the research. The ethical clearance and approval demonstrate the due diligence and responsibility of the researcher when conducting research. The University of Liverpool provided the International Online Research Ethics approval on July 20, 2020 (Appendix I).

The College approval process included a tri-college approval process that involved attaining an additional online Privacy certificate called the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE) obtained on November 30, 2019 (Appendix J). Approval was provided from the College.

The approval indicates that the researcher is responsible for adhering to and respecting the ethical guidelines, including the participant, risk, knowledge, and academic freedoms while conducting the research. The participant must be voluntary with informed consent, their confidentiality honoured and have the right to withdraw at any time during the process.

As the one-to-one interviews were conducted on the telephone, the setting provided a distance between the participant and me. I remained objective as I did not know the participant, and I was not leading the response with my body language. During the one-to-one interviews, they discussed unfortunate and unsafe situations. I provided the participants with access to emergency phone numbers and emails to access services to assist them, such as housing by-laws, employment services and immigration lawyers within the local area. The contact numbers were prepared before the interviews if the participant required referrals or resources for themselves and others.

3.8 Chapter Key messages

In this chapter, I outlined how I conducted, collected, and analysed the data. The next chapter will describe the data findings and utilise tables from the questionnaires and exact quotes from the participants' interviews.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data in a systematic approach to describe and illustrate the responses to the questions in the questionnaire and interview. Discussion of the data will be provided in chapter 5. The data will answer the three research questions and the analytic table (Table 3) on page 124 is used to organise the findings and provide the structure of this chapter. The quantitative and qualitative data will be aligned and discussed with each system or theme. This intentional alignment aims to show a larger inclusive picture of the students' experience.

The data analysis refers to both the questionnaire and interview data and focused on the six systems identified and explored in the literature review. However, any outliers or new evidence was compiled as this was part of the narrative of the students' acclimatisation experience. The students' voice when sharing their experiences was relevant, essential, and provided rich, authentic, and valued input for creating a safer settlement at the College. Student input can create a stable building block for overall student safety (Lee et al., 2019).

As the research problem aimed to obtain the students' perceptions, all outlier comments are included. The additional comments are shared to acknowledge that outliers may be a component of the cryptic culture, which may not be researched or published; however, it is known within the community that is examined. Although the outliers are deemed novel in this research, they may be common practice and not known or discussed by the general population or the published literature. The novel or non-obvious information creates value and benefits for this study by obtaining the students' lived experiences (Birss, 2018). I, as the researcher, have the questions; however, it is the participant who provides the answers.

The data from the quantitative questionnaire is presented through descriptive statistics. The quantitative data assisted me in drawing conclusions about the students' perception on the rating of importance of the topic. The analysis of the quantitative data both supports and refutes the current printed literature, which will be discussed further in chapter 5. The interview questions offered more insights about safety concerns or issues. Some extracts from the participants' statements were intentionally left as lengthy to show the complexity and interconnectedness of the systems within the international students' experience.

The table below (Table 3, pages 124-125) provides an overview of the data collected and the themes, patterns and connections revealed to answer the research questions. The table aligns the literature review concepts with the quantitative data from the questionnaire and qualitative data obtained from the interviews. The framework provides visibility of the new and undocumented concepts extracted from the qualitative interviews, which allows for a more focused analysis and discussion. The highlighted and overarching concepts include the impact of being a female, students' safety, the relevance of a cryptic culture and the essential use of developing trusting networks was also revealed.

Table 3: Thematic Data Analysis Table for Systems

Theme	Literature review concepts	Questionnaires Concepts	Interviews Concepts	Safety Concern Rating by students
Climate, weather systems	Adjusting to Cold Canadian winters Different due to climate sustainability	Arrival: Aware/strongly 65.25% Neither 25% Disagree/strongly 19 Current: Aware/strongly 100% Neither 0 Disagree/strongly 0	Adjustment to cold Snow coat and boots Any style of clothing accepted No summer concerns	5/5
Norms & Values	Societal Family, beliefs Multiculturalism	Aware/strongly 35.29 Neither 23 Disagree/strongly 41.63 Current: Aware/strongly 71 Neither 22.75 Disagree/strongly 6.25	Relationships Supportive networks Food: accessing vegetarian restaurants and foods does not taste the same.	2/5
Legal system	Fines Consequences of breaking the law	Aware/strongly 41 Neither 23.53 Disagree/strongly 35.29 Current: Aware/strongly 88.24 Neither 0 Disagree/strongly 1	Reliance on 911 Respect for Canadian police Pollution laws Domestic violence laws Use of a network for awareness Lack of knowledge about laws	3/5
Finances	Currency awareness ATM Banks/Credit unions Bill payment Budget taxes	Agree/strongly 25 Neither 5 Disagree/strongly 18.75 Current: Aware/strongly 87.5 Neither 0 Disagree/strongly 12.5	responsibility/agency/ autonomy trust within own community financial safety Rent food transportation tuition books	1/5
Employment systems	Rights Safety standards Laws Precarious work		Use of network Not aware of the H&S laws Treated not well	

Theme	Literature review concepts	Questionnaires Concepts	Interviews Concepts	Safety Concern Rating by students
Housing systems	On-campus/off-campus Affordable bylaws Overcrowding Accessible/ location to school		Large homes with family With family Not knowing bylaws Not rent to international students (discrimination) Expensive, safe	Not rated
Health care System	Access, coverage perceptions	Aware/strongly 50 Neither 12 Disagree/strongly 38 Current: Aware/strongly 93.75 Neither 0 Disagree/strongly 6.25	Emergency care Appointments Referral to specialist Seen right away at home in ER	4/5

Briefly, as identified from the thematic analysis table, the students' views corroborate much of the published literature. The rating was based on an average of the participants' safety concerns based on the quantitative data. The concerns were rated out of five. Although six of the themes were identified, only five were assessed in the questionnaire, as housing was not on the questionnaire, as it was omitted in error. Number one was rated the most serious safety concern, and number five was rated the concept with the minor concern. The quantitative ratings provide the level of concern from the participants' awareness of the system. The quantitative data is presented with circle graphs; however, the percentages are presented and discussed in the narrative.

4:2 Navigating Canadian Culture, Norms and Values.

Before coming to Canada, the quantitative rating showed that students placed their awareness of Canadian culture, norms, and values second out of five of the graded systems.

Their concerns positioned the adaptation to Canadian culture, norms, and values as a high priority to explore and resolve safety concerns for the international female student from Punjab. Canadian Culture.

When reviewing the quantitative data, participants were asked if they were aware of Canadian Culture before coming to the College. While 35.29% of respondents implied, they agreed with the statement, 41.63% disagreed or strongly disagreed with their understanding of the Canadian Culture. During the interviews the participants shared how their knowledge of Canadian culture changed before arriving in Canada and after living in Canada “I mean like reading it and experiencing it are two different things”, Kiran shared.

After acclimatising to Canada, 71% of the participants strongly agree that they understand the culture, while 6.25% disagree with the statement. The remaining 23% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Even with the increase of approximately 36% who responded that they understood better Canada’s culture, 6% of respondents felt that they continue to learn and understand the Canadian Culture, which demonstrates the importance to consider support not only upon students’ arrival but throughout the year. Participants like Daljeet openly said that she wants more explanations to assist her with how to acclimate to the new host culture.

The open-ended questions provided more details about potential factors that influence acclimatisation around the Canadian culture. Their impressions about Canada were shaped by social media, films, and the internet. As Kiran shared “all I was reading [about Canadian Culture] was from Chrome” but also impressions were influenced by the community around them, as Kiran added “there were a lot of people when I was talking to my relatives, and they were sharing their experiences, so basically it wasn’t my mindset, it was theirs”. Sundeep talked

about stereotypes that reinforced perceptions of Canada as a welcome and safe place in the 'social imaginary' (Guo & Guo, 2020), which may lead to newcomers not questioning some of the processes they experience "I knew that people are going to be from diverse cultures, different languages, and French was [the second] language. People are much nicer though. It is true; yeah, we all have stereotypes. We do for every country". Aman also shared, "Before I came to Canada, I understood that Canadians were fair and that women had rights compared to India. That was the biggest factor for me to choose to come to Canada was because of the Canadian Culture, and my parents and I and my brother knew that because I was a girl, I wouldn't have those opportunities at home". Suki also shared her experience, "When I first came to Canada, I've found that everybody was really welcoming and there were People were really nice and kind and before I came, I knew that it was a nice place to live". Their comments reinforce other participating students' pre-arrival views about Canada. These views helped their initial transition to the new country as they felt secure that they were moving to a 'safe' country, but they were accepted unquestioned. Such unquestioned perceptions of Canada being safe and friendly could also pose safety risk for these women as challenges and problems they faced in Canada could be attributed to their behaviour and attitudes rather than social inequalities or dangers. Aman found the opportunity to come to Canada as a positive influence to further develop and advance her career but also encountered persons not as friendly as she had anticipated when coming to Canada that clashed with the stereotype, she knew of Canadians being polite and courteous.

When the participants were asked what they liked about experiencing they Canadian Culture, they felt that there was more independence and opportunities for women around jobs, role expectations, education, and freedom of dress code, compared to experiences from Punjab. Suki commented "This country offers me everything that I wouldn't get back there [India]. You

know, being a woman, you can go out till two or three AM here, and you're safe. You couldn't do that at home". The newly found freedom of going out independently was important for these young women but unfamiliarity with the physical environment and the networks they became members of could put them in precarious situations. They discussed openly the threat of sexual assault they faced in India. Drisha stated that "women can be raped if they are out late" and that their society believes "it is their punishment for going out". Harjot mentioned that "...every woman has a rape story in India. Boys and men, there would molest people, and the police would not take the proper action". They put their trust on the police in Canada commenting that "people are afraid to do things here because they're more afraid of getting a criminal record or deported". However, such perception of immunity from injury can pose threats to their safety, and awareness of precautions they still need to take to be safe is important. Drisha referred to the existence of domestic violence in both cultures. "In the homes here, and at home, there is emotional abuse, we don't label it that, but since coming here, I have the education to tell me that. The women can't be hit or slapped; some are left alone [isolated] from families and cannot go outside without their brother or husband". A difference they find in Canada is the more open approach to discuss such topics of sexual violence in an attempt to address them. Drisha shared, "I have taken courses here and I understand that the threat of rape is a way the men can further control the women and that the punishment of the victim, is also a way of controlling the women". However, it is recognized that these incidents still happen in Canada "it is behind doors, here and at home; no one talks about it, even if they are witnessing it". The tension between educating themselves to be more aware and vocal about women rights and practices that sometimes still exist around them and especially within their communities also put these female students at risk.

Emotional and physical safety was a key difference between the two cultures identified in the participants' comments. "If you're a girl, restrictions or well it's not government restrictions, but it's just not safe. It's not safe there for girls, for sure", Suki added. She equated Canadian community with providing a safer, autonomous society for Punjab women. As Gaganpreet commented "the biggest reason my parents allowed me to come here at the age of 18 was safety because where I come from, like I hate to say this, that in my country but women are not safe".

From the quantitative data, four of the seventeen respondents utilised the text feature and stated they enjoyed the safer environment for women in Canada. Furthermore, when asked about the participants' overall feeling of safety at the College, 87.5% of students revealed that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. While 87.5% is high, 6.25% confirmed they strongly disagreed, leaving 6.25% to respond that neither agreed nor disagreed. When drilling down the data for specific details, the participants were asked whether they feel physically safe at the College and 93.75% indicated that they felt physically safe at the College. In contrast, only 6.25% disagreed with the statement. When asked about their emotional safety, 81.25% felt safe, with 6.25% neither agreeing or disagreeing, and 12.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. There is a question though how nuances of safety was being perceived by these young women who are still navigating themselves around the new culture. Their role as well as exposure to the wider Canadian community for some of them was still within very specific parameters, especially when they were living within their communities and as such, they needed more time to become more aware of wider implications around safety.

They acknowledged that India was gradually transitioning into a more progressive country, although the change process was slow. Participants like Gaganpreet commented on the range of job opportunities that women have in Canada in relation to back home "...equality [in

Canada] was one thing, like I saw women working in security. I saw them working as police officers. I saw them working like you guys are our teachers. I saw them working at restaurants, and I even know some women that did drive trucks ". Such new work opportunities offered more independence and at times they were not questioned in terms equality of payment against males workers, minimum wage or promotion and professional advancement.

The students shared that their parents sent them to Canada because they would be treated *'better'* and would have more freedoms and opportunities in Canada than staying in Punjab. Aman commented, "So, I was sent to Canada so that my family could give me an opportunity to not have to be just a housewife and hidden from society. They knew that I had the brains and the ability to really help with the family". The family pressure to do well is combined with the financial sacrifices families made for these women to study abroad. A few students explained that their families have financially invested in their daughters' education, even to the detriment of parents with limited funds and means and that "they [the families] may sell land or take out loans". As a result, being seen as troublemakers by reporting incidents puts additional pressure on these female students and consequences can be disproportionate for the women. Simran further explains the impact of the family's reputation and its significance when cultivating gender values and norms. "So, somebody in the family does something wrong; the whole family is shamed. If I did something wrong or my brother would do something wrong, there's so shaming for men, not as bad as [shaming] for women". The pressure of shaming the family and risking being disowned is enough to control or curb the females' behaviour. Some of the women like Drisha felt "courageous to speak out only because I am here in Canada, not back home" but not all of them felt that they had opportunities or safe enough to do so.

Community plays a central role in family honour even in Canada. The students felt that they needed to fit within with those traditional expectations and the desire not to develop and display individuality, as it was not a good quality in Punjab. "There's like a basic thing [in] our culture is family. Here in Canada, there's individuality. What matters in our Culture, you as an individual does not matter that much, which [is where] other people [family and society] have to say about your life matters way more than what you have to say about your life; this is a big difference here". The difference of the community role and the way that social time versus work time was organised was also mentioned by others like Simran, "I was surprised that a lot of Canadians would rather work than create a social life. They want money and don't have fun with friends and family". At the same time, these efforts to continue to practise their social, familial, and cultural norms while in Canada clashed with their attempts to fit in with the more western culture they are inhabiting now. Daljeet explained that she could fit into the Canadian culture because, "visually, my appearance does not project that I am an outsider"; thus, citizenship was assumed purely on her physical appearance.

They discussed the changing culture in India and how Indians who immigrated to Canada in previous generations, they held onto the older way of thinking and being from when they were citizens in Punjab. They recognized that have not experienced the progression that Punjab is making in terms of opportunities and equity for all people and as such they may still have very traditional expectations for these young women. Kiara said, "Yet despite progress, our community here don't see the progress at home, and they relate to the old home system". Daljeet also commented on her community in Canada, "...people in our own community, that have lived here for a while they expect us to listen, to what they have to say. They [think] they are the experts, not us. They don't understand that things back home are starting to change and that

women are having opportunities". Relationships was one of those concepts were differences were brought up like more acceptance by Canadians in seeing males and females living together before marriage. Harjot shared, "my Culture is that Indian males and females don't live together before marriage, so pre-marriage. Maybe in the big city, they do, so I found that strange here that males and females will live together before they are married".

Kiara shared that the easiest part of her adjustment to the Canadian Culture was her network. "I think it's important that you have someone to guide you. I had my uncle, and I lived with my aunt, so they were able to help me". Kiran concurred that creating a network helps with the adaptation, such as "Interacting with others, joining groups, not just sitting in the class and not being interactive". Harleen also expressed the need for a trusting network. "I was so lucky that I was living in the relatives' home, and I had them to talk to people were easy to talk to and to guide me". Aman further explained the significance of a supportive and trustworthy network: "There are students that get exploited and are vulnerable because they're here at such a young age, but I was lucky because I had family support".

The participants' acclimatization process relied on preconceived ideas around Canada as a safe and friendly place. As such they may have not questioned practices around them or interpreted challenges as problems, they initiated rather than unequal practices. They identified differences in the opportunities they have as women but again they seemed unaware of challenges that they as women may have in the workplace. Trusting networks helped their acclimatization. These were familial networks rather than organised College resources, which shows that there is scope for reflecting on support structures and processes the College offers.

4.3 Adjusting to the Canadian Climate: Weather and Clothing

Participants were asked if they had previous knowledge and awareness of adjusting and preparing for the Canadian weather and changing seasons. Before coming to Canada, 65.25% of respondents stated they were aware of weather changes in Canada and 25% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with their understanding of the Canadian weather. The importance of understanding the weather in Canada allows the newcomer to prepare to dress for the seasons. After being in Canada for a while all the participants felt that they were strongly aware or aware of the changing weather patterns. During the interviews all the participants commented on the lack of awareness around the cold winters. As Aman stated, "the hardest thing for me was to adjust to the weather". Drisha added, "it was so cold that I wore my winter coat inside. There is a thermostat to change the indoor temperature, and I couldn't get it to go any higher". Harleen agreed,

"I didn't have any problems adjusting other than the weather. I came in January, and I didn't know how cold it was, so I needed to go buy warmer clothing, and I sat all day by the heater in my relatives' house".

Purchasing clothes was an additional cost that students had not accounted for. In addition, acclimatization to the weather meant that at times they missed out on social activities or time dedicated to their studies. Gaganpreet shivered as she recalled her first winter in Canada, "Brrr! I couldn't believe that people lived in this weather. School was cancelled once because of the snow, and the ploughs could not clear the streets. I stayed in my warm bed drinking hot tea". For students who relied on services like the library or had to work becoming accustomed to these weather conditions was a priority.

Students had to consider all aspects of clothing that before they may have taken for granted. Suki said,

"Before the winter came, I had to buy a winter coat and wanted to buy these sandals. But my uncle laughed and told me I had to keep my feet warm, so I needed to but this big heavy boots. I didn't like them, but they helped to keep my feet warm when the snow came."

She had to adjust her desire and preference for wearing sandals with the need to stay warm and prevent the complications of the cold, such as frostbites.

The freedom to select individual clothing preferences and styles was mentioned when discussing cultural differences with their attire

"When I started at [the] College, I didn't really understand the clothing, like what people would wear because back home, we didn't wear shorts or jeans and if you did do that, people would stare at you in India. So, the other thing that was really surprising is that you can do whatever colour you want to do with your hair in India we don't do".

However, for some participants this freedom was also a challenge. Two people from the quantitative data commented that they found women's clothing different and required adaptation. Some of them felt dual pressures to fit within their cultural communities and the wider western community they were now inhabiting. While they were most comfortable wearing the clothing they wore in India and they did not feel like an outcast from their communities, they recognized that clothes are a sign of difference and if they wanted to fit in, they had to navigate between the two cultural systems. Kiara shared, "Feeling different from others here it's ok, at home we feel insecure or threatening if we act different from our community there's kinda a social order". This

was not a sentiment shared by all though. Some of them also felt that the pressures of their communities were harder on them, the women, and expectations about clothing conveyed expectations about behaviours and compliance, more than their male peers.

4.4 Navigating the Canadian Legal System: Policing and Laws

Navigating the Canadian legal system is determined to rank 3/6 as far as overall safety concerns for the students. The questionnaire participants were asked about their understanding and navigation of Canadian laws, including policing and the consequences of breaking the laws. When the students arrived in Canada, 41% strongly agreed or agreed that they understood how the legal system functioned in Canada, 35.29% replied that they did not understand, while 23.53% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. What is concerning with their responses is that over 76.5% of the respondents did not know the Canadian legal system which can put them in unsafe situations.

More specifically, on understanding of Canadian law, once the students lived in Canada and attended the College, 88.24% of the participants felt better understanding and more confidence to navigate the legal system. However, 11.76% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The lack of a committed response may indicate that the student had no experience or perceived need to know the laws, or perhaps they did not see the significance of the question. As well, the students may have been prepared for their encounter with the

immigration officers and had their documents ready for review. Their anxiety would be lessened if they had awareness of the required immigration documents for the student visa.

During the interviews the students reinforced the need for further awareness on laws.

Sundeep also shared,

"I know there's laws, but we don't know about that so just educating people about the laws that if they get scammed especially in our community. Maybe others don't talk about it, but we know it happens in our community. It's a pride thing. It is seen as a good trait to get the 'most' out of people; like winning".

For the students, community networks are important points of reference and support and feeling unsafe adds to their stress levels.

During the interviews, Suki described how she could develop an understanding of the Canadian legal system through her employment. She explained,

"I work with the law firm. Now I know how things work here; yes, we don't understand everything when we come here new. There are certain things that's OK to do back in India. We don't even have like any seminar on the laws. I had a cousin or went through everything with me".

Suki's comment identified the need for further input at orientation around the legal system. She also identified the need to have a trusting person to assist with navigating the legal system. Suki then became part of that trusting network and shared her acquired knowledge with newcomers to help them navigate the legal system. The importance of trusting networks to help with questions and problems was raised by all students. Daljeet said,

"I understood the laws. My boyfriend was here, so I knew that I could trust him, and he would tell me what people can do and what people can't do. And I felt really safe at [the College], so I knew that I could just ask a friend if I had any questions".

Again, students discussed how secondary sources like the media influenced their ideas about the legal system and the police before arrival. Harleen explained her lower confidence level with her exposure to the new governing laws,

"Back home, you didn't have the same type of laws. I don't really know nothing like that the way our legal system worked not much. I don't have so much knowledge, and you don't know sometimes you don't know until something happens. Everything I learned [was] from watching TV and from asking my relatives".

Harleen's statement indicates her reliance on television for Canadian laws, which can also be misleading especially if the programmes they watch are American rather than Canadian and present different legal systems.

Gaganpreet added her experience and trust in the police service.

"I felt really safe wherever I went, like on the buses or the malls, anywhere. I just knew there's just this one number I have to remember, 911 [the emergency number to call in Canada for immediate police and emergency assistance] and I'll be safe, and I'll be OK".

She went on to describe a personal experience that helped her shape that positive view of the police when a female police officer helped them when someone was harassing them in the streets. The fact that it was a female police officer was also a positive indicator for trust for Gaganpreet. Participants felt that their concerns were taken more seriously here and the immediacy of response by the police was a good indicator for them. They shared personal stories about the quick response of the police. Harjot said,

“We were told to call 911 if there is ever a problem, and we were so happy to know that they showed up very, very quickly. They were there in about 5 minutes, and the police made us feel very safe. They went, and they checked the house, and they wanted to make sure that we were felt safe before they left and what they do; they just made us feel really, really safe. (chuckle) In India, that would not be the same experience with the police. The police probably wouldn't show up”.

Aman also explained, "In India, we have 100 [the emergency number to call for police and emergency assistance], and the police just come whenever they came. They don't make it a priority”.

The students identified differences in laws that govern everyday practices. Sundeep compared the Canadian pollution laws with India,

"There [Canada's laws] are more strict than in my own country. The difference in India, sometimes like we just throw a wrapper on the ground. We believe it's just a wrapper, and nobody would care. I had read it was bad. Here I'm so scared you like drop it just like a wrapper or whatever scrap paper on the ground 'cause I feel I feel like the police will catch you”.

For Sundeep understanding the difference and practising it become a stressful experience. Another difference shared by Sundeep was, "We just don't know about the Laws. I have seen getting shouted at for play music too loud in the buses, in India we don't care”.

Students’ perceptions about those every day experiences reinforce how College orientation could be shaped further to support their understanding of legal and social expectations.

In summary, the data provide insights from the student's experience, such as their lack of awareness of pollution laws, the utilisation of their networks for information, and their exposures respecting the police and relying upon the 911 service for emergency response.

4.5 Navigating the Canadian Banking, Finances and Employment

When asked whether they understood banking systems, finances, and employment systems, before arriving in Canada, the participants' responses were rather diverse. While 25% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 56% of the respondents shared that they did not have the financial understanding, with 18.75% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. However, after settling in Canada, the respondent's replied with 87.5% certainty that they now understand the financial system, while 12.5% of the participants continued to feel challenged with the banking systems. When asked what helped the students familiarize themselves with the banking system, they responded that they attended the bank referred by friends, and the banking personnel assisted them with setting up accounts. The students created a trusting relationship with the banking personnel and felt comfortable asking them questions about setting up and maintaining a banking account. Kiran commented, "She [bank personal] made it easy for me". Such access to information decreased her anxiety about adjusting to the banking system, aligning with the literature. The respondents did not state that they received guidance or support from the College for banking and budgeting.

Most students did not have any budgeting experience before coming to Canada, as their family managed their finances. During the interview, Gaganpreet shared, "When I came, I had no banking experience. It has to do with how we lived back home. All the expenses in everything,

all the tuitions and everything are paid by our parents also, they deal with all of our finances”. Students enjoyed this new control over their finances. As Gaganpreet said, “You deal with all of your money on your own, and then I like that they give you credit cards so that that's really helpful”. However, the range of finance options could become a challenge for the students. One of these challenges is the issue of a credit card and the risks associated with limited financial literacy. These international students had to learn the balance between potential income and expenditures without prior knowledge of cost, value and worth of expenses. Kiara and Drisha expressed their concerns with the expenses of tuition, books, housing, and food. Both had not been in charge or taught how to budget their money at home. Drisha described, "my friend bought a new car and now can't pay tuition or books and rent”. The new autonomy of budgeting became a concern rather than a passage to adulthood when the students lacked the exposure to budgeting expertise to organise their money to last them throughout the entire program.

The students enjoyed the new autonomy and responsibility for banking, whereas, at home, their close male relatives, like their brothers, took the financial control. Consistent with these identified gender roles, Sundeep's brother did all the family banking back home, so she did not have any banking experience.

In some case though, even in Canada, these female students experienced gender disparity and did not have full control over finances. Students like Suki and Kiara relied on friends and family to assist them in initially navigating the banking systems. They are also aware of banking resources, such as the call centre, to assist them if they have any further issues.

Harjot explained a challenging financial situation, "I had an issue where somebody stole, my money was stolen, it was stolen online, there was \$800. I received a notification from the bank. So, I called the bank, and the banks here are open 24/7. So, I asked them to freeze the

account, and then they returned my money. Back in India, they would never return the money. They're just starting to have online service, but right now they don't have online service”.

Kiran also explained, "one there was just one-time event with the bank, the guys charge me [a fee] for my account, it was just a default in the banking system. They [the bank] fixed it. I did no banking at home”.

Employment

Employment rated first of the five concepts as a significant area of safety and acclimatisation concern. Ten of the eleven students interviewed responded that they had to find paid work during their studies, reinforcing the need to earn money. Harleen declared that she was the only one not working. She said,

"I did not work while I was here. My family was able to send money so that I was able to pay for food and because I worked in my relatives' home. I clean and take care of their children in exchange for eating their food. I would cook the food before I went to school, and then when I would come home, I would serve the food, and whatever food was leftover I was able to eat and pack for lunch for the next day ".

It is interesting to note that she did not consider the contributions she made to the family as a job and the disempowerment that she faced in her attempt to survive through the year. Many students also revealed they were relying on their parents for additional financial support due to the challenges of finding work in Canada, which made them feel obliged to find any job to support themselves and relieve their parents, some of whom were struggling financially.

Many participants were aware of the Canadian International Student policy for working a maximum of 20 hours per week and collectively felt the 20 hours limit was too restrictive. Daljeet stated, "I could only work 20 hours a week because that was what the rules are and I

didn't have any shifts during the winter semester, so I did find it hard; and my friends were helping me to find jobs, so it was really important to me". Kiara also reflected on the work opportunities she found and how she had to accept jobs that did not pay well, "I could only work 20 hours a week, and only jobs with minimum wage and it took five to six months to get a job" or jobs that they knew males were paid better. Kiara stated, "the males get trucking jobs which make much more [money], but they [the company's] won't hire us girls". The respondents were able to articulate that their gender norms and thus limitations were formed based on job assignments and the lack of equal opportunities for women.

Their comments demonstrated how the 20 hours system caused psychological strain; the budgeting and expenses of tuition and rent and the lack of work hours created a conflict within the international students' ability to thrive and safely acclimatise to Canada. The challenging conflict between policy and need also resulted at times in students seeking and accepting unsafe work settings without any recourse to unsavoury employers, who were creating schedules at their discretion and without regard for their studies. Therefore, the students were finding themselves in a position where they could not refuse work when it became available as they needed money.

Harjot was also struggling to find work; however, she could use her network to find part-time employment.

"I really had a lot of problems getting a job, especially in the last semester, I couldn't even get a job part-time. So back home, I was a physiotherapist. So, I was actually able to get a Co-op in our last term and work at the front desk. They knew that I was a physiotherapist back home, so they gave me a few hours so that that would help pay for my rent in my food until I could get a regular job. The job was also within walking distance, so I didn't have to worry about money".

Harjot's co-op experience was organized by the College, which allowed her to expand her network into her chosen field. Such experiences demonstrate further the role that the College can play to support international students and their transition to safer employment opportunities.

Aman also emphasised her ability to utilise her network: "It was hard because it was a different system with different people, but people were friendly. So, it was easier to get a job because I knew my uncle knew people". Whether Aman's uncle is a blood relative is unknown. As previously discussed, persons from India label close family friends as uncle and auntie. Nevertheless, Aman was using her 'familial' network to gain employment.

A recurring theme was the lack of knowledge of the Ontario Health and Safety Standards in the workplace, including being taken advantage of by employers, some of which from their own Canadian/Indian community. Drisha described how "my wages were withheld by my employer, who readily acknowledged their ability to bend the rules with international students". Drisha demonstrated discrimination and was unsure of how to deal or report it. Sundeep also asserted her concerns with the treatment of international students by their Indian community.

"You go you work, and you can't get paid. They don't pay you. That's wrong! These are wrong. Yeah, it's so easy. But it is too late 'cause you're not informed enough [about your] rights and the people who are doing this scamming, can buy their [way in their] own community from back home. And us students don't know, and that's really, that's wrong".

Simran illustrated,

"It's hard for somebody coming from the [Indian] community meeting somebody from their own community here and then almost feel disrespectful if they questioned their rules...I did not know anything about that [my rights] for two years until I started

working at [another shop], then I realised nobody can yell at you. Yeah, and our manager said, no you can't do that [yelling at me]. Yeah, so this is what kids don't know”.

Through going through unfortunate work experiences, students found themselves becoming more aware of the Health and Safety standards and employment code of conduct.

In summary, the participants explained how their limited or non-existent financial literacy skills made them more reliant on other people to help them navigate. The cost of life and the 20-hour work limit forced them to accept any job. Combined with lack of awareness of employment rights, work choices put them in precarious positions, where they were exploited in terms of unequal pay against male employers, having their pay withheld or being treated unkindly, even within their own Canadian/Indian communities. When the College was involved in helping them with employment, it was a successful intervention.

4.6 Navigating the Canadian Transportation System

Before arriving in Canada, 50% of the survey respondents stated they understood the transportation system in Canada. Comparatively, after the students had been in Canada, 93.75% of them said that they knew how to navigate the transportation system, while the outstanding responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. An overall rating of concern, transportation is rated 4/6, within the middle of the safety concerns, as the students had to adapt to the road laws and navigation of the new system. Whereas 93.75% of the students have a developed understanding of the use of transportation systems, this leaves 6.25% who replied they neither agreed nor disagreed, meaning they did not find transportation an issue of concern.

An issue three participants raised during the interviews was the international student's lack of knowledge around crossing the street at the intersections. Suki revealed, "Here, you press the [traffic] button, then you ready, get the signal, you're going across the road. I live near the college area...most of the kids they don't understand how [to cross the street]". Suki's comment showed the learning that these newcomers must make. However, Suki chose to live near the College, a more expensive area but she felt that she was saving money from travelling to the College.

Again, the students relied on trusting networks to help them. Daljeet said,

"I didn't know that you can only cross the road with the lights, so I had to learn that my friends taught me and then I taught my other friends. That was scary because I didn't know what to expect. I didn't live in a big city at home".

Harleen emphasised, "in India, we drive on the left-hand side of the road," which significantly impacts pedestrians when crossing the street. In India, the pedestrian would look for traffic, left then right before crossing, whereas in Canada, the pedestrian looks right then left to avoid any incoming vehicles. Again, the direction one looks when crossing the road becomes innate to contribute to safety, thus accident avoidance.

The students also had to learn about public transport as some of them had not used it before. Sundeep stated, "I never travelled by bus never really, so everything was like nearby, so I never had to. Back home, I saw a video of the buses, so I knew what they were when I came [here]". Sundeep's comment showed how the media influenced students' perceptions of systems, like public transport as they were preparing for their journey to Canada. Gaganpreet shared,

"I had little hard time trying to understand the maps, like which bus to take. It would say southbound or eastbound, which I had to get used to... At first yeah it was hard, but other than that no it was all good I liked system yeah, it's pretty fast and reliable".

Simran used buses in Canada, but her experience was different to Gaganpreet. "It's just sometimes they are not reliable. For forever now they've been improving the bus service, but still, it's just that there's still bus routes which we don't understand". The Canadian bus routes do not follow a gridline pathway; they loop and cross over streets and between city blocks. Getting on the wrong bus wastes time and creates an inconvenience for all passengers. A map and transit route booklet or cell phone app would assist the students to navigate the systems.

However, such a digital solution could also be stressful to students. The hidden cost of using their phones to navigate around the city added to the high living expenses. Sundeep said, "I took a couple of wrong buses, and it just got bad. I guess you need to have the data on or on your phone all the time, and my crappy data just fails me every single time". With their newfound autonomy, they had to develop map reading skills to navigate the transportation systems. Drisha found the "bus fees are expensive. Then I have to transfer onto another bus. The money adds up if you don't budget for it". The unexpected costs were stressful for the students who already were on a strict budget and, as previously stated, are restricted to the 20-hour workweek.

Harleen mentioned,

"transportation was an issue. We cannot afford a car and parking is expensive. I did get lost; I went to the GO (Government of Ontario bus) station I didn't have the directions. One of my student friends had to message me because she was lost. She actually went to the wrong campus".

Not being familiar with the busing systems can create confusion and potentially impact students' safety if they get lost.

For those students who did not use public transport and lived far from the College, the additional costs for learning to drive and car insurance was stressful. Aman conveyed a sad story, "I didn't drive back home, but I'm driving now. In fact, I had an accident, and I didn't know what to do. So, it was my fault. So, I thought I was going to get in big trouble, but the insurance actually took care of it. Now I need a new car".

Aman found out the relevance of having insurance; she was able to rely on the insurance company to assist her with her accident and vehicle replacement.

Kiara asserted, "We have a good bus system here and lots of options like Uber or taxis, so we're able to get around, and I've never felt unsafe using them". Some of them though were unsure about the safety of such options. Harleen shared,

"One day, in second year, I was working late, and I missed the last bus, so I called my boyfriend, and he told me to use an Uber, and I was crying because I didn't even know how to use an Uber. So, my boyfriend called the Uber for me, and then he showed me how to download the app so that I could get an Uber to get home. I did not know whether it was safe to use an Uber".

Public transport for these students meant that they would rely on the drivers to help and protect them. Sundeep used rickshaws in India. "We use auto-rickshaw and rickshaw drivers that would help you. I didn't know what North was, what was the South. Now I know". Harjot disclosed an unfortunate incident,

"One time I was on the bus [in India], and there was this man, he was drunk, and he started to put his hand on my thigh, and I screamed. There we have conductors back

home here on the buses. You don't have conductors here, but back home, we had conductors and what they would do is they would come, and they kicked him off the bus. The other people were concerned, but it's not unusual for people to get raped, and you hear about rape stories all the time”.

In summary, the participants reinforced the transportation challenges they faced in their acclimatization, such as adapting to private and public transit, the added expenses of vehicle licences, insurance, and the cost of parking. Moreover, the participants revealed their stress as they tried to balance their funds in order to pay for transportation to get to school or the workplace. The students referred to their lack of awareness of how to cross the road, the personal safety reliance on bus conductors and drivers, and the adaption to driving on the right-hand side of the road.

4:7 Navigating the Canadian Housing and Accommodation Systems.

There was no quantitative data collected regarding housing. However, the participants readily shared their experiences and challenges during the interviews or the free text section of the questionnaire, therefore it is feasible to assume that housing is a significant concern.

Students were describing house size as a significant difference between Canada and India. "In India, we have bigger houses with yards between the houses, and here the houses are so small, and then I really had to figure out how to manage things like where to store stuff and where to put things", Drisha portrayed the differences of house size between Canada and India and how she had to adjust to a smaller home. One questionnaire respondent added in the free text that they were accustomed to larger homes with security personnel, and in Canada, they lived in

smaller apartments without the outside security personnel they were accustomed to having at home. The different living environments created adjustment challenges in how comfortable they felt about their housing security. Many students have never lived in basements. Drisha described a basement "as a wee room that is always cold". At the same time, Simran reported being "happy to have a roof over our head". Adapting to a new country and a new home was challenging and for these students it also included adjustment based on the comforts and expectations of one's lived experience. Most of the participants came from rural areas where they had more space and were surprised about how space come at a premium in Canada. As a result, a few of them had to live with extended family as more economical and safe solution. Harjot "was living with my relatives when I first got here, and then I was fortunate, and I got to move out with a friend". However, that is not what they wanted in terms of feeling more autonomous but also, they had to support their host family with chores which at times took them away from study time.

When they were considering moving out of those community or family accommodation arrangements, they relied on networks to support them. As Harleen commented,

"living in my relative's home, and they took care of me. I had a friend who was living in a house, and she didn't have any relatives like me... She felt really isolated, and she ended up using Google Chrome to find the services and then she found a senior student who was able to direct her [to move out]".

The support networks mentioned though did not include College resources; the main support seemed to be from informal friend networks that they developed.

Another challenge students felt they faced in their attempts to become more independent from family in relation to accommodation was discrimination from landlords. Sometimes that was due to perceptions about students in general. As Suki commented,

"I'll be honest with you, you know kids do get sometimes issue with the housing. Yeah, they [the students] don't comply with certain rules, that's true actually. I used to visit some of my friends, and their houses would be a big mess. But sometimes certain kids are good as well. So, with the good ones, they find it a little hard, but again you know everybody just says you know how these young things [are]. That's out of 100, and you know 50% [cause the problems]".

Other times though there was additional challenges based on ethnicity. Kiran said, "We know the landlords stereotype us, there are signs saying no international students". Simran also shared the discrimination she encountered when she was looking for accommodation. In her case and in cases of other participants discrimination was based on gender and was from their own communities. She shared,

"two years ago everybody was so against the immigrant students coming in. Especially from men, Indian men within our own community. They didn't return my security deposit. I didn't know. So that is straight-up discrimination. Yeah, so that is a lot of people from our own community".

Simran was also proactively solution-focused and emphasized,

"they [the College and/or Canada] should tell us the basics, like rental laws for international students. I didn't get my security [deposit] back three times. They [students] don't know what their rights are and the basic thing they don't know. What we didn't know that we had to sign the lease, right? We didn't so 'cause then we have a legal proof that we discussed but prepaid them. We were sharing the place, so that wasn't that much amount of money, but that's still money so, it's our hard-earned money".

Some students did not seem to associate how the price of accommodation may have been related to geographical areas and safety. Simran illustrated her unsafe experience, "At the first place, with my first year here 2016, we had two break-ins into our house. I found the place on Craigslist. We moved out of there, [to somewhere] that's less scary". Like any urban area, there are some areas where the crime rate is high. The students did not seem to be aware upon arrival of what to do if a crime was committed and where potentially unsafe housing areas existed to avoid putting themselves in unsafer situations.

Some students though were forced to take decisions around accommodation that could have put them at risk due to cost. Others were forced to choose accommodation that is more expensive as they could not drive or use public transport. Simran said,

"I was in [name of suburb] when we used to live near to the College; oh my God, it was expensive...but then we have no choice because you have to live close to the College, as well 'cause we don't drive, just to save more time".

Daljeet also reported her difficulties finding affordable housing or accommodations close to campus. In her case she was also unaware of asking questions around hidden costs. As she said,

"Renting in [name of the suburb] was really expensive and I didn't have any money. My parents don't have a lot of money back home. So, I rented a basement apartment, and they told me that everything was included, so all of the utilities, but then they told me that I had to get my own Internet after I moved in. But I think they should have told me that before we moved in".

Other students made compromises between privacy and safety. Drisha explained that in her "community, the students are desperate and live with others, like up to 11 in an apartment. They want to feel safe and do their schoolwork".

When students chose to live off campus, decisions around accommodation were based on online research when there was no family or community support. At times that approach did work out well and students ended up getting conned. Sundeep shared her concerns about accessing housing,

"It is a huge problem for my friends and other people. They booked a home before they came here [from India]. That would make perfect sense, right. So, they would book a cab and just go straight to the place. They had to pay advance and they showed up there at the place it just didn't exist. That this is a problem".

Aman felt that there was "the need for better information-sharing networks to advise the students of their housing options, bylaws, bad landlords and particularly because of the limited time that students have for understanding and negotiating their new environment and their need to make decisions quickly".

Housing issues affect all students but in the case of international students that also needed to adjust to living away from their family and support systems, their housing challenges extended beyond affordability to personal safety and exposure to discrimination as well as lack of awareness around unexpected expenses of safer housing.

4.8 Navigating the Canadian Health Care System

Health care rated 5/6 as an area of concern for the students. However, based on the number of individuals' stories and potential health dangers, health care should have been considered a higher rated concept. When the questionnaire participants were asked whether they understood the Canadian Health care system before they arrived in Canada, only 18.75% replied that they agreed with the statement. A significantly larger per cent of 68.75 responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. While only 12.5% responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

After their settlement in Canada, 93.75% responded that they can now confidently navigate the Canadian Health care system; Leaving 6.25% of the respondents continuing to disagree with the statement. While the percentage of understanding and navigating health care has increased considerably since arrival, there remains a potential risk for not knowing how to navigate the system.

Accessing the health care system was a new experience for Harleen "I didn't know anything about [the Canadian health care system] because I had never gone to the hospital in India. I had gone to the doctor to get my vaccinations to come to Canada, but that's all!" For her to navigate the system and services she relied on trusted networks rather than information by the College. As she said when she had to access the hospital "my boyfriend was here, so he was able to help me, and he knew where the emergency room was located".

Such limited awareness about the health system and reliance on friends and acquaintances is a reoccurring approach to the students' problem-solving. Harjot declared, "I'm not sure, but I know I have insurance, and I have a number to call. I wasn't sure who to call. So, again I went to a senior friend who could help me". Kiran also shared,

"At first I wasn't sure about the insurance and everything. What was covering? Where to go? So, I went to one of my instructors, and senior friends, who told me when I am sick who to call and how to organize it. She made it easy for me".

In Kiran's case she felt confident to share the need for medical health with her academic tutor and find out more about support. However, in other cases they had to find out how systems work unaided. Daljeet shared,

" I thought my insurance was good, I was going to school part-time, and I thought that my [insurance] fee was covered in my course fee for the semester because in India, we don't have insurance. So, I had to contact the school and the international office, and they told me that I had a chance of only having 1% of my coverage, but I was very, very sick".

The lack of knowledge of health care insurance coverage put Daljeet in a precarious position. When she had assumed she had coverage through her tuition paid, it was removed when her student status changed to part-time. Daljeet did not understand the health care system because she did not need to utilise health care in the past. Once she got sick in Canada and needed to go to the hospital's emergency room, she had to figure out how the insurance and hospital system worked very quickly. Daljeet described that in India, her support system would be her mother and father, yet they were not in an immediate position to come to Canada as they had to get issued a passport, which took time.

Suki also experienced a health care crisis while in Canada and did not know how to navigate the health system.

"Actually, nobody notified us where to go, who to call, you know how things work here, so I went to the clinic at the back of the college, and they're like you have to go to the hospital. They never gave me the number of anybody...I called a taxi. The taxi guy knew

where the nearest hospital is. He's the one who took me to the nearest hospital. He said you should have called 911”.

Although Suki sought medical attention from the clinic, the clinic assumed that Suki had the knowledge and ability to get to the hospital.

Aman also had an emergent episode with her appendix and the use of her international student insurance coverage.

"I knew healthcare was expensive, and I had a problem with my appendix, and there were limits with Guardme [the international student's health insurance company], but I had to pay first, which I wasn't ready to do. I wasn't prepared I didn't have the money just there to hand over, and then I had to wait for it to be reimbursed”.

Many of the participants explained that they did not know how their insurance, or the system worked. Gaganpreet discussed her experiences of insurance coverage

"It was very expensive. International students do get Guardme. It's not fully covered. Everything's not covered. You spend first out of your pocket, and then you apply to claim it, and then it comes back into your account after three-four weeks. That was a little weird to me. Sometimes you don't have the money right away. It is expensive”.

This lack of awareness also put additional stress to international students and left them in precarious positions in making decisions between health and wider living needs

“My friend, she was admitted to the hospital, and she had some really serious problems. She thought she had the health care, but when she got out of the hospital, her bill was like over \$10,000 or something. She's like, 'Oh my God, I don't have as much money. Nobody told me that it was going to be like! How will I survive now? I have to pay for health care, but I need textbooks and to eat. I am so sad and cannot cope with my studies”.

The stress of such situations was also difficult to address, and students talked about “stress”, “anxiety”, “sadness” but felt that talking about mental health was a topic difficult for them to address. They found the more open approach to discussing mental health and counselling offer different to the experiences they had back home and unsure of whether it was a topic that they could openly discuss.

Although they did not experience any health care needs, Harleen, Harjot and Simran stated they did not understand the Canadian healthcare system,

"Well, health care is really, really different here. OHIP [Ontario Health Insurance plan] pays for your stuff, and you have to have an appointment. But at home, you pay out of pocket, and it can take you six months to 12 months to actually pay. But I didn't know how the healthcare system worked here”.

Simran explained, "I was lucky. I never got sick or anything. So, I was OK. Cause sometimes, it can be really hard to navigate to if you don't know where things are. We never needed an appointment in India”. Sundeep was also confused about the appointment system. "In India, anytime you want to see a dermatologist, you just show up. Here you wait for an appointment. The health care is different and so advanced here [in Canada]”.

One of the differences they shared was that the cost of treatment was higher for women than for men back in India and as a result they would only visit the doctor for emergencies or rely on community and religious-based approaches to health. Simran shared “women need pregnancy and baby care which is an additional cost. The men don’t have babies, so they don’t pay”.

In summary, participants supported the literature regarding navigating their access, coverage, and other healthcare access challenges. They referred to differences between the cost

of treatment for men and women back home and approaches to mental health. Furthermore, the data raised concerns regarding the unexpected upfront costs of health care due to their lack of knowledge of their insurance process and coverage. Unfortunately, they did not have the awareness before encountering an emergency that requires immediate health care. Finally, they explained the system differences where in Canada, they require an appointment with the health care provider and in India, they could attend the facility and get services.

4.9 Data Analysis Chapter Summary

The overarching aim of the data analysis is to identify significant patterns and trends to answer the two research questions, what are the safety concerns of female Punjab students with Canadian culture and systems and what are the perceived challenges female Punjab students have experienced when acclimatising to the College and community? My position is that the data collected from both the questionnaire and interviews demonstrate that safety remains a concern in the various systems that were discussed with housing and employment requiring the most attention.

The data identified that the students quickly entered a period of adjustment to the Canadian systems and norms to fit into the College and community. When assessing the data, some overarching safety concerns were disclosed that are reasonably consistent across the systems. They included the cryptic culture, the treatment of the students by the 'own' Canadian Punjab community, and the need for trusting networking for guidance, and successful navigation thus, acclimatisation which adds knowledge to the research gap.

The data extracted supports the theoretical approach and research design. The methodology uncovered novel information and supports the need for a proactive safety climate initiative to provide the information required to navigate the systems safely, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5- Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The research aims to address the following four research questions:

- a. What are the safety concerns of female Punjab students with Canadian culture and systems?
- b. What are the perceived challenges female Punjab students have experienced when acclimatising to the College and community?
- c. How does acclimatisation align with female Punjab's experiences?
- d. What suggestions are provided by the participants to create safer acclimatisation to the College for the female Punjab Students?

Data from anonymous survey and one-to-one semi-structured interview with female Punjab students from one site of study, the College, was collected **and** analysed. This discussion chapter examines how the collated data analysed in the previous chapter relates with the wider literature. Alignment, misalignment, or new concepts discovered from the data compared with the wider literature. Chapter 5 is organised around the subheadings from the thematic analysis Table 3 on page 124 and embeds the four research questions under each theme. The researcher felt that this way can offer a wholistic view of each of the identified factors. It is acknowledged there is limited literature available specific to the female Punjab international student, which makes this research important for the College as 48% of the Punjab students at the College are female.

Throughout the discussion, the overarching themes of the impact of safety on the female Punjab students, the significance of familial influence and the evolving cultural norms that conflict with female student acclimatisation are explored through a feminism and safety climate

lens. Trust was a concept discussed extensively by the students and it is embedded in the discussion. The chapter ends with a discussion of limitations and delimitations of the study.

5.2 Navigating the Canadian Culture

As identified in the literature (Ford, 2019; Grant & Robertson, 2018) and from the research data, understanding a culture solely through reading, storytelling or social media is different to living and experiencing that new culture. The literature (Berry, 2013; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019; Jamaluden et al., 2018) supports the importance of tangible ways of knowing how a culture and its sub-culture's function, that includes experiencing, observing, or participating in the nuances, language, activities, and norms in a foreign country. Many of the participants had perceptions about Canadian life from television, stories and social media. Such perceptions did not depict evidence of oppression and discrimination that they faced based on their gender and as a result they were surprised and unprepared to deal with such challenges upon their arrival to Canada. Such findings affirm that acclimatisation is an essential part of the safer onboarding process and opportunities to associate with the new host country are important (Burleigh, 2021).

What comes out of the research is that acclimatisation is a lengthy process and support must be extended beyond onboarding and induction processes (Adriansen, 2020; Berry, 2013; Jamaluden et al., 2018). While the majority of the participating students felt that they developed an increased understanding and awareness of the culture, 6% of participants admitted that they continued to lack the knowledge of the way Canada functions and such misunderstanding can

potentially have a significant impact and lead to unsafe or precarious situations (Jackson et al., 2019; Jamaludin et al., 2018).

The respondents stated similarities between the Canadian and Indian cultures around family values and especially around family influence and desires for their daughters. The participants' parents, as recognised by the literature (Sharma, 2018), would prioritise their daughters' education as a way to grow and develop to their full potential without fear or limitations (Ali, 2020) and if they did not have the financial means to get their daughter to Canada, they would sell their property or borrow from others.

These families wanted those opportunities for growth and autonomy for their daughters and such family attitudes are discussed in the wider literature (Asri & Hayati, 2019; Bhopal, 2019; Kaur & Kaur, 2018). Those priorities and family sacrifices put the female students into additional pressure to succeed in their studies. The pressure of shaming the family and risking being disowned is enough to control or curb these women's behaviour. The pressure not to disrespect the family is strong, and the women are aware of the dire consequences of being banished from the family; thus, failing at school is not an option (Asri & Hayati, 2019; Bhopal, 2019; Kaur & Kaur, 2018). As a result, reporting incidents, especially when extended family or community members may be involved, remains a challenge for these students. Hence the position of the feminist theory is to provide a safer voice to express the students' concerns. As Ali (2020) states Indian students, particularly female students, are conscious of shaming or dishonouring the family and this may lead to feelings of insecurity if they encounter an ethically and legally reportable situation. The feeling of isolation, uncertainty and fear as described by Berry and Ward (2016) were emotions felt by these students. Unfamiliarity around the processes

of reporting and the role of the College in those reporting processes do not help those students take further action around incidents.

Many of the students have left home for the first time and as reported in the literature (Sharma, 2019) they felt that they cannot utilize the same coping skills they would have used while in their home countries, such as going home and discussing issues with their parents or family. Therefore, they seem to rely on others from their communities for information, knowledge, and expertise rather than processes set up by the College. Naturally, a person will gravitate to someone from their home culture, as they have similarities and believe they share values (Ghosh, 2018; Kwon et al., 2019). The lack of a common first language as well makes those students turn to their social networks as the first point of support. As the literature review indicated, the ability to ask questions and seek clarification can be influenced by the person's comfort and ability to share a common language (Jackson, 2020; Wang et al., 2017). From the safety climate perspective, a reliable and supportive network will assist with acclimatisation, particularly for younger students (Nakhaie, 2018; Volpone et al., 2018). The student comments agree with the literature as using a dedicated person to help them settle, be it a distant relative or acquaintance is important for them (Tencer, 2019). Students felt misled by persons within their own cultural communities, who stated they would take the international student under their wings and show them the Canadian way, which aligned with McCann's (2018) research. This statement is not to imply that other communities will not mislead or take advantage of the students; however, it is to point out that when a student lets their guards down to establish trust with someone, they think they can trust, they may not be able to (Baas, 2019). All the participants expressed concerns about their treatment by their own community where they had been manipulated, conned, or deceived into potentially risky, illegal, or unjust situations. Patel

(2020) and Abedkar (2014) write that the oppression of inequitable treatment of Punjab women continue even when they are in a new country. Utilizing the understanding of the intersectionality's of the student and the liberal feminism approach provides a safer platform to express these concerns.

Although the caste system was abolished in 1950, the social and hierarchal practices continue to exist and therefore restrict, oppress, and control women (Patel, 2016); this can be relevant for those established cultural communities that may still carry older traditions they were familiar when they first arrived. Although many respondents shared a great mistrust within their Canadian/Indian communities, a trusting, reliable network was deemed essential to provide safer acclimatisation to the College and Canada as in Punjab, the students relied on their collectivist culture and societal norms. Through trial and error, the students learned whom they could trust and whom they could not but rarely they mentioned using the College as the first point for support or using the College processes in a proactive way. That raises the importance of supporting them to develop trustworthy relationships within the College and help reduce the risk element and fear of decision-making, such as how to correctly navigate the health system to get care or the legal system to access required vehicle licencing, points raised by the participants and reported in the literature as well (Deng et al., 2019).

The data extrapolated from the interviews suggested that the Punjab immigrants who came to Canada years ago, whom I will call the 'previously settled Punjab culture', had been raised and exposed to an era in Indian culture when there was limited access to opportunities and freedoms for women and women were submissive, did as they were instructed and under the guidance of males. The Canadian/Indians hold values and beliefs from a past generation and they may not be aware of the slow progress of increasing women rights and treatment. The

international students who have recently come to Canada report that they have been exposed to a more modern and less-repressive culture in India, which creates cultural clash between the two groups. Such clash is reported in the wider literature. For instance, Henry et al. (2017) report of unconscious bias and stereotyping that the settled Punjab community can show to newcomers, which can become instrumental in the cycle of oppression and lack of safety for these young women.

I am cautious about labelling the entire Canadian/Punjab communities in Canada as restrictive and unwelcoming to the international students or that discrimination does not happen in the Canadian society. However, concerns about their own ethnic communities were raised in 90% of the interviews; such a view concurs with other literature around established Punjab communities in Canada and newcomers (Marom, 2021). The situation can be reframed as to how the Punjab community in Canada can support incoming international students. The reframing of the concern removes perceived bias or judgement on the Canadian/Punjab community or culture. It allows the community to participate in the discussion and solve the issues. They may not be aware of the changes in norms, practices, and beliefs occurring in some parts of India. They, too, require education, awareness and behaviour change to create a positive experience for the international students as reported in the wider literature (Henry et al., 2017).

Some of those students felt that they could fit into the Canadian culture better because, visually, their appearance and clothing did not project that they are outsiders. For some students following a more Western approach to dress code was a deliberate approach and for others it was intended to mask their background and help them fit in; such approaches are reported in the wider literature (Ghosh, 2018; Kaushik et al., 2018). However, some of the students seemed unaware that 'fitting in' would be more complex than those physical elements of appearance and

as a result they would encounter unsafe situations with others assuming they understand a situation because they look like others in their community.

A sensitive topic disclosed by the students is that "everyone has a rape story" referring to experiences from both countries. As Donato et al. (2006: 4) argue "migration is a gendered phenomenon" and as such sexual harassment and assault remain issues that impact the safety of these newcomer students. Such incidents are reported in the wider literature with sexual predators taking advantage of female students who may not be familiar with the strict rules against sexual harassment in Canada (Marom, 2021). Results of sexual assault can result in physical dangers for women, including sexually transmitted infections or unwanted pregnancies. For these participants the added trauma of such events can include cultural clashes around perceptions of family shame and recrimination of the female victims and blame on their behaviour or lifestyle as research has also indicated (Behl, 2019; Ikävälko & Kantola, 2017; Marceno & Pera, 2017). These students come from a collectivist society, where the interdependence and interconnectedness of familial and societal relationships play a pivotal role in governing the individual's identity (Cooney, 2019; Eltahawy, 2019; Ghosh, 2018). Reporting such sexual crimes can lead to ostracisation and marginalisation (Dey, 2019; Lee & Wong, 2019), which female students felt that it will cause them more safety risk by being banished from their communities.

Other hidden concepts in the Canadian culture that relate to safety included students' perceptions about the ability to go outside after dark and the expectation that all Canadians are courteous. These ideas link to the "social imaginary" around Canada (Guo & Guo, 2020) as "Just Society". Freras (2018) and "the mythical Canadian narrative of inclusivity and diversity" (Henry, 2017) and the need for further awareness around safety. While the participants reported

more positive experiences in their interactions with people outside their community, the range of professional opportunities for women freedom that they felt in relation to life back home, they recognized at times that Canada is not immune to discriminatory and corrupt behaviours as the literature also reports (Berry & Ward, 2016; De Schutter, 2019).

5.3 Navigating the Canadian weather

Coming to Canada from a warmer country can create a disconnect between expectation versus reality. The students reported how they perceived Canada from social media and films and had not realized the actual frigid temperatures in winter. Therefore, the realisation of how to dress for the weather became significant once they experienced the cold temperature changes. They had to wear and outfit that was the most suitable given their environment and that may have not been a traditional outfit, something also experienced by other international students (Rai, 2018; Rajani et al., 2018). However, that difference also became an opportunity for them to express their individuality and break away from cultural expectations around dress code. Such change and autonomy in their decision to wear what they desired is also reported positively in the wider literature (Crossman, 2018; Hofstede, 2017; Ikävalko & Kantola, 2017; Sawant, 2018).

The acceptance of such diversity in Canada can contrast with social order and role expectations in India (Crossman, 2018). While women can choose what to wear in Canada, the students reported again conflict with their communities as the elder settlers find it unacceptable for females to be showing their skin and expect that they must remain covered to demonstrate being modest. This clash exposed female students to the risk of being ostracized for not wearing modest clothing or the threat of reporting back to the family that they display inappropriate

conduct for a woman and as a result the risk of shaming the family. Such conflicts around dress code expectations between newcomers and settled Indian communities are also reported in the wider literature (Hofstede, 2017; Ikävalko & Kantola, 2017). There also seem to be gendered differences in dress code representations; modernizing male fashion and the ‘Sikh chic’ movement (Khamisa, 2020) seem to be more accepted in these communities where women remain expected to conform to traditional expectations of fashion.

Students' self-reported concerns around climate and weather were rated 6/6 as an area of safety concern. The lower rating could be due to the students' experience of having no other options but to shop and purchase appropriate clothing for the snow and below freezing outdoor temperatures. All the responses referred to challenges with the winter months' weather and clothing, and none of the participants had concerns with the summer months. Due to the hot summers in India, the students welcomed the warmer weather of Canadian summers and felt that they could adapt quickly to similar temperatures from home. For these newcomers, especially winter outfits disrupted the cultural normativity of their communities, but they found themselves having to adopt multiple identities to fit in both within their cultural communities but also the wider international student communities. As Handa (2003) reports for these women what it means being a Canadian is not clear cut as they compartmentalize behaviours and try to understand what the dominant culture is and as a result to fit in, they adopt different outfits depending on the cultural context.

5.4 Navigating the Canadian Legal System: Policing and Laws

When assessing the rating of safety concerns, the legal system rated 3/6. The high rating is not surprising as the literature suggests adjusting to a host country's policing and laws can be a significant challenge for international students (Briggs & Ammigan, 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; OUSA, 2014; Yu et al., 2019).

Female students were fearful of laws and the position of power that immigration agents possess, which agrees with the wider literature around acclimatization of international students Sharma (2019). As also indicated in O'Connor's research (2017) the students were fearful as they were basing their judgement upon their past experiences from home, the media and learned stories of how custom agents function in their home countries. There seemed to be a gap between their understanding of the system and lack of input at orientation. It reinforces the need to consider the informal curriculum (Leask, 2015) as part of wider acclimatization support.

These female students reported positive exchanges with the police. These findings agree with other studies where female international students expressed favourable attitudes towards the police (Lai & Zhao, 2010; Taylor et al., 2001). They felt confident to call them when in an unsafe situation. They were surprised that the police responded quickly to their concerns, as they stated that in India the police do not make some female calls a priority. These students' experiences link to the studies like O'Connor (2017) and Parent & Parent (2019), which suggest that positive exposure between the community and the police leads to trust and confidence in the police that they are reliable and, in the position, to respond and assist when needed.

Canadian norms and beliefs can differ among ethnic groups and at times cultural differences and practices may not be universally acceptable legal practices and that could potentially put at risk individuals and groups (Birukou et al., 2013; Neil, 2019; Nieguth, 2015; Pieterse, 2019). One of the differences in everyday practices for these students is the

consequences of littering in public spaces, which is not an offense in their home country. Getting into trouble for such practices increased the stress for these students and emphasized the need for reviewing the level of information about laws and local customs provided at orientation in order to reduce the cultural dissonance (Forbes-Mewett & Schermuly, 2022).

5.5 Navigating Banking, Finances & Employment

When collating the data about banking systems, the respondents' replies were consistent with the wider literature around the international student experience (Baba & Hosoda, 2014), where the students claimed that they found budgeting challenging due to their newfound independence, lack of past exposure and autonomy with spending the money.

As women they enjoyed the new autonomy and responsibility for banking and budgeting, whereas, at home, they had to follow the gender norm (Joseph et al., 2022) and accept male members of their families, like their brothers, to take the financial control of their affairs. Those social constructs restricted and limited the females' control or power of reality (O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017) and as such it may have made the transition to the new country a steeper learning curve. As such there could be a significant risk to women if they do not have or acquire financial literacy skills quickly. As Baba and Hosoda (2014) pointed out, many international students can run out of money if they lack the budgeting skills and feel forced to work in precarious positions such as exploitable sex work (Ali, 2020; Eltahawy, 2019).

International students pay higher tuition fees and if they work part-time to support themselves, they report that they receive the same wages as domestic students. They know that they have limited capacity to work further due to VISA restrictions and are worried about

the higher tuition fees and ongoing expenses such as food, rent, utilities, and transportation; such feelings are reported in the wider literature as well (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Sondhi, 2019). As a result, some of the female students consider accepting informal work opportunities, such as domestic duties in the home of family acquaintances in exchange for room and board. While they may not get paid for such input, they felt grateful that they did not have to seek outside employment. However, this led to hefty responsibilities such as babysitting, tutoring, cooking, and cleaning in exchange for their living expenses and such arrangements could interfere with their studies and the amount of time they could concentrate on their college work. Ali (2020) states that culturally a male international student would not be asked to perform domestic duties in exchange for room and board, making the social construct of domestic work a female role. It is an example of unequal treatment between men and women, and as Ahmad (2019) discussed this leads to prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination for female students. For those students who were offered those domestic opportunities, meals were based on the amount of food leftover from the family meals, which demonstrated further in their eyes that women were continued to be treated as second class citizens even in Canada where they are deemed less worthy and must wait for the more powerful persons to eat before themselves (Bhopal, 2019; Durbin et al., 2017; Zinn et al., 2016). The students in the current study did not report undertaking sex work to support themselves but the wider literature (Ali, 2020; Eltahawy, 2019) report on international students involved in such precarious and often dangerous sex work.

The vulnerability of needing money put the student at risk of being cheated and swindled out of wages as the wider literature discusses (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Sondhi, 2019). Some of the work situations were also unsafe as the students were ill-informed of employment rights in Canada. As Punjab female students are stereotypically deemed demure, they did not feel

empowered to speak about injustice at the workplace (Eltahawy, 2019; Ganesh, 2018; Haslanger, 2017; Ylivuori, 2018). As also reported in the literature (Lau et al., 2019), they talked about cases of verbal abuse and their ignorance that employment standards and harassment laws in Canada made it illegal to verbally abuse an **employee**.

At the same time, Beaudoin and Demeyere (2018), O'Neill (2015) as well as Thomas, (2017) all have published the evidence that women experience financial inequity, where males are earning more than females for the same work. Yet through many publications and many years of advocacy and awareness, the wage inequity remains. Money is power, as per the preferential treatment towards the male family members where they have access to and the duty to control the finances (O'Neill, 2015; Thomas, 2017).

As Baba and Hosoda (2014) report, many international students can run out of money when they lack the budgeting skills. The female Punjab students in this study often felt that they were more at risk than their male peers as these were skills that they were not taught back home, when male members of the family were in control of their finance.

5.6 Navigating the Transportation System

As identified in Monteiro et al. (2021) use of transport was associated with usage patterns from the city of origin and students' perceptions were influenced by the travel habits they had back home. The literature review also examined the transportation system provided safety concerns, including Uber, taxis, and public transport (Jackson et al., 2019). The students in the study were unsure if the Uber or taxis were safe for women as culturally it is not acceptable to be alone with a male in a vehicle (Sen et al., 2019).

Furthermore, due to the participants' assumed age when they arrived in Canada after high school, many students did not drive in Punjab. Their first driving experiences were in Canada which made them more vulnerable not only about the experience of driving on the right-hand side of the road but also the experience of driving in icy conditions (Sharma, 2019).

Transport is necessary for travelling to the College but also for purchasing food and other supplies and that adds to the adjustment process for these international students as reported in the literature (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). They must learn how to access and use public transport but also the cost of transport adds to their adjustment concerns (Kahlon, 2021). For most of them there is limited choice in the location of accommodation and as a result transport is an essential consideration, especially when they have to commute sometimes at a distance to the College. Awareness of fare systems, purchasing correct type of tickets and navigation pathways was a challenge as with other international students (Chaudhry, Kiran & Khan, 2020) but the sense of autonomy of finding their way round these systems (rather than relying on others) was a welcome new freedom for these female students.

Learning how to use public transport is not included in their orientation process and as reported in the literature it is an important element in international students' acclimatization (Monteiro et al., 2021). The cost of public transport also could have made them take unsafe decisions around travelling, such as walking but for these students it is the knowledge of road rules, such as crossing the road safety that has been a challenge.

5.7 Navigating Housing and Accommodations Systems

Housing and accommodation safety considerations overlap with other areas of acclimatization discussed in the previous chapters such as understanding of the legal system and use of the transportation system. The participating students chose to live at off-campus private accommodation. They and their families relied heavily on others to find safer housing and it was usually until they arrived that they found that the housing offered was unsuitable for them in terms of substandard conditions of buildings, location or multiple occupancy and similar challenges are identified in the literature (Calder et al., 2016, Marangell et al., 2018).

As Babacan's (2010) research has also indicated student need for affordable accommodation and the types of accommodation on offer could lead to exploitation and unsafe situations, something shared by the participating students as well. Accommodation near the College was deemed more expensive and as a result they had to make choices between affordable accommodation and convenient accommodation. Canada's perceived safety is a major draw for international students (CBIE, 2021) which may also influence their more limited pre-arrival research around accommodation; however, that perception is quickly juxtaposed with the reality of the types of accommodation they find in terms of small size and position (e.g., basement flats). The students made no reference to seeking support from the College around non-compliance building conditions or risks from landlords and this is something reported widely at studies around international students (Babacan et al., 2010).

Students also reported incidents of discrimination with landlords and a combination of lack of awareness of their rights as renters, lack of housing options and need for cheap accommodation put them in precarious housing positions, which agrees with the literature (Calder et al., 2016; Frisque, 2019; Marangell et al., 2018; Tencer, 2019).

Accommodations is a challenge for all tertiary students, home, and international students (Obeng-Odoom, 2012); however, for international students restricted by hours of employment they can undertake to further fund themselves, familiarizing themselves with regulations and cultural differences in the host country accommodation becomes a safety concern.

5.8 Navigating Health Care Systems

According to Guardme (2020), one in 10 students will experience a serious safety or health incident while studying abroad. Therefore, awareness of accessing health services is an important priority though the students in this study did not place this topic high in their priorities. The reasons may be related to good health that these international students experienced, or self-perceived good health literacy practiced they felt they have. This was particularly relevant to these female students as in Punjab, the expense of health care is disproportionate between males and females and as such women are hesitant to access health care due to the additional cost (Saikia, 2019) and more home-made, communal and spiritual health solutions are sought and practised.

Students reported the importance of networks assisting and explaining the navigation of the healthcare system to them. Scholl, Cogan, Micol, Steward, Hancock, and Davis (2019) acknowledge that navigating the health care system can be confusing and time-consuming, requiring repeated visits to different clinics where the newness is compounding to the students' psychological stress.

Many students reported that they could not afford expensive unplanned services such as injury, or accidents, where their insurance plan stated they must pay first, and they had to wait to

be reimbursed. In those cases, the financial burden of health care impacted their stress levels and as also reported in the literature limited their ability to pay for school, books, and rent (Marangell et al., 2018).

Another cultural difference supported by the data and the literature included the students' inability to share or articulate mental health concerns and culture shock experiences. As Ali (2020) reports the Punjab community does not discuss mental illness. Mental health needs tend to be embedded within the Punjab culture, with spiritual meditation practices, multiple and frequent social and familial gatherings, and spiritual support through religious institutions. However, as culturally mental illness can be deemed as a weakness, as a taboo topic or even a curse placed on the family (Chavan et al., 2018), forces students not to seek medical or counselling assistance as also reported in the literature (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019). Culture can be ingrained and accepted by individuals as their norm. Since Punjab is a collectivist state, power and influence can impact people's behaviour (Ghosh, 2018). For these students arriving at a country where there is more focus and discussion around mental health can also be an adjustment challenge and disconnect between learnt experiences and different ways of positioning mental health and in a broader sense diversity; Especially for women who are taught by their society to be resilient through mediation or exposure to supportive persons, acknowledging and seeking help for their mental health would be a difficult step.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The research focused on exploring international female Punjab students' perceptions of safer acclimatisation upon their arrival to Canada for studies. It discussed safety challenges that female international students may face on their adjustment to the host country and focused on their awareness of the following topics: the weather, finances, health care, housing, the legal system and transportation. Overall, the findings identified the need for further work from the College around orientation and support processes and the need to address cryptic cultures that may pose risks through raising awareness about rights these students have as citizens, lodgers, students. The findings also revealed the central role that trusting community cultural networks play in that acclimatization process and the need for further work between the College and the community to support safer practices for female students. These newcomers bring current cultural experiences and practices that at times can clash with more traditional expectations around women's role embedded in their communities.

Some of the women needed additional support from their communities and the College to acclimatize safely to the new culture and country, especially around living independently and managing finances. A central theme identified from the study is how they felt that this transition to the new country could help with personal growth and development in spite of the difficulties. The participants strongly desired to maintain their Punjab identity which they were proud of but their narratives also revealed this cultural dissonance between their previous lived experiences and adjusting to the new country, some of which further work between the College and the community can alleviate.

The following chapter will explore recommendations that emerge from the discussion of the data including future research ideas.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

6:1 Introduction

As an introduction to Chapter 6 and following the data analysis and discussion, the participants' input was compiled into thematic solutions to address physical or psychological safety issues. Zadow and Dollard (2015) recommend that psychosocial safety climate theory proposes interventions to improve physical and psychological safety tailored to the organization with management commitment and priority, organizational communication, participation, and involvement. Thus, as per the feminism theory principle of inclusivity, student involvement is essential in addressing any identified concerns. Table 4 (page 177) highlights the study recommendations and identifies the types of safety that are considered as the desired outcome.

Although the quantitative evidence demonstrates that 96.25% of female Punjab students felt safe in Canada and at the College, 3.75% of respondents answered that they did not feel safe. While the literature discussed the definition of safer to imply that achieving 100% safety cannot be achieved due to many moving and diverse variables such as situations, persons involved and the potential comfort with risk (Bond, 2019; Desselle et al., 2020; Holtkamp et al., 2019). Safer in the context of this paper meant as safely as possible, and this approach is most likely to be an achievable outcome.

Once again, it is acknowledged that the term 'safer' can elicit many reactions from persons invested in the College and the community; the term will be used to improve the status quo. As per the safety climate theory, it is preventing incidents is the approach to avoiding or managing unsafe situations. The proactive safety climate theory suggests that once a concern, breach or possible cause of dangerous situations is identified, it is easier to address and prevent

the problem in the future (Zadow et al., 2019). While balancing student anxiety while promoting safety is often challenging, prevention is best created by an awareness of potential situations.

This chapter is divided into six recommendations: establishing a trusted network, prearrival orientation, accessible resources, mandatory onsite orientation, first year student preparation courses, and finally, a look at collaborative policy change, all engaging the students with significant persons from their community. The recommendations implore specific actions regarding policy, practice, and subsequent research to safer acclimatisation for female Punjab students.

Table 4: *Summary of Recommendations*

Desired outcome	Recommendations	Impacts Psychological or physical safety
Pre-arrival orientation sessions	Accessible online with two-way interaction to discuss expectations and respond to safety questions or concerns, i.e. Skype functionality	psychological
Establishing trusting networks	Peer mentoring strategy Collaboration with respected cultural community leaders, community links (e.g. police) and decision makers Ease of reporting anti-safe incidents	psychological
Resources: Accessible information about Canadian Culture and the College	Enhance resources on the current College Website Use an approved communication app – to engage and inform students about events	Both
Mandatory On-site Orientation	-Change to mandatory Update resources	psychological
First-year Preparatory Course	- offer and introduction to culture course as a mandatory credit	Both

6.2 Recommendation #1-The role of the College in Establishing Trusting Networks

As stated in Chapter 1, the College is considering itself as well-equipped with student resources but based on the international students' perception, the College has limited student-initiated services to support concerns international students raise about external systems of support like housing or employment.

All the respondents in the study spoke about either having or developing a trusting network. The trust of a support person includes the ability to assist, to enable the international student to act or function, particularly when female students are at higher risk (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Franco et al., 2019; Ladum & Burkholder, 2019; Le & Raposa, 2019; Luo et al., 2019; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). The practical support, in turn, provides psychological reassurance and reinforces the building of a trusting relationship. Again, several students recommended that the network involves a person or group whom the student can rely upon throughout their settlement to the College and Canada.

The international students have asked for senior students to assist in their acclimatisation to the College and Canada. A peer student mentoring approach buddying newcomers with students who have been in the country for at least a year is a recommendation as currently there is not such an approach at the College for international students. The alignment with multiple studies, including McFarlane, Spes-Skrbis, and Taib's (2017) research, supports peer-to-peer learning as a model for developing trust and thus improving settlement to a new country or institution.

The students also shared that they developed a trusting relationship with community members like bank representatives or police officers as per their cultural norm of collectivism, they feel that they can rely upon each other (Ghosh, 2018). To support the students' ingrained collectivist approach, it is suggested that it will be relevant to invite members from the communities and sectors that the students will encounter as part of a face to face in-person orientation process. Currently orientation processes focus more on raising awareness about study procedures and priorities and they do not extend to wider community links. The findings

reinforce the fact that in order for the students to concentrate on their studies wider awareness and support around living arrangements, transport and finances need to be considered.

It became evident from the data that there should be a shift in accepting shared responsibility between the College and the community in addressing international students' vulnerability and safety concerns (Franco et al., 2019). It is recommended that the College and college community develop an enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration to create changes for safer acclimatisation. The federal income generated from the students' tuition benefits the community as students spend additional money on housing, food, and resources; they gain employment to enhance business as they abide by Canadian laws and practices (Blatchford, 2019; Filken, 2013; Parent & Parent, 2018). Therefore, a community stakeholder collaboration would assist in addressing the students' and community concerns and fostering agreeable resolutions and such joint approaches are also reflected in the literature (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Ladum & Burkholder, 2019; Le & Raposa, 2019; Luo et al., 2019; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Furthermore, the safety climate approach can enhance relationships between domestic and international persons outside the College campuses. Collaborating or informing the community around the College enhances and repairs community networks and relationships.

Part of establishing a safer and trusting community is reviewing the reporting processes the College has around incidents that put students at harm (from discriminatory comments to practices and crimes) and enhancing the quality and reliability of reporting procedures. The College reporting processes, and safety policies are currently around on campus incidents and a community-wide safety climate policy should be adopted to support a preventative approach towards safety. The current processes may not be signposted clearly and seem inaccessible to international students in terms of visibility and understanding of how and what to report. There is

the suggestion that for community-wide considerations an anonymous reporting system could be implemented to protect the reporter and to investigate the reported situations.

The remit of the College committees, like the Health and Safety Committee that meets monthly, can be reviewed to consider concerns from student community engagement and seek corrective actions. Such a Community Liaison role could also be developed as part of the Student Union officers and in that way, it may have more direct links with the student population. A joint committee, which comprises community members, including City and Regional councillors, can also be set up to review recommendations from the Committees and communicate changes to departments across the College to ensure equity in knowledge transfer.

6.3 Recommendation #2- College Pre-Arrival Interactive Orientation

Zhou and Zhang (2014) suggest that providing international students with pre-arrival information assists with decreasing anxiety in a new country and ultimately increasing their psychological safety needs. As students apply to the College via the internet, it is assumed that internet access can be arranged even periodically, and they would be able to attend an online pre-arrival orientation event. This event can occur while the international students are still at the home country and they, their family and other support persons can attend and ask questions to assist with the transition to the College. The orientation should be facilitated by a person the student will meet upon their arrival to Canada, such as a member of the College Student Support team. Such connection currently occurs only when the student requires support and after registration. Becoming aware of support people who can help them upon arrival can provide comfort to the student and create links that they can trust and approach if they require the support

of the services; such an approach has been identified as a positive intervention in the literature as well (Ladum & Burkholder, 2019; Le & Raposa, 2019). Many students have reported that they rely on a family acquaintance to obtain information about their studies. A pre-arrival orientation event will bring the students to the driving seat and enhance their knowledge about the College and its support resources.

Part of the pre-arrival orientation can also include an introduction to their academic mentor. A mentor would be a senior student who had demonstrated positive attitude and academic success. The mentor would be relied upon for accessing systems and proper navigation. Their expanded role would be an advisor and director to departments and services as required. They would receive screening, training and follow up with monthly evaluations. This role could be added to their co-curricular activity report which are part of their legal academic records. Mentors meet students once a term when they start their studies in a pastoral capacity to check upon progress and wellbeing. Meeting the mentor before their arrival to the country can provide more individualized support for the student. However, such considerations will increase the workload of members of staff and support needs to be discussed and considered carefully.

Part of the pre-arrival orientation can also include peer mentoring from other Punjab students who are already at the College. Second-year students generally have more college experience and have acquired more cross-cultural skills than first-year students. Such a scheme can work towards the College Student Ambassador Scheme and support leadership skills and communication experiences for all students to achieve a certification for leadership. As well the College's Student ambassador can assist in organising a Female Punjab club for social events with informal collaboration of creating ideas for a safer acclimatisation.

6.4 Recommendation #3: Providing Accessible Information about the Canadian Culture and the College

The research data identifies a need for better information-sharing structures, thus critical modes of communication between the student and trusted resources. Communication is one key avenue to influence students and can assist in the alleviation of their stressors caused by the unknown. Providing more information about the expectations of the College, the availability of international student support assistance but also raising further awareness about transport, laws, accommodation can ease students' anxiety levels and thereby allow them to feel safer and focus on their studies as discussed in the literature (Berry, 2013; Tran & Vu, 2018). Although communication at every level of the recommendation is essential and will be explored, it is situated under accessing information as a strategy for ongoing resources.

There is an expectation that students will have digital literacy skills to access the College online teaching, learning and support resources. There is the need to update the College Website and signpost information for newcomers, even prior to arrival. As previously stated, when the students are stressed, they reach out to their support system. The College website outlines the services available, how to access them and the hours in which they are available, but navigation may not always be clear for new students. It is also strongly recommended that the webpage offers the option to change the language of the reading function rather than having separate pages translated into other languages. By utilising one website for all international and domestic students, the single access point can ease operation regardless of the user access point.

The College offers the International Student Application, a free app that provides College content and services on the students' smartphones. The application provides access to maps, emergency contacts, news bulletins, and events, and it assists in providing real-time and up-to-date information. It is important to signpost international students to this settlement app but also review the content to ensure that it provides information and resources to areas of need for international students such as settlement counselling, healthcare, financial support information, and referrals to appropriate community resources. It is important to listen to needs from different international student groups and shape some of the services around that input. At the moment there is more of a general approach for all international students and that may not be taking into consideration cultural differences that each group demonstrate but also different needs that established and newcomer students from the same ethnic groups may have.

All students should be advised about the College safety services and become aware of the emergency lights/alarms that directly communicate with the security office to signal security aid. While the listing is available on the College website, it may not be immediately obvious for students. The College also offers security personnel to accompany students to vehicles at night, if required or accompany them to their dorms. It can be discussed how support can be extended to for students to travel safely to their lodgings if they are based off campus.

6.5 Recommendation #4- Mandatory On-site Orientation

Currently, the College offers an optional orientation to the campus and its programs and as mentioned in Section 6.2 orientation focuses more on study advice rather than wider community links and information that support student living arrangements and wellbeing outside

the campus. Changing the orientation to a mandatory process for all students can support domestic and international students to gain more of a sense of oneness in the College community. Furthermore, international students can also be provided with an additional and separate breakout group to discuss priorities relevant to the group.

The fall semester begins in September. However, the College's orientation is provided during the last week of August. For the student to attend the orientation, the student will have to pay a month's rent for August as the rent is usually paid at the beginning of the month. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that the orientation be held during September before the classes start to save the student expense and ensure attendance at the orientation.

As mentioned in Section 6.2 this orientation should include trusting community partners that the students identified with such as bank representatives, police officers, bylaw officers as well as employment services to provide the most relevant and current information about housing, health and employment regulations. Currently there is a display set up at a table but that is not enough as students may not identify with the service at this time. Service providers should be given time to discuss their role and how they can assist students, and this exposure provides the students with a more accessible support approach.

Cultural community leaders should be invited to attend as this collaboration can help those leaders familiarise themselves further with expectations of the international students and the College community but also allow them to make links with newcomers and share information about places of worship and cultural events. The leader could also collaborate during the planning phase of the orientation and as part of the process they will be exposed to the progressive desires, wants, and behaviours of the incoming female Punjab international student. A respected leader who significantly influences other community members would be a starting

point for behavioural change, better treatment, and a collaborative effort to welcome the students to Canada more respectfully as also identified in the literature (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Ladum & Burkholder, 2019; Le & Raposa, 2019; Luo et al., 2019; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 201). In collaboration with the students, the community can alter their stereotyping of international students and work towards accessible, safer housing.

The orientation process should also include members of the counselling and health care team. Such presence can help spread further awareness about mental health and support around it and help destigmatise the topic for international students who may see it as a taboo. Ignoring emotional difficulties that can be associated with culture shock may give rise to clinical mental health problems. Especially female Punjab students can be helped to understand that mental health services are expected and acceptable in Western cultures.

6.6 Recommendation #5 First-year Student Preparation Courses Offering

Although some faculties at the College offer preparation courses, it is recommended that all the College students be enrolled in a mandatory preparation course. The course should be open to all students, not isolating the international student. The rationale for all students to attend the orientation is to provide equal support for all first students in their successful journeys at the College.

The course can focus on raising awareness about diversity and inclusion, unconscious bias and anti-discriminatory processes and culture as part of it. By the end of this course, students will have gained further awareness around analysing workplace culture and expectations

of Canadian workplaces and works of study. The course will allow students a critical perspective on culture related to personal, social, and organisational values.

At the moment, there is an optional General Education course that is not always well-attended. I am proposing the course be mandatory for all students. It is recommended that it is adapted and offered as a first-year preparation course to enhance cross-cultural learning and awareness of inclusion and diversity.

6.7 Chapter Summary

The practical recommendations discussed in this chapter focus on collaboration among a number of stakeholders and with input from the students themselves to support safer acclimatisation of international students; that includes the establishment of trusted multi-agency community networks, more focused pre-arrival orientation, signposting support resources on the College website, mandatory onsite orientation, first-year student preparation courses. It is important to acknowledge that the needs of these international students will need to extend past orientation and support process and mechanisms for sharing concerns are to be signposted clearly. There is also the need to extend support for off campus concerns and priorities such as health care, banking, employment and renting considerations. Support needs to take into consideration the needs from different international groups rather than offer blanket international services support.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Contribution to knowledge, practice, and further research

The research will support further awareness amongst educators, administrators, community members, and leaders around the international students' acclimatization process. It reinforces that the acclimatization process starts before students arrive in the country and as such support needs to be in place to help student transition, especially for female Punjab students who come from backgrounds where they had less autonomy in managing aspects of life but at the same time more support in dealing with challenges. It highlights the crucial role that support services play and emphasizes how their role in supporting international students can be extended to include resources and guidance around wider concerns that students may have, for instance about accommodation and employment.

The study raises the importance of considering the 'informal curriculum' (Lask, 2015) as an integral part of support for all students but especially for newcomers to the country. Feeling safe in the place they live, the way they commute and the employment they take are central in them being able to concentrate on their studies. When female students come from families that put enormous faith and financial support for their daughters to study abroad, it places an enormous responsibility on these women. As a result recognizing or reporting abuse or discrimination may not be the first point of call for these women. Reviewing how the introductory courses they enrol in offer awareness around social justice and practical resources for support may provide female students with more supportive resources to use.

What is also important is that in most cases the students relied on friends or informal networks rather than the College for support and guidance. It reinforces the importance of

signposting resources clearly including process of reporting safeguarding issues around harassment and assault. It also highlights that the College focus and policies on international student support will benefit from considering more specific culturally-responsive support based on background cultural experiences students may have. As Indian students comprise a large part of the international student population at the College, it will be relevant to consider resources that are more personalized to the needs identified by the Punjab female students as a result of this study.

The study recognizes how outsiders' positive perceptions around Canada help their transition but also make them more vulnerable and less vigilant. The research adds to the body of knowledge around student acclimatization and challenges they face. It adds the important dimension of community engagement and involvement and challenges that these female students have when their approach, attitude or decisions clash with the more traditional past values that their communities hold dear.

Further discourse between community members and the College can improve the international students' acclimatisation by advocating for students' safety when issues are identified. The study identifies the role that student support services can play working collaboratively with key community members.

The knowledge gained from this research includes the variability between the printed literature compared to the research data. The study identified a semi-cryptic sub-culture—a culture where concerns are known amongst the international students yet not identified in the printed literature, such issues included the misaligned beliefs of the students and their community and restrictions on the 20 hours of work week balanced with survival expenses.

Locally, nationally, and internationally, the research has also informed the approach for college orientations to meet the audience's needs. The respondents trusted senior students and required a trusting network, one that the College could be instrumental in developing by use of the community members.

7.2 Limitations of the research

Throughout the research, I developed a better understanding of how my unconscious bias toward the need for safety was more important when I tried to anticipate the female Punjab Students' needs. I over-anticipated an extraordinarily protective paradigm from the respondents when I considered my perceived vulnerability of the female students. I had pre-selected and explored systems that I had either been exposed to or gained knowledge from the literature. I am also aware that due to the small and specific sample size, the results may not reflect every female Punjab international student; however, the findings and student recommendations provide valuable insights. With the continued growth of globalisation, I remain confident that this research will add to the acclimatisation literature and pragmatically improve the safer acclimatisation for female Punjab international students.

The research was based on one College; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable but certainly offer invaluable insights on the topic. As well as the number of participants and the fact that there was one researcher, it may be beneficial to undertake a large-scale study.

The timely COVID-19 pandemic impacted this research, the Black Lives Matter movement and the ensuing Indian Farmer protests. All these global issues highlight the need for

an anti-oppressive framework to resolve many of the challenges faced by Female Punjab international students.

The research study focused on female Punjab international students at one educational site.

Population. The study was limited to the Punjab student. While the population was intentionally selected, there may be more collaborative data from international participants from other areas of India. Due to the scope and manageability of this research, a narrow focus was selected to identify essential similarities in experiences or hindrances to the international experience.

Although the official language at the College is English and each participant is recognised as a fluent English speaker, the potential that the interview questions were misunderstood or misconstrued due to English being all the participants' second language. Punjab is the participants' first language. There is also a possibility that research participants could not fully explain their intended and self-reported responses to the interview questions, making the collected data inaccurate or complete.

As well, the female student's experience was selected to research. While limiting the research to gender may appear to be a limitation for transferability to other genders, it is considered a strength and asset due to the lack of female-specific research on female students' experiences (Sarseke, 2018; Wagenaar et al., 2020).

The study sample's proposed goal was set at 15 responses and received 17 responses and 15 interviews. The more significant number of survey responses than interview responses may indicate multiple uncontrollable variables such as time, timing, accessibility, privacy setting or other unexplored or documented issues or reasons (Holtkamp et al., 2019).

The College. The College's geographical area covers three campuses in the GTA; thus, the area of study is a populous urban area in Canada. Comparatively, the data collected may or may not reflect other Southern Ontario Colleges based on the institutions' location; the data and recommendations may not be transferable to other rural colleges. However, it is assumed that the data and recommendations could reflect the other colleges due to similar Southern Ontario Colleges' demographics, with 50 % of all international students from Punjab students across Southern Ontario (CBIE, 2019). Furthermore, the study's outcome may be transferable to other institutes of higher education residing in urban areas, such as other colleges and universities.

Scope. The research is also specific and limited to systems that can influence change, such as transportation, laws, banking, housing, and health care. It is acknowledged that other significant variables or systems which were not explored in this research may be included in future studies may consider other expansive systems such as religion, politics, leaders or additional intersectionalities of the population target group. However, these systems were intentionally not selected due to the lack of the researchers' influence and ability to change the more extensive system at this research level.

The researcher. As the sole interpreter of the data, and though all efforts were made to ensure accurate data collection and analysis, it is possible the researcher's cultural values unconsciously bias influenced how the data was perceived and interpreted (Tate & Page, 2018). Unconscious bias occurs when one makes quick judgements and assessments without being aware. The biases are significantly influenced by one's background, culture, and life experiences. In addition, the research was conducted at the College, where the researcher was employed and attended, which may also lead to a potential conscious or unconscious loyalty bias. Unconscious bias has been criticised as an excuse for racist behaviour (Faillie, 2019; Ketokivi, 2019; Tate &

Page, 2018). As the researcher, I am increasingly aware of my whiteness and position of power and privilege, and every attempt to reflect and reassess my position within the paper has been taken and further reviewed with my research supervisor to address and remove any potential biases; particularly as the lens of the research is the participant's perception of their experience.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response. An unanticipated limitation that emerged during this study is the COVID-19 pandemic response. COVID-19 was identified as a potential viral pandemic in December 2019. During this time, the research proposal was prepared, in March 2020, Canada's pandemic response included social isolation, online learning, and social distancing (SC, 2020f). The impact of the pandemic on this research included the lack of the Student Union and Student Services to promote the project in person; thus, email was the method of communication utilised to access the participants. While the change in accessing the participants was altered or limited, the number of subjects could be accessed.

Timing. Although scheduling the questionnaire and the interview was arranged and managed by the participant, the timing of their participation could potentially impact the data. The data was collected between August to September 2020. During this season, current student participants are entering and planning for the new fall semester. The semester includes beginning new courses, new professors, and a new course delivery model. It is feasible that the timing of the data collection impacted the number of interview participants of current students.

7.3 Desirable research in the future

Indeed, this paper cannot address all the issues with the female Punjab international students. In the future, it is recommended that further research address ongoing systemic racism/discrimination, gender imbalance/opportunity and many other issues as they arise.

The research does not stand alone, and it is a segment of a larger dynamic with changing recommendations due to the evolving global environments. However, there remain outstanding systems and themes to be explored, such as religious practices and political beliefs, which will require further study for a more fulsome discussion of acclimatisation.

With the evolving nature of the progressive Punjab community, a follow-up research study to determine if cultural changes get translated into Canada. The increasing number of Punjab persons seeking to immigrate to Canada may create a collective shift in opportunities and treatment of women. As culture change can take time, future research will reveal if the challenges outlined in this research continue to exist in the future.

It would also be interesting to provide future research to see if advocacy for policy change to the limited 20-hour workweek would decrease anxiety and enhance student success.

The participants mentioned that they were uncertain about other Canadian provinces and their racism, discrimination, and stereotype management. It indicates that international students living in other provinces or territories may have a different experience. As a result, further research with various groups of international students in different parts of Canada may reveal valuable insights that can be applied to this area's continued research and discussion.

The students' perception of other concerns or issues included Canadians focusing more on work than pleasure and entertainment. Again, this is a concept beyond the scope of this paper and perhaps could be explored further in the future.

There are two other concepts raised, food and academic supports. While the scope of this research does not cover the two topics, they should not be forgotten, as per feminist principles of being inclusive and transparent, they are concepts raised by a few respondents and were essential for the participant to address. Due to the limitation of the current research, it is recommended that a future research project further explore both topics.

7.4 Concluding remarks

The research aimed to explore Female Punjab international students' perceptions of safer acclimatisation at the College. The selected categories included Canadian culture, including norms, values, behaviours, and systems such as climate, laws, transportation, housing, banking, and health care. The study identified the responsibilities that the College has to safeguard these students further. It identified that students quickly established and relied on their trusting networks to navigate the systems rather than using College processes and resources. As such it raises important considerations about the College's role to signpost resources more clearly, review orientation and onboarding processes and provide more culturally responsive support for the Punjab female students.

From the participants' experience at the College, the importance of the support service systems provided by the College to ease their integration into Canada was recognised. Thus, asking the senior students what their experiences have been and using their relevant experiences to foster an appropriate and relevant orientation. Creating a trusting network for the new students by utilising the senior students in a mentoring strategy could facilitate safer acclimatisation.

The safety concerns encountered revealed a disconnect in gender role expectations within their 'own' community, where previously settled Punjab's attitudes and beliefs were misaligned with the newly settling female students. The results on safety perceptions were overall more positive than expected. The students identified police officers, bank representatives, faculty, and senior students as persons they trusted and would approach if they felt unsafe. The students rated Canada and the College as safe environments. The respondents identified differences between Canada and their home country, Punjab, India but at times some of the differences were based on expectations of Canada as a 'just and fair society'. However, they demonstrated that students were more cognizant of how their life was being adapted to the settlement process. Without their families' physical support, the experience helped them become more autonomous and independent, gain a cultural experience, and learn about different cultural values.

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Appendix A: Search Terms

Support	Female	Safer	Acclimatisation	Culture	Contribution	Punjab	Perceptive	International Student
Provision Care Backing Upkeep Assist helpful comfort Encourage Help Aid Promote Champion Advocate Enable	Gender women	Harmless Innocent Protected Without harm Less vulnerable	Adaptation Adjustment Accommodation Familiarization Accustom Acquaint	Norms Values Beliefs Politics Laws traditions	Influence Donate Involvement Offer Impact input	India	View point Point of view Vision experience	Soujourn Immigration Study Migration globalization

Appendix B- Consent



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Exploring Female Punjab international students' perceptions of acclimatisation at Sheridan College

Researcher: Connie Stevens

**Participant Please
initial boxes below**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.
3. I understand that, under the Canadian Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.
5. I am over 18 years of age
6. I have not been taught by Connie Stevens

Participant Name

Date Signature

Name of Person taking Consent

Date

Signature

Researcher _____

Date

Signature:

The contact details of lead Researcher Connie Stevens are:

1-647-888-4659 or Connie.stevens@online.liverpool.ac.uk Connie.stevens1@sheridancollege.ca
Sheridan College, Hazel McCallion Campus 4180 Duke of York Blvd
Mississauga, ON L5B 0G5

Appendix C- Audio Recording Consent



Sound Recording Consent Form

Title of Research Project:

Exploring Female Punjab international students' perceptions of safer acclimatisation at Sheridan College

Principle Investigator: Yota Dimitriadi

Student Investigator: Connie Stevens

I hereby consent to be taped during participation in the research project: Exploring Female Punjab international students' perceptions of safer acclimatisation at Sheridan College. Connie Stevens will transcribe the recordings word for word. Connie is recording the interview so that she will be able to record participants pull out themes that come out in the interviews. I understand that I am free not to participate in this part of the project and that if I agree to participate, I am free to withdraw from this part of the project AT ANY TIME and that my data will be excluded from the research completely due to my consent withdrawal. The recording's transcript will be anonymised and no participants will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the project

Connie Stevens

Name _____

Name of Interviewer

647-888-4659

Signature _____

telephone number of interviewer

Connie Stevens

Date: _____

Name of Person who got consent

Signature

Date

Appendix D- Name assignment and documentation table

Interviews						
Pseudo names assigned	Participant consent	PIS sent	Recording consent	Transcription	Sent for review by participant	Returned
1Kiran	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 Suki	X	X	X	X	X	X
3Gaganpreet	X	X	X	X	X	X
4 Harleen	X	X	X	X	X	X
5 Simran	X	X	X	X	X	X
6 Daljeet	X	X	X	X	X	X
7 Harjot	X	X	X	X	X	X
8 Aman	X	X	X	X	X	X
9 Sundeep	X	X	X	X	X	X
10 Kiara	X	X	X	X	X	X
11 Drisha	x	X	x	x	X	X

Appendix E- Paperwork tracker with Assigned Pseudo-names

Questionnaires		
Participant number	Date	Consent Received
1	July 27, 2020	X
2	July 27, 2020	X
3	July 27, 2020	X
4	July 27, 2020	X
5	July 27, 2020	X
6	August 10, 2020	X
7	August 10, 2020	X
8	August 10, 2020	X
9	August 10, 2020	X
10	August 10, 2020	X
11	August 31, 2020	X
12	August 31, 2020	X
13	August 31, 2020	X
14	August 31, 2020	X
15- Target number*	August 31, 2020	X
16	September 14, 2020	X
17	September 17, 2020	X

Appendix F- Questionnaire
**Exploring Female Punjab international students' perceptions of acclimatisation at
 Sheridan College- Research Questionnaire**

Please rate the following statements using a scale of 1-5, where:

1 = strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4	5
1	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood Canadian's value other cultures					
2	Now, I confidently understand the Canadians value other cultures					
3	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood the Canadian norms and what is appropriate behaviours (societal accepted behaviours)					
4	Now, I confidently understand the Canadian norms and accepted behaviours					
5	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood Canadian laws					
6	Now, I confidently understand the Canadian laws					
7	I feel safe at Sheridan College					
8	I feel physically safe at Sheridan College					
9	I feel emotionally safe at Sheridan College					
10	I feel psychologically safe at Sheridan College					
11	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood the Canadian transportation systems					
12	Now, I can confidently navigate the Canadian transportation system					
13	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood the Canadian banking system					
14	Now, I can confidently navigate the Canadian banking system					
15	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood how to access my ethnic food					
16	I can confidently navigate the Canadian food system to access my ethnic food					
17	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood the Canadian Health system					
18	Now, I can confidently navigate the Canadian Health care system					
19	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood and could speak the English language					
20	Now, I can confidently understand and speak the English language					
21	When I arrived at Sheridan College, I understood the Canadian Climate					
22	Now, I can confidently understand the Canadian climate and how to prepare for the weather					

Please answer the following questions:

1- Please explain your understanding of Canadian culture, prior to arriving at Sheridan College?

2- Please explain your understanding of Canadian Culture, now that you have arrived at Sheridan College?

3- What areas or topics do you think would have assisted you with your adjustment to Canadian culture?

4- What has been the most difficult part of being an international student at Sheridan? Please explain why?

5- What have you found to easy about being an international student at Sheridan College? Please explain why?

6-What resources, services or persons have been helpful to you during your time at Sheridan College? Please list all.

Are you willing to participate in a short follow up interview about Punjab, female international students' acclimatisation to Sheridan College either via Skype or in-person?

Yes No

If Yes, please enter your preferred email address below and the researcher will contact you.

Thank you for your time.

Flesch Reading level: Grade 9.1

Appendix G- Interview questions

Exploring Female Punjab international students perceptions of safer acclimatisation at Sheridan College

Optional Participants' Telephone Interview Questions:

Institution: Sheridan College

Interviewee: (participant)

Interviewer: Connie Stevens

1. Please tell me your understanding of Canadian culture. (Probing verbal prompts: norms and values) (5 minutes)

2. What did you find difficult about adjusting to the Canadian culture? Please explain. (Probing prompts: norms and values) (5 minutes)

3. What did you find easy about adjusting to Canadian Culture. Please explain. (Probing verbal prompts: norms and values (5 minutes)

4. Please tell me your understanding of the Canadian systems. (Probing verbal Prompts: English language, laws, banking, transportation, housing, banking and health care). (10 minutes)

5. What did you find difficult about adjusting to the Canadian systems? Can you share an experience about your adjustment? (Probing verbal prompts: laws, banking, transportation, housing, banking and health care). (10 minutes)

6. What services would have or have assisted you in your adjustment to Canada? (5 Minutes)

7. On a scale of 1-5, Do you feel safe at Sheridan College and Canada?
1- feeling unsafe and 5- feeling safe; If no, please explain why? (5 minutes)

8. What can help to feel safer at Sheridan College? (10 minutes)

Times provided are flexible

Appendix H- Example of Coding

C: so, my first question is could you please tell me your understanding of the Canadian culture yeah, when I first came to Canada, I didn't really know too much about the Canadian culture. what I did know was that in when I came here, I had family, so I had to rely on them to help me. when I started at Sheridan college, I didn't really understand the clothing like what people would wear because back home we didn't wear skirts or jeans and if you did do that people would stare at you in India so the other thing that was really surprising is that you can do whatever colour you want to do with your hair in India we don't do. that there were a few other little cultural things that I found a little bit different such as the food. I had a hard time with the food because I'm vegetarian it was okay in Brampton but when you went to other places you couldn't find any food that was vegetarian. And it tasted different as well

C: anything else you'd like to add

I can't think of it right now

C: what else did you find difficult about adjusting to the Canadian culture like such as our norms or values

I think before I came to Canada and India, I thought that Canada I didn't realise how safe it was. I knew it was safe, but I didn't really understand. when I think about going out in the evening I would never go out in the evening. I was a physiotherapist back home and when I was a physiotherapist sometimes, I would have to take the bus back and forth and there it's not safe to travel on the bus and if I got if I worked late, then what would happen was I would have to go on the bus. One time I was on the bus and there was this man he was drunk, and he started to he put his hand on my thigh and I screamed and then when I screamed. There we have conductors back home here on the buses. You don't have conductors here but back there, back home we had conductors and what they would do is they would come, and they kicked him off the bus. The other people were concerned but it's not unusual for people to get raped and you hear about rape stories all the time.

Appendix I- University of Liverpool, Ethics approval

Dear Connie Stevens,		
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.		
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)	
Review type:	Expedited	
PI:	Yota Dimitriadi	
School:	HLC	
Title:	Exploring Female Punjab international students perceptions of acclimatisation at Sheridan College	
First Reviewer:	Kathleen M Kelm	
Second Reviewer:	Alla Korzh	
Other members of the Committee	Martin Gough, Lucilla Crosta	
Date of Approval:	20 July 2020	
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:		
Conditions		
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.
<p>This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc. Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).</p>		
<p>Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.</p>		

Kind regards,
 Lucilla Crosta
 Chair, EdD. VPREC

Appendix- J- Canadian Ethics Certification

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS

Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE



Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Connie stevens

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: **30 November, 2019**