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# Chinese International Students' Cross-cultural Adaptation and Online Communication

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CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND  
ONLINE COMMUNICATION

CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND  
ONLINE COMMUNICATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Communication

By

Chen Wei Wu  
Beijing City University  
Bachelor of Arts in English, 2009

May 2012  
University of Arkansas

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored Chinese international students' computer mediated communication with both Americans and Chinese during their studying in the U.S. based on a Cross-Cultural Adaptation theory. The specific purpose of this study was to test five theorems of the theory with a sample of Chinese international students and to explore how Chinese international students' intercultural transformation, adaptive personality, host communication competence, and their interpersonal and mass communication with both host and ethnic groups associate together.

This thesis is approved for recommendation  
to the Graduate Council.

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## **DEDICATION**

This edition of the *Chinese International Students' Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Online Communication* is dedicated to all the Chinese international students, the professors and students at the University of Arkansas, and my families.



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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Globalization, which is “essentially a technologically driven process of change toward increased informational and communicative interconnectedness and functional interdependence among people across societies and nations” (Kim & Bhawuk, 2008, p. 301), potentially brings diverse cultures, races, religions, and nationalities closer, and provides more chances for individuals of different national and ethnic backgrounds to communicate with each other while living and working more closely than ever before (Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2009). One major benefit of globalization is the cultivation of knowledge (Wood, 2010). Many promising individuals are seeking entities which can provide them with environments and resources to enhance their knowledge and competitiveness (Wood, 2010). Universities and colleges are considered as eligible entities (Wood, 2010) and thus an increasing number of college students decide to study abroad (Ning, 2011).

When international students enter a foreign country, they face a series of challenges to adapt to the new living and studying environment. They need to learn accepted behaviors in the context of the host culture to engage in the host environment, thus they need to unlearn some of what they have gained from their ethnic culture (Kim, 2001). This study will examine various influences arising from both Chinese international students’ ethnic culture and their U.S. host culture on their adaption process, influences identified in Korean scholar Young Yun Kim’s (2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory. Specifically five of the theorems proposed in Kim’s cross-cultural adaption theory will be investigated in this study. The selected theorems address relationships between host interpersonal/mass communication use, ethnic interpersonal/mass communication use, and intercultural transformation; and the relationship between the

international students' adaptive personality, their host communication competence, and their host and ethnic interpersonal/mass communication use.

The focus of this study is on young Chinese nationals enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. The U.S., as a desired destination for higher education, has been a major host country of international students since the 1960s (Hazen & Alberts, 2006) and has witnessed a steady increase in the enrollment of international students since World War II (Zhang, 2009). During the 2006-2007 academic years, 582,984 international students newly enrolled in U.S. colleges/universities. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities reached 690,923 (IIE, 2010), a 19% increase rate compared to the 2006-2007 academic year. Chinese students made up 18% (128,000) of the international students studying in the U.S., making China a "major sending country" (IIE, 2010). Due to the strong ties between China and the U.S. (Lu & Hsu, 2008) and China's role as a major sending country of U.S. international students, Chinese international students in the U.S. are an important group to study.

While the in-flow of international students brings economic benefits to the U.S. (NAFSA, 2010) and increased diversity within higher education institutions (U.S. Department of State, 2009), international students may face a variety of challenges and difficulties adapting to new cultural and academic environments (Sullivan, 2010). Psychological problems such as clashing ethnic identities (Brown, 2009), acculturative stress (Sullivan, 2010), and loneliness (Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009) can emerge during the initial adjustment to a new culture and society. Research suggests that when compared to native students, international students suffer from more physical, mental, and academic related problems (Lewthwaite, 1996). The pressure on and depression of international students may lead to some serious results. For example, a number of

international students have been involved in school shootings and other campus violence caused by psychological problems (Freydis, 2011). In December, 2009, a female Chinese Virginia Tech student was murdered by Haiyang Zhu who also was a student at Virginia Tech due to their sentimental dispute (CNN Justice, 2009). Another example, Tiantian Zhai, a former graduate student at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, was arrested and sent back to China on April 25, 2010, after allegedly threatening to burn down a campus building (The Associated Press, 2010). Zhai was reported to have problems getting along well with some students and teachers before the terroristic threat took place.

As the theoretical grounding of this study, Kim's (1988) cross-cultural adaptation theory claims that when one enters a new culture, he/she faces problems getting involved in the host culture. The major challenge to all individuals in a new culture is to learn "to live with unfamiliarity and uncertainty" (Laroche, Kim, Hui & Tomiuk, 1997, as cited in Yang, Wu, Zhu, & Southwell, 2004, p. 82). Some people actively seek to reduce the uncertainty: they seek to speak the language of the host country fluently, interact with the people from the host culture and use host-country media; in contrast, others rarely participate in communication with people outside of their ethnic group and never try to adapt to the host culture (Laroche et al., 1997, as cited in Yang et al., 2004). Chinese college students in the U.S. are a noteworthy group to study because of the "linguistic and cultural differences faced by the group as a whole relative to predominant US culture" (Yang et al., 2004, p. 83). Research investigating how Chinese college students seek to reduce their uncertainty is needed.

Kim (2001) points out that communication is crucial to cross-cultural adaptation. Communication is considered a "carrier of culture and social relationships" (Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009, p. 4); it plays an essential role in foreign-born immigrants' and

temporary sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation process and it relates to foreign-born individuals' psychological health and functional fitness in the host environment (Kim et al., 2009, p. 4). Shibutani and Kwan (1965, as cited in Yang et al., 2004, p. 82) claim that "newcomers' participation in a new society is closely bound with their communication behavior and information-seeking choices." To communicate in the host culture, non-natives need to acquire the ability to "receive and transmit messages and retain information" (Kim, 1988, p. 61) appropriately and effectively. The ability to perform in such a way is considered "host communication competence" (Kim, 1988, p. 61). Through communication competence, individuals are able to grow from stressful events and transform their behavior to meet the demands of a new cultural environment (Kim, 2001). This study investigates Chinese college students' host communication competence.

Strangers' communication with members of the ethnic culture and host culture both play important roles in the cross-cultural adaptation process (Kim, 2001). Based on Kim's communication theory and model of cross-cultural adaptation, interpersonal and mass communication within the ethnic community can help non-natives gain "material, informational, emotional, and other forms of social support" (De Cocq, 1976, as cited in Kim, 1988, p. 64) during the initial stages of their adaptation process (Kim, 2001). However, in the long term, continued heavy reliance on the ethnic sources will deter non-natives' development of host communication competence because non-natives must acquire some elements of cultural communication patterns from the host culture during their acculturation process (Kim, 2001). Such learning is enhanced through communication with members of the host culture.

Although Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation seems to be well developed, some of the theorems and hypotheses have yet to be fully tested, especially with Chinese college

students. This study investigates the following theorems:

Theorem 5: The greater the host interpersonal and mass communication, the greater the intercultural transformation (psychological health).

Theorem 6: The greater the ethnic interpersonal and mass communication, the lesser the intercultural transformation (psychological health).

Theorem 19: The greater the adaptive personality, the greater the host communication competence.

Theorem 20: The greater the adaptive personality, the greater the host interpersonal and mass communication.

Theorem 21: The greater the adaptive personality, the lesser the ethnic interpersonal and mass communication (Kim, 2001, p. 92).

Although Kim discusses three outcomes of intercultural transformation (i.e., functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity), this study focuses on psychological health as reflected in the modifications to the wordings of the theorems shown here. In this study, psychological health is assessed by the loneliness and acculturative stress concepts. Loneliness is conceptually defined as “the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relations is deficient in some important way” (Perlmam & Peplau, 1981, p. 31). Acculturative stress is conceptually defined as a series of stresses that occurs during strangers’ adaption and acculturation processes in a new culture (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Another important concept appearing in the theorems explored in this study is adaptive personality. Adaptive personality could be measured in many ways and may include multiple dimensions. However, in this study, it is accessed by willingness to communicate with Americans (WTCA). Other researchers (i.e., Lu & Hsu, 2008) have focused on willingness to communicate as one element



of adaptive personality in previous studies. WTCA is a personality-based and trait-like predisposition which represents openness and willingness to share ideas and interact with Americans (Lu & Hsu, 2008). Host communication competence is measured by self-perceived communication competence (SPCC) to assess how Chinese international students assess their own ability to communicate in the U.S. culture (Lu & Hsu, 2008).

### **Why the Study of Chinese International Students Is Necessary**

Kim et al. (2009) previously studied the direct and mediated interpersonal communication (testing Theorems 5 and 6) of non-native residents (51% of the sample came from European countries) in the U.S. They assessed elements such as host interpersonal and mass communication, and the ethnic interpersonal and mass communication. They found non-natives were mainly involved in interpersonal communication with people in the host environment rather than their ethnic group; computer-based media (e.g., e-mail, Internet) were most commonly used by non-natives to communicate with their ethnic group back home; and, interpersonal communication with ethnic group members did not significantly influence their “functional and psychological well-being” (p. 3) within the context of the U.S.

Kim et al. (2009) conducted interviews and, due to the difficulty of finding eligible participants, they only recruited 51 interviewees. The current study builds on the Kim et al. (2009) study and further tests Kim’s theorems using a survey methodology to increase sample size.

In addition, Kim et al.’s (2009) findings may not apply to Asian students. Asian students and European students use distinctive forms of communication: Eurocentrism versus Asiacentrism (Lu & Hsu, 2008). The Eurocentric form of communication “values personal thoughts, feelings and actions in communication” (Klopf, in press, as cited in Lu & Hsu, 2008);

and individuals can express their thoughts “precisely, explicitly and directly” (p. 76). The Asiancentrism form values harmonious relationships, direct dissent is prohibited, and silence is encouraged to avoid conflicts.

The role of ethnic interpersonal and mass communication may be particularly strong for Chinese international students. Evidence suggests that “receiving emotional support from trusted others” is the most effective way of releasing people from upsetting situations (Burlison, & Goldsmith, 1998, as cited in Mortenson, 2006). Since Chinese people have strong ties and identity within their ethnic group (Lu & Hsu, 2008) and given their collectivistic culture (Hofstede, 1993), it is likely interpersonal communication with ethnic group members may be especially important to Chinese international students’ host communication competence and their adaptation process. Thus, a Chinese sample can represent an important test to verify the cross cultural validity and credibility of Kim’s theory and the theorems based on her model.

Moreover, the well-educated participants in Kim et al.’s (2009) study had resided in the U.S. for an average of 10 years. Most Chinese international students who come to the U.S. for college stay in the U.S. for a relative short term (i.e., undergraduate program—4 years; graduate programs—2-4 years). Thus, Chinese international students’ cross-cultural adaptation might differ. In this study, Theorems 5, 6, 19, 20, and 21 in Kim’s (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory were tested with a sample of Chinese international students in the U.S. Relationships among concepts in these theorems including interpersonal and mass communication (with both host and ethnic groups), intercultural transformation (i.e., psychological health in terms of acculturative stress and loneliness), adaptive personality (i.e., WTC), and communication competence (i.e., SPCC) were explored based on Kim’s theory and model. Chapter Two reviews Kim’s theory and research testing these concepts. The third chapter

describes the method and the procedures of this study. Chapter Four shares the results of this study. The final chapter discusses the study's results together with its limitation and suggestions for future studies.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This literature review begins with a discussion of the cross-cultural adaptation process. Then it moves to a discussion of Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory and structural model, followed by a review of five out of six dimensions in Kim's structural model. The five dimensions investigated in this study are: *host communication competence, host interpersonal and mass communication, ethnic interpersonal and mass communication, adaptive personality, and predisposition*. The order of these five dimensions reviewed in this study is consistent with their order in Kim's structural model (Kim, 1988, 2001). Key concepts representing each dimension being investigated in this study are clarified at the end of the introduction to each dimension. The chapter ends with a review of research related to the key concepts in this study.

### Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation has been investigated in social science in the U.S. since the 1930s (Kim, 2005). First studied by Park (1950), Gordon (1973, 1981), and Berry (1970, 1990), cross-cultural adaptation became a major focus for Kim (1988, 1995, 2001). White (1976) helped define the term cross-cultural adaptation as "the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, upon relocating to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment" (p. 18). Basically speaking, it entails a stranger's moving from one culture to another culture which is associated with changes in the social environment; and usually the stranger's learning to cope with the new and unfamiliar culture (the rules, norms, customs, language, etc.) due to the cultural gaps caused by relocation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

People relocate for various reasons. According to the length of time and reason of relocation, Taft (1977, as cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 1984, p. 206) categorized situations involving relocation and cultural adaptation under five groups: sojourning, settling, sub-cultural mobility, segregation, and change in society. The first two headings involve major geographical mobility while the other three did not. This study focuses on the experience of Chinese students studying in the U.S. Since most intend to return to China upon graduation, these students can be classified as sojourners—those who stay or reside in place temporarily (Kim, 1988, 2001). Specific terms including immigrants, refugees, sojourners, and resettlers are not used in this study. Instead, the integrative notion of “stranger” was used because it represents all individuals who “enter and resettle in an alien cultural environment” (Kim, 2005, p. 380).

**The process of cross-cultural adaptation.** Prior to entering a new culture, strangers have already been engaged in their domestic lives and built their own identities in their home countries (enculturation). When strangers enter a new culture, which is likely to be different from their own culture, they need to learn the new culture and change to be involved in the new cultural environment (acculturation) (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Kim, 2005). Strangers experience a process of learning from their host culture and leave some things from their original culture behind (deculturation) when they are learning the new one. After going through a whole process of learning, unlearning, doubting, struggling, and recovering, strangers may reach the final step and be assimilated into or even adapt to the new culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Kim, 2005). *Cross-cultural adaptation*, which is considered as a “superordinate category” (White, 1976, p.18), is used to represent and subsume all the terms such as enculturation, acculturation, deculturation, and assimilation in adaption process (Kim, 2002). The following sections provide a more detailed description of the cross-cultural adaptation process.

***Enculturation (or Socialization)***. Enculturation is regarded as learning “culturally acceptable concepts, attitudes, and actions” through continuous interactions and communication with strangers’ home cultural environment to fit into it (Kim, 2005, p. 382). Kelvin (1970) described it as the socialization process. In the enculturation and socialization process, early “significant others” (e.g., family) will teach children “the cultural forms for presenting essential social behavior” (Berger & Luckman, 1967, p. 134) and the ability to communicate effectively including “decoding (perceptual and cognitive) patterns and encoding (verbal and nonverbal language) training” (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984, p. 207). Children gain knowledge of self, reality, and how to respond to the world according to their home culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). The ability to organize oneself in and with the home culture environment is considered as *communication competence* and “the development of an individual’s communication competence within his or her cultural community occurs side by side with the degree of the individual’s *functional fitness* and *psychological health*” (Kim, 2001, p. 49). People from the same cultural background share a similar image of self, reality and the world so that they are fit to live in the company of each other (Kim, 2005). On the other hand, an unfamiliar culture might be out of harmony with one’s own cultural norm (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

***Entering a new culture***. When people enter a new and unfamiliar cultural environment as strangers, resocialization occurs to some degree (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). Kim (2005) considered it “just like starting an enculturation process all over again” (p. 382) but the existence and influence of the original culture cannot be ignored. In the resocialization process, strangers will suspend some old cultural habits (*deculturation*) while learning something new from the host culture (*acculturation*) (Kim, 2002, 2005).

***Deculturation*** In a new and unfamiliar cultural environment, strangers will face situations

which “deviate from the familiar and internalized original cultural script” (Kim, 2005, p. 382). They might start to learn and acquire some new symbols and patterns of activities to adapt to the host society (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Kim, 2005). However, to learn something new from the host culture, strangers may be forced to suspend or even abandon some taken-for-granted habits from of their original culture (Kim, 2005). Strangers’ willingness and degrees of deculturation differ, thus their adaption to the host culture varies: some want to keep their ethnic identity and refuse to leave their original culture behind; others adopt the new customs so as to live harmoniously in the changed environment. When strangers fail to manage the relationship between the old and new cultures, inner conflict occurs (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). The deculturation step will not be analyzed in this study because this study emphasis on strangers’ willingness to acquire new behavior from the host culture rather than suspend habits from original culture. However, deculturation is of importance in the cross-cultural adaptation process.

*Acculturation* is “the process by which individuals acquire some (but not all) aspects of the host culture” (Kim, 2002, p. 260). During the acculturation process, strangers will acquire a wide range of host cultural practices “from attire and food habits to behavioral norms and cultural values” and develop relationships in the host cultural environment (Kim, 2005, p. 51) through both personal and social communication (Ruben, 1975). Personal communication involves communication at the intrapersonal level (cognition) while social communication references interpersonal communication and mass communication (Ruben, 1975). Both personal and social communication are essential in the acculturation process and they are interrelated closely (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). Only social communication is investigated in this study and is discussed later within the context of Kim’s cross-cultural adaptation model.

*Assimilation.* As the deculturation and acculturation processes go on, strangers experience

an internal transformation which may result in assimilation (Kim, 1988, 2001). Assimilation is the final stage of the acculturation process. Theoretically, it is “a state of the highest degree of acculturation into the host milieu and deculturation of the original cultural habits” (Kim, 2001, p. 52) and it is “the maximum possible convergence of strangers’ internal and external conditions to those of the natives” (Kim, 2005, p. 383). According to Kim (2001), complete assimilation is not easily achieved because it is hard to change one’s “internalized core values and beliefs” (p. 52). Some immigrants spend a lifetime becoming acculturated or it may take the efforts of multiple generations to achieve this goal (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984), and the degree of adaptation differs among different people during a given time period. However, not all the people or ethnic groups are willing to assimilate to the host culture (Croucher, 2009; Croucher, Oommen, & Steele, 2009).

In this study, the researcher did not focus on the different stages of adaptation of Chinese international student sojourners, but only the relationship of their psychological health and social communication in a cross-cultural adaptation context. However, it is important to know how the adaptation process works.

**Factors influencing the cross-cultural adaptation process.** Strangers’ acculturative experiences are influenced by both of the strangers’ personal backgrounds and the conditions of the host environment (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). The similarity between the strangers’ original culture and the host culture, the strangers’ degree of familiarity with the host culture, personality characteristics, demographic characteristics, language skills, and previous educational level are considered influential on strangers’ acculturative process (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

In this study, strangers’ willingness to communicate (reflects personality characteristics) and strangers’ host communication competence (reflects language skills) were explored as



personal influential factors during Chinese strangers' adjustment to the U.S. host culture.

Demographic information including age and educational level was gathered in this study for descriptive purposes only.

Some properties of the host culture like interaction potential, attitudes held by members of the host society toward the strangers' national and/or cultural group, and the degree of rigidity of the host society also can influence strangers' adaptation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). These influential factors from a host culture coincided with the environment dimension in Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model. However, the environment dimension in Kim's model was not investigated in this study because the U.S. culture is considered to be more open and it allows more freedom of strangers to decide the degree of their acculturation.

### **Kim's Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

There are five commonly discussed models of the adaptation process related to Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory: the personal evolution process model, the culture shock U-curve, the reverse culture shock W curve, the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, and the structural model of factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation (see Kim, 1988, 2001, 2002, 2005, for a discussion of each of these models). Only Kim's structural model of factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation are discussed here because this study was based on her theory of cross-cultural adaptation and her structural model.

Kim began her scientific investigation of cross-cultural adaptation more than three and a half decades ago. Before Kim started her study, the field of cross-cultural adaptation studies was rich yet scattered (Kim, 2005). Many terms like "culture shock, acculturation, adjustment, assimilation, integration, and adaptation" were used but in such a way as to make research fragmented (Kim, 2005, p. 376). Moreover, various disciplinary and personal interests of

different researchers together with a linear-causal one-directional notion made the research disconnected and unilateral (Kim, 2005). Thus, a coherent overview of the research remained elusive. Kim proposed an integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation to provide an overall perspective of the research area.

Kim's goal was to understand the adaptive struggles and successes experienced by sojourners and immigrants representing a variety of cultural groups (Kim, 2005). She began her exploration with Korean immigrants in Chicago (Kim, 1976, 1977, 1978a, 1978b). Then, Kim conducted studies about other immigrant and refugee groups in the U.S. including Indochinese refugees in Illinois (Kim, 1980), Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese who arrived in Illinois during 1975 to 1979 (Kim, 1989), Asian Pacific refugees (Kim, 1990), Japanese/Japanese Americans (Kim, 1978a; Kim & Paulk, 1994), Mexican/ Americans (Kim, 1978a), and American Indians in Oklahoma (Kim, Lujian, & Dixon, 1998). Further, the later researchers extended the context of cross-cultural adaptation to international students studying in Japan (Maruyama & Kim, 1997), Turks in Germany (Kim & Braun, 2002), and American expatriates in South Korea (Kim & Kim, 2007). However, an exhaustive literature review revealed little research on Kim's theory with Chinese strangers' cross-cultural adaptation.

The methodology of Kim's study developed from the linear-causal path and sought to address dependent variables and independent variables to a more interrelated and integrated open system (Kim, 2005). The foundation of an integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation was launched in Kim's (1979) study titled "Toward an interactive theory of communication-acculturation" (Kim, 2005). Then in Kim's (1988) book *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: An Integrative Theory*, the integrated theory was published. The theory was revised in Kim's (2001) book *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and*

*Cross-Cultural Adaptation.*

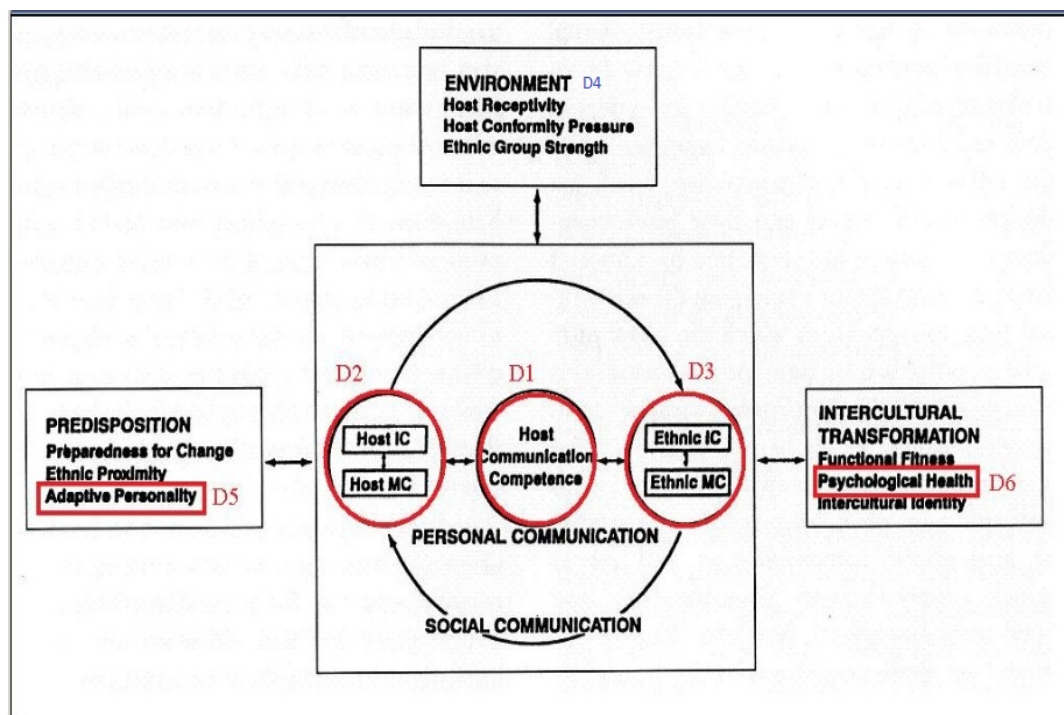
Kim's (1988, 2001) contribution to our understanding of cross-cultural adaptation was to connect the fragments in this field on the following five perspectives: first, she combined the influence from both the macro level (host environment including the ethnic group in the host environment) and the micro level (strangers' personal backgrounds and features); second, she investigated short-term and long-term adaptation as a whole; third, she pointed out that the difficulties experienced by strangers during the adaptation process cannot be isolated from the strangers' new knowledge acquisition and self-improvement in the new cultural environment; fourth, she claimed that factors which influence strangers' cross-cultural adaptation process could be categorized to analyze different stages of adaptation; last, she suggested the strangers' adaptive change and the maintenance of their ethnic identity and cultural heritage could be explored together to describe the strangers' adaptation process.

Kim (1988, 1995, and 2001) considered strangers as open systems. She assumed that strangers have the ability and motivation to adapt to different environments and that they can reach a qualitative transformation. The adaptation is accomplished in and through communication and is a complicated and robust process. The next section introduces Kim's structural model of factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation.

**Kim's structural model of factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation.** In Kim's (1988, 2001) structural model, factors related to strangers' adaptive changes were identified and integrated to explain why individual strangers differ in the speed and level of their cross-cultural adaptation. Kim (1988, 2001) classified those factors into six dimensions (D1-D6) (see Figure 1) according to their importance and influence on strangers' cross-cultural adaptation. Strangers' personal communication trait of *host communication competence* which Kim (2001) considered

to be of the most importance to strangers' adaptation process is listed as Dimension 1 (D1). This is followed by Dimension 2 (D2), strangers' *host interpersonal and mass communication* (as a form of social communication); Dimension 3 (D3), strangers' *ethnic interpersonal and mass communication* (as another form of social communication); Dimension 4 (D4), the *environment* in terms of host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength; Dimension 5 (D5), strangers' personal *predispositions* represented by preparedness for change, ethnic proximity, and adaptive personality; and Dimension 6 (D6), strangers' *intercultural transformation* which influences and are influenced by the other five dimensions.

**Figure 1 Factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation: A structural model**



Note: IC = interpersonal communication; MC = mass communication.

Dimensions involved in this study are marked in red

Adapted from *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* (p.), by Y. Y. Kim, 2010, Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage. Adapted with permission.

Elements representing five of the six dimensions were explored in this study. As mentioned earlier, Dimension 4 *Environment* is not investigated in this study. The related literatures are reviewed in the next section in the order they appear in the model. These dimensions are Chinese students' host communication competence (Dimension 1), Chinese students' host interpersonal and mass communication (Dimension 2), Chinese students' ethnic interpersonal and mass communication (Dimension 3), Chinese students' adaptive personality (Dimension 5-*Predisposition*), and Chinese students' psychological health (Dimension 6-*Intercultural transformation*). The following are brief introductions of the five dimensions being investigated in this study.

***Dimension 1: Host communication competence (as a form of personal communication)***. Host communication competence appears in Theorem 19. To understand host communication competence it is important to begin by defining personal communication. Personal communication is a process by which an individual senses and acts toward the objects and people in his/her milieu to fit into the environment around him/her (Rubin, 1975). Through personal communication, we gain knowledge of our environment and then learn to respond to it (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). Personal communication has been contextualized in the cross-cultural adaptation context by Gudykunst and Kim (1984) and it was described as “the process of organizing adaptive experiences into a number of identifiable patterns that are compatible with the patterns of the host culture” (p. 210).

In her structural model, Kim (2001) identified host communication competence as a form of personal communication. Communication competence is defined as “an internal capacity or a set of identifiable capabilities associated with (but not identical to) performance outcomes such as perceived effectiveness” (Kim, 2001, p. 98). Strangers' host communication competence was

located as the center of Kim's structural model because it was considered as the "very engine" of strangers' intercultural transformation and something which can affect other dimensions of the model (Kim, 2001, p. 97). Host communication competence is an essential condition of strangers' adaptation but it does not necessarily guarantee successful adaptation of strangers.

Three major interrelated components of host communication competence were identified by Kim (2001): cognitive, affective, and operational. Cognitive components include strangers' knowledge of the host communication system, their understanding of the host culture, and their cognitive complexity. These sub-concepts reflect strangers' ability to understand verbal (i.e. language) and non-verbal (i.e., facial expression, body movement, and vocal patterns) code in the host culture, strangers' in-depth knowledge of the host culture (i.e., values, history, religion), and strangers' ability to discern useful information from all the information they receive from the host culture (Kim, 2001). Affective components include strangers' motivation to adapt, their identity flexibility, and their aesthetic co-orientation. These concepts influence strangers' flexibility to make changes to meet new cultural identities and their ability to balance the fulfillment of their aesthetic needs and their appreciation of the local aesthetics (Kim, 2001). Operational components are the outcomes and expressions of strangers' accumulation of cognitive and affective experiences. These components are related to strangers' behavioral competence which is reflected by their technical skills (i.e., language skills, job skills), their ability to interact with local people harmoniously, their creativeness in solving new problems based on their previous experiences, and their ability to balance their identities and the identities of local people (Kim, 2001).

Besides these three components, there are two dimensions of host communication competence: the "culture-specific" dimension and the "culture-general" dimension (Kim, 2001,

p. 98). The culture-specific dimension refers to “a set of abilities to encode and decode linguistic and nonlinguistic codes and practices specific to a given cultural or subcultural community” (Kim, 2001, p. 99). Strangers need to learn how to behave appropriately in the host culture to interact with others. The culture-general competence indicates “the ability to communicate in all types of encounters, regardless of the specific cultural context” (Kim, 2001, p. 99).

In this study, culture specific *self-perceived communication competence* (SPCC) was used to measure Chinese international students’ “self-evaluations of their ability to communicate appropriately” in the U.S. (McCroskey, 1982, as cited in Lu & Hsu, 2008, p. 78).

***Dimension 2: Host social communication.*** Social communication takes place when there are two or more people involved in the interaction; and social communication can be classified into interpersonal communication and mass communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). According to Braithwaite and Baxter (2008), interpersonal communication is the communication between participants who are dependent upon one another and have a shared history while mass communication (through television, newspapers, magazines, theaters, libraries, etc.), according to Gudykunst and Kim (1984), is more about individuals’ interaction with the sociocultural communication environment rather than with specific persons. In this study, only online communication of Chinese international students will be investigated as a form of mass communication because it is the most convenient way for this group of strangers to access host social communication (Yang, et al., 2004).

***Host interpersonal communication.*** In a cross-cultural adaptation context, interpersonal communication with both ethnic and host group members is essential for strangers who seek to gain social support (Kim, 2001). House and Kahn (1985) categorized social support into four types: emotional support involves esteem, affect, and trust; instrumental support involves the

sharing of money, labor, and time; informational support involves advice and suggestions; and appraisal support employs affirmation and feedback to help improve people's performance. Social support can help people "enhance well-being and cope with difficult life events" (Cody, Dunn, Hoppin, & Wendt, 1999, p. 273). According to Kim's (2001) theory, emotional support and informational support are the most important types of support for strangers (i.e., international students), especially when they entering a new host country. So this study focuses on emotional and informational support.

Participating in interpersonal communication with natives influences strangers' cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001). Upon entering the host environment, strangers start to build new social networks with natives, regardless of their host communication competence (Kim, 2001). Strangers observe in the interactions and learn the acceptable behaviors both verbally and non-verbally from the natives. Strangers modify their own behavior according to what they have taught (Kim, 2001). They can gain informational and emotional support from natives to reduce loneliness, release stress, and overcome difficulties (Fogel, 1993; Jou & Fukada, 1995, Marcia, 1993, Tanaka, Takai, Kohyama, Fujihara, & Minami, 1994; as cited in Kim, 2001, p. 123). Both the size (i.e., number of friends) and strength (i.e., intimacy) of strangers' social networks with natives form the basis for the development of strangers' host communication competence and facilitate strangers' cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001). Studies show that international students' interaction with the natives of the host culture is positively related to improved language skills, greater satisfaction with the experience within the host country, and enhanced communication competence with hosts (Brown, 2009). Also, a close and strong social network with natives can predict better acculturation to the host culture than a weak one (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).



In this study, perceived social support (emotional and informational) received from Americans and the size of the social networks with natives (i.e., number of American friends) were measured as representatives of the concept of host interpersonal communication which appears in Theorems 5, 6, 20, and 21.

*Host mediated communication.* In addition to direct personal experiences and interpersonal interactions, media is the third way for people to obtain information about the world (Xu, 2010). Mass communication within a host society plays an important role in the initial process of cross-cultural adaptation (Ryu, 1976, as cited in Yang et al., 2004, p. 82). Mass media transmit messages about social issues and events, social values, norms of behavior and other information about the host culture to strangers. Learning from media can be less stressful compared to the interpersonal communication channel (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). Yang et al. (2004) found that new coming strangers often prefer indirect interactions due to their underdeveloped host communication competence; and those indirect interactions usually are afforded through mass media.

Research suggests that Chinese international students use different types of mass media for different purposes (Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009). Wang and Sun (2008, 2009) found Chinese students in the U.S. watch TV programs to get information about the U.S. society. They use the Internet to gain information and to maintain their newly formed relationships with the host country residents/internationals. Such relationships influence their social-cultural and psychological adaptation (Ye, 2006). In this study, Chinese international students' Internet use was investigated as representative of host mass media use. As stated before, Internet is the most convenient and commonly used media channel for Chinese international students to access host social communication. Internet contains a huge amount of information in different languages.

This flexible property of Internet enables new coming strangers to immerse in the U.S. culture while keeping contact with their family back home (Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009; Yang, et al., 2004; Ye, 2006). In this study, Chinese international students' online communication with Americans represents their host mediated communication. Online communication with Americans appears in Theorems 5 and 20.

***Dimension 3: Ethnic Social Communication.*** Strangers, especially sojourners, may leave their friends and families back home when they enter the host environment but this does not mean their connection with their ethnic group is cut off. Kim (2001) claims that new coming strangers gain help and support from their family and friends back home as well as from members of their ethnic community living in the host environment during their initial stages of adaptation. Like a double edged sword, communication within ethnic communities can facilitate strangers' initial adaptation process; however, it also can hinder strangers' long-term adaptation to the host culture (Kim, 2001).

*Ethnic interpersonal communication.* When international students enter a new host culture, they are dependent on local members of their ethnic group to gain informational, material, and emotional support since they often "lack host communication competence" and do not have other means to access information and support (Kim, 2001, p. 183). When international students face upsetting situations during the initial phase of their adaptation process, "receiving emotional support from trusted others" is the most effective way to lift their bad mood (Burlison & Goldsmith, 1998, as cited in Mortenson, 2006, p. 128). Communication with ethnic group members provides international students with essential resources to acquire host culture competence. Communication with such sources also helps Chinese international students maintain their ethnic identity (Kim, 2001). However, exclusive communication with ethnic group

members ultimately will deter international students' adaptation to their host culture (Kim, 2001). In this study, Chinese international students' ethnic interpersonal communication is a concept which appears in Theorems 6 and 21 and it is measured by *social support* (emotional and informational) *from Chinese friends and relatives* together with the *number of Chinese friends and relatives* they have.

*Ethnic mediated communication.* Research indicates that Chinese international students use the Internet to contact and interact with members of their ethnic groups back home to gain social support, especially emotional support (e.g., Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009). Ye (2006) also found Chinese international students in the U.S. used the Internet to maintain their long-distance relationships with friends and families back at home as well as their newly established social networks within the host cultural milieu. In this study, Chinese international students' ethnic mass communication was conceptualized into two dimensions: *online communication with Chinese in China*, and *online communication with Chinese in the U.S.* These two concepts represent ethnic mass communication and they appear in Theorems 2 and 21.

***Dimension 5: Predisposition—represented by adaptive personality and measured by willingness to communicate (WTC).*** Every stranger who relocates to a new environment has a distinctive background and unique previous experiences. Thus, strangers' potential for cross-cultural adaptation differs. Kim (2001) listed three key concepts related to strangers' predispositions: strangers' preparedness for change, their ethnic proximity (which refers to the similarity of ethnic characteristics between strangers and natives), and their adaptive personality. Only strangers' adaptive personality was investigated in this study because this concept is considered more important and relevant to the current study.

Kim (2001) pointed out three interrelated traits of strangers' adaptive personality:

openness to change, personality strength, and positivity (p. 173). These three traits intertwine as “inner resources” (Kim, 2001, p. 179) to facilitate strangers’ management of challenges and culture shock within the context of cross-cultural adaptation. In addition, “strangers’ possession of the three interrelated traits of adaptive personality is likely to facilitate their development of host communication competence and participation in host social communication process (Theorems 19-21)” (Kim, 2001, p. 180).

In this study, willingness to communicate was used to indicate adaptive personality. Adaptive personality is a personality attributes which represents strangers’ predisposition and it appears in Theorems 19, 20, and 21.

*Willingness to communicate (WTC)*. WTC is not a concept discussed in Kim’s theory; however, the researcher considers it to be an essential factor for effective intercultural communication and a reflection of strangers’ adaptive personalities. WTC plays an essential role in effective intercultural communication (Lu & Hsu, 2008). It is defined as the likelihood of an individual initiating and engaging in conversation (Barracough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988). WTC is related to an individual’s openness and confidence of communication (Yashima et al., 2004, as cited in Lu & Hsu, 2008). People with high levels of WTC are more open to communication with others and more willing to share their ideas; people with low levels of WTC are less confident and less likely to interact with people of other cultures (Yashima et al., 2004, as cited in Lu & Hsu, 2008, p. 76). Representing strangers’ adaptive personality, WTC is investigated in this study in conjunction with Chinese students’ host culture competence and their communication with both host and ethnic groups (Theorems 19-21).

***Dimension 6: Intercultural transformation—represented by psychological health and measured by loneliness and acculturative stress.*** Regardless of strangers’ willingness and

intention, the intercultural transformation process starts as soon as they enter the new culture (Kim, 2001). Intercultural transformation includes strangers' functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity (Kim, 2001). In this study, attention was paid only to Chinese international students' psychological health, as psychological health is directly related to an individual's behavior and well-being (Freydis, 2011).

The psychological health of Chinese international students is noteworthy because their fear of losing face may keep them from seeking others' help and cause them to suffer heavy psychological burdens (Uba, 1994). Due to a series of problems they encounter as they adjust to new surroundings including language barriers, homesickness, loss of social support and status, academic demands and challenges, and perceived discrimination (Pederson, 1991; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002, as cited in Lee & Bradley, 2006, p. 4), Chinese international students mainly undergo two types of psychological problems: acculturative stress and loneliness (Lee & Bradley, 2006). Thus, the two concepts of acculturative stress and loneliness were used to address psychological health in this study. Acculturative stress refers to a series of psychological health states experienced during strangers' adaption and acculturation processes in a new culture such as "lowered mental health status (specifically confusion, anxiety, and depression), feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom levels, and identity confusion" (Berry et al., 1987, p. 492). An acculturative stress scale for international students (ASSIS) was used in this study to measure Chinese international students' acculturative stress. This scale has been applied to Asian students successfully in Constantine, Okazaki, and Utsey's (2004) study. Perlman and Peplau (1981) defined loneliness as "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way" (p. 31). It was an important variable in Wang and Sun's (2008, 2009)

studies in investigation of Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory with Chinese international college students in the U.S. In this study, psychological health appears in Theorems 5 and 6.

**Recent Research Testing Kim's Theorems.** Various cultural studies with different target groups (i.e., Chinese, Indians, Europeans, Muslims) (Croucher, 2009; Kim, 1998; Kim et al., 2009; Mortenson, 2006) have been conducted based on Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory. These studies have addressed issues related to education (e.g., Mortenson, 2006; Radclyffe-Thomas, 2007), psychology (e.g., Mortenson, 2006; Sullivan, 2010), media use (e.g., Croucher et al., 2009; Ye, 2006), and business (Francis, 1991).

Kim et al.'s (2009) study on long-term foreign-born residents in the U.S. reaffirmed the positive influence of strangers' host interpersonal communication on their intercultural transformation. However, long-term non-native residents' used online communication to maintain contact with ethnic members back home rather than as a way to facilitate communication with members in the host group. These findings partially supported Kim's (2001) Theorem 5.

Brown's (2009) ethnographic study of international students in England revealed that international students' expectations of friendships with native students were disappointed. Discrimination and indifference from the host groups were found to be "a hidden problem" (Pai, 2006; as cited in Brown, 2009, p. 452) influencing international students' functional fitness and psychological health (related to Theorem 5).

Ye's (2006) study investigated Chinese international students' interpersonal and online communication with both ethnic and host groups during their stay in the U.S. They found that contact with members of their ethnic group back home helped Chinese international students maintain positive emotions. This result coincided with Kim's (2001) Theorem 6.

Zhou and Cai (2002) studied Chinese immigrants in the U.S. finding and reported that Chinese language media (i.e., newspapers, television, radio programs) can connect Chinese immigrants with the host society by showing them what is going on in the host environment. Zhou and Cai (2002) believed Chinese language media can help Chinese immigrants assimilate in the U.S. However, they claimed that Chinese language media could “trap them in permanent isolation” as well (p. 439) (supporting Theorem 6).

Berry et al. (1987) conducted a series of studies to investigate the acculturative stress of strangers (i.e., immigrants, refugees, and sojourners), native people, and ethnic groups in Canada. They found females reported greater acculturative stress than males, education level negatively predicted stress levels, and contact with the local people and culture was related to less acculturative stress for Chinese, Malay, and mixed student sojourners (supporting Theorem 5). They also found Koreans who have access to social support from members of their ethnic group reported fewer experiences of acculturative stress (supporting Theorem 6).

Lu and Hsu (2008) studied Chinese and American’s willingness to communicate in intercultural contexts. They found that for both Chinese and Americans, self-perceived communication competence was the most significant predictor of their willingness to communicate in a cross-cultural context (supporting Theorem 19).

Hsu (2010) investigated the acculturation and communication traits of Chinese who reside in the U.S. Hsu (2010) found Chinese who became more willing to communicate tended to be more competent in communication (supporting Theorem 19). Moreover, Chinese adaptation to the American host environment was affected by their personality predispositions (supporting Theorem 20).

The review of previous studies reveals that Theorem 5, 6, 19, and 20 have been

investigated with Chinese sojourners/immigrants and these four theorems have been supported or partially supported by previous studies. Theorem 21 has not been tested with Chinese “strangers”. This study’s sample consisted of Chinese international students in the U.S.



## Chapter 3

### Method

Prior to the study's execution, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained. Modified informed consent was sought through the use of an invitation letter (see Appendix A) inviting Chinese international students to participate in this study and informing them the rule and the benefit. Once IRB approval was obtained, an on-line survey was utilized to test the theorems identified earlier. Both English and Chinese surveys were released on Survey Gizmo. Respondents were given the option of completing the survey on line in English at <http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/593950/Chinese-international-students-cross-cultural-adaptation-in-the-U-S> (see Appendix B) or in Mandarin Chinese at <http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/597930/de3e20abf279> (see Appendix C). All questions were randomized for each access of the online survey on purpose of counterbalancing except for the "Welcome" page, "Enter to win" page, and "Thank you" page.

Translation and back-translation (Brislin, 1970) were used to verify the functional equivalency of the English and Mandarin versions. First, the researcher wrote the questions in English, making sure all the expressions were accurate, clear, and simplified as necessary. Second, the researcher translated the English survey into Chinese. Then the researcher gave the Chinese survey to a 25-year-old male Chinese volunteer (who majored in computer science and had been studying in the U.S. for two years) and asked him to translate the Chinese survey back into English. After that, the researcher compared the original English survey with the one from the male translator and noted the differences. The researcher and translator discussed disagreements and adjusted the Chinese translation accordingly. Four rounds of adjustments were made until the researcher and translator reached agreement that the translation was accurate.

## Sample

A nonrandom sampling method was used to reach Chinese college students studying in the U.S. Respondents were recruited three ways. The first way was in-person by the researcher recruiting volunteers at Chinese student social events and the Chinese Students and Scholar Association (CSSA) on the University of Arkansas campus in Fayetteville. The second way involved contacting Chinese international students by email. Email contacts came from the researcher's personal contact list and major Chinese social networks and forums such as Facebook, Renren, and MITBBS. International Students Scholars Office at the University of Arkansas suggested that the University of Kansas and Kansas State University have comparatively large populations of Chinese students on campus. Similar to the Wang and Sun (2008, 2009) studies, e-mails were sent to the presidents of CSSAs at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University asking them to forward the invitation letter containing the survey's URL links to Chinese students via their university e-mail systems or through Bulletin Board Systems. Due to the insufficient participants after the first attempt of recruitment, multiple rounds of invitation letters were sent to the presidents of CSSA at other universities upon the researcher searched their e-mail addresses online. Only the CSSA presidents at Saint Louis University, University of New Hampshire, and University of Rhode Island forwarded the invitation message to their Chinese student members. Each participant was encouraged to forward the survey to other eligible Chinese students.

The survey was published online for three months during September to November in 2011. Seventy-one out of 204 participants completed the survey. Among the 71 participants in this study, 36 (50.7%) were male and 34 (47.9%) were female. One participant elected to not report biological sex. Sixty participants (84.5%) were single/never married while 10 (14.1%)

were married. One participant elected to not report marital status. For education level, 31 (43.6%) had a bachelor's degree, 24 (33.8%) of them had a master's degree, and 7 (9.8%) held doctorate degrees. Six institutions including University of Arkansas, University of Kansas, Kansas State University, University of New Hampshire, University of Rhode Island, and Saint Louis University were represented in the sample across 5 states. The participants had lived in the U.S. from 1 month to 240 months, for an average of 33.63 months ( $SD = 47.05$ ).

### **Procedure**

Participants at the University of Arkansas received the invitation letter and paper survey and participants at the other universities gained access to the survey by clicking the URL link provided in the invitation e-mails. After collecting the completed paper survey, the researcher entered the answer into the blank online survey and then collected these data together with the data from online survey. Participants who finished the paper survey or online survey can leave their names to enter into a drawing for \$50; and the participant (e.g., personal contact of the researcher, president of various chapters of the CSSAs) who introduced the largest number of eligible participants who complete the survey was given \$50. Information regarding these incentives was included in the invitation letter.

Two pretests were conducted. For the first pretest, four graduate students (three males and one female) at the University of Arkansas were asked to finish the survey and then give feedback to the researcher. The researcher talked to the four students face-to-face. The students pointed out several confusing expressions on the survey, claimed the WTC and SPCC were similar, and said it confused them when these two scales (i.e., WTC, SPCC) appeared separately due to the randomization of the survey questions. The researcher rephrased the confusing expressions and linked the WTC and SPCC questions so they showed up together on the survey.

A second pretest was run trying to test the reliability of each variable in this study. Eleven participants completed the second pretest. Fifteen sets of data from both the Chinese and English surveys (including four set of data from the first pretest) were collected and merged into one file. A language variable was created to mark data coming from the Chinese survey as “1” and data from English survey as “2”. Then the researcher ran the reliability analysis on the combined dataset and then by language to discover the Cronbach's alpha for each scale or variable. The Cronbach's alpha scores were in the acceptable range except for the ASSIS scale on the English language survey. However, considering that only 4 participants completed the English language survey for the pilot test, the researcher decided to keep the questions on the survey.

### **Scales and Measurement**

Theorems 5, 6, 19, 20, and 21 were tested in this study. Key concepts in these theorems include: *host communication competence* (i.e., SPCC), *host interpersonal and mass communication*, *ethnic interpersonal and mass communication*, *adaptive personality* (i.e., WTC), and *intercultural transformation* (i.e., psychological health in terms of acculturative stress and loneliness).

*Communication competence* was measured by the Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC) (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988). *Host interpersonal communication* was measured by the Sherbourne and Stewart's (1991) Social Support Scale and by the number of American friends respondents reported. *Host mass communication* was measured by the revised Internet Motive Scale (Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009) and how many minutes they “talk” to Americans online. *Ethnic interpersonal communication* was measured using Sherbourne and Stewart's (1991) Social Support Scale, number of Chinese friends in China

and the US, and number of Chinese relatives. *Ethnic mass communication* was measured by the revised Internet Motive Scale (Wang & Sun, 2008, 2009) and how many minutes the respondent “talked” online with both Chinese in China and Chinese in the U.S. *Adaptive personality* was measured using the modified (Lu & Hsu, 2008) Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC) (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). *Intercultural transformation* was measured using the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996) and the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998). These scales were described in the next section where Cronbach’s alphas are reported for the combined dataset and for each language version separately. The alphas were uniformly strong and the results of both language versions were merged to test the theorems in the Results section.

**Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC).** The 12-item Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988) was modified by Lu and Hsu (2008) to test Chinese students self-perceived host communication competence. In this study the modified scale was used. Participants were asked to assess their own ability to communicate with Americans in various settings on a scale from 0 (*not competent*) to 100 (*fully competent*). Settings included “Present a talk to a group of Americans”, “Talk with an acquaintance”. Since the items in Lu and Hsu’s (2008) study were about Chinese international students’ communication with Americans in the U.S. only, an additional 12 questions about Chinese students’ communication with other Chinese during their sojourn in the U.S. were added. The original SPCC has reliability above 0.85 (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988) and the alpha of the modified scale was 0.87 for Chinese students’ self-perceived communication competence with Americans (Lu & Hsu, 2008). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha of Chinese international students’ self-perceived communication competence with Americans was .96

(Chinese language version  $\alpha = .96$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .94$ ). The Cronbach's alpha of Chinese international students' self-perceived communication competence with Chinese was .93 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .94$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Interpersonal Communication.** Questions to measure emotional and informational support were drawn from Sherbourne and Stewart's (1991) study. Sherbourne and Stewart's (1991) measured emotional and informational support as a unidimensional variable and the reliability for the scale was .96. Participants were asked how frequently they had "Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk", "Someone whose advice you really want", and "Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem". In this study, we asked each set of questions three times: once about their American friends, then about their Chinese friends they met while studying in the U.S., and lastly about their relatives. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the questions on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "none of the time" (1) to "all of the time" (5). The Cronbach's alphas were American friends: .92 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .91$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .96$ ); Chinese friends: .95 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .94$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .98$ ); and relatives: .97 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .97$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .98$ ).

In addition of the emotional and informational support, respondents were asked to report "the number of their Chinese friends in China", "number of Chinese friends in the U.S.", "number of American friends", and "number of relatives". On average, respondents in this study reported having 7.79 Chinese friends in China ( $SD = 8.35$ ), 4.56 Chinese friends in the U.S. ( $SD = 4.33$ ), 2.51 American friends ( $SD = 3.52$ ), and 3.48 relatives ( $SD = 3.64$ ).

**Internet Use/Internet Motives Scale (IMS).** Based on Papacharissi and Rubin's (2000) study, Chinese international students were asked to report how many minutes they spent daily on

e-mail, instant messenger, and in chat rooms. For purposes of this study, these questions were modified to focus on both host media connections and ethnic media connections. Questions included “how long you usually spend to e-mail with Chinese friends in China”, “how long you usually spend to use chat room with you American friends”, and “how long you usually spend to use chat room/using instant messenger with relatives”. On average, respondents reported to spend 43.76 minutes emailing/chatting with Chinese in the U.S. ( $SD = 63.44$ ) per day, 66.62 minutes emailing/chatting with Chinese in China ( $SD = 82.24$ ) per day, and 41.24 minutes emailing/chatting with Americans ( $SD = 78.76$ ) per day.

The revised Internet Motives Scale (IMS) used by Wang and Sun (2008, 2009) was used to test Chinese international college students’ motives for Internet use. Due to their original Cronbach’s alpha and relevance to the current study, 20 questions of the original 35 questions were selected to measure four Internet functions: social involvement, acculturation, companionship, and ethnic maintenance. In the Wang and Sun (2008, 2009) studies, the alphas were social involvement ( $\alpha = .92$ ), acculturation ( $\alpha = .90$ ), companionship ( $\alpha = .85$ ), and ethnic maintenance ( $\alpha = .49$ ). Participants indicated their agreement with statements about their reasons for using the Internet on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “*never*” (1) to “*always*” (5) such as “I want to learn more about American culture,” “I want to find out what is going on in China,” and “so I can feel less lonely.” In this study the Cronbach’s alpha for social involvement was .85 (Chinese  $\alpha = .84$ ; English  $\alpha = .89$ ), for acculturation was .90 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .91$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .83$ ), for information was .70 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .65$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .78$ ), for companionship was .72 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .68$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .88$ ), for ethnic maintenance was .66 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .66$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .72$ ). The Internet Motive Scale subsequently was

not included in the hypothesis testing because it didn't specify the communication target groups (Chinese or Americans) of the Chinese international students which was of importance in this study. However, independent samples *t*-tests were run to identify potential differences in Chinese international students' Internet motives depending on their level of intercultural transformation (loneliness and acculturative stress) and their adaptive personality (willingness to communication with Americans). Before running the *t*-tests, each concept (i.e., stress, loneliness, and willingness to communicate with Americans) was divided as near the median as possible based on a frequency list into high group and low group according to the score reported by respondents. The result of *t*-tests will be reported in the following chapter.

**Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC).** Lu and Hsu's (2008) modified version of McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) original WTC scale was used. In this modified version the target population was changed from general "people" to Americans and Chinese to assess Chinese international college students' willingness to communicate cross-culturally in 24 different situations like "Present a talk to a group of Americans," "Present a talk to a group of Chinese friends". Respondents marked 0 (*not choose to communicate at all*) to 100 (*always choose to communicate*) on these questions. The original reliability of the WTC scale ranged from 0.85 to 0.90 (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987) and the reliability of Lu and Hsu's (2008) modified WTC scale was 0.87 for their Chinese sample. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of Chinese international students' willingness to communicate with Americans was .95 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .95$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .92$ ). The Cronbach's alpha of Chinese international students' willingness to communicate with Chinese was .93 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .93$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .93$ ).

**UCLA Loneliness Scale.** The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) (Russell, 1996) was



used to measure Chinese students' degree of loneliness within a cross-cultural adaptation context. There were 20 items in Russell's (1996) UCLA Loneliness Scale. Respondents answered how often they feel lonely ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (5). A respondent's total score can range from 20 to 100. Higher scores indicate greater degrees of loneliness. Items included "How often do you feel that you lack companionship?" and "How often do you feel part of a group of friends" were asked. Questions 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, and 20 were reverse coded before data analysis. Wang and Sun (2008, 2009) used the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) with a sample of Chinese international college students and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .91. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was .92 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .92$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .95$ ).

**Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS).** To test Chinese international students' acculturative stress, questions from the ASSIS (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998) were used. ASSIS (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998) is a 36-item, 5-point (1 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *unsure*, 5 = *strongly agree*) Likert-type scale which investigates international students' adjustment problems including perceived experienced discrimination, homesickness, perceived hate/rejection, fear, stress due to change/cultural shock, guilt, and nonspecific concerns. Constantine et al. (2004) used the ASSIS with Chinese international students and reported a combined alpha of .92 in the study. In the Constantine et al.'s study (2004), the Cronbach's alphas for each factor were discrimination ( $\alpha = .90$ ), homesickness ( $\alpha = .89$ ), perceived hate/rejection ( $\alpha = .90$ ), fear ( $\alpha = .88$ ), stress due to change/cultural shock ( $\alpha = .79$ ), guilt ( $\alpha = .44$ ), and nonspecific concerns ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Sandhu and Asrabadi (1998) provided additional questions including "I don't feel a sense of belonging here," and "I feel that my status in this society is low due to my cultural background" for future researchers to consider. These additional

questions were included in this study. However, in the current study, questions related to factors such as perceived hate, fear, guilt, and nonspecific were not included due to the low alpha values in Sandhu and Asrabadi's (1998) study, low relevance to the current study, and the need to limit survey size. As a result, only 21 questions of the original 36 were selected. These 21 questions were used by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1998) to assess factors including "Perceived Discrimination", "Homesickness", "Perceived Hate/Rejection", and "Stress Due to Change/Culture Shock". Sample questions include "many opportunities are denied to me", "homesickness bothers me", "I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new cultural values", and "I feel nervous to communicate in English." Participants were asked to mark each question describing their acculturative stress from 1 "*strongly disagree*" to 5 "*strongly agree*". The higher the score, the greater the acculturative stress. Although the ASSIS scale was developed as a multidimensional instrument by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1998), in this study it was used as a one-dimensional instrument because the researcher did not aim to specify different types of stress in this study. The Cronbach's alpha was .88 (Chinese language version  $\alpha = .86$ ; English language version  $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Personal Characteristics.** At the end of the survey, participants were asked to provide personal information including their age, gender, marital status, working status, formal education, and length of time living in the U.S. Those who desired to participate in a raffle to potentially win an award of \$50 in cash were asked to enter their full name and e-mail address as contact information. All participants were asked to provide the contact information of the person who introduced them to the survey. The person who introduced the most participants to this study was rewarded \$50 in cash.

The means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas of most the study's variables are

presented in Table 1. For the Internet Motive Scale, descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

## Chapter 4

### Results

Results of this study were reported by three parts-Chinese international students' communication with Americans, their communication with Chinese, and their Internet use motives.

#### **Communication with Americans (Theorems 5, 19, and 20)**

Theorems 5, 19, and 20 involved Chinese international students' adaptive personality, their host interpersonal and mass communication, and their host communication competence. Overall, Pearson correlations and multiple regressions were used to analyze the relationships between variables according to the theorems.

In this study, *host interpersonal communication* was represented by the *social support the respondents perceived receiving from American friends* (ICASS) and *the number of American friends they reported having* (ICANF). *Host mass communication* was represented by *the online communication they have with Americans* (MCA). *Psychological health*, as the part of *intercultural transformation*, was represented by two variables: *loneliness* (UCLA) and *acculturative stress* (ASSIS). Chinese international students' *adaptive personality* was represented by their *self-reported willingness to communicate with Americans* (WTCA). Moreover, Chinese international students' *host communication competence* was measured by *self-perceived communication competence with Americans* (SPCCA).

**Theorem 5: The greater the host interpersonal and mass communication, the greater the intercultural transformation (i.e., greater psychological health in terms of lower loneliness and lower self-perceived acculturative stress).** In Theorem 5, host interpersonal communication was operationalized as social support from Americans and the number of

American friends. Host mass communication was operationalized as online communication with Americans. Loneliness and self-perceived acculturative stress were used to measure psychological health which represented intercultural transformation in the theorem.

The result of the multiple correlations (see Table 3) indicated that loneliness was negatively related to social support received from Americans ( $r(71) = -.59, p < .001$ ) and the number of American friends ( $r(71) = -.33, p < .01$ ) the respondent reported. Likewise, self-perceived acculturative stress was negatively related to social support received from Americans ( $r(71) = -.62, p < .001$ ) and the number of American friends ( $r(71) = -.26, p < .05$ ) reported. Chinese international students' loneliness and self-perceived acculturative stress were lack of linear association with their online communication with Americans. The results indicate the greater the host interpersonal communication (i.e., social support), the less loneliness and acculturative stress Chinese international students feel.

Two standard multiple regression analyses were used to investigate the relative importance of social support from Americans, the number of American friends, and online communication with Americans on Chinese international students' loneliness and self-perceived acculturative stress (see Table 3). For loneliness, an overall significant relationship was found  $F(3, 67) = 12.41, p < .000$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .33 which means 33% of the variance in loneliness was explained. As shown in Table 3, an examination of the beta weights indicated that the only significant variable affecting loneliness was social support from Americans. The beta weights for the number of American friends and online communication with Americans were not statistically significant.

For self-perceived acculturative stress, an overall significant relationship was found as well,  $F(3, 67) = 14.49, p < .001$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .37 which means 37% of the variance in

self-perceived acculturative stress was explained (see Table 3). As shown in Table 3, an examination of the beta weights indicated that the only significant variable affecting self-perceived acculturative stress was social support from Americans. The results of this study partially supported Theorem 5.

**Theorem 19: The greater the adaptive personality, the greater the host communication competence.** The adaptive personality was operationalized as willingness to communicate with Americans. The host communication competence was measured by self-perceived communication competence with Americans.

The result of the multiple correlation indicated a strong positive relationship between willingness to communicate with Americans and self-perceived communication competence with Americans (see Table 5),  $F(1, 69) = 107.55, p < .001$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .60. That is, 60% of the variance in self-perceived communication competence with Americans was explained by willingness to communicate with Americans. The results supported Theorem 19.

**Theorem 20: The greater the adaptive personality, the greater the host interpersonal and mass communication.**

Adaptive personality was measured by willingness to communicate with Americans. The host interpersonal communication was assessed by social support from Americans and the number of American friends reported. The host mass communication was operationalized as online communication with Americans.

Multiple correlations (see Table 3) indicated a positive relationship between willingness to communicate with Americans and the social support from Americans ( $r(71) = .40, p < .01$ ). Willingness to communicate with Americans was not significantly linearly associated with the number of American friends and online communication with Americans. These results partially

supported Theorem 20.

### **Communication with Chinese (Theorems 6 and 21)**

In this study, *ethnic interpersonal communication* was measured by *social support from Chinese friends* (ICSSF), *social support from Chinese relatives* (ICRSS), *number of Chinese friends in China* (ICCNFC), *number of Chinese friends in the U.S.* (ICCNFU), and *number of Chinese relatives* (ICRN). *Ethnic mass communication* was assessed by *online communication with Chinese in China* (MCCC) and *online communication with Chinese in the U.S.*

**Theorem 6: The greater the ethnic interpersonal and mass communication, the lesser the intercultural transformation (i.e., lower psychological health in terms of greater loneliness and greater self-perceived acculturative stress).**

The ethnic interpersonal communication was measured by a combination of social support from Chinese friends, social support from Chinese relatives, the number of Chinese friends in China, the number of Chinese friends in the U.S., and the number of relatives. The ethnic mass communication was measured by Chinese international students' online communication with Chinese in China and their online communication with Chinese in the U.S. Psychological health, which represents intercultural transformation, was measured by loneliness and self-perceived acculturative stress.

Pearson correlations (see Table 6) revealed that loneliness was negatively related to social support from Chinese friends ( $r(71) = -.54, p < .001$ ), social support from Chinese relatives ( $r(71) = -.31, p < .01$ ), number of Chinese friends in the U.S. ( $r(71) = -.34, p < .01$ ), and number of Chinese relatives ( $r(71) = -.33, p < .01$ ). However, loneliness was not significantly linearly related to number of Chinese friends in China, online communication with Chinese in China, and online communication with Chinese in the U.S.

Similarly, self-perceived acculturative stress was negatively related to social support from Chinese friends ( $r(71) = -.43, p < .001$ ), social support from Chinese relatives ( $r(71) = -.33, p < .01$ ), and number of Chinese relatives ( $r(71) = -.33, p < .01$ ). Self-perceived acculturative stress was unrelated in a linear way to number of Chinese friends in China, number of Chinese friends in the U.S., online communication with Chinese in China, and online communication with Chinese in the U.S. The correlation results suggest that the greater the ethnic interpersonal communication, the less loneliness and lower acculturative stress Chinese international students will experience, thus the greater the psychological health of Chinese international students.

Two multiple regression were run to learn how social support from Chinese friends, social support from Chinese relatives, the number of Chinese friends in China, the number of Chinese friends in the U.S., the number of Chinese relatives, online communication with Chinese in China and online communication with Chinese in the U.S. predict Chinese international students' loneliness and self-perceived acculturative stress separately.

An overall significant relationship was found for loneliness and the independent variables,  $F(7, 63) = 6.03, p < .001$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .34 which means 34% of the variance in loneliness was explained (see Table 7). As shown in Table 7, the only significant variable affecting loneliness was social support from Chinese friends and it was negatively related to loneliness (positively related to psychological health which represents intercultural transformation). These results do not provide support for Theorem 6.

For self-perceived acculturative stress, an overall significant relationship with the independent variables was found,  $F(7, 63) = 3.25, p < .01$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .18 which means 18% of the variance in self-perceived acculturative stress was explained (see Table 7). Among the independent variables, social support from Chinese friends was the only significant



variable affecting Chinese international students' self-perceived acculturative stress (see Table 7) and it was negatively related to their self-perceived acculturative stress (positively related to psychological health which represents intercultural transformation). These results do not provide support for the theorem.

**Theorem 21: The greater the adaptive personality, the lesser the ethnic interpersonal and mass communication.**

Adaptive personality was assessed by Chinese international students' willingness to communicate with Americans. The ethnic interpersonal communication of Chinese international students was measured by the social support received from their Chinese friends, the social support received from their Chinese relatives, the number of Chinese friends in China, the number of Chinese friends in the U.S., and the number of relatives. The ethnic mass communication of Chinese international students' was measured by both of their online communication with Chinese in China and with Chinese in the U.S.

According to the results of the multiple correlations (see Table 6), the adaptive personality of Chinese international students was not negatively associated with their ethnic interpersonal and mass communication as the theorem had suggested. Conversely, Chinese international students' willingness to communicate with Americans was positively related to the social support they gained from Chinese friends ( $r(71) = .29, p < .05$ ), and social support from Chinese relatives ( $r(71) = .28, p < .05$ ). Willingness to communicate with Americans was unrelated to number of Chinese friends in China, number of Chinese friends in the U.S., number of Chinese relatives, online communication with Chinese in China, and online communication with Chinese in the U.S. These results do not provide support for Theorem 21.

**Internet motives and loneliness, acculturative stress and willingness to communicate**

**with Americans.**

Unfortunately, failure to identify whether or not respondents were using American or Chinese Internet locations meant that this scale could not be used in the earlier hypotheses testing. However, the data were gathered and provide some interesting results. Therefore, the key findings are reported in this section.

In terms of motives for Internet use (i.e., social involvement, acculturation, information, companionship, and ethnic maintenance), several significant differences were found in key variables (see Table 8). First, there was a significant difference in using the Internet for social involvement depending on respondents' degree of loneliness (low:  $M = 25.59$ ,  $SD = 4.19$ ; high:  $M = 22.40$ ,  $SD = 4.64$ ;  $t(69) = 3.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ), acculturative stress (low:  $M = 25.26$ ,  $SD = 4.33$ ; high:  $M = 22.42$ ,  $SD = 4.67$ ;  $t(69) = 2.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and willingness to communicate with Americans (low:  $M = 22.09$ ,  $SD = 5.25$ ; high:  $M = 25.50$ ,  $SD = 3.39$ ;  $t(69) = -3.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Second, there was a significant difference in use of the Internet for acculturation purposes depending on respondents' degree of loneliness (low:  $M = 20.94$ ,  $SD = 3.92$ ; high:  $M = 19.03$ ,  $SD = 3.78$ ;  $t(69) = 2.09$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and acculturative stress (low:  $M = 21.06$ ,  $SD = 3.43$ ; high:  $M = 18.75$ ,  $SD = 4.10$ ;  $t(69) = 2.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Third, there was a significant difference in using the Internet for information purposes depending on respondents' degree of loneliness (low:  $M = 8.19$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ; high:  $M = 7.36$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ;  $t(69) = 2.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### Summary

Using a sample of Chinese international students, this study tests five of Kim's theorems of strangers' cross-cultural adaptation. Concepts included in those theorems were strangers' *host interpersonal and mass communication*, strangers' *ethnic interpersonal and mass communication*, *adaptive personality*, *host communication competence*, and *intercultural transformation*.

The analyses yielded several significant results. Overall, the results offered support for the prediction of Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 19. Theorems 5 and 20 were partially supported, while the analyses provided no evidence to support Theorems 6 and 21.

For Chinese international students' communication with Americans, the results indicated a strong positive linear association between Chinese international students' adaptive personality and their host communication competence (Theorem 19). Overall significant relationships were found between Chinese international student's intercultural transformation and their host interpersonal communication, but not their host mass communication (Theorem 5). Third, Chinese international students' adaptive personality was related to their host interpersonal communication; but not their host mass communication (Theorem 20).

For Chinese international students communication with other Chinese, an overall positive linear association was found between Chinese international students' ethnic interpersonal communication and their intercultural transformation in contrast to the negative association expressed in Theorem 6,. Chinese international students' adaptive personality was positively related to their ethnic interpersonal communication, rather than negatively predicted by Theorem

21.

### **Interpretations**

**Chinese International Students' Intercultural Transformation (Loneliness and Acculturative Stress).** The results of this study indicate the greater the number of American friends of Chinese international students, the greater the social support Chinese international students received from the host group. And the more relatives Chinese international students reported have, the more social support Chinese international students received from their Chinese friends. Social support received from American friends and Chinese friends significantly reduces Chinese international students' loneliness and acculturative stress during their stay in the U.S. This result coincides with Brown's (2009) finding on international students in England that friendship has the power to reduce international students' stress and loneliness. It also supports Kim's (1988, 2001) prediction of Theorem 5. Having more social contacts in the form of the number of their Chinese friends in Chinese and U.S., number of relatives, and number of American friends is not as important as the quality of supportive communication the respondents received from both host and ethnic sources.

Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 6 predicts that interpersonal communication with ethnic group members will not help strangers achieve better intercultural transformation. That theorem was not supported. Correlation tables display results indicating that the greater amount of social support received from Chinese friends, the greater amount of social support received from relatives, the greater the number of Chinese friends in the U.S., and the greater the number of relatives, the less the Chinese international students' loneliness and acculturative stress. However, the result of multiple regression indicated only social support received from Chinese friends was significantly associated with Chinese international students' loneliness and

acculturative stress. Kim (1988, 2001) acknowledges that during the initial stage of living abroad, connections with their ethnic group can help strangers by providing social support and this is indeed what we found.

Social support from American friends and Chinese friends can help reduce Chinese international students' acculturative stress and loneliness probably because the problems which lead to Chinese international students' acculturative stress and loneliness are practical and specific such as difficulties in finding an apartment, getting rides to buy food, and academic distress. Because they are too far away, family members back home can hardly help Chinese international students' solve those practical problems except for showing support emotionally and informationally.

Moreover, Chinese people believe that when far away from home, a sojourner should avoid reporting negative news which may make families worried. Mortenson (2006) found that Chinese students are not inclined to seek social support when they are facing problems during their studying abroad, especially problems associated with academic distress. That may be why Chinese students are less likely to seek support from family members and friends. If the explanation is valid, it is not difficult to understand why the number of friends and family members, and the length Chinese international students spend online were not linearly associated with their loneliness and acculturative stress.

Chinese mass communication with both host and ethnic group members, which were represented by the amount of time Chinese international students spend in online communication with both ethnic and host group members, were not linearly related to their loneliness and acculturative stress in this study. This result may challenge Ye's (2006) finding that Chinese students, as short term residents in the U.S., tend to use the Internet as a mean to receive support

from their ethnic group when coping with loneliness. We only investigated the amount of time Chinese international students spent online with host and ethnic group members rather than the nature of the supportive messages conveyed online. Also, it might be because supportive contact with Chinese friends in the U.S. provides respondents with practical help which may be more important than the emotional and informational support respondents can receive online. Of course, emotional and informational support received online remain important, but support received in face-to-face communication such as receiving a ride from a friend can provide actual help indeed, especially for those who are in their initial stages of studying in the U.S.

Wang and Sun (2009) found Chinese international students are likely to use the Internet to seek information rather than reduce loneliness. Yang et al. (2004) also found that the media use of Chinese international students was goal directed toward information and entertainment. They use the Internet to check what is going on in China rather than talking to their friends and families about the loneliness and stress they experience. Such behavior can explain why the loneliness and acculturative stress of Chinese international students' were not related to their Internet use in this study.

**Importance of Adaptive Personality.** Consistent with Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 19 and the results of Hsu's (2010) study on Chinese students, the results of this study indicate that those Chinese international students with a stronger adaptive personality (i.e., willingness to communicate with Americans) perceive having stronger communication competence and receiving more social support from Americans. Yet different from the prediction of Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 20 and 21, Chinese international students' willingness to communicate with Americans is positively and linearly related to the social support they receive from Chinese friends and relatives and is not related to their online communication with both ethnic and host

groups or with their number of friends.

Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 21 predicts that on a long term basis, strangers with strong adaptive personalities will have less connection with their ethnic group. But in this study, participants came to the U.S. as students which means many and perhaps most of them will return to their home countries upon graduation. The participants had been in the U.S. for a relatively short term (an average of 2.8 years), and short term sojourners tend to keep connection with their ethnic group during their initial stage of residence (Kim, 2001). That's probably why Chinese international students' adaptive personality was not negatively related to their communication with ethnic groups in this study. Also, according to Yashima et al.'s (2004) description of willingness to communicate, strangers with strong adaptive personalities should have more friends regardless of the nationalities of friends. This means they may have more connections with Chinese and American friends both online and face-to-face. Future studies could explore the reason for these results and could involve willingness to communicate with ethnic group members as well.

Overall, adaptive personality appears to facilitate Chinese international students getting social support from both ethnic and host group member and it can further ensure Chinese international students remain psychologically healthy in terms of lower loneliness and acculturative stress. Thus, willingness to communicate may be quite important to Chinese international students who seek to decrease loneliness and acculturative stress.

**Internet motives.** Although the researcher was unable to include this scale in the regression analysis, a series of t-tests were conducted with the variables including Internet motive, loneliness, acculturative stress and willingness to communicate with Americans in the study. The results of t-tests show that compared to those who reported less loneliness, Chinese

international students who reported higher levels of loneliness are more likely to use Internet as a means to a more involved social life, achieve acculturation, and gather information. These results expand Wang and Sun's (2008) research, who found that passing time and companionship were the major purposes of Chinese students' Internet use, and non-lonely Chinese were more likely to use the Internet for acculturation purpose. Wang and Sun (2008) also found that Chinese students' loneliness was not related to their overall Internet use. This finding is consistent with the results of the current research.

In terms of social involvement specially, Chinese students who reported having more acculturative stress are more likely to use the Internet to get involved in social life and achieve acculturation. Moreover, those who reported more willingness to communicate with Americans are less likely to use the Internet for social involvement with the host culture, perhaps because those with weaker adaptive personalities are not as confident in their face-to-face communication skills and thus turn to the Internet for involvement in the host society. Future studies could investigate and further explain these interesting findings.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies**

To measure Chinese international students' host communication competence, the self-perceived communication competence scale was used. This scale asked students how competent they think they are when delivering a speech or talk with various groups of Americans. According to Kim (2001), language skill is only one aspect of communication competence. Communication competence involves a range of skills such as knowledge of the host culture, skills to understand non-verbal codes of the host culture, and the ability to interact with local people in harmonious ways. Moreover, self-perceived communication competence is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the actual performance of effective communication. A more



comprehensive scale which includes additional communication skills and can measure the communication competence more broadly could be used for future studies. Observational or experimental studies might be useful because self-perceived communication competence is not necessarily correlated with students' actual behaviors.

The survey could be improved. Future researchers could select scales to specify the online communication with distinct target groups—online communication with Chinese and online communication with Americans. In this study, information was gathered using the Internet Motives Scale but the data could not be used because the researcher discovered during data analysis that it was not clear whether or not respondents were referring interactions with Chinese or Americans. The remaining questions were mainly asking participants to report the time they spend online doing various interactions. The function served by these online interactions (i.e., chatting, web browsing, emailing) really is interpersonal communication in nature. Future studies could explore the content on these online interactions.

More channels of host and ethnic media could be included in future studies. Although the Internet is the most commonly used means for Chinese international students to access the outside world (Ye, 2006); students' mass communication via television, newspapers and additional venues cannot be ignored. Due to space constraints on the survey and because Ye's (2006) research indicated the importance on online communication for Chinese students, these alternative media sources unfortunately were not investigated in this study.

Finally, the survey was already too long, 204 participants started but failed to complete the survey. Obviously, future studies could use shorter surveys to increase sample size.

## **Conclusion**

Building on Kim et al.'s (2009) study and using a survey design with 71 respondents, this

study investigated five of Kim's (1988, 2001) theorems of cross-cultural adaptation with Chinese international students who are currently studying and living in the U.S. The results support Kim's (1988, 2001) Theorem 19, partially support Theorems 5 and 20, and failed to provide support for Theorem 6 and 21. This study represents the first study to investigate these specific theorems with a Chinese student sample.

The results of this study raised multiple issues that might be of interest to future researchers. Further studies could be conducted using better research methods to fully verify the partially support theorems. The theorems which are not supported could be tested on different groups of strangers who have resided longer in their host country. If they remain unsupported, then modifications of those theorems need to be undertaken.

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**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
UCLA Loneliness	71	52.59	11.09	.92
ASSIS Acculturative Stress	71	55.30	11.60	.88
WTC: 1. with Americans	71	69.34	25.17	.95
2. with Chinese	71	84.24	21.09	.93
SPCC: 1. with Americans	71	70.55	24.49	.96
2. with Chinese	71	92.66	18.89	.93
Interpersonal COMM:				
1. American Social Support	71	24.11	5.94	.92
2. Chinese Social Support	71	27.03	6.65	.95
3. Relatives Social Support	71	28.42	8.38	.97
4. Number of Chinese friends in China	71	7.79	8.35	
5. Number of Chinese friends in the US	71	4.56	4.33	
6. Number of American friends	71	2.51	3.52	
7. Number of relatives	71	3.48	3.64	
Mass COMM: 1. Chinese in the US	71	43.76	63.44	
2. Chinese in China	71	65.62	82.24	
3. Americans	71	41.24	78.76	

*Notes:* UCLA = Loneliness

ASSIS =Self-perceived acculturative stress

WTC = Willingness to communicate

SPCC = Self perceived communication competence

COMM = Communication

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics for Internet Motive Scale

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
Social Involvement	71	23.82	4.70	.85
Acculturation	71	19.89	3.93	.90
Information	71	7.73	1.40	.70
Companionship	71	6.17	1.72	.72
Ethnic Maintenance	71	6.94	1.55	.66

**Table 3** Multiple Correlations for Communication with Host Group

	UCLA	ASSIS	WTCA	SPCCA	ICASS	ICANF	MCA
UCLA	1.000						
ASSIS	.771***	1.000					
WTCA	-.445***	-.441***	1.000				
SPCCA	-.320**	-.309**	.780***	1.000			
ICASS	-.590***	-.620***	.402***	.334**	1.000		
ICANF	-.334**	-.257*	.173	.220	.428***	1.000	
MCA	-.120	-.057	.027	-.032	.243*	.144	1.000

Notes: \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$

UCLA = Loneliness

ASSIS = Self-perceived acculturative stress

WTCA = Willingness to communicate with Americans

SPCCA = Self perceived communication competence with Americans

ICASS = Interpersonal communication--social support from Americans

ICANF = Interpersonal communication--number of American friends

MCA = Online communication with Americans

**Table 4** Results of Multiple Regressions for Theorem 5

	Variables	B	$\beta$	SEB	t	p
DV:	UCLA					
IVS:	ICASS	-1.035	.207	-.554	-5.005	.000
	ICANF	-.318	.341	-.101	-.932	.355
	MCA	.004	.014	.029	.282	.779
DV:	ASSIS					
IVS:	ICASS	-1.263	.210	-.646	-6.013	.000
	ICANF	.019	.347	.006	.054	.957
	MCA	.015	.014	.099	1.011	.316

*Notes:* UCLA = Loneliness

ASSIS =Self-perceived acculturative stress

ICASS = Interpersonal communication--social support from Americans

ICANF = Interpersonal communication--number of American friends

MCA = Online communication with Americans

**Table 5** Result of Simple Regression for Theorem 19

	Variables	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>SEB</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
DV:	SPCCA					
IV:	WTCA	.760	.073	.780	10.371	.000

*Notes:* WTCA = Willingness to communicate with Americans

SPCCA = Self perceived communication competence with Americans

**Table 6** Multiple Correlations for Communication with Ethnic Group

	UCLA	ASSIS	WTCA	ICCSF	ICRSS	ICCNFC	ICCNFU	ICRN	MCCC	MCCU
UCLA	1.000									
ASSIS	.771***	1.000								
WTCA	-.445***	-.441***	1.000							
ICCSF	-.540***	-.432***	.285*	1.000						
ICRSS	-.312**	-.332**	.281*	.476***	1.000					
ICCNFC	-1.94	-.098	.032	-.123	-.120	1.000				
ICCNFU	-.342**	-.232	-.003	.151	.011	.662***	1.000			
ICRN	-.332**	-.326**	.144	.273*	.146	.379***	.399***	1.000		
MCCC	.047	.004	.167	.071	.120	-.051	-.121	-.086	1.000	
MCCU	.064	.125	.071	-.198	-.109	-.060	-.067	-.132	.453***	1.000

Notes: \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$

UCLA = Loneliness

ASSIS = Self-perceived acculturative stress

WTCC = Willingness to communicate with Chinese

SPCCC = Self perceived communication competence with Chinese

ICCSF = Interpersonal communication--social support from Chinese friends

ICRSS = Interpersonal communication--social support from Chinese relatives

ICCNFC = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese friends in China

ICCNFU = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese friends in the US

ICRN = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese relatives

MCCC = Online communication with Chinese in China

MCCU = Online communication with Chinese in the US

**Table 7** Results of Multiple Regressions for Theorem 6

	Variables	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>SEB</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
DV:	UCLA					
IV:	ICCSF	-.841	.206	-.504	-4.089	.000
	ICRSS	-.144	.149	-.109	-.972	.335
	ICCNFC	-.215	.190	-.162	-1.131	.262
	ICCNFU	-.309	.359	-.121	-.862	.392
	ICRN	-.232	.347	-.076	-.667	.507
	MCCC	-.023	.020	-.133	-1.164	.249
	MCCU	.017	.015	.127	1.111	.271
DV:	ASSIS					
IV:	ICCSF	-.506	.238	-.290	-2.122	.038
	ICRSS	-.235	.172	-.170	-1.364	.177
	ICCNFC	-.027	.220	-.020	-.123	.902
	ICCNFU	-.277	.416	-.103	-.666	.508
	ICRN	-.547	.402	-.171	-1.359	.179
	MCCC	.002	.023	.014	.107	.915
	MCCU	.001	.018	.010	.079	.938

*Notes:* UCLA = Loneliness

ASSIS = Self-perceived acculturative stress

ICCSF = Interpersonal communication--social support from Chinese friends

ICRSS = Interpersonal communication--social support from Chinese relatives

ICCNFC = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese friends in China

ICCNFU = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese friends in the US

ICRN = Interpersonal communication--number of Chinese relatives

MCCC = Online communication with Chinese in China

MCCU = Online communication with Chinese in the US



**Table 8** *t*-test on Internet Use Motive Scale

Internet Motive	Loneliness		<i>t</i>	Acculturative Stress		<i>t</i>	WTCA		<i>t</i>
	L (≤51)	H (≥ 52)		L (≤53)	H (≥ 54)		L (≤66)	H (≥ 68)	
	M/SD	M/SD	M/SD	M/SD	M/SD	M/SD			
Social Involvement	25.59/4.19	22.40/4.64	3.05**	25.26/4.33	22.42/4.67	2.65**	22.09/5.25	25.50/3.39	-3.26**
Acculturation	20.94/3.92	19.03/3.78	2.09*	21.06/3.43	18.75/4.10	2.57*	19.29/4.57	20.47/3.15	-1.28
Information	8.19/1.15	7.36/1.50	2.57*	8.06/1.33	7.42/1.42	1.96	7.63/1.55	7.83/1.25	-.61
Companionship	6.06/1.32	6.26/2.00	-.47	5.86/1.33	6.47/2.00	-1.51	6.06/2.04	6.28/1.37	-.54
Ethnic Maintenance	7.13/1.48	6.79/1.61	.89	6.94/1.41	6.94/1.69	-.00	6.86/1.78/	7.03/1.30	-.46

Notes: \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$

WTCA = Willingness to communicate with Americans

## Appendix A

### Invitation Letter

Dear Chinese international students:

I am a graduate student at the University of Arkansas working on my Masters' thesis. I am looking at how Chinese international college students' communication with people from the U.S. and China, and how that communication influences their success while living in the U.S. It will take you about 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation will help me understand about the issues mentioned above and finish my thesis. There are no known risks to you for participating. Your frank feedback will contribute to studies on Chinese international students and will lead to more attention on and benefit to Chinese students.

All survey results will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. Your contact information (name/email/phone number) will be saved into a separate database and will only be used for the draw to win rewards. A brief summary of the finding might be shared with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISS) so that they will be aware of the problems and needs of our Chinese international students.

You can refuse to complete this survey or withdraw from the study at anytime. Your volunteer work will be highly appreciated and you are encouraged to introduce this survey to other Chinese international students on the U.S. campus.

If you want a chance to win a reward of \$25 in cash, you need to provide your full name and contact information at the end of the survey. Then your contact information survey will be recorded on a list only for entering a random drawing. One person on the list will win. In addition, the person who introduces the most participants will get a \$25 reward (only 1).

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Chen Wei Wu or Dr. Myria Allen at (479) 575-3046 or by e-mail at [myria@uark.edu](mailto:myria@uark.edu). For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or by e-mail at [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

## Appendix B

## English Version of Survey

*Web Page 1*

Chinese international students' cross-cultural adaptation in the U.S.

If you are a Chinese national who are currently living in the U.S., please help us doing this survey. It might take you 15-20 minutes. Those who finish the survey will have chance to win a \$50 award in cash! Thank you for your participation!

*Web Page 2*

Direction: The following statements describe how people sometimes feel. For each statement, please indicate how often you feel the way described about your life in the U.S. by choosing one of the options below. Questions with \* are required.

1. How often do you feel that you are "in tune" with the people around you?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

2. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

3. How often do you feel that there is no one you can turn to?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

4. How often do you feel alone?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

5. How often do you feel part of a group of friends?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

6. How often do you feel that you have a lot in common with the people around you?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

7. How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

8. How often do you feel that your interests and ideas are not shared by those around you?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

9. How often do you feel outgoing and friendly?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10. How often do you feel close to people?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

11. How often do you feel left out?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

12. How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

13. How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

14. How often do you feel isolated from others?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

15. How often do you feel you can find companionship when you want it?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

16. How often do you feel that there are people who really understand you?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

17. How often do you feel shy?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

18. How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

19. How often do you feel that there are people you can talk to?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

20. How often do you feel that there are people you can turn to?\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

### *Web Page 3*

Directions: Below are 24 situations in which you might choose to communicate or not to communicate. (1) Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation by choosing one of the options. (2) Besides, please indicate how competent you believe you are in communicating in the 24 situations mentioned by choosing one of the options. Questions with \* are required.

Questions 1-4 are asking you to reflect upon how you communicate with Americans (not other internationals) here in the U.S.

How often ... (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

How competent ... (0 = Completely incompetent to 100 = Completely competent)











8-2. How competent do you think you are in talking in a large meeting of\*

	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
Chinese strangers.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Chinese acquaintances.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Chinese friends.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

*Web Page 4*

The following statements describe how some international students may feel when studying abroad. Please think about your experiences in the U.S. Indicate your agreement with the following sentences by choosing one of the options provided.

Here in the U.S.:

1. Many opportunities are denied to me.\*

- ( ) Strongly disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Unsure
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Strongly agree

2. Others are biased toward me.\*

- ( ) Strongly disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Unsure
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Strongly agree

3. I feel that I receive unequal treatment.\*

- ( ) Strongly disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Unsure
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Strongly agree

4. I feel that Chinese people are discriminated against.\*

- ( ) Strongly disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Unsure
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Strongly agree

5. I feel sad leaving my relatives behind.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

6. Homesickness bothers me.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

7. I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

8. I miss the Chinese people and China.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

9. Others are sarcastic toward my Chinese cultural values.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

10. Others don't appreciate my Chinese cultural values.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. Multiple pressures are placed upon me after I came to the U.S.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. I feel uncomfortable to adjust to American cultural values.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. I feel nervous to communicate in English.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. I feel intimidated to participate in social activities.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. I feel angry that Chinese people are considered inferior here.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. It hurts when people don't understand my cultural values.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

18. I feel low emotionally because of my cultural background.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

19. I feel that my status in this society is low due to my Chinese cultural background.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

20. I don't feel a sense of belonging (community) here.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

21. I feel some people don't associate with me because I am Chinese.\*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

#### *Web Page 5*

Directions: The following questions are talking about people's Internet use, please indicate the average MINUTES per day you usually spend on the Internet doing each of the following when you are studying in the U.S. Questions with \* are required.

1. E-mail with:\*

Chinese friends you met in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese friends back home in China.: \_\_\_\_\_

family members back home in China.: \_\_\_\_\_

family members in the U.S. (if any).: \_\_\_\_\_

American friends in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese professors in the U.S. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

American professors in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Chat room/using instant messenger with\*

Chinese friends you met in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese friends back home in China.: \_\_\_\_\_

family members back home in China.: \_\_\_\_\_

family members in the U.S. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

American friends in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese professors in the U.S. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

American professors in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Reading online news about\*

China.: \_\_\_\_\_

the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_

other.: \_\_\_\_\_

4. General Chinese Web browsing.\*

\_\_\_\_\_

5. General American Web browsing.\*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Web Page 6*

Directions: The following statements describe your reasons for using the Internet while in the U.S. Please indicate your agreement with each sentence by choosing one of the options.

Questions with \* are required.

1. To give my input.\*

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

2. To show others encouragement.\*

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

3. Because I enjoy answering questions.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

4. To participate in discussion.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

5. To express myself freely.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

6. To tell others what to do.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

7. To help others.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

8. To meet new people.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always



9. To learn about Americans' points of view.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10. To learn about American culture.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

11. To learn more about American values.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

12. To help me adjust to American society.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

13. To find out what is going on in the U.S.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

14. To improve my English.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

15. To get information for free.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

16. To look for information.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

17. So I can feel less lonely.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

18. When there is no one else to talk or to be with.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

19. To find out what is going on in China.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

20. To reinforce my Chinese cultural values.\*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

*Web Page 7*

Direction: Followed are some questions about the social support that is available to you while you are studying in the U.S. Questions with \* are required.

Part 1: Write in whole number of how many close Chinese friends, close American friends and close relatives you have (people you feel at ease with and can talk to about what is on your mind)?

Close Chinese friends in China\*

---

Close Chinese friends in the U.S.\*

---

Close American friends\*

---

Close relatives\*

---

Part 2: International students usually look to others for companionship, assistance, or other types of support when they are studying in the U.S.

---How often is the following support available to you if you need it from an American while studying in the U.S.? For each statement, choose one of the options.

1. Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

2. Someone to give you good advice about a crisis.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

3. Someone to give you information to help you understand a situation.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

4. Someone to confide in or talk to about yourself or your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

5. Someone whose advice you really want.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

6. Someone to share your most private worries and fears with.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

7. Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

8. Someone who understands your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

---How often is the following support available to you if you need it from a Chinese while studying in the U.S.? For each statement, choose one of the options.

1. Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

2. Someone to give you good advice about a crisis.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

3. Someone to give you information to help you understand a situation.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

4. Someone to confide in or talk to about yourself or your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

5. Someone whose advice you really want.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

6. Someone to share your most private worries and fears with.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

7. Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

8. Someone who understands your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

---How often is the following support available to you if you need it from a family member (regardless of where he/she is) while studying in the U.S.? For each statement, choose one of the options.

1. Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

2. Someone to give you good advice about a crisis.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

3. Someone to give you information to help you understand a situation.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

4. Someone to confide in or talk to about yourself or your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

5. Someone whose advice you really want.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

6. Someone to share your most private worries and fears with.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

7. Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

8. Someone who understands your problems.\*

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

*Web Page 8*

### Personal Information

Please note that your personal information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. Questions with \* are required.

1. What's your gender?\*

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you? (whole numbers)\*

---

3. Marital status\*

- Single/never married
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated

4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.\*

- High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
- Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- 1 or more years of college, no degree
- Associate degree (for example: AA, AS)
- Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, AB, BS)
- Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)
- Professional degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
- Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)
- Other

5. Current working status in the U.S. Are you currently...? (check all that apply)\*

- A student.
- Visiting scholar/exchange student.
- Employed for wages. (including TA/RA/GA).
- Self-employed.
- Out of work and looking for work.
- Out of work but not currently looking for work.
- A homemaker.
- Unable to work.

6. Length of time living in the United States (As how many months; if less than a month, then apply "0" in the blank)\*

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How many semesters have you spent studying in countries besides China (*Including your high school and elementary experiences*)? Please indicate the number of semesters and the countries. If you don't have related experiences, please leave it blank.

Numbers of semesters: \_\_\_\_\_

Countries: \_\_\_\_\_

8. How do you get this survey?\*

- From on-campus events
- From CSSA Bulletin Board
- From a friend
- other

Please provide his/her full name and e-mail address here. The name and email address of the person who referred you will be saved separately from the survey responses and will only be used for the draw\*

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate where did you get to know the survey if you choose "other".\*

\_\_\_\_\_



*Web Page 9*

Enter to win a draw! : )

Every person who completes this survey has a chance to win a reward of \$50 in cash, if you want to enter the draw, please leave your full name and valid e-mail address here, your e-mail address will be the only way I get in touch with you if you win the draw. Your name and email will be saved separately from the rest of the survey and will only be used for the draw. Those who don't want to enter the draw please feel free to leave the following space blank. Thank you!

Full name

---

E-mail address

---

*Web Page 10*

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us to help other Chinese international students get better adaptation to their lives in the U.S.!

## Appendix C

### Chinese Version of Survey

#### *Web Page 1*

中国赴美留学生的跨文化适应调查问卷

如果你来自中国且目前居住在美国，请协助我们完成此调查问卷，这可能需要15-20分钟，完成问卷的同学有机会获得\$50现金奖励！感谢参与！

#### *Web Page 2*

说明：下列语句表述人们平时的一些感受。请根据你在美国生活期间的实际情况对每项表述进行打分，并在下列选项中进行单选。带星号的为必填选项。

1. 你常感到与周围人的关系和谐吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

2. 你常感到缺少伙伴吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

3. 你常感到没人可以信赖吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

4. 你常感到寂寞吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

5. 你常感到属于朋友们中的一员吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

6. 你常感到与周围的人有许多共同点吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

7. 你常感到与任何人都不亲密了吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

8. 你常感到你的兴趣与想法与周围的人不一样吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

9. 你常感到想要与任来往、结交朋友吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

10. 你常感到与人亲近吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

11. 你常感到被人冷落吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

12. 你常感到与别人来往毫无意义吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

13. 你常感到没有人很了解你吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

14. 你常感到与别人隔开了吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

15. 你常感到如果你愿意就能找到伙伴吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

16. 你常感到有人真正了解你吗？\*

- 从不
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

17. 你常感到羞怯吗？\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

18. 你常感到有人围着你但并不关心你吗？\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

19. 你常感到有人愿意与你交谈吗？\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

20. 你常感到有人值得你信赖吗？\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

### *Web Page 3*

说明：以下是24种场合，在其中你可以选择是否与别人进行交流。（1）假设你有完全的自由进行选择，请用百分比指出在下列各种情形下，你愿意用多少时间与别人进行交流。

（2）并且请对你自己在下列24种场合中与他人交流的能力进行评估打分。依据打分进行单选。带星号的为必填选项。

问题1-4反映的是你与在美国遇到的美国人（非其他国籍外国人）的交往情况。

交往意愿：0 = 从不，100 = 总是。

交往能力：0 = 完全不能胜任，100 = 完全有能力。













## 8-2. 在.....大会中发言的能力。\*

	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
中国陌生人	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
中国熟人	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
中国朋友	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

*Web Page 4*

说明：下列语句描述的是国际学生在国外学习时可能出现的一些感受。请结合你在美国的经历，进行单选。带星号的为必填选项。

在美国：

## 1. 我被许多机会拒绝。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

## 2. 其他人对我有偏见。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

## 3. 我感觉受到不公正待遇。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

4. 我感觉中国人受到歧视。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

5. 把亲人留在国内我感到难过。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

6. 思乡之情困扰着我。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

7. 生活在陌生的环境中我感到沮丧。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

8. 我想念中国人以及中国。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

9. 其他人嘲笑我的中国文化价值观。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

10. 其他人不尊重我的中国文化价值观。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

11. 我感到不适应新的食物。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

12. 我到美国后开始承担多重压力。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

13. 我感到不适应美国的文化价值观。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

14. 用英语交际使我感到紧张。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

15. 参加社交活动使我感到恐惧。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

16.我对中国人在这里低人一等这一看法表示愤怒。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

17. 当人们不理解我的文化价值观时我感到苦恼。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

18. 我因为我的文化背景而感到情绪低落。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

19. 我觉得我的中国文化背景使我在这里的社会地位低下。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

20. 在这里我没有集体归属感（例：团体/社区）。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

21. 我觉得有些人不同我交往是因为我是中国人。\*

- ( ) 非常不同意
- ( ) 不同意
- ( ) 不确定
- ( ) 同意
- ( ) 非常同意

说明：以下是关于人们网络使用的问题。请写出你在美国学习期间，平均每天在下列各项网络活动上所花费的时间【分钟】。带星号的为必填选项。

1. 与.....发邮件。\*

你在美国认识的中国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在国内的中国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在国内的家人: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的家人（如果有）: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的美国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的中国教授（如果有）: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的美国教授: \_\_\_\_\_

2. 通过聊天室/即时通信与.....交谈。\*

你在美国认识的中国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在国内的中国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在国内的家人: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的家人（如果有）: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的美国朋友: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的中国教授（如果有）: \_\_\_\_\_

在美国的美国教授: \_\_\_\_\_

3. 在线阅读关于.....的新闻。\*

美国: \_\_\_\_\_

中国: \_\_\_\_\_

其他: \_\_\_\_\_

4. 中文网页浏览。\*

\_\_\_\_\_

5. 浏览美国网页。\*

\_\_\_\_\_

说明：下列语句描述的是你在美国期间使用网络的动机。请在选项中进行单选以示对所下列语句赞同与否。带星号的为必填选项。

1. 给（他人）提建议。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

2. 给他人支持鼓励。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

3. 因为我喜欢回答问题。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

4. 参加讨论。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

5. 自由地表达我自己。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

6. 告诉他人应该做什么。\*



- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

7. 帮助他人。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

8. 结识新朋友。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

9. 了解美国人的观点。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

10. 了解美国文化。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

11. 了解美国人的价值观。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

12. 帮助我适应美国社会。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

13. 了解美国实事。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

14. 提高英语水平。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

15. 免费获取信息。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

16. 查询信息。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

17. 可以减轻我的孤独感。\*

- 从不
- 不常
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

18. 当没人可以和我讲话或没人和我在一起时。\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 不常
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

19. 了解中国实事。\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 不常
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

20. 加强我的中国文化价值观。\*

- ( ) 从不
- ( ) 不常
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

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说明：下列问题是关于你在美国学习期间受到的社会支持。带星号的为必填选项。

第一部分：用数字(整数)写出你有多少个中国密友，美国密友，和关系密切的亲人（和这些人在一起你感到自在并且可以和他们讲你的想法）。

在国内的中国密友\*

---

在美国的中国密友\*

---

美国密友\*

---

关系密切的亲戚\*

---

第二部分：国际学生通常会在美国学习期间向他人寻求友谊、帮助、或其他形式的支持。

——在你赴美学习期间当你需要一个美国人的支持时（如下所列），多常能得到你需要的支持？对下列描述进行单选。

1. 当你需要的时候和你聊天。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

2. 当你在危急关头提出好的建议。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

3. 提供信息以帮助你了解情况。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

4. 可以信赖并且可以对其诉说关于你自己的事情及你的问题。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

5. 你希望得到其建议。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

6. 分享你最私密的困扰及忧虑。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

7. 遇到个人问题时可以向其寻求建议。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

8. 了解你的问题之所在。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

——在你赴美学习期间当你需要一个中国人的支持时（如下所列），多常能得到你需要的支持？对下列描述进行单选。

1. 当你需要的时候和你聊天。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

2. 当你在危急关头提出好的建议。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

3. 提供信息以帮助你了解情况。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

4. 可以信赖并且可以对其诉说关于你自己的事情及你的问题。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

5. 你希望得到其建议。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

6. 分享你最私密的困扰及忧虑。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

7. 遇到个人问题时可以向其寻求建议。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

8. 了解你的问题之所在。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

——在你赴美学习期间当你需要一个亲人(无论在何处)的支持时(如下所列),多常能得到你需要的支持?对下列描述进行单选。

1. 当你需要的时候和你聊天。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

2. 当你在危急关头提出好的建议。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

3. 提供信息以帮助你了解情况。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

4. 可以信赖并且可以对其诉说关于你自己的事情及你的问题。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

5. 你希望得到其建议。\*

- ( ) 从未
- ( ) 很少
- ( ) 有时
- ( ) 经常
- ( ) 总是

6. 分享你最私密的困扰及忧虑。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

7. 遇到个人问题时可以向其寻求建议。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

8. 了解你的问题之所在。\*

- 从未
- 很少
- 有时
- 经常
- 总是

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#### 个人信息

请注意你的个人信息会根据法律及阿肯色大学政策规定的范围内受到保密。带星号的为必填选项。

1. 你的性别是：\*

- 男
- 女

2. 你的年龄是？（整数）\*

---

3. 婚姻状况：\*

- 单身/未婚
- 已婚
- 离异
- 丧偶
- 分居



4. 你的最高学历是什么？如果现为在校生，请选择此前获得的最高学历。\*

- 高中毕业或其他相同水平学位（例：GED）
- 一些大学学分，但少于1年
- 1年或1年以上大学学习，无学位
- 大专文凭、肄业证书、或副学士学位（例：AA, AS）
- 学士学位（BA, AB, BS）
- 硕士学位（MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA）
- 专业学位（MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD）
- 博士学位（PhD, EdD）
- 其他

5. 目前在美工作状况：\*

- 学生
- 访问学者/交换学生
- 带薪工作（包括学校的TA, RA, GA）
- 自雇人士
- 失业并且正在找工作
- 失业但目前不打算求职
- 家庭主妇
- 无法工作

6. 在美居住时长（以月为单位，如不满一个月，则填写"0"）\*

\_\_\_\_\_

7. 你在除中国以外的其他国家修过几个学期的课程（包括大学及中小学课程）？请在下列空白处写出学期数以及国家名称。如果无此经历，请忽略此题。

学期数: \_\_\_\_\_

国家名称: \_\_\_\_\_

8. 你是如何得知此问卷的?\*

- 校园活动
- 中国学生会公告板
- 朋友介绍
- 其他

请在此填写他（她）的姓名及电子邮件地址。这些信息将被与问卷调查结果分开保存并且仅被用于抽奖。\*

姓名: \_\_\_\_\_ 电子邮件地址: \_\_\_\_\_

如果选择"其他"，请在此填写得知此调查问卷的方式。

\* \_\_\_\_\_

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参与抽奖 =)

每一位完成此问卷的参与者都有机会赢取**50美元现金**。如果你想参与赢取现金的抽奖，请在此留下你的姓名全称以及有效电子邮件地址。你的电子邮件地址将会是你获奖后我们联系你的唯一途径。你的姓名及电子邮件信息将被与此问卷的其他问题区分开来单独保存，并且仅被用于抽奖。如果你不想参加抽奖，可以不用填写以下信息。谢谢合作！

姓名

---

电子邮件地址

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Thank You!