

FOSTERING FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN CHINESE INTERNATIONAL AND AMERICAN
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Current research revealed that international students adjust more optimally to the host country when they have host-national friendships (e.g., Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011). The researcher aimed to study and examine the process of sociocultural adjustment for Chinese international high school students. Specifically, the present study focused on the perspectives of Chinese international high school students to: a) gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students and b) identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students. Twelve Chinese international high school students participated in the study. An analysis of participants' interview responses generated four themes, including 1) *Despite having experienced various acculturative stressors as they interacted with Americans, there were factors and conditions that are conducive to intercultural friendship development between Chinese international and American high school students*, 2) *Participants perceived friendships with fellow Chinese students to be important and a protective factor for studying abroad*, 3) *Participants valued friendships with American students and perceive such*

friendships to be instrumental for adjusting to the United States, and 4) Participants perceived interactions and engagement with Americans to be important for developing intercultural friendships. Participants' experiences aligned with findings of previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students in some respects and differed in other respects. Implications of the findings are discussed in regard to intercultural friendship development between the two student groups.

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Introduction

Background

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), there were 1,094,792 international students that studied at U.S. colleges and universities during the 2017-2018 school year (IIE, 2018a). Compared to the figure of the 2007-2008 school year, which was 623,805 (IIE, 2018a), this number nearly doubled. This shows that the influx of international students seeking education in the U.S. has been growing steadily. Particularly, based on the most up-to-date figure during the school year of 2017-2018 (IIE, 2018b), it is indicated that about 35.9% of the international student population came from China (including Special Administrative Regions Hong Kong and Macau as well as the Taiwan Region), which is also the specific subgroup that is the focus of the current study.

Compared to other international student subgroups (e.g., international students from East Africa, Southeast Asia, Caribbean, Oceania, etc.), the Chinese group stood as one of the largest ones. Even by itself, Chinese International students in the U.S. are a large and diverse group, as China is a geographically large country and consists of individuals from a variety of distinct subcultures and origins. As some researchers have noted (e.g., Lin & Ho, 2009), although they all share the same Confucian¹ cultural roots, substantial differences exist between Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Chinese international students in the U.S. bring with them a wide range of knowledge, skill sets, and perspectives that contribute to the richness of many aspects of the American society, but particularly to the educational system, where they

¹ A traditional Chinese philosophy and a way of life rooted in Confucianism – founded by Confucius (551–479 BCE).

pursue their education. This is especially true when the number of Chinese international students in the U.S. has increased significantly in recent years (Lewin, 2012).

International students are classified as foreign nationals in the U.S., and although some consider them to be similar to immigrants, they, in fact, possess specific characteristics that distinctly differentiate them from immigrants (Berry & Sam, 1997). In this paper, the term *international student* is defined as an individual who is a) enrolled for academic credits at an educational institution(s) on a student visa and b) not an immigrant or permanent resident. This term will be used to refer to the broader international student population. Similarly, the term *Chinese international student* shares the same basic definition as *international student* but is used to refer to those who have a Chinese cultural and/or national origin. Related to that, and as they will be used shortly, the term host-nationals is defined as outgroup members of the host country (from the perspective of international students), whereas the term co-nationals is defined as ingroup members of the same national group (also from the perspective of international students), and the two terms are generally used when referring to findings of previous research. When referring to the findings and discussions of the current study, the terms Americans and American students are generally used.

Most international students are young, well-educated, and have received prior training regarding the language and culture of the host country (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005). Different than most immigrants, international students typically travel to the host country with the intention to leave once they complete their education. Therefore, their stays are typically short, voluntary, and academic/goal-oriented (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). Given how their stay is impermanent in nature, international students typically arrive in the host country by themselves and do not have permanent local social support as do host-national students (Cemalcilar et al.,

2005). Since the focus of their stay is generally academic-oriented, they are often motivated to adjust to their host country for academic success (Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007). In order to adjust to the host country, international students may need to adapt to the host country's language, lifestyle, values, sociocultural norms, and various cultural practices.

Among the many benefits that international students bring with them, the most valuable one is perhaps their expansion of host-national students' cultural well-roundedness, cultural appreciation, and global worldviews (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Bennett, Volet, & Fozdar, 2013). This benefit seems even greater in light of comments and arguments that some American scholars have made. For instance, Ungar (2015) criticized how the majority of Americans seem unaware of the world outside of the United States. On the other hand, other American scholars have noted the benefits of having international students as part of the educational environment and the need for their presence. For instance, as Neil Rudenstine (former president of Harvard University) put it,

“We really have to sustain our commitment to international students and faculty exchange programs. We need those international students, and we need our students to be out there [studying abroad]. There is simply no substitute for direct contact with talented people from other countries and cultures. We benefit from international students; they drive research and teaching in new directions that are very fruitful” (as cited in Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, & Nelson, 1999, p. 67).

International students' unique experiences and perspectives greatly enhance the intellectual and cultural capital of the U.S. – a country that thrives on diversity.

Recognizing the steady increase of the number of international students in the U.S. as well as the benefits they bring, many U.S. educational institutions have been increasing their

efforts to recruit internationally over the years (Choudaha & Chang, 2012). The steady and immense growth of the international student body reflects the success of these recruiting efforts. This growth has brought American educational institutions the many benefits of having international students, and vice versa, many international students have benefited from the quality education that the U.S. offers. At the same time, the unique challenges that international students experience as they study abroad have also surfaced concomitantly.

Statement of the Problem and Scope of the Present Study

For most Chinese international high school students in the U.S., the path to academic success is filled with obstacles. In addition to typical factors that are needed for academic success (e.g., academic preparedness, personal effort, etc.), they need to overcome a host of acculturative stressors as they pursue their academic career in a foreign land. For some, this may simply mean to learn and perform academically in a non-native language. For others, it may mean to adjust or adapt to an entirely different lifestyle, value and/or belief system. The process of adapting to a new culture can at times lead to acculturative stress, or in other words, negative psychological impact caused by such a process. The inability to deal with acculturative stressors effectively can not only prevent these students from achieving academically, but it can also place them at greater risk of suffering psychological and mental health problems. Depending on the severity, such an inability to cope may eventually lead to premature termination of their academic career in the United States (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011), an outcome that directly opposes their goal of studying overseas. Furthermore, Lee, Koeske, and Sales (2004) stated that due to the demands of living in a foreign land, international students generally have more adjustment problems than their host-national counterparts. Yet, given how they are often separated from friends and families in a foreign land without a strong support system, they have

comparatively fewer resources than their host-national peers to cope with these acculturative stressors.

Given these implications, the topic of international student adjustment is one that deserves a close examination. Based on this premise, the present study focused on such an adjustment process of international students. Regarding the target population, the current study specifically focused on Chinese international high school students, and the decision was based on two reasons. First, research regarding the general international high school student population is limited overall, and there is a need to study this population more. Such a need may be especially warranted when one considers its likely growth. Although there are no available records of the number of international high school students in the U.S. in recent years, there are reasons to believe that the enrollment trends at the high school level are similar to those at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As the IIE (2015) stated, “U.S. high schools are a growing source of international applicants for U.S. higher education institutions” (para. 3). In addition, the organization argued that international students perceive an admission advantage for American colleges and universities by having a U.S. high school diploma. Second, there are many distinct groups within this high school level population (e.g., Arabs, Chinese, German, Polish, etc.), and many of them are substantially different from one another. Although they may be grouped together as “international high school students,” they can be very different from one another and their needs can be significantly different. Therefore, each subgroup deserves to be examined individually, especially if the subgroup is of substantial size. Regarding the number of Chinese international high school students in the U.S., the IIE (2015) stated that currently, international students from Asia (primarily from China and South Korea) make up about 75% of international students seeking diplomas at U.S. high schools. Therefore, although there are no

available records of the number of Chinese international high students in the U.S., one may reasonably assume that the Chinese international high school population is also of substantial size, similar to that at the college and university level.

Proper adjustment is vital to the well-being and success of international students, yet previous research indicated that most international students experience problems in adjusting to the host culture (Lee et al., 2004). For this reason, the present study was designed to study the adjustment process of Chinese international high school students in the United States. Specifically, this study focused on their sociocultural adjustment.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

There are many possible areas of adjustment for Chinese international high school students, and the present study focused on one of the most impactful adjustment areas, namely, sociocultural adjustment, and specifically, the development of intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students. As Hendrickson et al. (2011) identified, one of the most effective ways for international students to adjust well in the host country is through having intercultural friendships with host-nationals. Thurber and Walton (2012) also asserted that host-national friends can be an important social support for international students' adjustment.

Considering the presence of Chinese international high school students in the U.S., the importance of strong sociocultural adjustments for these students, and the limited research available in this area and for this specific population, the present study was designed to conduct the warranted examination of intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students.

As researchers have found, increasing international students' sense of connectedness is an effective way to foster their resilience and well-being (Roffey, 2013). Based on current research, one of the most effective ways to increase international students' sense of connectedness is through intercultural friendships with their host-national peers. As Hendrickson et al. (2011) found, new host-national connections and friendships support international students' adjustment, whereas the lack of such relationships can contribute to homesickness, loneliness, and a host of negative psychological impacts. Ying and Liese (1991) also argued that remaining close to one's culture and support network from home without eventually engaging with the host culture and host-nationals can hinder international students' adjustment to the host country, which can prevent them from adjusting optimally (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011), for they would be less likely to make connections and/or friendships with host-nationals. Similarly, Thurber and Walton (2012) stated that a friendship group that is primarily consisted of co-nationals impedes international students' acculturation to the host country. It should be clarified, however, that remaining close to one's culture and support network from home and/or having co-national friends overseas is not negative for international students, for individuals from one's home culture often provide comfort for international students as ones who share similar values, cultural perspectives, and languages (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). It is remaining primarily in co-national circles or having primarily co-national friends that inhibits international students' interactions with host-nationals, which can hinder the optimal adjustment of international students in the host country (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011; Thurber & Walton, 2012).

As to what optimal adjustment may look like for sojourners in the host culture (including but not limited to international students), Church (1982) provided some insights in his

comprehensive review regarding cross-cultural adjustment (see also Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). He stated that such individuals experience greater satisfaction, less homesickness, and less loneliness in the host culture compared to those who are adjusting less optimally. More recently, Hendrickson et al. (2011) also provided insights as to characteristics of optimal adjustment specifically for international students. They stated that such students have better overall adjustment, struggle less in social situations with members of the host culture, make greater improvements in their ability to communicate in the host language, and feel more positively about the host culture. As discussed by Church (1982), Hechanova-Alampay et al. (2002), and Hendrickson et al. (2011), achieving and/or arriving at such an optimal phase of adjustment entails meaningful friendships/interactions with host-nationals.

Yet, research shows that by leaving students to their own devices, international students are typically drawn to co-nationals and have minimal interactions with host-nationals. Similarly, host-national students do not typically take the initiative to approach their international peers for meaningful friendships/interactions (Brown, 2009).

Limited research has shed light on what factors contribute to the development of friendships between international and host-national students. In contrast, and as I will examine shortly in the *Literature Review* section, several researchers have shed light on certain factors that hinder the development of such relationships. This entails the need to gain a better understanding of intercultural friendships between the two student groups.

Based on the above reasons, the current study was designed to examine intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students. First, I sought to gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students, as research regarding the general international

high school student population in this area is scarce. Second, I sought to identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students.

Conceptual Framework

Congruent with the topic and research goals, which focused on the development of intercultural friendships as an adjustment process from the perspectives of Chinese international high school students, the current study proceeded through the theoretical lens of acculturation. Specifically, the stress and coping framework regarding acculturation by Berry (1997) was used to guide the current study.

According to Berry (2005), the process of acculturation occurs when groups or individuals with different cultural backgrounds engage in intercultural contact with one another. Such intercultural contact entails the potential for conflicts as well as opportunities to reach an adaptive solution for all involved parties. One assumption within the broad acculturation model is that, challenges from various domains can occur when an individual comes into contact with others from other cultures (e.g., an international student studying abroad), and such challenges may lead to acculturative stress as well as adjustment problems for the individual. Acculturative stress can be defined as psychological stress that stems from the process of acculturation, or as Thurber and Walton (2012) put it, “the stress caused by the changes in values, beliefs, and behaviors that result from sustained contact with a new culture. (p.416)”

Prior to reviewing sociocultural stressors and other related acculturative stressors that can hinder the sociocultural adjustment of international students and their intercultural friendship development with host-national students, it is essential to review the concept of acculturation,

and more importantly, the specific acculturation theoretical framework that was used for the current study.

The term and concept of acculturation appeared as early as the early 1800s (e.g., Coutts, 1820), and for a long time, the concept was conceptualized as a uni-directional and uni-dimensional process, which usually focused on the migrant's perspective and entailed that the migrant, who was often seen as having less cultural capital, to assimilate to the host culture. In fact, as some scholars have noted, migrants were often expected to abandon their cultural heritage in the host culture and criticized by members of the host culture if they did not (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). As Smith and Khawaja (2011) argued, it was not until about three decades ago that researchers began conceptualizing the concept of acculturation as a bi-directional and bi-dimensional process. Based on the more recent conceptualization, changes during the process of acculturation occur not only for the migrant, but also for members of the host country. Moreover, as Berry (2005) stated, changes occur both at the psychological level for the individual(s) as well as cultural level for the overall group(s). For instance, as international students interact with members of the host culture, psychological impact is experienced by members of both groups, and the behaviors of both groups may be different than they normally are as they adapt to the intercultural exchange. At the same time, the intercultural exchange may also effect changes in social and/or cultural norms for both groups.

Regarding these psychological- and cultural-level changes, Berry (1997) proposed four distinct strategies/approaches that individuals take when dealing with acculturative changes, according to two broad questions: 1) Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics? 2) Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society? Based on the responses to these two questions, the four strategies/approaches that Berry (1997)

proposed are a) integration, b) assimilation, c) separation (or segregation), and d) marginalization. Integration describes the strategy where one maintains her/his cultural identity while seeking to involve as part of the larger social network; assimilation describes the strategy where one discards her/his cultural identity and blends in with the larger social network according to the social and cultural norms; separation describes the strategy where one prioritizes maintaining her/his cultural identity to the exclusion of interacting with the larger social network; marginalization describes the situation where the maintenance of one's cultural identity is not possible or feasible and there is minimal to no interest for the individual to interact with the larger social network.

Building upon Berry's (1997) acculturative strategies, Navas et al. (2005) later developed the relative acculturation extended model (RAEM), which further expands on Berry's (1997) acculturative strategies. Navas et al. (2005) argued that an individual's strategy regarding acculturation is not all-encompassing for all life aspects, meaning as one acculturates in one life aspect in a certain way, s/he can acculturate in a different way for another life aspect. For instance, a migrant may choose to assimilate to the host culture's social and educational norms, but s/he may choose to separate when it comes to religious and sexual norms.

Several other acculturation models have been developed over the years, but the most prominent and fundamental work is perhaps still the stress and coping (or acculturative stress and adaptation) framework by Berry (1997), and it was the guiding theoretical framework for the present study. In this framework, acculturation is seen as a process that brings about significant life changes to an individual's life, and the individual perceives the changes in one of two ways: a) the changes are benevolent and/or opportunities, or b) the changes are adverse and/or complications. For the former, such changes do not generate stress for the individual. For the

latter, however, are changes that Berry (1997) classified as acculturative stressors. When facing acculturative stress, an individual may experience minimal to no acculturative stress if it is adequately dealt with. Conversely, an individual may experience a greater amount of stress if the acculturative stress remains inadequately resolved, and in more severe cases, it can even lead to mental health problems.

According to the stress and coping framework, many significant life changes can impact an individual who is adjusting to a different culture as acculturative stressors. Regarding international students, researchers have identified five most common acculturative stressors for undergraduate and graduate level international students in various countries, namely, learning English as a non-native language (e.g., Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000), educational stress (e.g., Hashim & Yang, 2003; Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003), sociocultural stress (e.g., Chataway & Berry, 1989; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008), discrimination (e.g., Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), and practical stressors such as financial hardships and restrictions on employment (e.g., Bradley, 2000; Li & Kaye, 1998). Of these five factors, three have been found to sometimes hinder the formation of intercultural friendships between international and host-national students, namely, learning English as a non-native language, sociocultural stress, and discrimination. In the following literature review, I will discuss specifically how each of these three acculturative stressors can hinder the formation of intercultural friendships. I will provide relevant literature review from various perspectives.

It should be noted, however, that currently, research and data regarding international high school students is scarce in general, and it is especially limited regarding those of Chinese origin. Previous research regarding international students is mostly concerned with those at the undergraduate and graduate levels. There are very few existing research studies that share the

same specific population of interest with the present study. Due to this scarcity, there are no referenced studies that are specifically concerned with high school-age international students and/or Chinese international students in this study. For these reasons, the current study referenced studies that are concerned with international students at the undergraduate and graduate level from a variety of country of origins. Although this is less desirable, as the referenced studies do not address the exact same target population of this study, drawing from a broader literature base regarding international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels can still offer great insights regarding the general international student body for the present study.

Literature Review

Common Acculturative Stressors for International Students that can Negatively Impact Intercultural Friendship Development

Learning English as a Non-native Language

For non-native English-speaking international students, one of the most common obstacles is using English in the host country. Many researchers have found that the process of learning the English language is difficult for many non-native English-speaking international students. In their examination of stressors experienced by international and host-national undergraduate students in the U.S., Fritz, Chin, and DeMarinis (2008) found that Asian international students (e.g., East Asia, South and Central Asia, and Southeast Asia) experienced the most difficulties in learning English compared to their host-national and European counterparts. Experiencing difficulty in learning and using the host language has immense implications for international students. As communication is a basic foundation for nearly all areas of their lives abroad (e.g., learning in the classroom and completing school work, seeking

help from others, exploring outside of campus, conversing with host-nationals, etc.), struggling with using the host language in the host country can be a crippling experience. Similarly, Sawir (2005) interviewed Asian international undergraduate students (Indonesia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan) in Australia and found that the majority of participants struggled with conversational English. Participants commented that prior to studying in Australia, they had very few opportunities to speak English and limited exposure to good English speakers. Both factors were perceived by the participants to be contributing factors to their lack of preparedness to communicate in English in Australia. In light of the implications of the findings of Fritz et al. (2008), it may be a common struggle for non-native English-speaking international students to be struggling with the language as they live abroad in English-speaking countries, which can also complicate a variety of aspects of their study abroad experience.

The ability to communicate in English is a vital foundation in having meaningful interactions and conversations with others in Western countries such as the U.S. and Canada. It is needed not only when conversing with host-nationals, but also with individuals from other cultures with whom English is the only common language. When international students struggle with learning and using English, it is no surprise that their opportunities to connect meaningfully with others will also suffer. For instance, Chen (1999) found that anxiety over one's English competency was a stressor for international undergraduate students in the U.S. in sociocultural contexts with host-nationals. This perception can very well serve as a hindering factor for them in making friends and interacting with host-national students. Similarly, Barratt and Huba (1994) examined adjustment issues for international undergraduate students in the U.S. and found a positive correlation between the students' English skills and self-esteem. They also found that competency in English was positively associated with interactions with Americans. In other

words, having stronger and better abilities in the English language may contribute to more meaningful interactions between international and host-national students – one of the foundations for developing intercultural friendships.

Similarly, Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, and Pisecco (2002) found a good command of English to be a predictor of positive adjustment in the host country for international graduate students in the U.S. in a variety of ways, one of which is the increased interactions with host-national students. Similarly, Zhang and Goodson (2011) stated that English competency is a predictor for both psychological and sociocultural adjustment for international undergraduate and graduate students in the United States. In other words, international undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S. with a good command of English were found to have better psychological (e.g., mental-health) and sociocultural adjustment (e.g., socially connected). This aligns with Chen's (1999) findings as described earlier, where international undergraduate students in the U.S. without a good command of English experienced stress and anxiety in sociocultural contexts with host-nationals. Other researchers have also found that English proficiency is a predictor of acculturative stress and/or depression for international undergraduate and graduate students in the United States (Dao, Lee, & Chang, 2007; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004). Findings from the above studies provide strong evidence that an international student's English ability is a significant factor in the process of sociocultural adjustment, having meaningful interactions with host-nationals, and developing friendships with host-national students. Although language ability is a crucial factor, it is not the only factor that determines the success of this intercultural process.

Sociocultural Stress

Other than language barriers, international students also face a variety of sociocultural barriers. Not only can these barriers cause stress, but they can also be obstacles to developing intercultural friendships. In this section, I will provide a review on factors that may complicate international students' sociocultural adjustment in the host country as well as specific implications for intercultural friendships.

As mentioned earlier, international students typically do not have permanent local social support (such as family and friends) as many host-national students do (Cemalcilar et al., 2005; Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). As a strong social support network is vital to one's well-being, the implications of international students having such a social support network are even greater given their need to adjust in the host country. Since international students are generally apart from their families abroad, having strong friendships are especially important. As a result, they often need to establish new connections and friendships in a foreign land. Success in establishing new connections and friendships can support international students' adjustment, whereas the lack of such relationships can contribute to stress (Hendrickson et al., 2011). Similarly, Ying and Liese (1991) studied the emotional well-being of Taiwanese graduate students in the U.S. and found that remaining close to one's home culture and social support might hinder adjustment to the host culture, which aligns with the argument of Thurber and Walton (2012), who argued that a friendship group that is primarily consisted of co-nationals impedes international students' acculturation to the host country. Similar to an earlier discussion regarding co-national circles, it is not negative for international students to have strong social ties from home or with co-nationals in the host country. In fact, it may even be necessary during the early months of their stay abroad. It is when they remain in that support system without engaging with the host culture

that can hinder their sociocultural adjustment (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011).

In light of that, it raises concerns when previous research indicated that international students tend to struggle with befriending host-nationals, including host-national students. For instance, in studying the experience of international undergraduate students in Australia, Townsend and Jun Poh (2008) reported that participants experience difficulty in socializing with Australians. Not only does the lack of friendships with host-national students prevent international students from adjusting optimally (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011), but as found by some researchers (e.g., Parr, Bradley, & Bingi, 1991; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), it can also contribute to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and homesickness. Unfortunately, struggling with connecting with host-nationals is not an uncommon phenomenon among international students. In their qualitative study with 200 international undergraduate students in Australia (from 30 different nations), Sawir et al. (2008) found that two thirds of participants reported loneliness and/or isolation in the host country, especially during the beginning months of their stay. As the authors explained, their participants often experienced personal loneliness and isolation due to being away from families. Moreover, they also experienced social loneliness because they have moved away from their social network from home yet are unsuccessful in forming new ones in the host country. In light of these reasons as well as research findings regarding how international students typically struggle with making friends with host-national peers (Townsend & Jun Poh, 2008), their personal loneliness and isolation may remain well past the beginning months of their stay. This aligns with the previous discussion that the inability to adjust and acculturate (specifically in a sociocultural sense in this

case) can place international students at greater risk for psychological problems (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011).

Among the international student body, researchers have found that Asian international students (which includes those of Chinese origins) typically experience more challenges in making friends with host-nationals than their European international peers in Western countries (e.g., Lee & Rice, 2007). In explaining this phenomenon, Triandis (2001) stated that this may be due to differing worldviews, as Asian cultures are generally collectivistic and Western cultures are generally individualistic. To briefly define these two cultural constructs, we refer to the definition of Wheeler, Reis, and Bond (1989):

“Individualism stands for a preference for a loosely knit social framework in society wherein individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Its opposite, collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives, clan, or other in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. (p. 79)”

Individuals with an individualistic cultural orientation tend to be more assertive and self-sufficient in everyday social interactions (Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003), whereas individuals with a collectivistic orientation tend to emphasize the views, needs, and goals of others rather than oneself (Wheeler et al., 1989). For this reason, Asian international students may find it difficult to interact with host-nationals from western cultures.

Furthermore, conflicting acculturation attitudes between international students and host-nationals can create further challenges. For instance, Smith and Khawaja (2011) argued that international students may want to retain their culture, values, and belief systems in the host country, yet host-national students may expect international students to assimilate to the host

culture, values, and customs. In such situations, international students may feel they have to give up or sacrifice their cultural identity in order to establish friendships in the host country, a compromise that not all international students are willing to make. In addition to making it more difficult for friendships to form, such opposing perspectives may create conflicts, where the two parties may compare and argue about whose culture has more prominence/value.

In addition, the differing level of interest in being friends with one another can also hinder the development of intercultural friendships between international students and host-nationals. Some researchers have found that host-nationals are sometimes disinterested in befriending international students or individuals from another culture (Williams & Johnson, 2011; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Based on their findings, Williams and Johnson (2011) stated that their participants (Americans in their study) who have reservation about interacting with individuals from a different country or culture may harbor feelings of racism and/or behave in discriminatory ways. Conversely, participants who are interested in connecting with individuals who come from a different country and/or culture tend to hold a more open and unprejudiced attitude towards out-group members as well as their differing cultures, norms, and values. Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) also gave insights to the context from both sides, as they argued that international students are naturally drawn to co-nationals for primary support and typically do not leave their comfort zone to reach out to host-nationals. Conversely, host-nationals are sometimes complacent with their dominant/majority status and do not feel the need to leave their comfort zone to connect with out-group members, such as international students.

Besides external factors that can hinder intercultural friendships between international and host-nationals (e.g., disinterest from host-nationals), there are also personal factors (inherent of or on the part of the international student) that can play a role in this tension. For instance,

some researchers have identified that attachment style, trait-anxiety, and extraversion can influence international students' ability to establish new friendships in the host country (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier, 2010; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). In regard to attachment security, Brisset, et al. (2010) found that for both their undergraduate level Vietnamese and French participants, those who are comfortable with intimacy, believe that others in general can be depended on, and have very little concerns about being abandoned and/or unloved experience greater sociocultural adaptation in their academic environment. Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006) had similar findings and found that these variables are significant predictors for international undergraduate and graduate students' psychosocial adjustment in the United States.

Other personal variables that may hinder international students from establishing social connections with host-nationals, as found by other researchers, include cultural differences (e.g., a collectivistic worldview vs. an individualistic worldview) and the lack of English fluency (Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000). This may be especially true when the home and host cultures and/or languages are substantially different (e.g., Chinese vs. English; collectivistic vs. individualistic). In addition to Chen (1999) and Mori (2000), Yang, Noels, and Saumure (2006) studied the adjustment of international undergraduate students in Canada and found that language self-confidence has a significant role in mediating differences between students' contact with the host culture and self-construal as well as psychological adjustment and sociocultural difficulty. When examining friendship development between international and host-national students, the above personal factors are pertinent and should be considered.

Expanding on the role of cultural differences in intercultural friendships, the different nature and expectation of friendships in the host culture can make forming new relationships more challenging for international students. For instance, Mori (2000) noted that the American

concept of friendship is much less permanent and is more fluid compared to those of other cultures. For international students who may be more used to or prefer a more permanent concept of friendship, the more fluid nature of the American concept of friendship may be less appealing to them and may deter them from investing in potential friendships.

Moreover, the influence of culture can affect much more than just the concept of friendship. Mori (2000) also stated that American students' outward friendliness can sometimes be interpreted as offers of serious friendships or even romantic relationships by international students. The inconsistency between their perception and reality can complicate opposite-sex relationships and create confusion for international students if and as they seek to befriend host-national students. While misunderstanding, rejection, and other similar situations in opposite-sex contexts are generally unpleasant, Furman and Shomaker (2008) offered insights as to why these situations may be especially awkward for adolescents. First, they argued that these opposite sex encounters are typically one of the first contexts in which adolescents learn to navigate through potential intimacy and connectedness with the opposite sex. Second, they stated that girls' communication style tends to facilitate interactions, whereas for boys, it tends to be directive. Combining these two factors with the differing cultural expectations (Mori, 2000), these social situations can be especially confusing and uncomfortable for international students (and to a certain degree, for host-nationals as well).

In summary, there are a number of sociocultural factors that can affect the development of intercultural friendships between international students' and host-nationals. These factors include cultural worldviews (i.e., collectivistic vs. individualistic), cultural attitudes (i.e., retaining one's culture vs. assimilating to the host culture), perspectives on friendship (i.e., fluid/flexible vs. permanent), and perceptions on social interactions (i.e., offers of friendships vs.

offers of serious friendships and/or romantic relationships). One must consider these pertinent factors in examining intercultural friendships between international and host-national students. Nevertheless, beyond linguistic and sociocultural factors, there are also social factors that influence this intercultural process.

Discrimination

Other external factors that complicate intercultural friendship development may include racial or ethnic prejudice and discrimination from host-national students (Hayes & Lin, 1994). As noted by some researchers, these negative and often harmful experiences may significantly discourage international students in forming deep and meaningful relationships with host-nationals (Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000).

Unfortunately, the experience of discrimination is not uncommon for many international students. For instance, in their survey with 130 international undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S. (from 10 different country of origins), Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) found that perceived discrimination is a significant concern for these students. As the authors explained, in addition to actual discrimination from host-nationals, the perceived discrimination may also be a result of international students' misinterpretation of a different set of cultural norms as well as social distance that many international students experience, which may be especially common when they first encounter and adjust to the host culture. Although discriminatory acts from host-nationals are relatively hard to control and alter, the misperception of international students is changeable with more exposure and meaningful interactions with host-nationals (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). Furthermore, regardless of whether a discriminatory act occurred, or if the discrimination was simply a misperception, many researchers have found that the experience of being discriminated against (or the perception of) can lead to negative mental health issues such

as anxiety and/or depression (e.g., Ellis et al., 2010; Fischer & Shaw, 1999). In light of the potential effects of discrimination (or the perception of discrimination) on international students, this further strengthens the importance of intercultural friendships between international and host-national students.

In addition, research regarding discrimination has shown that international undergraduate students from Asia (e.g., China, India) and non-European regions (e.g., Latin America, Africa) reported perceiving significantly more discrimination compared to host-national and European international students in Western countries (Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Lee and Rice (2007) stated that these international students reported significant discrimination in the forms of feelings of inferiority, direct verbal insults, and even physical attacks in the United States. As some of the excerpts that Lee and Rice (2007) provided show, these students not only felt harassed, but also helpless in defending themselves in such discriminatory situations. Not only do these situations harm the psychological well-being of international students (Jung, Hecht, & Wadsworth, 2007; Wei et al., 2007), but they also significantly hinder the development of intercultural friendships, which should be one of many positive outcomes from studying abroad. In light of our previous discussion on how Asian international students tend to struggle with making friends with host-nationals (Townsend & Jun Poh, 2008), the findings that they are particularly susceptible to discrimination and related mental health consequences are of even greater concern.

The literature review thus far is concerned with relevant acculturative stressors that may hinder intercultural friendships between the international students and host-nationals or specifically, host-national students. In the next section of literature review, specific research regarding intercultural friendships will be discussed.

Friendship Development between International and Host-national Students

Given the current study's focus on intercultural friendship development between Chinese international high school and American students, I will provide a brief review below on available research findings concerning intercultural friendships between international students and host-nationals and/or host-national students, both inside and outside of the United States.

Similar to research regarding international high school students, intercultural friendship research that pertains to this study's specific population of interest (Chinese international high school students) is limited. Therefore, the following literature review is based on the broader international student body at the undergraduate- and graduate level. This is less desirable given the differing population of interest of this study. Nonetheless, findings on this topic regarding the general international student body will still be insightful.

In studying international students' initiative to befriend or initiate meaningful interactions with host-national students, some researchers have found that international students are generally unwilling to leave their comfort zone of co-national circles (if there is a co-national circle). As to why they tend to remain in their co-national circles, Brown (2009) explained, based on her research study with international graduate students in the U.K., that not only are they seeking the comfort offered by those who have the same language and heritage, but they are also seeking such a social circle due to their fear of discrimination by host-nationals. It is not uncommon for international students to experience discrimination, and Asian international undergraduate students in the U.S. have been found to experience more discrimination than host-national and European international students (Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). As for the motivation to seek comfort from those who share the same language and heritage, one may argue that Chinese international students, who generally have a collectivistic orientation, will have a

greater tendency to do so. As Triandis' (2001) stated, members of collectivistic cultures tend to value their identities within their in-group as well as their relationships with in-group members over others, whereas the same is less true for individuals from individualistic cultures. In light of international students' overall preference to remain close to their co-national group, it is no surprise that some researchers (e.g., Hendrickson et al., 2011) found a common pattern of friendship among international undergraduate students in the U.S., where they generally prefer and have more friends who share the same national and/or cultural origin. As Hendrickson et al. (2011) argued, the consequence of their reliance on co-national relationships may stand as a factor that inhibits international students from forming friendships with their host-national peers as well as other members of the host culture.

It should be noted that it is not negative for international students to have strong co-national circles. In fact, in their study with Taiwanese graduate international students in the U.S., Ying and Liese (1991) found that co-national circles can be very beneficial in the early months of arriving to the host country as they adjust initially. However, when the source of support for international students does not transition to be more host country-based, the quality of their adjustment may remain sub-optimal (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011), not to mention not all international students have access to co-nationals in their new educational setting.

In light of this, it is concerning that international students tend to remain close to their co-national circles instead of also connecting with those of host-nationals. In fact, researchers have found that remaining close to one's home culture might hinder adjustment to the host culture for international students (e.g., Ying & Liese, 1991). In addition to the reservation of international students in approaching host-nationals, host-nationals can also contribute to this "intercultural

impasse.” For instance, Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) found that international students feel invisible among host-nationals and at times ignored intentionally by host-nationals. In addition, Lee and Rice (2007) reported that undergraduate and graduate level international students in the U.S. at times experience a significant lack of respect from Americans regarding their culture, language, history, and other elements related to their national and/or cultural origins. Other researchers contended that such apparent disrespect may be because of one’s lack of knowledge or familiarity with other cultures. As Peterson et al. (1999) stated, questions from host-nationals (Americans in their particular study) such as “Do you live in a tree? What is the capital of Africa? and Do you have electricity in New Zealand? demonstrate great ignorance to international students” (p. 71), and experiences such as these can be perceived as disrespect and/or contempt, which can further diminish the likelihood of intercultural friendships being developed between the two groups.

Some researchers are keenly aware of the benefits of intercultural friendships for both international and host-national students. Yet, they also recognize that, by default, international and host-national students do not generally socialize and befriend one another. For this reason, some researchers have explored ways to encourage students to build intercultural friendships. One of the ways to achieve this is to implement a multicultural intervention program. Essentially, a multicultural intervention program is an intervention that is designed to enhance participants’ social ties and their initiative to seek social connections by cultivating their interest and understanding of other individuals’ cultures (Sakurai, McCall-Wolf, & Kashima, 2010).

For instance, Sakurai et al. (2010) examined the effects of what they described as a “bus excursion” multicultural intervention program. In brief, a group of new international undergraduate and graduate students in Australia from eleven different countries and regions

were randomly assigned to two different school buses (note: no Australian students participated in the program), which transported them to a tourist area that is about an hour away from their campus for the day. The bus rides as well as the remaining time at the tourist area provided a set amount of time and a relaxed atmosphere in which students can get to know one another. In examining the effectiveness of the intervention, Sakurai et al. (2010) found that international students who participated in the program have significantly more social ties with international students of other national and/or cultural origins even three months after the intervention took place. Interestingly, the authors also found that international students who participated in the program have significantly more host-national friends than those who did not participate in the program, and that participants feel significantly stronger cultural orientation and/or interest toward the host culture. Regarding this positive “spill over” effect onto participants’ friendships with host-nationals, the authors argued that the intervention might have positively triggered and reinforced participants’ cognitive and attitudinal changes that would not have occurred otherwise (e.g., interests in seeking new experiences in the host culture, self-efficacy in connecting with host-nationals). Although, as stated by Sakurai et al. (2010), additional evidence needs to be consulted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, results such as these are encouraging for researchers who desire to bridge the social gap between international and host-national students.

Another notable study in this area is an examination of a “buddy project” that involves international and host-national university students in New Zealand by Campbell (2012). In brief, the project involved 30 pairs of intercultural dyads, with the New Zealand student being the “buddy” to the international student in each dyad, providing social support for a semester. Not all specifics are provided, but it was stated that the New Zealand students were expected to have regular contact with their assigned international peer for 12 weeks, and that their contact could

be purely social or task-oriented. In addition, New Zealand participants were required to keep a reflective journal throughout the 12-week period, documenting their encounters with their international peer. As part of a communication class that the New Zealand participants were taking, they appeared to have more of a lead role in the relationship. Campbell (2012) focused more on the perspectives of host-national students and found four positive outcomes: host-national students a) felt they learned a lot from their international peer, b) appreciated the opportunity to experience intercultural communication firsthand, c) felt personal satisfaction and inspiration from the experience, and d) felt the experience improved their intercultural competence. Though they were not the focus of the study, Campbell (2012) also surveyed the international participants for some of their perspectives, and found that they, too, found the experience positive and helpful overall. Particularly, most of them seemed to appreciate the linguistic benefits that the experience brought them through such arranged intercultural experience.

These studies provide some hope that meaningful interactions and friendships between international and host-national students can be fostered, which, in turn, suggest that international students' sociocultural adjustment as well as well-being in the host culture may be improved through multicultural intervention programs.

Methods

Epistemological Foundation

The current study employed a qualitative approach for several reasons. Foundationally, this decision was driven by a constructivist epistemology. As Trochim (2006) defined it, epistemology essentially means the “philosophy of knowledge or of how we come to know” (para. 1). As an epistemological approach, constructivism asserts that knowledge is not

discovered. Rather, it is formed by individuals' perceptions and experiences (Crotty, 1998; Yilmaz, 2008). It is constructed by individuals to make sense of the experiential world (Maclellan & Soden, 2004). As such, the same event does not necessarily impact individuals the same way. Experiences are relative to those who experience them.

A qualitative approach compliments the foundational philosophy of constructivism. As Malterud (2001) stated, qualitative research is used to study social phenomena in their natural contexts. It aims to examine the meanings and experiences by individuals and has an exploratory nature. Related to what was discussed earlier, the current study is exploratory in at least two ways. First, research regarding the general international high school student body is few and far between. Moreover, little is known about the sociocultural experiences that are specific to Chinese international students (of all educational levels), especially when it comes to intercultural friendship development with American students. Besides and related to its exploratory nature, a qualitative approach also enables researchers to achieve a deep understanding of the topic of interest (Trochim, 2006). The depth of understanding that a qualitative approach offers allows for the construction of knowledge based on the constructivist framework. Although generalizability is typically limited in qualitative research, as the gathered data tend to be specific, rich, and subjective, it allows researchers to gain a detailed understanding of a social phenomenon, which can be beneficial especially when the topic of interest is relatively novel.

In light of these characteristics and attributes, a qualitative approach is fitting for the current study. Ultimately, the experiences of interest were based on Chinese international high school students who are currently experiencing the lived experiences of studying abroad in the United States. Specifically, I, the researcher, was interested in how they have navigated the

process of intercultural friendship development with American students, and such experiences were constructed by individual participants based on a variety of factors (e.g., individual factors, past experiences, encountered situations, etc.). This complex nature aligns with and reflects the constructivist perspective, and a qualitative approach provides an appropriate way to make sense of the depth of participants' experiences.

Methodology and Research Design

The qualitative method that was used in this study is based on grounded theory, a set of qualitative methods that were specifically developed to generate theories inductively by Glaser and Strauss (Douglas, 2003; Reichertz, 2007). It is generally used to study social processes such as social relationships and group behaviors (Charmaz, 1996). It is “grounded” because theories that are generated through this methodological approach are grounded from data that has been systematically gathered and analyzed. Abstracted categories and/or theories are constructed inductively in grounded theory, and the process entails theoretical sensitivity on the part of the researcher. As Noble and Mitchell (2016) put it, “theoretical sensitivity refers to the insight of the researcher. It concerns the researcher being able to give meaning to data, understand what the data says, and being able to separate out what is relevant and what is not” (p. 34). Although personal factors play a role in a researcher's theoretical sensitivity, it is not the primary or only source of it. As Noble and Mitchell (2016) argued, a researcher's theoretical sensitivity is also rooted in an in-depth familiarity of literature regarding the phenomena of interest as well as sound data analysis that allows for understanding the phenomena. To aid in this process, the following research design was selected.

Aligning with the aforementioned epistemological considerations, the general design of a case study was used, and several factors contributed to the decision of choosing this design. First

of all, according to Yin (2014), a case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 2). Overall, a case study provides the researcher the flexibility to study and explore a relatively less examined topic of interest as well as individuals’ subjective perspectives. Given the goals of the present study, however, the specific design of a collective case study approach was chosen, as it provides the ability to compare several individual narratives (Shkedi, 2005). A collective case study is a study of a phenomenon that consisted of the examination of multiple cases and it allows the researcher to study similarities and differences between multiple cases in regard to the phenomenon of interest (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Overall, a qualitative case study design enables a deeper level of understanding and interpretation that is not possible through most experimental or survey design.

Participants and Setting

Participants were recruited from a religious private Midwestern high school, where the Chinese international student population is approximately 5% of the total student body (as of fall of 2017). The decision to recruit from a private high school was due to the fact that nearly 95% of international high school students attend private schools in the United States (Farrugia, 2014). Participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Babbie, 2013) – a sampling technique that can be used in qualitative research for studying social dynamics and networks, especially when the target population is difficult to locate. In snowball sampling, the researcher recruits members from the target population whom s/he can locate, and then asks those individuals to make use of their connections to refer to the researcher other members of the target population whom they happen to know. This is a non-probability sampling technique and is sometimes considered a type of accidental sampling (Babbie, 2013). The decision to employ snowball

sampling was based on the fact that it was difficult to locate members of the target population (i.e., Chinese international high school students). Twelve Chinese international high school students (approximately 25% of the Chinese international student population) participated in the study. In brief, there were five female and seven male participants. On average, participants' years of age was 16.83 (ranged from 16 to 18 years of age) and time spent in the U.S. was 1.92 years (ranged from 1-3 years in the country) at the time of the interview. It is worth noting that none of the participants recently arrived in the U.S. for the first time, and that all of them had spent at least one year in the United States. In addition, all but one participant came from mainland China.

The sociocultural context of the participants at the said high school was typical in some ways and unique in other ways. Socially, the said high school did not, at the time, provide specific and structured opportunities where international and American students are regularly encouraged to interact with one another (e.g., fellowships, gatherings, etc.). That being said, there were no particular contextual or structural barriers that prevent international and American students from interacting with one another. Natural opportunities to interact with one another were available during the school day (e.g., classes, lunch time, after-school sport and/or extracurricular activities, etc.).

Academically, depending on the English proficiency of the individual international student, they had the option to enroll in specially designed classes for international students who do not speak English as a native language, where the language requirements tended to be lower. However, such specially designed classes were only limited to the subjects of English and Religion, where international students would not be learning with American students. For all other classes (e.g., Algebra, Physics, Music, World History, etc.), however, there were no

specially designed classes and international students learned alongside with American students. Regarding their selection of classes, individual students would work with their advisors to decide.

As for living arrangements, international students lived neither with host families nor in dormitories (two common living arrangements for international high school students, both inside and outside of the United States). Instead, they lived in school-owned townhouses. Students were assigned to individual townhouses based on the same gender. In addition to students, each townhouse had either one or two house parents (either a single person or a married couple), who resided in the townhouse with the students. The arrangement within each townhouse was as follows: each townhouse had four separate units (a unit is similar to an apartment), with seven to nine students living in three of the four units and the house parent(s) living in one of the units. The role of the house parent(s) was similar to that of a dorm supervisor in that they enforced campus rules (e.g., curfews, study halls, etc.), but dissimilar in that they managed their townhouse more as a family, based on a combination of interpersonal approach with students as well as the close proximity they shared. For instance, they had regular scheduled times to gather with their students as a townhouse unit, and they shared the same living room with the students, where many daily encounters and small conversations occurred. It should also be noted that most house parents did not have other roles at the high school (e.g., teachers, coaches, deans, staff, etc.) and generally held a full-time job outside of the high school. For these reasons, the house parents could have a more relaxed relationship with the students compared to most other school staff while maintaining an authoritative and caring role over the students, as they were relatively removed from the students' academic environment. Overall, international students lived with one

to two house parents and about six to eight fellow international students in their assigned townhouses.

Study Procedure

I, the researcher, submitted a research protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in order to gain permission to conduct the current study. Reviewers from the IRB ensured that the current study meet expectations in multiple respects (e.g., ethical standards, recruitment and consent, data security and confidentiality, etc.) prior to granting the approval for conducting the study. Upon meeting all of IRB's requirements, a year-long approval was granted on May 17th of 2017 (please see Appendix A for the approval letter). Regarding the consent process, it was collected from participants who were of age (18 or above). As for participants who were below the age of 18, assent from the participants as well as consent from their guardians were collected for their participation. The same procedures were used to obtain participants' permission to audio record the interview. Upon obtaining consent, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant face-to-face at their high school. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half. Participants were offered the choice to interview in Chinese or English. One participant chose to interview in Chinese, and the rest of the participants chose to interview in English. Among interviews with participants who chose to conduct in English, Chinese was used on infrequent occasions to clarify specific terms (e.g., embassy, discrimination, etc.) or terms that do not have a clear English equivalent. The transcription process began once all interviews have been completed. The audio recordings were then used during both the transcription process as well as the review process to ensure accuracy.

Interviews Questions

As for the interview questions, they were designed by the researcher based on theories and related literature to capture the perspectives of Chinese international high school students (please see Appendix B), which address the two primary goals of this study: a) gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students and b) identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students. The researcher decided to design and employ this set of questions due to the lack of available question sets that explore the two specific research questions.

This set of self-developed questions consisted of several sources. First, it was written based on current literature related to acculturation. As discussed earlier, researchers have identified five most common acculturative stressors based on the experiences of international undergraduate and graduate students in various countries. Although these stressors are crucial to understanding the topic of acculturation, this study was only concerned with three of the five stressors that have been found to impact the focus of the present study directly, namely, intercultural friendship development between international and host-national students. These pertinent stressors are learning English as a non-native language (e.g., Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000), sociocultural stress (e.g., Chataway & Berry, 1989; Sawir et al., 2008), and discrimination (e.g., Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). As the interview questions show, the majority of the questions were structured based on these three areas. However, it should be noted that although the interview questions relate to acculturation and three of the five most common acculturative stressors, the goal of the interview was not to simply learn about participants' general acculturative experiences in the said areas. Rather, the goal was to study how their experiences in

these three specific areas impact them as they relate to a specific aspect of sociocultural adjustment, namely, intercultural friendship development with American students. In addition, as the interview questions show, explicit distinctions are made between three types of relationships, namely, acquaintances (i.e., people you know of, but have no personal relationships with), casual friends (i.e., you do fun things with them, but you don't share a strong personal relationship with them), and close friends (i.e., friends that you share a close relationship with). The interview questions focus specifically on participants' experiences in regard to casual friends and close friends.

The questions were first written based on previous research on the three acculturative stressors as well as intercultural friendship development that were discussed in the *Literature Review* section. A good portion of questions were written to directly inquire about participants' experience in learning English as a non-native language, sociocultural adjustment, and discrimination. There are also follow-up questions that were written to inquire about how their experiences in these areas affect their experience in intercultural friendship development with American students. Moreover, there are questions that were written to inquire about their overall experience with building intercultural friendships with their American peers. For instance, some researchers who examined intercultural friendships between international students and Americans have found that international students do not always feel connected to Americans, or that they feel they could not connect with Americans (e.g., Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013). Based on such findings, questions were added to inquire about participants' perspective on whether they feel fit in with their American peers, and what circumstances or factors contribute to their experience. Another example is that other researchers have found that international and host-national students are not typically drawn to members of the other group for friendships (e.g.,

Brown, 2009). Therefore, questions were added to inquire about participants' perception on their and American students' interest and willingness to be friends with one another.

In addition to these sources, the interview question set was also refined based on recommendations from the researcher's dissertation committee (i.e., narrowing the questions down to only those that are relevant to the research questions, adding additional questions that are rooted in pertinent literature, rewording some of the questions to be more open-ended). Together, these sources helped create an interview question set that addresses the two primary research goals more appropriately and concisely.

Data Analysis

This study is driven by a constructivist epistemology and employs a qualitative approach based on grounded theory. Given the narrative nature of the interview data, the method of constant comparison method (Glaser, 1965) was used to generate theories and themes that are grounded in the data. By analyzing the data using the constant comparative method, it allows the analysis to highlight various conditions, effects, and implications that surround the data. As stated by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008), constant comparison analysis allows the researcher to build theories, analyze data systematically as well as creatively, understand the data in multiple ways, and identify and create relationships among the data.

To achieve this, Corbin and Strauss (1990) provided some guidelines for analyzing data using the constant comparison method. Specifically, participants' responses were analyzed through the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding refers to the first step of a three-stage process, where coders independently examine the data to look for conceptually similar ideas expressed among participants' responses. Upon breaking down and examining the data, it is then conceptualized and categorized. These ideas are then grouped

together in distinct segments. Each segment is then given a descriptor, or “open code.” With this goal in mind, coders often examine the data repeatedly as they look for conceptually similar ideas that recur between the participants.

Once all the open codes have been created, coders then proceed to the next stage – axial coding. Whereas the goal of open coding is to create open codes based on conceptually similar ideas, the goal of axial coding is to make connections among open codes. In other words, coders seek to identify conditional, contextual, and/or other types of relationships between open codes. Open codes that relate to one another are grouped together to form a segment. Similar to what is done in open coding, each segment is then given a descriptor that highlights the identified relationship, or “axial code.”

Finally, coders work with the axial codes to form selective codes in the last stage. In some ways, the construction that occurs in axial coding continues in this stage, and selective coding is similar to axial coding in that coders identify a broader theme(s) or idea(s) that emerge from the data. This integrative process has a more summative or cumulative nature compared to that in the axial coding stage. For this reason, selective coding is built on the detailed development of categories that took place in open and axial coding. Based on such a foundation, the researcher can then select a core category that relates to and validates other sub-categories that first emerged through the coding process systematically.

Coders: Regarding the coding process in this study, two undergraduate students participated in the coding process along with the researcher. In order to recruit two qualified students to assist with the coding project, the researcher recruited through UWM’s Office of Undergraduate Research, where undergraduate applicants are interviewed, vetted, and if employed, matched with research projects that they are interested in and are qualified for

participating. Two student candidates were recommended to the researcher. Through individual meetings, each student coders further learned about the current study. It was also during these initial individual meetings that student coders were informed of the expectations on time-commitment (i.e., minimum of five hours each week, though student coders are encouraged to devote more time to the coding project if they are able to; student coders are not expected to work on the coding project during certain times during the semester such as midterms week, finals week, and holidays, etc.) and confines of their responsibility (i.e., student coders are expected to help analyze the data along with the researcher until the process is complete, but they are not expected to contribute to the actual writing of the researcher's dissertation). The understanding and agreement of both student coders thus commenced their participation in the data analysis.

Open Coding and Related Training: Upon recruitment and prior to engaging in the coding process, the student coders spent approximately six weeks to familiarize themselves with the interview transcripts. As Esterberg (2002) put it, this pre-coding stage is about “getting intimate with your data” (p. 157). She argued that for most researchers, perhaps some time has elapsed between the time they collected the data and the time when they would actually analyze it, so prior to working with the data, it is important to refresh one's familiarity with it. In the current case, it is even more important for the two coders to spend time to first immerse themselves in the data since they had no experience with it. The researcher did not specify or give instructions to the student coders on how many times they should read the transcripts as a whole. Rather, they were told to take the time they need to read them until they feel familiar with the interviews. From the time they received the interview transcripts, they researcher checked in with the student coders once every two weeks to gauge where the individual coder was in terms

of their familiarity with the interviews. In the end, both student coders took about six weeks to complete the process and read the interviews collectively three times. On the other hand, the researcher only read through the interviews once, since the researcher already had experience with the interviews through conducting them with the participants as well as transcribing each interview.

Once all coders had familiarized themselves with the interviews, the student coders received coding training from the researcher. As part of their training, the student coders first learned about each coding stage, its purpose, and its procedures from the researcher. Then, the student coders had practice on the specific procedures of open coding. To do that, the researcher presented excerpts of five different interviews from a qualitative study that he had conducted for his master's thesis to the two student coders, which all center on the same questions and topics. The student coders were first asked to read through the excerpts thoroughly. They were then asked to independently examine the excerpts and create open codes from the data. The student coders were asked to follow procedures for open coding as described previously, along with one criterion that an open code should be created based on recurring and similar responses and ideas that are expressed by half of or more participants (50% or more). In this training practice, it would be at least three out of five participants given the uneven number of excerpts. In other words, any recurring and similar responses and ideas that were expressed by less than three participants should not be used to create an open code. The student coders were also asked to document any participant responses they use to support their open codes as they go through the process, so that they can demonstrate how they developed each open code. Moreover, student coders were instructed to only code what is explicitly stated within its context by participants. Responses from participants that could be inferred but were not explicitly stated were not coded.

For instance, consider the following example from this study regarding an open code with the descriptor “Chinese international and American high school students initiate conversations evenly:”

[Participant 2 – Interviewer] Do you or they (*American students*) usually start the conversation?

[Participant 2] I don’t know. We usually just talk about things. I think it’s kind of even. We both start that sometimes.

[Participant 7 – Interviewer] Do you or do the American students usually start the conversations?

[Participant 7] I think most time, this year, is American students, but last year, is me. I always talk with the American students. Sometimes the American students talk with me.

In this case, the response from Participant 2 would be included as support for the said code, and the response from Participant 7 would be excluded. Although Participant 2 began the response with “I don’t know,” it is reasonably clear that the response indicates evenness in response to the question. In contrast, one may argue that the same evenness could be inferred from Participant 7’s response, but given how the indication is not reasonably clear, it would not be included as support for the said open code. Thus, coders were instructed to only include responses that directly support the descriptor in open coding. Certainly, not all situations can be easily decided upon, which is why, as I will discuss shortly, all coders would discuss and decide as a team regarding any disagreements that emerged from the coding process in this study.

The excerpts used for the practice were from the researcher’s master’s thesis, which included open codes that were identified by the researcher and his coders from the previous study. Subsequently, they were used as “answer guide” to evaluate the student coders’ work. Given that each individual has her/his writing style, stylistic differences in how the student coders wrote their descriptors were not considered differences, so long as the differences in wording do not entail differences in the meaning of the open code(s). For instance, the same

open code could be preliminarily coded as a) “Having experienced discrimination in the U.S.,” b) “Participants reported discrimination since their arrival,” and c) “Perceived discrimination by locals.” Although the choice of wording to capture participants’ responses is different among the three coders, the general idea that participants have felt discrimination in the U.S. is the same. Once the team was certain that their open codes indicate the same idea, the said open code was considered an agreement. The team then moved on to other open codes and returned at a later time to refine the wording of each descriptor together. Using the same example, the team of coders may later decide collectively to reword the open code descriptor to "Participants reported to have experienced or perceived discrimination by individuals in the United States."

Given the somewhat straightforward criterion (i.e., coding recurring and similar responses and ideas that are explicitly expressed by half of or more participants), student coders were expected to identify all and the same open codes that the researcher had for the excerpts. For this particular exercise, each of the five excerpts was no more than four pages long, and there was a total of four target open codes that the student coders were expected to identify, which they did. In addition to identifying the same open codes, the student coders were also evaluated for their ability to use the appropriate evidence to support their open codes, namely, responses or quotes from participants that directly speak to the descriptor. Although this aspect is comparatively less ambiguous than the naming of a descriptor, as it does not involve the individual coder’s choice of words, it is perhaps, at times, the more complicated aspect in open coding, as it involves the individual coder’s judgment on what evidence is to be used to support an open code. As mentioned previously, student coders were instructed to only use what is explicitly stated by participants, and in less clear-cut instances, personal judgment is needed to determine whether a response should be used. That said, some variations of what is documented

or quoted are considered typical. For instance, a coder may simply quote a single direct line of response that sufficiently supports an open code, whereas another coder may include statements that come before and/or after the same direct line of response (e.g., a question from the interviewer that precedes the response of interest, a follow up statement from the interviewer, etc.). In either case, it is considered acceptable as long as the individual coder includes the participant's response that directly supports the open code descriptor. Once the student coders demonstrated that they understand the appropriate procedures and successfully applied them in the training, the researcher and the student coders proceeded to open coding.

Although student coders were encouraged to open code as much as they are able to, the researcher did not prescribe a specific timeline during which student coders must complete open coding. Rather, student coders were asked to take the time they need to code thoroughly based on the aforementioned criteria (i.e., coding recurring and similar responses and ideas that are explicitly expressed by half of or more participants). The researcher periodically checked in with the student coders to gauge their progress about once every two weeks. Excluding periods of time such as midterms week, finals weeks, holidays, and the like, in the end, the three coders took approximately between eight to nine weeks to produce their respective set of open codes.

Intercoder Reliability on Open Codes: Intercoder reliability refers to the measure for assessing the degree to which each coder makes the same decisions when analyzing the data (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). It allows the researcher to check the extent of homogeneity or consensus between or among more than one coder. Intercoder reliability is also important for ensuring the data's validity and reliability.

There does not seem to be an abundant number of examples of research studies that establishes intercoder reliability by using more than one coder to analyze interview or similar

text-based data. Campbell et al. (2013) echoed this sentiment, stating that for how much has been written about intercoder reliability in general, there is surprisingly little that has been written about it when it comes to coding text-based data (see also Olson, McAllister, Grinnell, Gehrke Walters, & Appunn, 2016). The lack of guidelines and discussions is perhaps one of the reasons why few researchers who utilize text-based data establish intercoder reliability. That said, some researchers have reported intercoder reliability on text-based data to ensure validity and reliability (e.g., Newell, Newell, & Looser, 2013a; Newell, Newell, & Looser, 2013b). In addition to the infrequent application of intercoder reliability on text-based data, Campbell et al. (2013) also argued that even when they report such a reliability, researchers do not typically elaborate on how it is established and/or assessed.

In light of this, the researcher took different steps to establish and measure intercoder reliability among the three coders in the current study. Specifically, intercoder reliability was assessed after each coder had independently produced their respective set of open codes. Since subsequent steps in the coding process (e.g., connecting related open codes to create axial codes) are relatively interpretative, it is essential to ensure that the outcome of this initial transformation (i.e., open codes generated from the interviews) possesses an acceptable level of intercoder reliability or reproducibility (the consideration of what is acceptable will be discussed shortly). Until coders achieved an acceptable level of agreement, the coders did not attempt to resolve any disagreements by discussing the actual content of their open codes conceptually (i.e., discussing each other's rationale for creating an open code, discussing each other's rationale for including/excluding certain participants' responses as support for an open code). Instead, the researcher and the two student coders focused on ensuring that all coders are following the same criteria and coding procedures until their work share an acceptable level of agreement. This was

done to provide additional safeguard to maintain each coder's objectivity. In fact, the researcher and the two student coders realized there were some procedural inconsistencies during this stage and some coding procedures and criteria were revisited and clarified before they re-coded and reconvened. For instance, it was discussed that both general and specific recurring ideas should be coded (e.g., if participants expressed they experienced difficulty with the English language in general as well as specific aspects such as speaking and listening, create individual open codes for each, as participants do not all experience difficulty with the English language in the same way). It was also reemphasized that open codes should not be based on inferences, but only ideas that are explicitly stated.

Then, to determine such a level of intercoder reliability, the three coders met with their respective open codes and used Krippendorff's (2011) alpha (Kalpha) reliability estimate to determine their level of consensus. In brief, Kalpha is specifically designed to measure the agreement among multiple (any numbers of two or more) raters, observers, judges, and the like. Some researchers have reported percent agreement among coders as a measure of intercoder reliability, but as Krippendorff (2004) reported, some scholars have argued that it is an overly liberal index, as it does not account for chance agreement. Although there is not an agreed-upon "best" index, Kalpha is an appropriate measure of intercoder reliability for the current study for a number of reasons. As Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2002) stated, Kalpha is capable of assessing the reliability of any number of coders. It accounts for the chance of agreement and is designed to work with variables at different levels of measurement, from nominal to ratio. Although Cohen's kappa (1960, 1968) also accounts for chance agreement, it is only designed to measure agreement between two coders (Fleiss & Cohen, 1969). Given the current study had three coders, Kalpha (Krippendorff, 2011) was chosen to measure intercoder reliability.

Each open code that all coders have identified was considered an agreement. As discussed, different wording for the descriptor or code was acceptable, but the meaning behind the descriptor or code must be the same. Moreover, evidence used to support each open code must also be the same. In other words, each coder would use the same supporting statements/responses from participants to support the same open code. Conversely, a code was considered to be a disagreement if it did not meet both of the criteria above (i.e., all coders have a descriptor that shares the same meaning, all coders use the same participants' statements/responses to support the descriptor/open code).

As for what is considered an acceptable level of agreement, the researcher turned to current literature for guidelines regarding alpha coefficients. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), an acceptable alpha value is typically reported to range from 0.70 to 0.95. Other scholars, such as Gliem and Gliem (2003), argued that an alpha value of 0.80 is generally a reasonable goal to aim for regarding reliability. They further explained that the increase of an alpha value is partly influenced by the number of assessed items, but that the effect has diminishing returns. However, as Tavakol and Dennick (2011) argued, if the alpha value is too high (e.g., beyond 0.95), it may be an indication that some items are redundant, and therefore, they recommended a maximum alpha value of 0.90. In addition, George and Mallery (2016) provided the following guidelines regarding alpha values: “ $\alpha > .9$ – Excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – Good, $\alpha > .7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > .5$ – Poor, and $\alpha < .5$ – Unacceptable” (p. 240). Considering all of these guidelines and arguments, the researcher aimed for a level of intercoder reliability of an alpha value between 0.8 to 0.95 for the open codes.

For the present study, the Kalpha (Krippendorff, 2011) value was calculated with a statistical software program named SPSS, along with a pre-programed macro for calculating the

Kalpa value written by Hayes (n.d.) as well as a step-by-step instruction guide to use the macro by De Swert (2012). Using these instructions and tools, it was measured that the three coders reached a level of agreement of a Kalpa value of 0.89 for their 49 identified open codes across the twelve interviews (please see Appendix C for more detailed results and the syntax for the calculation).

After reaching an acceptable level of intercoder reliability (e.g., Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; George & Mallery, 2016), the coders now had the foundational agreement to discuss the actual content of the open codes in order to resolve remaining disagreement and refining the open codes. To do so, the researcher and the student coders first discussed their disagreements and decided the course of action for each (i.e., keeping or discarding an open code; whether a particular participant's response should be included as support for a particular open code). During the discussion, each coder shared their perspectives as well as their rationales for each proposed action. Afterwards, decisions were made using the majority rule (two out of three votes) if the three coders are unable to reach a consensus. In this specific process, all coders were able to reach a consensus on what was the best course of action for each disagreement once they had discussed and considered all perspectives and rationales. In addition, they collaborated to refine the descriptors of the remaining codes. This was done because of the variations of descriptors that was generated by three individual coders. For instance, using the same example that was discussed earlier, the same open code could be preliminarily coded by the coders as a) "Having experienced discrimination in the U.S.," b) "Participants reported discrimination since their arrival," and c) "Perceived discrimination by locals." Through the refinement process, the team may come to the consensus that the descriptor of this open code should be reworded to "Participants reported to have experienced or perceived

discrimination by individuals in the United States." Similar to the process of resolving remaining disagreements on open codes, all coders were able to reach a consensus on how each open code should be worded once they had discussed and considered all perspectives and rationales. This, however, did not yet complete the open coding stage. Aware of the psychological phenomenon of groupthink, the researcher and student coders intentionally took a weeklong break from open coding and reconvened afterwards to reassess whether there were any remaining questions, concerns, and/or disagreements. As Janis (1982) defined it, the term groupthink is "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action" (p. 9). According to Janis (1982), one of the most effective strategies to combat groupthink is to delay making the final decision, that groups should take some time off, then to reconvene prior to settling on their final decision. In doing so, this allows for group members to consider the initial agreements and/or decisions they have made individually and to discuss any remaining uncertainties. Once the researcher and the two coders were sure that there are no remaining questions, concerns, and/or disagreements, they proceeded to the next coding stage – axial coding.

Axial Coding and Related Training:

The student coders received training on axial coding prior to starting their work in this stage. Procedurally speaking, whereas open coding is developing descriptors for segments of recurring statements or ideas from participants, axial coding is developing descriptors from segments of connected open codes. Given the procedural similarity between open and axial coding, the training that student coders received for axial coding was relatively brief compared to the training for open coding and was instruction-based. The researcher taught the student coders

how to perform axial coding and used materials from the aforementioned master's thesis to illustrate the procedures.

Since the task of axial coding is to make connections among open codes, coders now independently examined and identified relationships between the open codes. To do so, open codes that relate to one another were grouped together to form a segment. Similar to what is done in open coding, each segment was then given a descriptor, or "axial code." As Corbin and Strauss (1990) argued, an identified relationship "must be indicated by the data over and over again" (p. 13). They, however, did not quantify that condition or provide specific guidelines as to how much data is needed to support an identified relationship. This is likely due to the varying nature of qualitative studies. They did, however, argue that one single occurrence is insufficient support for an axial code. With that in mind, the researcher specifically chose to use at least three (or more) open codes as support for forming each axial code. This was done to help ensure that any axial codes would have considerable support. Since axial codes do not all share the same number of open codes as support, open codes do not necessarily all get used in this stage. Open codes that do not have enough related codes for forming an axial code were thus discarded at the end of the axial coding stage. The three coders took approximately between two to four weeks to complete axial coding.

There appears to be few agreed-upon guidelines regarding how disagreements should be resolved when multiple coders are involved. Therefore, the researcher took several steps to ensure that the collaborative process remains as objective and as quality-oriented as possible as the three coders worked to resolving their disagreements and unifying the axial codes. Once each coder had independently completed axial coding, student coders were asked to share their work with the researcher. The researcher then shared all three versions of axial codes in their

deidentified form with the student coders. The three coders spent approximately two weeks to critically consider each set of axial codes, and each coder was expected to share their perspectives and rationales for each identified axial code from all three axial code sets at the meeting (e.g., whether the code captures the interviews accurately, whether the use of open codes is appropriate for the given axial code, if/how the axial code can be refined, etc.). Decisions were made after the discussion, once again using the majority rule. For axial codes that were identified by all three coders, the decision lied in refining the descriptors. For instance, with the same use of open codes as support, each coder identified an axial code that was preliminarily coded as a) Experiences the most interaction with American students involving school-related activities or subjects, b) Have regular contact with American students at school, and c) Reported most interactions with Americans were during school-related activities. Upon discussing and considering the original responses and statements from participants, the three coders reached a consensus to reword the axial code descriptor to “Participants have regular interactions with American students during school activities.” For other codes that were not identified by all three coders, the decision lied in organizing the codes in a way that best represents the participants. In some of such cases, the coders picked between similar axial codes that were generated between the three coders. In other cases where coders were not completely satisfied with the existing options, they re-coded to produce axial codes that represent the data more accurately. This process was productive in unifying the axial codes, especially since the three coders already shared a high degree of familiarity with the data, achieved a strong level of foundational agreement, and had gone through the axial coding procedures independently. To guard against groupthink, the researcher once again gave the team a week to consider the outcome of the meeting. After confirming that there are no remaining questions, concerns, and/or disagreements

on the 14 unified axial codes, the three coders proceeded to the final coding stage – selective coding.

Selective Coding:

Given the procedural similarities, the researcher did not provide separate training for the student coders regarding selective coding. Selective coding is similar to axial coding in that coders' task in this stage is to identify core ideas that connects all the data. As such, any core ideas that emerge from this stage should represent an essential phenomenon among the data. As Corbin and Strauss (1990) stated, a core idea and its subcategories should always stand in relationship to each other. A coder's familiarity with the overall data, therefore, is crucial for identifying core ideas. At the same time, these core ideas should also emerge systematically from the coding process (i.e., open and axial codes). Axial codes that are connected to one another by a core idea were grouped together to form a segment, and each segment was then given a descriptor, or "selective code." Given the comparatively conclusive nature of selective codes, descriptors that are given to selective codes to elaborate these core ideas are sometimes longer than those given to open and axial codes, especially when explanations are needed to explain any observed actions, interactions, and/or variations among the data. Once the three coders have independently completed this stage, they employed essentially the same procedures that were used at the end of the axial coding stage to resolve any discrepancies and unify the selective codes, followed by a week of consideration time prior to confirming the four finalized selective codes that emerged from this coding stage.

In addition, the researcher sought comments and recommendations on the finalized coding scheme from some of the dissertation committee members after the coding process was completed with the student coders. The structure and progression of the coding scheme were

considered to be acceptable, and the researcher received suggestions regarding the wording and length of certain selective codes. These suggestions focused on expanding and clarifying some of the word choices to better depict the target phenomenon as well as aligning the language with the broader current literature regarding peer relations. The researcher applied these suggestions, which helped to capture the overall sense and progression of the coding scheme more precisely as well as aligning the descriptors more with pertinent current literature. These resulting selective codes from the data analysis will now be examined in the *Results* section.

Results

A total of four themes (selective codes) emerged from the data. Themes 1, 2, and 3 provide insights to the first research question (i.e., gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students), and themes 1 and 4 provide insights to the second research question (i.e., identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students). Specific categories (axial codes) that make up each theme, will be expanded with the concomitant sub-categories (open codes), along with some relevant excerpts from interviews with participants that help highlight the narrative. Following this examination, a detailed discussion on how these results answer the two primary research questions as well as their broader implications on the topic of intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American students are discussed.

Theme 1: Despite having experienced various acculturative stressors as they interacted with Americans, there were factors and conditions that are conducive to intercultural friendship development between Chinese international and American high school students.

The first theme provides insights into both research questions and is consisted of a total of four axial codes and thirteen open codes.

Negative acculturative experiences did not negatively impact their desire to be

friends with American students: As discussed in the *Literature Review* section, international students sometimes experience acculturative stressors that can negatively impact their adjustment in the host country, including developing intercultural friendships with host-national students. Participants' responses revealed that they have experienced some of these acculturative stressors. First, they reported to have experienced difficulty with the English language in general:

[Participant 1] Ah... so, listening part, it's like harder than the TOEFL test we took (*a standardized test much like the SAT or ACT, but is focused exclusively on English language abilities, specifically in the areas of speaking, reading, listening, and writing*). Cause, the TOEFL test is more standardized, but in here, it's like, like everybody has their accents, or just everything's not the same, in a mode, instead of they're just like quite different, everywhere, you can see any people doing different things, and speaking different things, and you can like, for me, first arrive here is like, I cannot quite understand. After the first semester in here, I didn't know happening around me, so it took over 4 months to get into, but that's not quite a long time because I friend take almost a year to get to it. And sometimes they can speak fast. Like rap, there's like rhythm like there's like different... sometime I don't even recognize they're speaking or singing and I wonder "are you listening to me?" (*laughter from participant*)

[Participant 4] I was very nervous. I didn't know what to say, and I only know to do basic greetings, like say "hi" or "hello," "how are you?"... Reading professional articles was also hard, like geography, I've so many unknown terms... To use high level words in daily talks conversations was hard.

Second, they reported to have felt stress or anxious speaking English to Americans:

[Participant 1 – Interviewer] Have you ever felt stressed or anxious talking to Americans?

[Participant 1]: Yea sometimes when I don't really remember a word I want to talk about. You know sometimes you wanna talk about but you only remember the Chinese, but you cannot talk the Chinese to them! Just like they're speaking Spanish to you, you cannot understand, and I'd be like... "what am I going to say?"... Yea and also kind of sometimes awkward cause sometimes you speak so fast then you just accidentally you stop, and everybody looking at you, and it's like... ahhhhhhhhhh.

[Participant 2] Yea! I don't know, sometimes I feel in a really weird way, while I was listening to others conversations, when they talk to me, suddenly, I don't understand them... Maybe because I didn't understand them, and then I can't reply back.

Other than experiencing language barriers, participants also reported to have perceived discrimination from Americans:

[Participant 1] I think sometimes it means treats Asians or Chinese people differently (*by Americans*), cause sometimes some American students don't quite understand the study aboard means, they probably think about it's not your original language so you can't understand it, and sometimes they right in front of me talking about bad things in front of me, and I'm like... "alright..."

[Participant 2] Yea... when we go shopping, they just don't care about us. They talk to everyone else, but not to us. It doesn't happen all the time, but sometimes people look at us differently. Sometimes I can't tell if they think we'll steal stuff of something, but it's not a good way they look at us. It's like, you know when people put their stuff behind them to protect, they do that sometimes when we are around them. I don't know, it feels very weird.

In addition to having experienced or perceived discrimination from Americans, one participant also recalled an account where he witnessed a fellow Chinese international student being discriminated against by an American student with some physical aggression:

[Participant 6] Can I talk about my friends' experience? I won't mention names.

[Participant 6 – Interviewer] Oh yes, yes. Like what they experienced?

[Participant 6] Yes. I think they're just in locker room, and when he is going to try something, I don't know the specificity, but he was just trying to get something from others, and one of the Americans just come here and push him and said, "Get out, you Asian."

The above experiences align with what has been noted in previous research regarding acculturative stressors for international students, specifically in the areas of learning English as a non-native language as well as discrimination (e.g., Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000; Lee & Rice, 2007). Although one may expect some negative impact to accompany these experiences regarding intercultural friendship development with American students, participants' responses indicated otherwise. When asked by the interviewer how the participant's difficulty with the English language impact their interest or ability in making friends with American students, participants reported it does not negatively impact the friendship development process:

[Participant 2] I mean, still now, it's still really hard to fit in, but I mean, now it's better, cause I know we think differently. We have different things to talk about. Even now that's true... I think, no. It's not the point. I mean, still like there're people, even if we don't talk, we're still pretty good friends. They take care of me.

[Participant 6] I don't think so. I think most Americans they'll understand, because they know you're not native speakers, so sometimes even though you might not very understand what they are saying, they will explain it to you.

As to how having felt stressed speaking English impact their desire and ability to develop intercultural friendships with American students, participants reported that such a negative emotional state does not impact the friendship development process:

[Participant 7] When I get bad experience, I think, in my opinion, I want to get better, I need to chat with people. I can't just stay at home, I think. And try to learning American people saying. Try to join their group, like when they go out to have some club activity, I go with them. And spend more time together, and talk together, and don't wanna be shy about something like that... So I still make friends. Maybe I am nervous sometime, but I still want to make friends.

[Participant 9] I don't think so. Cause I think it's a kind of motivation for me personally. Cause I'm a really challenge person. I like to do the things I can't do, so when I think I can't communicate with them, or I can't be friend with them, I will just keep trying for me to involve in the group, so it's kind of good for me.

Participants were also asked about the impact of discrimination, and they reported that their negative experiences do not impact their desire or ability in being friends with American students:

[Participant 6 – Interviewer] (*Regarding discrimination*) Tell me how these experiences affected your interest or ability in making friends with Americans.

[Participant 6] Probably none. That's just some persons, not all Americans... I mean, I know some Americans are bad, but I know not all of them are bad people. Many are good Americans. Like I said, some of them are outgoing and friendly. I like nice Americans.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] Does your experience with being discriminated influence your interest and ability in making friends with American students?

[Participant 11] No, actually. I mean, I wouldn't want to make friends with those who discriminated against me, but that doesn't apply to others who don't do that.

Participants did not perceive linguistic or fundamental barriers in making friends with Americans: As mentioned in the above category, participants reported having felt stress speaking English, yet such a negative accompanying emotional state did not impact their intercultural friendship development with American students. Related to that, linguistically, participants shared they have experienced or are experiencing difficulty in conversing in English, but they also reported that they do not perceive their lack of fluency in the language negatively impacts their desire or ability in being friends with American students:

[Participant 2] I don't think my English made it hard to friend them.

[Participant 3] I don't think so. Cause most of the American students they know you're not good at language, so they can understand sometimes you need to repeat your words, or sometimes like you use some words are not very fit to the situation.

Another area where participants did not seem to perceive a barrier is the concept of friendship between the Chinese and American cultures:

[Participant 11] I think they are the same thing, haha. No differences.

[Participant 12 - Interviewer] ... And as for the definition of friendship, do you think it differs between the two cultures?

[Participant 12] No, I don't think so.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So you believe they are in essence the same thing, or similar?

[Participant 12] Yes.

Participants had regular interactions with American students during school activities: When asked how often they interact with American students, participants shared they do so every day:

[Participant 5] Pretty much every day.

[Participant 10] I still speak English every day with Americans, but there's a lot of Chinese between that.

When participants were asked to elaborate on when and where they interact with American students the most, one of the specific circumstances they shared is during classes:

[Participant 1] Every day... every minute, haha... During classes and also in the hallway cause sometimes you know say hi, hello, or just like in the class to do group work, or sometimes you're discussing work in class, how you would do some work.

[Participant 5] I'd say class period, like group talk, project or something, or during studying hall.

And the other specific circumstance they shared is during extracurricular activities:

[Participant 8] ...I'm in tech team. My team is like, beside L, he's Chinese, he's from A. Beside him, my two teammates are Americans, so everyday morning, it's our team in charge, so I need to talk to my team what we are going to do, and after school, what meetings we need to set up, in the cafeteria, microphone, cord connector, phones or something. That's our job, so I need to talk to them. Which channel I should plug in, like that...

[Participant 10] So last year when I first few weeks got here, it was really hard to talk with people because the school system here is when the bell ring you come and go, ring again and you go out, change the class, and there's no time to talk with people, and the time when I really talk to people is when I'm in swimming team, like there's a lot of time to talk, and after that I start to see people in my class on my team and I start to know people, or sometimes in other classes we sit in a group, then know people from my group.

Participants believed a variety of psychosocial factors to be important for developing friendships: For participants who reported to have Chinese and/or American friends, they were asked to share why they were friends with some but not other Chinese/American peers, factors that go beyond one's national and/or cultural origins that contribute to friendship development. Several factors emerged from participants' responses, namely the quality of being helpful, the condition of physical proximity, and the characteristics of having matched personality and/or shared interest(s). First, the quality of being helpful:

[Participant 1] ... like E is kind of like a super cool straight A student, sometimes I've questions on my school work, and I need to ask her, and she's so good to help, and just like, "thank you!" and F, she's like the living helper, it's like, if you've anything, like making your kitchen clean, she'll be helping. Also, if you've anything that you can't go through, you can talk to her, she'll be with you, even though it's not good to hear, she'll let you know what you need to hear, good advice.

[Participant 4] ... In general they're very kind. If you ask them about math problems, they'll be very willing to help you, as you know English is not our first language, we can't really help you with English, but everything else, if we know, we can help.

Second, the condition of physical proximity:

[Participant 4] I think the answer to this question will be cause to me, I live with some old boys before (*male Chinese international students*), I knew their, what they like to do, and so we can kind of have common hobbies, but to those new international students, the reason why I don't really interact with them is because I don't really know about them, cause I don't live with them, and that's about it... Main reason will be I don't have class with them. If I've a class with lots of American students, I'll try my best to make friends with each of them, but if I do not have the same class with them, or even same homeroom with them, like I said, I've very little chance to interact with them. That's the main reason.

[Participant 11] Well, I live with a lot of them, like the guys, so it's a no-brainer that we are friends. For some other ones, we are friends because we have the same interests, like playing basketball or video games, and our personalities click. We can trust and talk to each other when we need to. Sometimes they fit all these characteristics, too.

Third, the characteristic of having matched personality:

[Participant 2] It's actually because of personalities. Some of them I just get along with. We just get along, but some of them I can from their words, their actions, I know like we don't get along with each other, even though I can be kind to them.

[Participant 3] (*In Chinese*) For this question, I'll use Chinese to answer.

[Participant 3 – Interviewer] (*In Chinese*) Feel free.

[Participant 3] (*In Chinese*) Because I'm afraid I won't express my thoughts clearly in English. So I think part of it has to do with my personality. For some people, they consider someone a friend as long as our relationship is decent, but for me personally, I only consider someone a friend if I'm really close with him/her relationally. So that might have to do with my personality. Then, if we aren't friends, then I likely won't care as much about how they feel and think. For

the most part, I'm friends with some of them and not others because our personalities match.

And fourth, the characteristic of having shared interest(s):

[Participant 6] ... Most of them like basketball. Most boys like that. Also playing video games, watching movies, animate. I think basically common interests...

[Participant 8] ... I think it's common interest because we have different personalities. Sometimes we argue, but it doesn't matter. We like the same hobbies.

In summary, the first theme provides some insights into both research questions. First, participants in this study had experienced acculturative stressors as they adjusted in the U.S., yet such acculturative stress did not appear to negatively impact their desire nor ability in making friends with American students. Second, participants did not perceive linguistic and fundamental barriers in making friends with American students. Third, participants had regular interactions with American students. Last but not least, participants believed a variety of psychosocial factors contribute to friendship development in general. Together, they paint a picture that despite having experienced acculturative stress that resulted from interacting with Americans, there were factors and conditions that are conducive to intercultural friendship development between Chinese international and American high school students. It should be noted that in regard to the second research question, the examined factors in the first theme did not directly encourage or discourage intercultural friendship development between the two student groups. However, as we continue to examine the remaining themes, and as their implication will be further examined in *Discussion*, it will become clearer as to why they are factors that matter to this intercultural process.

Theme 2: Participants perceived friendships with fellow Chinese students to be important and a protective factor for studying abroad.

The second theme contributes to the overall understanding of intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students and consisted of a total of three axial and nine open codes.

Participants had experienced linguistic stress as they studied in the United States:

Already reported in the first theme (as contextual support), participants reported to have experienced difficulty with the English language in general and that they have felt stress speaking English. Yet, they did not seem to perceive that to negatively impact their friendship development with American students. Their difficulty with English, however, appeared to have some influence on their relationships with fellow Chinese international students, as will be examined shortly in this same theme, and the two aspects of English that seemed to have such impact are speaking and listening:

[Participant 2] It's hard to understand, maybe, and there's not much conversations, like, there was conversations, but like, it's just, I cannot understand... speaking wasn't easy for me... Like vocabularies... I think it's like don't understand the words.

[Participant 3] Kind of struggling, like when you talk with some American students, you can't understand the words they're talking about, just sometimes it's struggle like how I can talk with some, how I can help them understand what I'm saying.

Participants had experienced sociocultural stress as they studied in the United

States: Already mentioned in the first theme (as contextual support), participants reported to have experienced discrimination from Americans. On the other hand, participants shared that they have experienced homesickness during their time in the United States:

[Participant 1] ... Yeaaaa... like especially during the Chinese festivals, cause whenever I see my father and mother post some pictures to their memory, I was just like "how can you guys do this without me?"

[Participant 7] ... Yes. Last year, I want to see the mental doctor. Because I always get low grade, have headache, throw up, and stomach ache, and like 2 – 3 months, almost 1 month is at home, but my host parent say “you can’t just do that,” he told me we need to meet with mental health doctor, and when done for that, I feel better, but it seems for this year coming here, until right now, last week I still feel, not homesick, but not comfortable.

Furthermore, participants also shared their experience of not feeling fit in with American students when they cannot connect with them socially:

[Participant 2 – Interviewer] What makes you feel you don’t fit in with American students? If you feel that way ever?

[Participant 2] Yes. When I stayed with my host family, like even when we were, when her friends take us to school, when they talking about stuff, it’s like I feel I’m not being included. It’s just like they talk about things I don’t understand. They don’t really take care of me because, yea...

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] ... And when do you feel you don’t fit in with them, or what makes you feel that?

[Participant 5] If you’re in a group they don’t really ask you anything, and you just feel like, ok... they don’t really like me... You think they don’t care about you.

Participants perceived Chinese friendships to be important during their stay in the United States: As part of the interview, participants were asked to choose one of four descriptions that most accurately describes them. The options are A) Having Chinese friends is not very important to me. I would like to have more American friends, B) Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I have no interest in making friends with American students, C) Having Chinese friends is not very important to me, and I have no interest in making friends with American students, and D) Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I would also like to have more American friends. Participants chose option D. As to why they perceive Chinese friends to be important in the U.S., they shared, as one of the reasons, that Chinese friends help with dealing with homesickness:

[Participant 1] ... Some of them (*Chinese international students*) will buy me some snacks, Chinese snacks, but for American friends, they’ll just like, “I

understand you,” they’ll tell me some experiences they have and how you try to solve it... as I said before, if we have Chinese like friends, you got support from them, when you’re, whatever, homesick, birthday party, and just get support from them... if you’re hanging out with Chinese friends, you’ve like you’re homesick feeling, you can feel like you’re still in China sometimes.

[Participant 8 - Interviewer] Have you ever felt lonely or homesick in the U.S.?

[Participant 8] Haha, no.

[Participant 8 - Interviewer] Do you think having friends helps with not feeling that way?

[Participant 8] Of course! Most American friends who will talk to me about something, or I feel not lonely, and when I went back to dorm home, I’ve Chinese friends here, so of course I can’t feel lonely. We eat together, we play together, we have the same language and culture. You feel home.

Participants also shared that they find Chinese friends to be important because they share the same language and cultural familiarity:

[Participant 4] ... I think it’s good to have Chinese friends because we speak same language and have same culture. We understand each other. But like I said, now I’m in the U.S., so we should have American friends. They help us... So if I have a task, like TOEFL test in a month, so during this month, I will try to have conversations with my American friends, as much as possible, to get my speaking improved. If it’s for fun, then I prefer Chinese students more because we have the same culture. It’s easier to talk to them...

[Participant 6] We have the same culture and we speak the same language. I think it’s good we understand our own country people. We can help each other in the U.S.

In summary, participants shared they have experienced linguistic stress as they study in the United States. They also shared they have experienced sociocultural stress during their stay. Last but not least, participants perceived Chinese friendships to be important, particularly for how they offer linguistic and cultural familiarity as well as how they can help deal with homesickness as they study in the United States. Together, these factors paint a picture that participants valued friendships with fellow Chinese students and perceived such friendships to be a protective factor for studying abroad. This perception will be further discussed later as to how

it can impact intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students.

Theme 3: Participants valued friendships with American students and perceived such friendships to be instrumental for adjusting to the United States.

The third theme also contributes to the first research question and is consisted of a total of two axial and seven open codes.

Participants valued friendships with American students: Already reported in the second theme as contextual support, participants reported that the description “Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I would also like to have more American friends” most accurately describes them. When asked specifically if they would encourage fellow Chinese students to be friends with American students, they expressed that they would:

[Participant 2] Yea! I actually, when people talk with my American friends, they just like being so weird, like the Chinese students will say “oh you’re not Chinese anymore,” like “you’re not in our group anymore because you talk with American friends.”

[Participant 2 – Interviewer] Now do they actually mean that, or do they joke about it?

[Participant 2] I mean, some people say it, and some don’t, because some people don’t like them to make American friends, so when they saw people making American friends, they don’t like that.

[Participant 2 – Interviewer] So they actually mean it, that to them, you can only be friends with one group of people?

[Participant 2] Yea.

[Participant 2 – Interviewer] So if you were to encourage them to befriend American students, what would you say are the reasons why? Like why should you befriend them?

[Participant 2] Well like there are so many nice (*American*) people, and I don’t want them to think about them in a negative way, cause I hear that a lot, and I don’t like people saying that about American students.

[Participant 6] Well, yes. Because I think you’re at least in the U.S., and you choose to be in the U.S. You should just like learn more about American culture and be friends in the U.S.

[Participant 6 – Interviewer] Just because you’re here?

[Participant 6] No. It's not a bad thing, if you say "I don't like to make friends with them." That's fine, but you should try. It's good, and it can help you be in the U.S.

[Participant 6 – Interviewer] So having friends would help you adapt to the U.S.? What about Chinese students who didn't choose to come to the U.S.? Would you still encourage them to make friends with Americans?

[Participant 6] I'd say yes, because even though you may be force to come here, so just make it useful. Don't give up yourself. You're here already. Things are not all going to the way you expect, so even though not really like just connecting to your force in the U.S., you still need to do it, so why not just make it a better result in the U.S. Make the best of it.

Related to that, participants reported that they would advise fellow Chinese students to take the initiative to approach American students for friendship:

[Participant 2] I think firstly you have to be, don't be shy, I mean just when you meet people that is not nice, just ignore it, trying to still be nice to people, and join school activities, cause that's how most people make friends with others, then trying to talk with them, maybe sometimes just try to see what they're interesting, but if they aren't comfortable with it, don't do it, and be happy. I mean, don't force it.

[Participant 8] Me, the only thing is just to start a conversation first. To go say "hello," "hi, how are you," "how is it going," something like that. Talk about something, ask about his hobby, maybe you have same hobby, and you can talk about that.

Participants perceived interactions and communication with Americans to be beneficial for learning English and culture: As part of the interview, participants were asked what factors contributed to their improvement in spoken English. One of the ideas that participants expressed was that spoken communication with Americans has helped in the process:

[Participant 7] ... Last year I stayed with a host family. That host family I don't have any Chinese, so just me, two parents, and two children, one 10-year-old boy 2 years ago, and I love play the board game, magic, and I always play with my host family and the host family children. We play together, and I think I can't even speak Chinese in a whole day because the last year in my high school just have 7 Chinese people, and we don't have every class same. I can't even speak Chinese, so all days like speak English and chat with people about English and that way improve a lot of my speaking skills...

[Participant 8] ... In the class, ask questions the teacher ask, or talk with my American friends, and join, I joined Tech Team, so I need talk to teachers who do chapel, and talk to my teammates what we are gonna do... Something like that, so from that, and also my house parents, we'll have party and talk about something, and will speak of course in English. They cannot understand Chinese, so that's a good way to improve my English skills.

Participants also shared that they find guidance (in the form of explaining or teaching) from Americans to be helpful for improving one's English:

[Participant 7] I do have. In my host family last year. "I can't understand, and can you repeat the sentence the simple way?" Because it's my host family, I don't feel embarrassed at all, and they always explain to me. We go to the church, and I see church friends there. If I can't understand them, my host family will come to me and help me to understand.

[Participant 9] Yea, a lot. I mean, this is why I chose to be in a religion school. It's they have their rule, and most of the religion tell kids to be friendly, so if I hear some word I don't understand, or some joke that I don't understand, they will explain it to me. And that makes me improve my English and make me understand the conversation more.

Related to that, participants expressed that one of the reasons why they would encourage fellow Chinese students to be friends with American students is to improve their English:

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] ... Now would you encourage your fellow Chinese students to become friends with American students?

[Participant 5] Yea.

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] Why would you?

[Participant 5] It's a great way to understand that culture, just good to have American friends also, and I'd say they probably have better reading and speaking skills, and vocabularies memorized, so that helps me improve, too.

[Participant 8] Of course! H, I told him to go make friends with American students. It's good for English. That's good for your experience. In America, you have to. In school, you at least have to have some friends, you can talk, not just when you have lunch, you sit lonely, you alone in a corner of table. That's not good. So I think you need to have some friends to talk to.

In addition, participants expressed that they believe having fellow American students as friends helps improve cultural understanding:

[Participant 5] You always want some person who can hold your back, and Chinese friends understand you, same language, culture, so very easy to get close friends with Chinese, they just very important, they know your feelings, if you lonely they lonely, too. We're in the same situation, so we get each other, that's very important. And if we say we want more American friends, because we're in America, so pretty sure we just need more American friends, can pretty much more adapt in the American culture, they can help us know more about the culture, language, school work, the country, and just have more different opinions to think about, and you can have better conclusions what kind of Americans you like, or what kind of Americans is like, truly faithful in Jesus, or maybe some of them are fake Christians, like that, you can just, if you really know them, it'll help you definite the kind of person they are, it's really helpful to have American friends to adapt in America.

[Participant 12] For Chinese friends, it's important to me, cause I can speak with them, in our language, more naturally, and then sometimes it's easier to express myself to them, cause then sometimes I don't really have to translate to English, haha, so that's easier for me. For making American friends, it's for me better, so I can get more involved and a different culture, too, and understand more, too, and they can help me get involved, too, to feel comfortable in the U.S.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So you believe American friends can help you be more well-rounded here, like to adapt?

[Participant 12] Yea.

In summary, participants valued friendships with American students. They also perceived interactions and communication with Americans/American students to be beneficial for improving their English as well as cultural understanding of the United States. Together, both factors paint a picture that they valued friendships with American students and perceived them to be instrumental for adjusting in the United States. This perception will be further discussed later as to how it can impact intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students.

Theme 4: Participants perceived interactions and engagement with Americans to be important for developing intercultural friendships.

The fourth and final theme addresses the second research question and is consisted of a total of three axial and thirteen open codes.

Participants perceived the ability to communicate well with American students to be important for building intercultural friendships: When discussing how English skills impact their conversational experience, participants shared that they believe good English skills are important for having meaningful conversations:

[Participant 7 – Interviewer] ... In your experience, are English skills important for having meaningful conversations?

[Participant 7] Yes. It's important.

[Participant 7 – Interviewer] Why do you think that?

[Participant 7] Because when you talk with Americans, you can't just use your body language. Nobody know what you say, and when they speak something, you can't understand if your English is not good. It's hard to understand what people are talking about. But if you have good English skills, it will easier to talk with people. For example, if people don't know the English and come here, they would feel stressed because they can't talk anything. Every day they would talk with themselves. If they can't talk, feel nervous, and stressed, and feel bad emotions like that.

[Participant 12] It kind of depends. If you have good English skills, you probably can speak more and better than people who doesn't really talk English that much, and then also sometimes might be like, for me, I try to express myself now, is kind of still hard, because I don't really know like what to say in English... you can take conversation deeper if you have better skills. It's kind of frustrating sometimes to know what you want to say but don't know how to say it.

Related to that, participants expressed that they believe meaningful conversations are important for having deeper intercultural friendships with American students:

[Participant 1] Yea. Sure, cause I think you have to make your conversations quality, so sometimes if you are just talking about goofing that I mentioned before, then sometimes they don't really understand you, or know you, or how it feels like sometimes, so meaningful conversations is actually, yea, it's just important, it helps you to get to know each other better.

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] I see. Now to you, in the context of friendship with American students, are meaningful conversations important?

[Participant 9] Yea!

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] How so?

[Participant 9] When you make friends with Americans, you just talk with them, "oh, that girl was a jerk," or "that boy was just stupid," but that's not gonna make you guys relationships become deeper.

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] So it sounds like, you believe that in order to have a deeper relationship with someone else, you need to...

[Participant 9] Yes, you should have some meaningful conversations to be friends.

When asked if positive conversational experience impact their desire or ability in being friends with them, participants expressed that it does:

[Participant 10] Yea of course.

[Participant 10 – Interviewer] Tell me more about it. How so?

[Participant 10] Because I know what they think when it comes to do things, to reduce the gap between us.

[Participant 10 – Interviewer] Like misunderstanding? Like it improves your understanding of Americans?

[Participant 10] Yea like I know we have more similarities, or when she told me something the other day, and then later she tells me, “oh remember I told you that? you know this now,” or “I told you about this song, you know it.”

[Participant 10 – Interviewer] So it sounds like the cultural gap is smaller because of the conversations you’ve had, and that improves your interest and ability?

[Participant 10] Yes, it’s easier to make friends with them.

[Participant 11] Yea, I think the more we chat with and get to know them, the stronger our relationships are. Like during PE class, we would talk about basketball. I like basketball.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] And have you made friends from talking about basketball or any common interests?

[Participant 11] Yea, a lot, actually. Because we used to have PE class together, and we would play basketball together quite a bit.

In discussing the topic of language barriers, participants shared that language barriers in English discourage intercultural friendship development between Chinese and American students:

[Participant 7] The first thing I think it’s bad English skills. If you think hard to talk to people, you probably don’t want to talk to that people because you can’t understand what they think, and sometime you just feel stressed to talk to them because you try to understand, but you can’t, so you feel embarrassed.

[Participant 8] Language. Cause H down there, he’s freshman, he’s really struggle with the language, his English, not very good. When he wants to say something, he just can’t. He just wants to make sense in his mind, he wants to say that sentence, but he can’t say that. I don’t know why. Maybe his English is not really

good, so it's hard for him to talk with people, so that's a big reason we don't want to make friends. Language is first problem.

It should be noted that this particular finding appears to contradict a previous finding under the first theme (i.e., linguistic stress did not negatively impact their desire to be friends with American students). The apparent inconsistency will be addressed in *Discussion*.

Participants perceived mutual interest as well as initiative important for developing intercultural friendships between Chinese and American students: Already mentioned in previous themes, participants reported that they would advise fellow Chinese students to take the initiative to befriend Americans and that the description "Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I would also like to have more American friends" most accurately describes them. On the other hand, in discussing their conversational experience, participants shared that they perceive Chinese and American students initiate conversations with each other evenly:

[Participant 3] It depends on the situation. For most, it just like when you walk in the hallway, say hi to each other, that's pretty even, if it's for academic stuff, I usually will wait for them to start, cause sometimes it's just hard for me to find a point to start, but they usually will anyway. And for club stuff, if I've any questions, I'll ask them, or if I want to tell them something, I'll just let them know what happens or what I want you to do.

[Participant 12] ... It depends on what's going on. Sometimes they do, sometimes I do. It's pretty even.

As for taking the initiative to befriend American students, participants expressed that they do not find it difficult to do so:

[Participant 6 - Interviewer] Tell me what it was like or is like for you to make friends with Americans.

[Participant 6] I think most Americans are friendly, so it's not hard. Maybe some people think it's hard, but I think it's not hard. I also don't feel it's necessary to make friends with Americans, so I don't feel it's that hard. It's just if I want to, I make friends with them, but I don't have to.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] ... What was it like to make friends with your American friends?

[Participant 12] I think it's pretty natural.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] (*referencing experience shared by the participant earlier*) It sounded like you were interested in being friends with them and they were also interested in being friends with you, would that be accurate?

[Participant 12] Yea that's accurate.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So the mutual interest might have contributed to it feeling natural?

[Participant 12] I think so. We both want to know each other.

Similarly, participants expressed that they perceive most American students to be willing to make friends with Chinese students:

[Participant 3 – Interviewer] In your experience, tell me whether American students are willing to be friends with Chinese students.

[Participant 3] It depends. Some of my friends they would talk to Chinese students, but some of them I just focused on like, they like make 1 or 2 Chinese student friends, but they don't like to make friends with every Chinese students, it's very depend on persons.

[Participant 3- Interviewer] I see. Why do you think that happens?

[Participant 3] I think it's their personality. Not everyone can be your friend.

[Participant 3 – Interviewer] So it's just that they don't click with each other, but for Chinese students they click with, they would be friends.

[Participant 3] Yes.

[Participant 3 – Interviewer] So would you say most American students are willing to be friends with Chinese students, or not?

[Participant 3] I think most of them are willing to make friends with Chinese students.

[Participant 4] Yes, they're very willing to be friends with us. I think they're also like curious about our culture, for example, Chinese food, they really like Chinese food...

In addition, participants perceived that American students who are willing to be friends with Chinese students would also take the initiative to befriend them:

[Participant 3] ... Yea I think most of them are willing to make friends with us, and they do actively befriend us, like some of my friends I've in school, they will invite you to go out with some of them...

[Participant 9] Well I think they want to be friends with me. I don't know other person, but it's really weird, like I do have black friends, I have a lot, but not that many. But you know what? Last year, after the first few months, and I walk

through our hallway, every black people know me, and I don't know their name, I don't even know that face, and every black people know me, and they know my name! and I was like, "huh?" They said hi with my name, and I was like "hi...? Who are you?" right now, I still don't know...

Participants believed interactions and engagement with American students foster intercultural friendships: In sharing their relationship experience, participants reported that they feel fit in with American students when they participate in extracurricular activities with them:

[Participant 2] Yes! I'd say I made most of my American friends outside of school. It's like last year during school time, but during activities. I joined activities, and I feel like part of them, and that make me want to know them more. I think most people make friend that way. Or maybe they've friends in grade school and they come to high school together. That's how I feel when I was freshman. Everyone knows each other, and I didn't feel fit in, the activities help me feel belong. I think it'll be different in college, though.

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] ... What makes you feel fit in with Americans or when do you feel that?

[Participant 5] I'll say when we make up our teams, play certain sports, competition, work together, like that, I'd say.

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] So when you are working towards the same thing together. Maybe a common goal, task, team, or something like that?

[Participant 5] Yes.

In addition, participants reported that they feel they fit in with American students when they collaborate with them for a task or a common goal:

[Participant 2] In school activities, and in math class, maybe, haha, cause usually I help with my classmates with math, and that's when I feel fit in with them, when I'm helping them. I feel I'm working with them, I'm part of them, I'm making contribution.

[Participant 3 - Interviewer] ... What makes you feel fit in with American students? Or when do you feel that way?

[Participant 3] When some of American students have group chat here, they'll invite you to joining them, and they'll tell you what they saw, or sometimes in class, for group work with each other, you'll think you fit in to them, you can understand what they talk about, they will like accept your ideas.

[Participant 3 – Interviewer] I see. So when you're invited, when you're engaged with them, when your ideas are heard by them, those are times when you feel fit in with the American students?

[Participant 3] Yes.

Related to that, participants shared that when they feel fit in with American students, it fosters intercultural friendships between them:

[Participant 5 – Interviewer] Does the feeling of fitting in with them make it easier to be friends with them?

[Participant 5] Yea, after having that experience, you can find more ways to talk to them, understand what they think, you can kind of guess with that experience, to understand them.

[Participant 6] If you don't fit in, you will feel sad, and if you feel sad, you will be not that interested in making friends with them. If things are not going as the way you hope, you will not be as interested.

[Participant – Interviewer] So the more you feel connected with the American students, the more you would be interested in making friends with them?

[Participant 6] Yes. You are more interested.

Moreover, when asked if their school can do anything to help foster intercultural friendships between Chinese and American students, participants expressed that their school can contribute to it by having activities that will provide opportunities for both student groups to interact and engage with one another:

[Participant 11] I think there should be an international teacher who would find American and Chinese students to eat out together, chat, and introduce themselves to others.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] That's what you would like to see more of?

[Participant 11] It's already being implemented. I just tried it for the first time.

[Participant 11 - Interviewer] I see. How did you feel about it?

[Participant 11] I think it's pretty good. Some people actually got to know each other that way.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] Is that offered to every student?

[Participant 11] No. They just did that with new students.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] How did that work? New Chinese and new American students?

[Participant 11] No. It was just new Chinese students and American students who like to make friends with Chinese students.

[Participant 11 - Interviewer] I see, I see. So they pre-select American students

who would be better for this. So you were there because you were new?

[Participant 11] Yea.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] And you liked it?

[Participant 11] Yea, I think it's pretty good.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] Do you think this should be done again?

[Participant 11] Oh yes.

[Participant 12] Maybe they can have like Chinese festival things, like the school can be do more on that. Like the mid-Autumn festival, they can do something more. Maybe introduce what the festival is, and then also the big one is Chinese New Year. They can do more, rather than just... cause for the Chinese students, they will have a party thing, for their dinner, but rather than that alone, maybe the school can make it a bigger event, so then every student at school knows it's a big deal for the Chinese kids, then they can feel more comfortable with coming, too.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So they currently are doing something, but you feel that the school can do more to...

[Participant 12] Yea, they can do more to bring the Chinese and American kids together.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So are the American students involved in these activities, or...

[Participant 12] For Chinese New Year party, all the international students can invite two to three friends, but that's all, and also the international committee at school is there, too, but I think that's only like part of the American students can go and know what's going on, but not really everyone, so I think if all the American kids can involve, and maybe after the chapel, they can make an announcement, like "today there's a Chinese festival."

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] And you believe these will bring the two groups together and create more opportunities for them to become friends?

[Participant 12] Yea, I think so. If they are together, that's easier.

In summary, participants perceived the ability to communicate well to be important for building intercultural friendships with American students. They also perceived mutual interest as well as initiative for developing intercultural friendships between Chinese and American students. Last but not least, participants believed interactions and engagement with American students foster intercultural friendships. Together, these factors paint a picture that participants perceived interactions and engagement with American students to be important for developing intercultural friendships.

Discussion

The U.S. has a substantial number of international students. Based on the most recent figure, there were 1,094,792 international students that studied at U.S. colleges and universities during the 2017-2018 school year (IIE, 2018a), and of these international students, those that came from China accounted for 35.9% of the entire college/university-level international student population in the country (IIE, 2018b). Previous research indicated that international students face a host of acculturative stressors that can negatively impact their experience as they adjust in the host country (e.g., Berry, 2005; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Previous research has also indicated that one of the most effective protective factors for international students as they adjust in the host country is to increase their sense of connectedness through establishing intercultural friendships with host-nationals (e.g., Hendrickson et al., 2011). However, researchers have also found that international and host-national students do not typically become friends on their own (Brown, 2009). For these reasons, the purpose of the current study was to explore the development of intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students in the United States. The two research goals for this study were to a) gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students and b) identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students. Responses from twelve participants were analyzed and coded into 49 open codes. Further analysis of the open codes produced 14 axial codes, and finally, the additional analysis of the axial codes produced 4 selective codes, which serve as the themes for the study. These four resulting themes provide some insights for both research goals.

The context of the current study should be reviewed prior to discussing the results. To summarize, a total of twelve Chinese international high school students (five females and seven males) from a Midwestern religious private high school in the U.S. participated in the current study. On average, participants' years of age was 16.83 and time spent in the U.S. was 1.92 years at the time of the interview. None of the participants arrived in the country recently, and all of them had spent at least one year in the United States. Socially, the school did not provide any regular structured opportunities where the two student groups are encouraged to interact with one another. At the same time, there were no particular contextual or structural barriers that prevent students from either group to mingle with one another. Depending on the English proficiency, some international students would take a different version of English and/or Religion class, which were designed for non-native English speakers. Such classes had a lower language requirement and did not have any American students. Other than these specially designed classes, however, students from both groups share the same educational environment during the school day (e.g., classrooms, canteen, hallways, etc.). Students from both groups were not required to interact with one another, but natural opportunities to do so were available if they chose to. In regard to living arrangement, international students lived in school-owned townhouses along with either one or two house parents, who would oversee their living arrangement, care for their needs, and enforce campus rules. Although the house parents were employees of the school, they did not have other roles at the high school (e.g., teachers, coaches, deans, staff, etc.) and generally held a full-time job outside of the high school. As such, the house parents' role was primarily about the living arrangement and were relatively removed from the international students' academic environment. Each townhouse had four separate units with a

shared living room. The house parent(s) would live in one of them and about seven to nine students would live in the other three units.

The contexts of the current study as well as that of previous research should be considered in order to properly understand the discussion of the following themes. As mentioned, the current study referenced studies that are concerned with international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels from a variety of country of origins, but that the current study was specifically concerned with Chinese international high school students. The discrepancy between the current study and previous research that was referenced in this study is due to the scarcity of previous research on international high school students. Although this is less desirable, as the referenced studies do not address the exact same target population of this study, drawing from a broader literature base regarding international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels can still offer great insights for understanding international high school students. At the same time, it is important to consider the contextual differences between most colleges/universities and high schools. Whereas most high schools have more structured day-to-day schedules for all students, college and university students have comparatively flexible and individualized schedules. For high school settings, international and host-national students tend to have more structured opportunities where they would be in each other's presence, whereas for college/university settings, students from the two groups would have less structured opportunities for the same kind of contact. Related to the discrepancy between the current study and previous research that was referenced in this study, the developmental differences must also be considered. Whereas participants from previous research are international undergraduate and graduate students, participants from the current study are

high school students. Therefore, it must be noted that the observed differences in the current study compared to previous research may at least partly due to different developmental stages.

Themes

Theme 1: Despite having experienced various acculturative stressors as they interacted with Americans, there were factors and conditions that are conducive to intercultural friendship development between Chinese international and American high school students.

Acculturative Stressors and Intercultural Friendship: According to Berry (2005), the process of acculturation occurs when groups or individuals with different cultural backgrounds engage in intercultural contact with one another, and such contact may bring intercultural conflicts in various areas, which are considered to be acculturative stressors. Aligning with previous research, participants in this study also experienced acculturative stress in several commonly identified areas for international undergraduate and graduate students, namely, difficulty with the English language (e.g., Fritz et al., 2008; Sawir, 2005; Chen, 1999), sociocultural stress (e.g., Townsend & Jun Poh, 2008; Sawir et al., 2008; Williams & Johnson, 2011), and discrimination from host-nationals (e.g., Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). The stress and coping framework regarding acculturation states that acculturative stressors can lead to acculturative stress as well as adjustment problems for an individual (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2005). Related to that, previous research indicated that these three specific acculturative stressors can negatively impact the interactions and/or intercultural friendship development between international and host-national students (e.g., Barratt & Huba, 1994; Chen, 1999). Participants in this study, though experienced acculturative stress in these areas, did not perceive such stress to impact intercultural friendship development with their American peers, which seems to differ from findings from previous research. For instance, researchers found that for international undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S., English

competency was positively associated with sociocultural interactions with host-nationals (e.g., Poyrazli et al., 2002; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Although participants in this study reported to have experienced difficulty with the English language, most of these participants held a positive perspective when it comes to making friends with American students. In fact, as the referenced excerpts show, some participants continue to want to make friends with American students despite their struggle with the English language (i.e., Participant 7, p. 55; Participant 9, p. 55). This appears to reflect characteristics of the integration strategy as discussed in Berry's (1997) stress and coping framework, which describes the strategy where one maintains her/his cultural identity while seeking to involve as part of the larger social network.

As for discrimination, researchers who studied international undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S. have argued that these negative and often harmful experiences may significantly discourage them from forming deep and meaningful relationships with host-nationals (e.g., Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000). In fact, Brown (2009) found that international graduate students in the U.K. sometimes seek co-national social circles due to their fear of discrimination by host-nationals. It is interesting, then, to note that high school participants in this study did not perceive their personal experience with discrimination to have negatively impact their intercultural friendship development with American students. They did not generalize such negative experiences to the overall American population. A notable example is perhaps the account of Participant 6 (p. 54). He witnessed his fellow Chinese friend being discriminated against with some physical aggression by an American peer, yet when it comes to being friends, he acknowledged that although he believes some Americans are prejudicial to Chinese, most Americans are good people and that his experience does not negatively impact his desire to be friends with them (p. 55). As discussed previously, discriminatory acts from host-nationals are

relatively hard to control and alter, but the misperception of international students is changeable with more positive exposure and meaningful interactions with host-nationals (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). This finding seems to support this argument from previous research.

Cultural Concept of Friendship and Intercultural Friendships: Besides a lack of negative impact from acculturative stressors, participants perceived the concept of friendship to be the same between the Chinese and American cultures. In other words, participants perceived the concept of friendship to mean the same thing between the two cultures. Given how one's definition of friendship is largely tied to its culture, it is interesting to note participants' perspectives in light of the differences between the two cultures.

As discussed earlier, Asian cultures are generally collectivistic and Western cultures are generally individualistic (Triandis, 2001). Individuals with an individualistic cultural orientation tend to be more assertive and self-sufficient (Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003), whereas individuals with a collectivistic orientation tend to emphasize the views, needs, and goals of others (Wheeler et al., 1989). In addition to the contrast between collectivism and individualism, there are still various other aspects where the Chinese and American cultures are dissimilar. In fact, when comparing friendship characteristics between North American and East Asian cultures, previous research has indicated that the concept of friendship differs in several substantial ways. For instance, whereas East Asian friendships tend to be long-term with asymmetric reciprocity, North American friendships tend to be short-term with symmetrical reciprocity (Yum, 1988). In other words, East Asian friendships tend to be more interdependent and obligatory, whereas North American friendships tend to be more independent and contractual. Findings from similar previous research also support this. For instance, a south Korean participant captured this sentiment regarding American friendships in the study of Hotta

and Ting-Toomey (2013) that examined intercultural adjustment and friendship dialectics in international undergraduate and graduate students in the United States: “I actually don’t know how Americans develop friendships. I don’t know if it’s the same as in other countries” (p. 558). Perceived differences (or the lack thereof) in the understanding of friendship is significant to note in regard to intercultural friendships. As Mori (2000), who specifically studied international undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S., argued, such differences may discourage international students from even attempting to form deep and significant relationships with Americans (see also Robinson & Ginter, 1999).

It should be noted, that whether there are actual differences between the two cultural definitions of friendship is beyond the scope of the current study. Rather, the existence of perceived differences between the two cultural concepts (or the lack thereof) from participants is the point of interest, as their perception may influence participants’ behavior as it relates to intercultural friendship development, and high school participants from this study indicated that they perceive the concept of friendship to be the same between the Chinese and American cultures.

Intergroup Contact and Intercultural Friendships: Recalling the social context of this study, Chinese and American high school students had natural opportunities to interact with one another if they chose to (with the exception of specially designed English and Religion classes with a lower language requirement for certain international students). Most participants shared that they interact with American students every day, particularly during classes and extracurricular activities. Although intergroup contact with American students does not automatically equate to intercultural friendships, some researchers such as Stringer et al. (2009) have found intergroup contact to be one of the most effective interventions in bridging the

relational gap and fostering friendships between two distinct groups, whether the differences are due to race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and other variables (see also Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006). Therefore, participants' experience in this area seems especially positive when previous research indicated that international and host-national undergraduate and graduate students typically have minimal contact. For instance, recalling what Brown (2009) found in her study regarding international graduate students in the U.K., international students are typically drawn to co-nationals and have minimal interactions with host-nationals, and the same can be said of host-nationals in regard to how much they interact with international students. In light of the stress and coping framework (Berry, 1997), this is perhaps done to avoid acculturative stress. It also reflects the characteristics of the separation strategy within the framework, which describes the strategy where one prioritizes maintaining her/his cultural identity to the exclusion of interacting with the larger social network. As Brown (2009) explained, international students are typically drawn to co-nationals in order to seek comfort from those who have the same language and heritage and/or to avoid discrimination by host-nationals. Other studies have even found that at times, international students can feel invisible, ignored, and unwelcomed by host-nationals. Consider the following excerpts from Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) that captured such sentiments from their international undergraduate and graduate students in the United States:

Several international students in this study, like Natalia, a student from Colombia, described feeling invisible when interacting with other students:

Even when they saw me working at the gym, they don't say anything. Maybe, I don't know, I'm small, they don't see me. (Laughs) Yeah, it's weird. So, I say,

“Yeah, I saw you yesterday at the gym.” “Oh really? I didn’t see you.” Liar!
(Laughs.) (Natalia, Female, 26, Colombia)

Natalia tried to rationalize how she was treated. However, when her presence was still ignored at other chance meetings, she continually felt as if she were invisible:

Even sometimes they saw you, and they know you, but they don’t say “hi”. I don’t know if it’s just because maybe Americans think that you must say “hi” first, not them. It’s my hypothesis. I don’t know if it is true. But no: I’m here. You are in my country, so you must say “hi” to me.... I usually say, “Hi! I’m here. You know me!” I don’t care. (Natalia, Female, 26, Colombia)

As a result of feeling ignored and invisible, Natalia felt unwelcomed, rejected and excluded. (p. 559)

In light of the effect of intergroup contact on intercultural friendships, the fact that participants in this study have daily interactions with American students is an important finding to note. The importance of interactions and engagement regarding intercultural friendships between the two student groups will be further examined in the discussion of the last theme.

Various Psychosocial Factors and Intercultural Friendships: Another noteworthy finding under the first theme is that participants found a variety of psychosocial factors to be important when it comes to developing friendships in general. Previous research indicated that international undergraduate and graduate students typically prefer co-nationals for friends, whereas their host-national peers typically prefer being friends with fellow host-nationals (e.g., Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). Along with other research findings, it is reasonable to think that one’s national and/or cultural origin can be an important determining factor when it comes to friendships for international students (e.g., Ying & Liese, 1991; Hechanova-Alampay et al.,

2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011), which is why it is notable that participants in this study brought up several psychosocial factors that may contribute to friendship development, and that these factors are qualities and conditions that are unrelated to one's national and/or cultural origin. These factors include the quality of being helpful, the condition of physical proximity, and the characteristics of having matched personality and shared interest(s). These factors that participants brought up are not actually new ideas. In fact, over the last few decades, a good number of researchers have continually found that these factors contribute to friendship development (e.g., Izard, 1960; Rubin & Shenker, 1978; Wong & Harris Bond, 1999; De Klepper, Sleebos, Van de Bunt, & Agneessens, 2010). What is worth noting is that although a person's national and/or cultural origin can be a determining factor for intercultural friendships, participants' responses seemed to indicate that it is not the only determining factor for them. The psychosocial factors that they brought up also seem to have a substantial impact on their friendship decisions. This is significant because, although one's national and/or cultural origin is a relatively fixed and established attribute, qualities and/or conditions such as helpfulness, proximity, matched personality, and shared interest(s) are not bound by it. In fact, some of these qualities and/or conditions, such as proximity and shared interest(s), can potentially be enhanced through interventions, which will be examined in the discussion of the last theme.

Theme 2: Participants perceived friendships with fellow Chinese students to be important and a protective factor for studying abroad.

Acculturative Stressors and Co-national Relationships: In the discussion of the first theme, two specific acculturative stressors (i.e., linguistic and sociocultural) were discussed as contextual support in relation to intercultural friendships. Based on their responses, the point of interest was that participants did not seem to perceive these acculturative stressors to have impacted their intercultural friendship development with American students. When it comes to

participants' relationships with their fellow Chinese international students in this second theme, however, these two same acculturative stressors seemed to have some influence, and their impact on participants' relationships with their fellow Chinese international students might have some implications on their friendship development with American students.

As discussed earlier, researchers who studied international undergraduate and graduate students have found that the presence of co-nationals can be very beneficial in the early months of arriving to the host country (e.g., Ying & Liese, 1991). Especially when they are adjusting to the new land initially, co-nationals often provide comfort as those who share similar values, cultural perspectives, and languages (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002), not to mention, as some of the referenced excerpts from participants in this study have indicated, co-national international students can often relate to the same acculturative experience that they individually face (i.e., Participant 4, p.61; Participant 6, p.61-62). Together, these are perhaps some of the reasons why international students typically prefer co-nationals as friends and are drawn to them rather than host-nationals (Brown, 2009). Some researchers even argued that international students are typically drawn to their co-nationals for primary support and do not leave their comfort zone to reach out to host-nationals (e.g., Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994), a tendency that reflects the separation strategy where one prioritizes maintaining her/his cultural identity to the exclusion of interacting with the larger social network (Berry, 1997).

Participants' responses from the current study seemed to support findings of previous research. Similar to international undergraduate and graduate students, they, too, believed that friendships with fellow Chinese international students are important and beneficial as they adjust in the United States. As to why they perceived that, two reasons emerged from their responses. First, they shared that they appreciate fellow Chinese international students for how they share

the same language and culture. Second, they expressed that fellow Chinese international students help them deal with homesickness. These two expressed reasons seem to align with the two acculturative stressors that emerged from participants' responses, namely, linguistic stress (i.e., perceiving difficulty specifically with speaking and listening, feeling stressed or anxious when conversing with native speakers) as well as sociocultural stress (i.e., experienced discrimination from Americans, not feeling fit in with Americans, struggled with homesickness), and this may be an indication that participants perceived friendships with fellow Chinese peers to be a protective factor as they study in the United States.

Given how participants' responses align with previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students in this regard, it seems even more imperative to emphasize that co-national circles are not in and of itself negative for international students. Some researchers even argued that co-national circles may be necessary for some as they adjust in the host country initially (e.g., Ying & Liese, 1991). However, if their social network is primarily consisted of co-nationals and if they remain in only such social circles, it can eventually become an inhibiting factor for international students to develop intercultural friendships with host-nationals, which has been noted to hinder the optimal adjustment of international undergraduate and graduate students in the host country (e.g., Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Hendrickson et al., 2011; Thurber & Walton, 2012). In other words, the presence of co-nationals can be beneficial, but the continuing and exclusive reliance on co-national circles may contribute to international students' separation from host-nationals (i.e., where one prioritizes maintaining her/his cultural identity to the exclusion of interacting with the larger social network), which may inhibit them from integrating into host-national circles (Berry, 1997).

Summarizing several findings from previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students, co-national circles can be beneficial as international students adjust to the host country initially, although when international students remain in only such circles, their co-national friends can inhibit them from making host-national friends. In addition, international students are typically drawn to co-nationals rather than making friends with host-nationals. Responses from the high school participants from this study, then, seemed to support previous research findings that co-nationals can be beneficial as they adjust in the United States. Considering the implications of how international students are typically drawn to co-nationals for friendships as well as having only co-national friends, however, participants' responses under the second theme may serve as indirect, albeit strong support for fostering intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students. Although the second theme provides some insights into participants' perception of fellow Chinese international students, the implications of such a perception on intercultural friendship development with their American peers can perhaps be understood more fully along with the discussion of the third theme, which focuses on participants' perception of fellow American peers.

Theme 3: Participants valued friendships with American students and perceived such friendships to be instrumental for adjusting to the United States.

Instrumental Functions and Host-national Relationships: The third theme provides unique insights into participants' perception of fellow American students. As discussed earlier, not only did previous research find that international undergraduate and graduate students typically prefer to be friends with co-nationals, but it also indicated that they and their host-national peers generally have minimal contact with one another (e.g., Brown, 2009). Responses from high school participants in this study, however, indicated otherwise. For instance, results

show that they had contact with American students every day, valued friendship with them, and perceived mutual interest in and initiative for developing intercultural friendships (such mutual interest and initiative will be elaborated under the fourth theme). These findings paint a somewhat different picture about the state of intercultural friendships between international and host-national undergraduate and graduate students from previous research. For instance, in their study regarding international and host-national undergraduate students in the U.S., Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) argued that Americans are sometimes complacent with their dominant/majority status and choose not to connect with out-group members such as international students. Along with that, Smith and Khawaja (2011) argued that host-national students may sometimes expect international students to assimilate to the dominant culture, values, and customs, but international students may want to retain theirs, and the conflicting attitudes may act as a deterrent to intercultural friendship development between the two groups. On the other hand, Williams and Johnson (2011) found that despite having the opportunity to do so, the majority of their participants (American undergraduate students) do not have any friendships with their fellow international students. Even for international students in the U.S. whose culture is similar to the American culture, this disconnect with American students may still hold true. For instance, a female Canadian university student who was studying in the U.S. shared the following account in Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013):

Here people have grown up and lived here their whole lives, and really developed their bubble of friends and their support system. I'm kind of stepping into that. And I don't fit into their bubble. So they're not willing to extend what they would usually give to their close friends who they grew up with. I think that's the biggest problem here. It's really hard to go into their bubble. (p. 559-560)

This Canadian student's account and other similar ones like hers is by no means the universal experience for all international students in the U.S. who come from Western countries.

Nonetheless, it highlights the significance when the experience of Chinese international high school students in this study was comparatively positive, especially when previous research found that East Asian international undergraduate and graduate students typically struggle more in this area compared to their peers who come from European and other Western countries (Triandis, 2001; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007).

Moreover, the third theme offers some insights as to why participants in this study might have a stronger interest in being friends with their American peers than what is generally reported in regard to friendships between college- and university-level international and host-national students. Participants' interest in being friends with American students were indicated in several ways. First, all participants chose a description to represent themselves where the description states "Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I would also like to have more American friends." There was also another description that states "Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I have no interest in making friends with American students," but participants did not believe that to be accurate. Second, participants shared they would encourage their fellow Chinese students to be friends with American students, and they also expressed they would encourage their Chinese peers to take the initiative to approach their American peers for friendships. One may argue that participants' perception, though positive, does not necessarily equate to the actual behavior of encouraging fellow Chinese peers to do so. Nonetheless, considering what previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students has indicated, these findings are worth noting.

Based on participants' responses, it seems that their interest in being friends with American students might at least be partly instrumentally motivated. Specifically, their interest appeared to be driven by and built on the perception that American students are instrumental in fostering academic and linguistic successes. A referenced excerpt from Participant 4 captured this sentiment (p. 62). Recalling his response when he spoke of his Chinese and American friendships:

[Participant 4] ... I think it's good to have Chinese friends because we speak same language and have same culture. We understand each other. But like I said, now I'm in the U.S., so we should have American friends. They help us... So if I have a task, like TOEFL test in a month, so during this month, I will try to have conversations with my American friends, as much as possible, to get my speaking improved. If it's for fun, then I prefer Chinese students more because we have the same culture. It's easier to talk to them...

In fact, according to the functional model by Bochner, McLeod, and Lin (1977) that was designed to describe the friendship formation of international university students, host-national circles for international students tend to be more linguistically- and academically-oriented compared to their co-national circles. Considering also the academic/goal-oriented nature of international students' stay in the host country (e.g., Cemalcilar et al., 2005), this explanation for their interest in being friends with American students appears reasonable.

Theme 4: Participants perceived interactions and engagement with Americans to be important for developing intercultural friendships.

Language Ability, Self-disclosure, and Intercultural Friendships: The fourth and final theme that emerged from participants' responses highlights several findings. The first one deals with the importance of language proficiency in intercultural friendship development.

Hendrickson et al. (2011) argued that one of the reasons why international undergraduate and graduate students struggle with making friends with host-nationals is that they have a poor command of the host language. Participants' responses appeared to support this argument by

Hendrickson et al. (2011) and findings from several other previous research studies (e.g., Chen, 1999; Barratt & Huba, 1994; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Not only did the high school participants in this study express the perceived importance of English fluency in making friends with American students, but they also expressed that the lack of such fluency is a main reason why some Chinese peers have limited intercultural friendships with their American peers.

Going beyond the association between English fluency and the ease of developing intercultural friendships, however, a more nuanced reason as to why this linkage matters is perhaps more important, and two things that emerged from participants' responses might have shed light on this nuanced reason. First, they expressed that good English skills are important for having meaningful conversations with American students. Second, they expressed that meaningful conversations are important for having deeper intercultural friendships with American students. Interestingly, Chen (2006), who studied the effects of self-disclosure on intercultural friendships between East Asian international and American undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S., found that international students' English skills is one of the main factors that influences self-disclosure, which she argued is a "major factor as well as a crucial and defining indicator" (p. 43) for intercultural friendships. In fact, Chen (2006) argued further that the width and depth of one's self-disclosure is a determining factor for the level of closeness or intimacy of intercultural friendships. Considering that, the English skills of international students may simply be a vehicle on which self-disclosure is made or exchanged, for one cannot self-disclose or reciprocate self-disclosure, at least not effectively, without the needed language skills. This by no means negates the role of one's English skills in the process of intercultural friendship development, and it has to be stated that English skills, in and of themselves, do not bring forth intercultural friendships between international and host-national students. The

implied and underlying desire to connect more intimately with one another, or in other words, personal agency, still has to be present in order for self-disclosure to occur.

Recalling what has been discussed in the first theme, participants in this study did not perceive the acculturative stressors they experienced to have impacted their intercultural friendship development with American students (specifically, one of such acculturative stressors is linguistic stress). Connecting that to the discussion in this last theme regarding language ability and self-disclosure, a fuller picture emerges regarding language ability and intercultural friendship development for the participants, especially in light of the two types of friendships that this study focused on, namely casual friends (i.e., you do fun things with them, but you don't share a strong personal relationship with them) and close friendships (i.e., friends that you share a close relationship with). Although linguistic stress did not appear to deter casual intercultural friendship development between them and American students, their language ability appeared to play a role in deepening close intercultural friendships that might otherwise remain comparatively superficial. In fact, referenced excerpts from Participant 1 (p. 67) and Participant 9 (p. 67-68) appear to support this notion:

[Participant 1] Yea. Sure, cause I think you have to make your conversations quality, so sometimes if you are just talking about goofing that I mentioned before, then sometimes they don't really understand you, or know you, or how it feels like sometimes, so meaningful conversations is actually, yea, it's just important, it helps you to get to know each other better.

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] I see. Now to you, in the context of friendship with American students, are meaningful conversations important?

[Participant 9] Yea!

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] How so?

[Participant 9] When you make friends with Americans, you just talk with them, “oh, that girl was a jerk,” or “that boy was just stupid,” but that's not gonna make you guys relationships become deeper.

[Participant 9 – Interviewer] So it sounds like, you believe that in order to have a deeper relationship with someone else, you need to...

[Participant 9] Yes, you should have some meaningful conversations to be friends.

This discussion regarding self-disclosure is also relevant for another reason. One of the findings under this last theme is that participants perceived mutual interest as well as initiative for developing intercultural friendships between Chinese and American students. As mentioned, the implied and underlying desire to connect more intimately with one another, or personal agency, is what impels self-disclosure. In light of that, participants' perception regarding the mutual interest and initiative for developing intercultural friendships between them and their American peers seems positive, for self-disclosure has been found to play an important role in relationship development and fostering closeness (Chen, 2006). In the specific context of intercultural friendship development, however, personal agency alone may not be sufficient to foster friendships between the two student groups. As it will be elaborated in the discussion of the next finding of this theme, the effects of personal agency may be dependent on one other condition.

Interactions, Engagement, and Intercultural Friendships: The last finding under this theme is that participants believed interactions and engagement with American students foster intercultural friendships. In light of the discussion thus far, specifically parts that relate to intergroup contact between the two student groups, this finding is not surprising. What may be comparatively novel, however, is that participants believed their school can contribute to their intercultural friendship development with American students by having activities that will provide opportunities for both student groups to interact and engage with one another. As discussed in the first theme, participants shared that they already interact with Americans every day. Their idea of having such institutional interventions, therefore, may be an indicator that there was a perceived need for additional and structural opportunities to interact and mingle with

American students beyond a superficial level if intercultural friendships are to develop between the two groups. This seems plausible especially in light of the social context of the current study, where Chinese and American students had natural opportunities where they could interact with one another (e.g., in classes, in the hallways), but there were no specific and structured opportunities where international and American students are regularly encouraged to interact with one another (e.g., fellowships, gatherings, etc.).

Institutional interventions, though not a very prevalent concept, has come up in previous research. In a qualitative study regarding international undergraduate students, Sias et al. (2008) reported that targeted socializing is an important factor for intercultural friendship development. The authors explained that targeted socializing is a contextual rather than personal factor (e.g., personal agency) in the process, and that it refers to “socializing opportunities targeted toward either specific cultural groups or intercultural gatherings such as a ‘Chinese student party’ or an orientation for international students on campus.” (p. 9). Just as personal factors are crucial for friendship development, the right environment is also needed for relationships to form. Although an institutional intervention may seem less desirable in some respects, as it is not a “naturally-occurring” context, it may be a necessary controlled effort to foster intercultural friendship development between international and host-national students. For instance, Bennett et al. (2013) found that unlike typical friendships that develop more naturally and are less dependent on contextual factors (e.g., friendship dyads of the same national and/or cultural origin), personal agency alone is not enough to foster intercultural friendships. In fact, personal agency may not even be activated until intercultural dyads are forced to interact with one another. This by no means negates the importance of personal agency, for it is still necessary for friendships to develop, and it does highlight the vital role of targeted socializing that participants and previous

research studies brought up, as a contextual factor. In other words, the lack of intentional and institutional effort to foster targeted socializing opportunities for international and host-national students could be a hindering factor for intercultural friendship developments between the two student groups.

In summary, the four themes provide some insights into the two research goals (i.e., gain an overall understanding of Chinese international students' perception of intercultural friendships with American high school students; identify factors that afford and constrain intercultural friendships between the two student groups as perceived by Chinese international high school students.). The first theme states that *Despite having experienced various acculturative stressors as they interacted with Americans, there were factors and conditions that are conducive to intercultural friendship development between Chinese international and American high school students.* It addresses the first research question by revealing that similar to previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students, Chinese international high school participants in this study experienced various types of acculturative stress as they studied in the United States. However, such acculturative stress did not appear to negatively impact their intercultural friendship development with American students. Furthermore, participants' responses appeared to indicate a few elements of positivity, especially when compared to findings from previous research, which is typically more oriented on the obstacles to intercultural friendships for international undergraduate and graduate students. These factors (i.e., did not perceive linguistic or fundamental barriers in making friends with American students, had regular interactions with their American peers, and believed a variety of psychosocial factors to also be important for developing intercultural friendships) provide some insights into the second research question.

As for the second theme, it states that *Participants perceived friendships with fellow Chinese students to be important and a protective factor for studying abroad*. It primarily focuses on participants' perception of fellow Chinese international students and provides some insights into the first research question. Participants' responses that formed this theme largely align with what previous research regarding international undergraduate and graduate students had indicated. First, it indicates that participants in this study experienced linguistic and sociocultural stress as they studied abroad. Second, it shows that they provided two primary reasons for perceiving friendships with fellow Chinese international students to be important, namely, they help deal with homesickness and that they share the same language and culture. In light of how previous research found that international undergraduate and graduate students are typically drawn to co-nationals and considering the implications of international students with a lack of intercultural friendships with host-nationals, the second theme provides indirect, albeit strong support for fostering intercultural friendships between Chinese international and American high school students.

The third theme states that *Participants valued friendships with American students and perceive such friendships to be instrumental for adjusting to the United States*. It primarily focuses on participants' perception of fellow American students and provides insights into the first research question. It shows that participants appeared to genuinely value intercultural friendships with American students. It also shows that their appreciation for their American peers might at least be partly instrumentally motivated, as intercultural friendships with their American peers were viewed as instrumental for academic and linguistic successes.

Last, the fourth theme states that *Participants perceived interactions and engagement with Americans to be important for developing intercultural friendships*. It primarily addresses

the second research question. It indicates that participants perceived interactions and engagement with American students to be important for developing intercultural friendships as well as their idea of having institutional interventions to help foster intercultural interactions and engagement between the two student groups. Participants' responses brought forth the potential linkage between one's English ability, self-disclosure, and targeted socializing. Although one's English ability is important for intercultural friendships to develop, it appears to merely be the vehicle on which self-disclosure can occur. Moreover, in the context of intercultural friendships, the occurrence of self-disclosure may be dependent on targeted socializing between two different groups. In other words, the lack of targeted socializing may hinder intercultural friendship development between the Chinese international and American high school students.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the above findings, a discussion on potential interventions on intercultural contact is warranted. Specifically, it was discussed that intergroup contact is one of the most effective interventions (e.g., Stringer et al., 2009) in regard to bridging the relational gap and fostering friendships between two distinct groups (e.g., due to race, ethnicity, ideology, culture, etc.) under the first theme. It was also discussed under the fourth theme that targeted socializing is an important contextual factor, especially in the context of intercultural friendship development, for it may be a condition on which self-disclosure is activated between intercultural dyads.

Currently, there is limited research on interventions for intercultural contact. One of such studies is the "bus excursion" multicultural intervention program by Sakurai et al. (2010). As discussed previously, international undergraduate and graduate students who participated in the program have significantly more social ties with fellow international students of other national

and/or cultural origins even three months after the intervention took place. Additionally, these same international students who participated in the program also have significantly more local Australian friends than those who did not participate in the program.

Another notable study on this topic is an examination of a “buddy project” that involves international and local university students in New Zealand by Campbell (2012). As discussed, Campbell (2012) found that international and host-national students mutually experienced positive outcomes as a result of the targeted socializing. It should be noted that fostering friendships between international and host-national students was not the goal of Campbell’s (2012) study (from a practical or research aspect). Rather, it was designed to explore ways to help international students adjust to New Zealand more smoothly. Nonetheless, several anecdotal accounts in her study indicated that intercultural friendships were made between the intercultural dyads as a result of the targeted socializing.

Although it is not a stated focus, both Sakurai et al. (2010) and Campbell (2012) began their interventions prior to or right at the beginning of the academic year when international students in their respective studies would be commencing their academic careers abroad. Considering how international students typically experience acculturative stress most intensely in the early months of their sojourns (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Ying, 2005; Sawir et al., 2008), this decision seems appropriate and provides some guidance on the timing on possible interventions on targeted socializing between international and host-national students.

Both Sakurai et al. (2010) and Campbell (2012) highlighted the importance of targeted socializing. Moreover, their studies lent support to beginning an intercultural intervention early on. With a limited number of research studies that examine intercultural interventions such as

these, it is difficult to discuss potential interventions specifically. That said, based on previous research on international undergraduate and graduate students as well as findings from this study, several recommendations can be made regarding Chinese international and American high school students. Instead of a “buddy project” as part of a class activity for American students, schools may want to implement a similar arrangement at the beginning of the semester. One possibility is to create mentoring programs with regular activities that structurally increase interactions between Chinese international and American high school students. Depending on factors such as age and grade level, an American student can serve as a mentor for an incoming Chinese international student. Well-adjusted Chinese international students can also serve as mentors for incoming American students to help them become more culturally well-rounded. Such interventions may foster friendships between the two student groups. In fact, Participant 11 (p. 72) from this study shared a similar intervention at the participants’ high school that specifically targeted new Chinese international students (a one-time event at the beginning of the school year):

[Participant 11] I think there should be an international teacher who would find American and Chinese students to eat out together, chat, and introduce themselves to others.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] That’s what you would like to see more of?

[Participant 11] It’s already being implemented. I just tried it for the first time.

[Participant 11 - Interviewer] I see. How did you feel about it?

[Participant 11] I think it’s pretty good. Some people actually got to know each other that way.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] Is that offered to every student?

[Participant 11] No. They just did that with new students.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] How did that work? New Chinese and new American students?

[Participant 11] No. It was just new Chinese students and American students who like to make friends with Chinese students.

[Participant 11 - Interviewer] I see, I see. So they pre-select American students who would be better for this. So you were there because you were new?

[Participant 11] Yea.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] And you liked it?

[Participant 11] Yea, I think it's pretty good.

[Participant 11 – Interviewer] Do you think this should be done again?

[Participant 11] Oh yes.

Participant 11 seemed to really appreciate it and reported that some intercultural connections were established as a result.

At a later time in the academic year, or perhaps simultaneously as the “buddy project” or a similar mentorship program is taking place, schools can also host a variety of events or activities that structurally foster targeted socializing between all Chinese international and American students. Similar to what Participant 12 (p. 73) had shared, such activities can be culture-oriented (e.g., Chinese New Year celebration, American Thanksgiving), or it can also be purely social (e.g., open gym, game and/or movie night):

[Participant 12] Maybe they can have like Chinese festival things, like the school can be do more on that. Like the mid-Autumn festival, they can do something more. Maybe introduce what the festival is, and then also the big one is Chinese New Year. They can do more, rather than just... cause for the Chinese students, they will have a party thing, for their dinner, but rather than that alone, maybe the school can make it a bigger event, so then every student at school knows it's a big deal for the Chinese kids, then they can feel more comfortable with coming, too.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So they currently are doing something, but you feel that the school can do more to...

[Participant 12] Yea, they can do more to bring the Chinese and American kids together.

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] So are the American students involved in these activities, or...

[Participant 12] For Chinese New Year party, all the international students can invite two to three friends, but that's all, and also the international committee at school is there, too, but I think that's only like part of the American students can go and know what's going on, but not really everyone, so I think if all the American kids can involve, and maybe after the chapel, they can make an announcement, like “today there's a Chinese festival.”

[Participant 12 – Interviewer] And you believe these will bring the two groups together and create more opportunities for them to become friends?

[Participant 12] Yea, I think so. If they are together, that's easier.

Whatever the nature of the event is, the goal should be to enhance intergroup contact between Chinese international and American high school students, which may help foster intercultural friendships by providing targeted socializing opportunities.

Limitations

The findings of the current study should be considered in light of its limitations. Regarding participants, given the access to Chinese international high school students is rather limited, the method of snowball sampling was used, whereby one participant recommends another participant for the study. Although this strategy helped locate a relatively stable group of Chinese international high school students, snowball sampling has a significant limitation. As Cohen and Arieli (2011) stated, the leading limitation of snowball sampling is the lack of representativity of the population. Since the use of this sampling technique relies on participants' referrals, the researcher has little control over the selection process.

Moreover, all but one participant came from mainland China. Considering how there are multiple subgroups within the Chinese international student body in the U.S., it would be more representative to also obtain the perspectives of Chinese international high school students who came from outside of mainland China. The lack of American student perspective in this study may also have limited the potential insights that this study could have gained. As friendships are two-sided, American high school students may have much to offer in regard to intercultural friendship development with their Chinese counterparts. Furthermore, the current study did not examine gender differences among the participants. Anecdotally, there did not seem to be gender differences in regard to participants' perspectives. Nonetheless, as participants' responses were analyzed collectively, there was no differentiation between females and males. In other words,

the results may have been different if the study focused only on female Chinese international high school students or their male counterparts (e.g., De Goede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009).

Moreover, although they were not directly involved in the friendship development of the two student groups, investigating the perspectives of relevant school personnel (e.g., house parents, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.) might also have improved the extent of findings. It should also be noted that as this study was completely voluntary in terms of participation, the results were somewhat filtered by nature. Specifically, there were approximately a total of 45 Chinese international students at the said high school, but only 12 of them participated in the study. Given the use of snowball sampling technique, the researcher cannot be certain regarding exactly how many of the 45 potential participants received a word-of-mouth invitation to participate in the study. However, based on informal conversations that the researcher had with the participants, there were potential participants (those who were invited by participants) who declined to participate in the study. In other words, participants' initial step of participating in this study was dependent on their willingness, and once they agreed to be interviewed, the gathering of participants' responses was dependent on what they are willing to share with the interviewer.

As for the setting, the current study was only conducted in one Midwestern American high school. It is important to note that a variety of factors contribute to the environment, atmosphere, and context of a school. In fact, in addition to its private nature (vs. public), the said high school also had a religious background. Therefore, readers are discouraged from speculating that results from the current study would be similar to those from another American high school.

Moreover, although the current study included a substantial number of previous research studies as references, these previous studies focused on international undergraduate and graduate

students, whereas the current study focused on Chinese international participants at the high school level. Although the referenced studies offered an abundance of knowledge regarding international students, there are significant developmental differences between the two populations.

Future Studies

Based on the discussion thus far, there are several areas where future studies are warranted. First, given the population of interest (i.e., Chinese international high school students) is still relatively unexamined, similar studies should be conducted with more Chinese international high school students. In order to gain a more comprehensive picture regarding intercultural friendships development between Chinese international and American high school students, researchers should also consider studying the perspectives of American high school students as well as relevant school personnel. As mentioned, these individuals may offer additional perspectives that may add to the understanding of intercultural friendship development between the two groups. In addition, in light of the finding regarding interactions and engagement between the two groups, future studies should focus on potential interventions that can effectively foster intergroup contact between the two student groups. A few aspects of potential interventions may be especially pertinent to examine, such as the nature of the intervention (e.g., institution-based, community-based, etc.), types of events or activities (e.g., academic and/or task-oriented, social-based, culture-oriented, etc.), and length of time. In a more long-term sense, and depending on the results of such future studies, it may also be important to examine intercultural relationships beyond the academic setting. For instance, what effects do intercultural friendships in academic settings have on intercultural relationships in professional, community, and other non-academic settings? Intercultural friendships are indeed beneficial for

international students (as well as host-national students) as they pursue their academic career, and the significance of such relationships is certainly not confined to academic settings. In fact, in an increasingly multicultural society, the ability to develop intercultural relationships effectively may likely become an essential element for adjustment. A deeper understanding of intercultural friendships as well as how to foster them may help equip our future generations with such intercultural competence.

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Appendix A (IRB Approval Letter)



Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator
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New Study - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

Date: May 17, 2017

To: Kyongboon Kwon, PhD

Dept: Educational Psychology

CC: Kai Tai Chan

IRB#: 17.306

Title: Fostering Friendships between High School-level Chinese International and Domestic Students

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been approved as minimal risk Expedited under **Category 6 and 7** as governed by 45 CFR 46.110.

This protocol has been approved on **May 17, 2017** for one year. IRB approval will expire on **May 16, 2018**. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a continuation for IRB approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form found in IRBManager.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintain proper documentation of study records and promptly report to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., [FERPA](#), [Radiation Safety](#), [UWM Data Security](#), [UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts](#), state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator

Appendix B (Interview Questions for Participants)

Rapport Building/ General Relevant Questions

1. How long have you been in the U.S.?
2. What are your plans after you finish high school?
3. Before coming to the U.S., have you interacted with anyone who is not a Chinese?
 - a. If so, tell me about the experience(s).

English as a Non-native Language

1. How long have you studied/spoken English?
2. Tell me about what it was like for you to speak English with *Americans* when you first arrived in the United States.
 - a. If the interviewee mentions difficulty but does not specify:
 - i. Tell me about how speaking English with Americans was difficult for you (e.g., speech generation, speech comprehension, lack of vocabularies, understanding idioms, etc.).
 - ii. Tell me how you feel about it now.
 1. If improvements are noted, ask about what contributed to that.
 - iii. Tell me how this difficulty affects making friends with American students.
 - b. If the interviewee mentions no difficulty of any kind:
 - i. Tell me what helped/prepared you in this area?
 1. If non-linguistic factors (e.g., personalities, comfort level, etc.) are mentioned, ask about what helped/prepared him/her linguistically.
 - ii. Tell me how the lack of difficulty influences your interest/ability in making friends with American students.
3. Tell me about your experience in speaking English with *American students* (in class, during sport practices/ events, during lunch, social gatherings, etc.).
 - a. If the interviewee does not mention any positive experiences:
 - i. Have you had good conversations that went well with American students?
 1. If so, tell me what was positive about these conversations.
 - b. If the interviewee does not mention any negative experiences:
 - i. Have you had conversations that didn't go well with American students?
 1. If so, tell me what was negative about these conversations.

- c. Tell me how your experience(s) affects your interest/ability in making friends with American students.
 - d. If the interviewee does not mention it in her/his response, ask about:
 - i. How often do you speak with Americans?
 - ii. Do you or American students typically initiate these conversations?
 - iii. How long or what type of conversations do you typically have with American students (e.g., hallway-passing chats, lunch-time chats, etc.)?
4. Have you felt anxious or stressed when speaking English with American students?
- a. If so:
 - i. Tell me what made it anxious or stressful.
 - ii. How do you cope with or deal with the anxiety or stress?
 - iii. Tell me how such anxiety/stress affects making friends with American students.
 - b. If not:
 - i. Tell me what helped/prepared you in this area?
 - 1. If non-linguistic factors (e.g., personalities, comfort level, etc.) are mentioned, ask about what helped/prepared him/her linguistically.
 - ii. Tell me how the lack of anxiety/stress affects making friends with American students.
5. In your experience, are English skills important for having meaningful conversations with American students (e.g., discussions about a common interest, hobby, personal life, beliefs, preference for music, or anything that is more than on a surface level)?
- a. If so, tell me why they are important.
 - b. If not, tell me why they are not important.
6. Have you had meaningful conversations with Americans?
- a. If the interviewee did have such conversations:
 - i. Describe for me whether you found it easy/difficult to have that conversation, and what made it easy/difficult.
 - ii. To you, are meaningful conversations an important part of making friends with American students?
 - b. If the interviewee did not have such conversations:

- i. To you, are meaningful conversations an important part of making friends with American students?
- 7. Have you talked to Americans who made it easy/easier for you to talk with them?
 - a. If so, what did they do that made it easy/easier for you?
 - b. Tell me how else Americans can help when they talk to international students.

Sociocultural Stress

Before we move forward, let's define several terms:

- 1. Acquaintances: people you know of, but have no personal relationships with.
- 2. Causal friends: you do fun things with them, but you don't share a strong personal relationship with them.
- 3. Close friends: friends that you share a close relationship with.

From this point on, we will focus on causal and close friends when we discuss about "friends."

- 1. Tell me about how often you see American students.
 - a. When/where do you see them around the most?
 - b. When/where do you interact with them the most?
- 2. Interviewee's friendship circles:
 - a. Tell me about your Chinese friends. If need be, probe:
 - i. Who are they (in general, not specific names)? What are they like?
 - ii. Tell me why you are friends with these Chinese students and not the other ones. In other words, how did you become friends with them but not the other Chinese students (e.g., common interest, proximity, same nationality/native language, personalities, etc.)?
 - b. Tell me about your American friends. If need be, probe:
 - i. Who are they (in general, not specific names)? What are they like?
 - ii. Tell me why you are friends with these Chinese students and not the other ones. In other words, how did you become friends with them but not the other Chinese students (e.g., common interest, proximity, same nationality/native language, personalities, etc.)?
 - c. If the interviewee has both Chinese and American friends:
 - i. Which group of friends do you spend time with more?
 - 1. Tell me why.

- ii. And how do you typically spend time with this group of friends?
3. Tell me what it was/is like for you to befriend (or make friends with) American students.
 - a. If the interviewee indicates a lack of difficulty, ask about what helps with the process.
 - b. If the interviewee indicates difficulty, ask about what makes it difficult.
4. In your experience, tell me whether American students are willing to make friends with Chinese students.
 - a. If the interviewee indicates any willingness on the part of American students (either overall or just some of them): tell me whether they actively befriend Chinese students.
 - b. Of those who are willing to make friends with Chinese students, tell me what is/are common about those American students (vs. those who aren't).
5. For you personally, do you prefer spending time/ being friends with Chinese or American students.
 - a. Why?
6. Have you felt lonely or homesick since you arrived in the U.S.?
 - a. If so, tell me about the experience.
 - i. And how have your friends (both Chinese and/or American) helped you in the process?
 - b. If not, tell me how your friends (both Chinese and/or American) have helped you in the process.
7. Compare for me between the American concept of “friendship” and the Chinese concept of “friendship.”
 - a. If need be, probe:
 - i. In what ways are the concepts similar?
 - ii. In what ways are the concepts different?
 - iii. If any similarities or differences are noted: tell me how they make it easier or more difficult for you to be friends with American students.
8. What makes you feel fit in with American students, or when do you feel fit in with them?
 - a. In your experience, how does this feeling of fitting in or belonging influence friendship development between Chinese and American students?

9. What makes you feel you don't fit in with American students, or when do you feel that?
 - a. And in your experience, how does this influence friendship development between Chinese and American students?
10. Here are four different descriptions. Please tell me which description fits you the best.
 - a. Having Chinese friends is not very important to me. I would like to have more American friends.
 - b. Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I have no interest in making friends with American students.
 - c. Having Chinese friends is not very important to me, and I have no interest in making friends with American students.
 - d. Having Chinese friends is very important to me. I would also like to have more American friends.
 - i. You picked option _____. Tell me how this description fits you the best.
 1. Probe for specific examples if none are provided.

Discrimination

1. Tell me what "discrimination" means to you (if the interviewee's understanding seems incorrect, explain).
2. With that understanding, tell me if you have experienced discrimination since your arrival in the United States.
 - a. If so, tell me about the experience (e.g., location, settings, causes, forms of discrimination, etc.)?
 - i. Tell me how the experience has affected you.
 - ii. Tell me how the experience has affected your interest in being friends with American students.

Interviewee's Perceptions

1. Tell me what kind of things or factors encourage Chinese and American students become friends.
2. Similarly, tell me what kind of things or factors discourage them from becoming friends.
3. Would you encourage your fellow Chinese students to become friends with American students? If so/not, tell me why you would/wouldn't encourage it.

4. If you were asked to offer advice to fellow Chinese students about how to make friends with American students, what would you tell them?
5. Tell me what you think your school can do to help Chinese and American students become friends more easily.

Appendix C (Reliability Estimate Results for Open Codes and SPSS Syntax for Running Kalpha)

Run MATRIX procedure:

Krippendorff's Alpha Reliability Estimate

	Alpha	LL95%CI	UL95%CI	Units	Observrs	Pairs
Nominal	.8919	.8014	.9801	49.0000	3.0000	147.0000

Probability (q) of failure to achieve an alpha of at least alphamin:

alphamin	q
.9000	.4627
.8000	.0221
.7000	.0001
.6700	.0000
.6000	.0000
.5000	.0000

Number of bootstrap samples:

10000

Judges used in these computations:

Coder1 Coder2 Coder3

Examine output for SPSS errors and do not interpret if any are found

----- END MATRIX -----

```

/* This macro computes Krippendorff's alpha reliability estimate for judgments */.
/* made at any level of measurement, any number of judges, with or */.
/* without missing data. The macro assumes the data file is set up */.
/* in a SPSS data file with judges as the variables and the units being */.
/* judged in the rows. The entries in the data matrix should be */.
/* the coding (quantified or numerically coded for nominal judgments) given */.
/* to the unit in that row by the judge in that column. Once the macro is */.
/* activated (by running the command set below), the syntax is */.
/* */.
/* KALPHA judges = judgelist/level = a/detail = b/boot = z.
/* */.
/* where 'judgelist' is a list of variable names holding the names of the */.
/* judges, 'a' is the level of measurement (1 = nominal, 2 = ordinal, */.
/* 3 = interval, 4 = ratio), 'b' is set to 1 if you desire SPSS to print */.
/* the coincidence and delta matrices, and 'z' is the number of bootstrap */.
/* samples desired for inference; z must be at least 1000 and is truncated to the */.
/* lowest 1000 entered (for example, 2300 is truncated to 2000) */.
/* The '/level' and '/detail' and '/boot' subcommands are */.
/* optional and default to 1,0, and 0, respectively, if omitted */.
/* */.
/* Missing data should be represented with a 'period' character */.
/* Units that are not coded by at least one judge are excluded from */.
/* the analysis */.
/* */.
/* This macro is version 3.0, updated on February 5, 2011 */.
/* */.
/* */.
/* Written by Andrew F. Hayes */.
/* School of Communication */.
/* The Ohio State University */.
/* hayes.338@osu.edu */.
/* http://www.afhayes.com */.

```

```

DEFINE kalpha (judges = !charend ('')/level = !charend('') !default(1)/detail
= !charend('') !default(0)/boot = !charend('') !default(0)).

```

```

PRESERVE.

```

```

SET MXLOOP = 900000000.

```

```

SET LENGTH = NONE.

```

```

SET SEED = RANDOM.

```

```

SET PRINTBACK = OFF.

```

```

MATRIX.

```

```

get dat/variables = !judges/file = */names = vn/missing = -9999999.

```

```

compute btn = !boot.

```

```

do if (!boot > 0).

```

```

    compute btn = trunc(!boot/1000)*1000.

```

```

end if.
do if (!boot > 0 and btn = 0).
  print/title = "Number of bootstraps must be at least 1000.".
end if.
compute btprob = 0.

/* FIRST WE CREATE THE DATA FILE EXCLUDING OBJECTS WITH ONLY ONE
JUDGMENT */.
/* THAT DATA FILE IS HELD IN DAT AND DAT3 */.

compute rw = 1.
loop i = 1 to nrow(dat).
  compute good = 0.
  loop j = 1 to ncol(dat).
    do if (dat(i,j) <> -9999999).
      compute good = good + 1.
    end if.
  end loop.
  do if (good > 1).
    compute dat(rw,:) = dat(i,:).
    compute rw = rw+1.
  end if.
end loop.
compute dat = dat(1:(rw-1),:).
compute nj = ncol(dat).
compute nobj = nrow(dat).
compute dat3 = dat.

/* NOW WE CREATE A SINGLE COLUMN OF DATA TO FIGURE OUT HOW MANY */.
/* UNIQUE JUDGMENTS ARE MADE, AND WE SORT IT */.

compute m = reshape(t(dat),(nobj*nj),1).
compute allm = nobj*nj.
compute j = 0.
loop i = 1 to nrow(m).
  do if m(i,1) <> -9999999.
    compute j = j + 1.
    compute m(j,:)=m(i,:).
  end if.
end loop.
compute m = m(1:j,1).
compute mss = nrow(m).
compute mss = allm-mss.
compute mtmp = m.
compute mtmp(GRADE(m)) = m.
compute m = mtmp.

```

```
compute m2 = make(nrow(m),1,m(1,1)).
compute yass = csum((m = m2))/nrow(m).
```

```
do if (yass <> 1).
  compute des = design(m).
  compute uniq = ncol(des).
  compute coinc = make(uniq,uniq,0).
  compute delta = coinc.
  compute map = make(uniq,1,0).
  loop i = 1 to nrow(m).
    loop j = 1 to uniq.
      do if (des(i,j) = 1).
        compute map(j,1) = m(i,1).
      end if.
    end loop.
  end loop.
  loop i = 1 to nobj.
    loop j = 1 to nj.
      do if (dat(i,j) <> -9999999).
        loop k = 1 to uniq.
          do if (dat(i,j) = map(k,1).
            compute dat(i,j) = k.
            BREAK.
          end if.
        end loop.
      end if.
    end loop.
  end loop.
  compute datms = (dat <> -9999999).
  compute mu = rsum(datms).
  compute nprs = csum(mu&*(mu-1))*0.5.
  compute btalp = make((btn+1),1,-999).
```

/* THIS CONSTRUCTS THE COINCIDENCE MATRIX FROM THE MATRIX DATA */.

```
loop k = 1 to nobj.
  compute temp = make(uniq, uniq, 0).
  loop i = 1 to nj.
    loop j = 1 to nj.
      do if (dat(k,i) <> -9999999 AND dat(k,j) <> -9999999 AND i <> j).
        compute temp(dat(k,i),dat(k,j)) = temp(dat(k,i),dat(k,j)) + (1/(mu(k,1)-1)).
      end if.
    end loop.
  end loop.
  compute coinc = coinc + temp.
end loop.
```

```

compute q = reshape(coinc, (nrow(coinc)*ncol(coinc)), 1).
compute q = csum(q > 0).
compute nc = rsum(coinc).
compute n = csum(nc).
compute coincct = coinc.
compute dmat = diag(coinc).
compute nzero = csum(dmat > 0).
compute bootm = nprs.
compute nx = (dmat/n)&*&bootm.
compute nx=rnd(btn*csum(nx)).
compute numone = 0.

```

```

/* THIS CONSTRUCTS THE EXPECTED MATRIX */.

```

```

compute expect = coinc.
loop i = 1 to uniq.
  loop j = 1 to uniq.
    do if (i = j).
      compute expect(i,j)=nc(i,1)*(nc(j,1)-1)/(n-1).
    else if (i <> j).
      compute expect(i,j)=nc(i,1)*nc(j,1)/(n-1).
    end if.
  end loop.
end loop.

```

```

compute tst = 25*q.
compute tst = {tst; (((nj-1)*n)/2)}.
compute bootm2 = cmin(tst).

```

```

loop z = 1 to (btn + 1).

```

```

/* HERE IS WHERE WE START DOING THE BOOTSTRAPPING */.

```

```

do if (z > 1).
  compute rand = uniform(bootm2,1).
  compute numsum = 0.
  loop i = 1 to bootm2.
    loop j = 2 to indx+1.
      do if (rand(i,1) <= pmat(j,1)).
        do if (rand(i,1) >= pmat(j-1,1)).
          compute numsum = numsum + pmat(j,2).
        end if.
      end if.
    end loop.
  end loop.
  compute alpha = 1 - (numsum*(1/(expdis*bootm2))).
  do if (alpha < -1).

```

```

    compute alpha = -1.
end if.
do if (alpha = 1 and nzero = 1).
    compute alpha = 0.
end if.
do if (alpha = 1 and nzero > 1).
    compute numone = numone + 1.
end if.
compute btalp(z,1) = alpha.
end if.

do if (z = 1).
do if (!level = 2).
    compute delta = make(uniq,uniq,0).
    loop i = 1 to uniq.
        loop j = i to uniq.
            do if (i <> j).
                compute delta(i,j) = (csum(nc(i:j,1))-(nc(i,1)/2)-(nc(j,1)/2))**2.
                compute delta(j,i) = delta(i,j).
            end if.
        end loop.
    end loop.
    compute v = {"Ordinal"}.
    do if (z = 1).
        compute deltat = delta.
    end if.
end if.
do if (!level = 1).
    compute delta = 1-ident(uniq).
    compute v = {"Nominal"}.
    compute deltat = delta.
end if.
do if (!level = 3).
    loop i = 1 to uniq.
        loop j = i to uniq.
            do if (i <> j).
                compute delta(i,j) = (map(i,1)-map(j,1))**2.
                compute delta(j,i) = delta(i,j).
            end if.
        end loop.
    end loop.
    compute v = {"Interval"}.
    compute deltat = delta.
end if.
do if (!level = 4).
    loop i = 1 to uniq.

```

```

loop j = i to uniq.
  do if (i <> j).
    compute delta(i,j) = ((map(i,1)-map(j,1))/(map(i,1)+map(j,1)))**2.
    compute delta(j,i) = delta(i,j).
  end if.
end loop.
end loop.
compute v = {"Ratio"}.
compute deltat = delta.
end if.
compute num = csum(rsum(delta&*coinc)).
compute den = csum(rsum(delta&*expect)).
do if (den > 0).
  compute alp = 1-(num/den).
  compute btalp(1,1)=alp.
  compute expdis=csum(rsum((expect&*delta)))/n.
end if.

```

/* NOW WE COMPUTE THE FUNCTION FOR BOOTSTRAPPING */.

```

compute pcoinc = 2*(coinc/n)-(mdia(diag(coinc))/n).
compute temp = mdia(diag(coinc))/n.
compute pmat = make((uniq+((uniq*(uniq-1))/2)),2,0).
compute psum = 0.
compute ct = 1.
loop i = 1 to uniq.
  loop j = i to uniq.
    compute psum = psum+pcoinc(j,i).
    compute pmat(ct,1)=psum.
    compute pmat(ct,2)=delta(j,i).
    compute ct=ct+1.
  end loop.
end loop.
compute indx = nrow(pmat).
compute t3 = {0,0}.
compute pmat = {t3;pmat}.
end if.
end loop.
compute alpfirst = btalp(1,1).

```

/* NOW WE CALCULATE CI AND P(Q) FROM BOOTSTRAPPING */.

```

do if (btn > 0).
  compute btalp=btalp(2:nrow(btalp),1).

```

/* FIRST WE CORRECT DISTRIBUTION OF NEED BE */.

```

do if (nx > 0 and nzero > 1).

```

```

compute chk1 = 0.
compute chk2 = 0.
loop i = 1 to nrow(btalp).
  do if (nx >= numone and btalp(i,1) = 1 and chk1 < numone).
    compute btalp(i,1) = 0.
    compute chk1 = chk1 + 1.
  end if.
  do if (nx < numone and btalp(i,1) = 1 and chk2 < nx).
    compute btalp(i,1) = 0.
    compute chk2 = chk2 + 1.
  end if.
end loop.
end if.

```

```

/* NOW WE SORT THE BOOTSTRAP ESTIMATES */.

```

```

compute btalptmp = btalp.
compute btalptmp(GRADE(btalp)) = btalp.
compute btalp = btalptmp.

```

```

compute btalp = btalp(1:nrow(btalp),1).
compute mn = csum(btalp)/btn.
compute low95 = trunc(.025*btn).
compute high95 = trunc(.975*btn)+1.
compute low95 = btalp(low95,1).
compute high95 = btalp(high95,1).
compute median = btalp(0.50*btn).
compute q = {.9, 0; .8, 0; .7, 0; 0.67, 0; .6, 0; .5, 0}.
loop i = 1 to 6.
  compute qcomp = (btalp < q(i,1)).
  compute qcomp = csum(qcomp)/btn.
  compute q(i,2)=qcomp.
end loop.
end if.
do if (btalp(1,1) = -999).
  compute btprob = 1.
end if.

```

```

print/title = "Krippendorff's Alpha Reliability Estimate".
do if (btn = 0 or btprob = 1).
  compute res = {alffirst, nobj, nj, nprs}.
  compute lab = {"Alpha", "Units", "Obsrvrs", "Pairs"}.
end if.
do if (btn > 0 and btprob = 0).
  compute res = {alffirst, low95, high95, nobj, nj, nprs}.

```

```

    compute lab = {"Alpha", "LL95%CI", "UL95%CI", "Units", "Observrs", "Pairs"}.
end if.
print res/title = " "/rnames = v/cnames = lab/format = F10.4.
do if (btn > 0 and btprob = 0).
    print q/title = "Probability (q) of failure to achieve an alpha of at least alphamin:"/clabels =
"alphamin" "q"/format = F10.4.
    save btalp/outfile = alpboot.sav/variables = alpha.
    print btn/title = "Number of bootstrap samples:".
end if.
print vn/title = "Judges used in these computations:"/format = a8.
do if (!detail = 1).
    print/title = "=====".
    print coinct/title = "Observed Coincidence Matrix"/format = F9.2.
    print expect/title = "Expected Coincidence Matrix"/format = F9.2.
    print deltat/title = "Delta Matrix"/format F9.2.
    compute tmap = t(map).
    print tmap/title "Rows and columns correspond to following unit values"/format = F9.2.
end if.
else.
    print/title = "ERROR: Input Reliability Data Matrix Exhibits No Variation.".
end if.
do if (btprob = 1).
    print/title = "A problem was encountered when bootstrapping, so these results are not printed".
end if.
print/title = "Examine output for SPSS errors and do not interpret if any are found".
END MATRIX.
RESTORE.
!ENDDEFINE.

```

Curriculum Vitae

Kai Tai Chan

Academic Position

October, 2016 – ongoing Ph.D. Candidate
Educational Psychology (School Psychology; APA, NASP Accredited)
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Education

August, 2016 M.A.
Educational Psychology (School Psychology)
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

December, 2010 B.A.
Psychology, Business Minor
Wisconsin Lutheran College

Professional Experience

August, 2015 – August, 2016 Project Assistant
Evaluation of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction & University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

August, 2014 – August, 2015 Project Assistant
Evaluation of the Junior Achievement of Wisconsin
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

August, 2013 – August, 2016 Project Assistant
Evaluation of the Milwaukee Community Literacy Project/ Spheres of Proud
Achievement in Reading for Kids (SPARK) Program
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

August, 2013 – August, 2016 Graduate Assistant
Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation (CORE)
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Honors and Awards

August, 2014 – August, 2015 Chancellor's Graduate Student Awards
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

August, 2013 – August, 2014 Chancellor's Graduate Student Awards
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

May, 2010 Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Klingbeil, D. A., Fischer, A. J., Renshaw, T. L., Bloomfield, B. S., Polakoff, B., Willenbrink, J. B., Copek, R. A., & **Chan, K. T.** (2017). Effects of mindfulness-based intervention on disruptive behavior: A meta-analysis of single-case research. *Psychology in the Schools, 54*(1), 70-87.

Book Chapters

Newell, M., Henderson, H., **Chan, K. T.** (in press). Accountability for Child Rights in School Psychology. *International Handbook on Child Rights and School Psychology.*

Technical Reports

Walker, C. M., Rice, N. E., Newell, M. L., Purdy, S. R., **Chan, K. T.**, Lynch., R. P., & Westrum., R. L. (2016). *An Exploration of the Impact of the Wisconsin Specific Learning Disability Rule on Placement Rates.* Milwaukee, WI: University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation.

Presentations

Chan, K. T. (2016, February). *Getting Ready to Serve – Understanding East Asian International Students.* Poster presented at the annual conference of the National Association of School Psychologists, New Orleans, LA.

Teaching Experience

January, 2017 – May, 2017	Instructor Motivation Strategies (Ed. Psy. 105) University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
August, 2016 – December, 2016	Instructor Pathways to Success at UWM (Ed. Psy. 104) University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
April, 2016	Invited Guest Lecturer Introduction to Learning and Development (Ed. Psy. 330) University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
March, 2016	Invited Guest Lecturer Psychological Testing (Psy. 470) Wisconsin Lutheran College
November, 2015	Invited Guest Lecturer Infant and Early Childhood Assessment (Ed. Psy. 575) University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
October, 2015	Invited Guest Lecturer Introduction to Learning and Development (Ed. Psy. 330) University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

April, 2015 Invited Guest Lecturer
Introduction to Learning and Development (Ed. Psy. 330)
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

November, 2014 Invited Guest Lecturer
Infant and Early Childhood Assessment (Ed. Psy. 575)
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Applied Experience

School Experience

August, 2017 – School Psychologist
Present Mary McLeod Bethune Academy
Milwaukee Public Schools
Supervisor: Christina Monfre

September, 2016 – Advanced Practicum Student
June, 2017 Initial Evaluation Team – Central Region
Milwaukee Public Schools
Supervisor: Jenessa Nawrocki

January, 2015 – Practicum Student
June, 2015 Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning
Milwaukee Public Schools
Supervisor: Angela Caskey

September, 2014 – Practicum Student
June, 2015 Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School
Milwaukee Public Schools
Supervisor: Travis Pinter

January, 2014 – Practicum Student
June, 2014 Story Elementary School
Milwaukee Public Schools
Supervisor: Edmund Campbell

Clinical Experience

August, 2015 – Clinical Intern Therapist (Advance Practicum Student)
June, 2016 Family Options Counseling, LLC
Supervisor: Christina Diorio

January, 2011 – Youth Care Specialist
October, 2011 Clinicare Corporation – Milwaukee Academy
Supervisor: Romero Ference

Special Skills

Language

Cantonese Chinese	Skill Level: Native
Putonghua Chinese (Mandarin Chinese)	Skill Level: Conversant/Advanced
English	Skill Level: Near-native/Business Fluent