Contributing and Inhibiting Factors of Cultural Adjustment:
The Case of East Asian Students Adapting to the Rural U.S.

A Dissertation

Submitted to the University of Tsukuba

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Science

HOMMADOVA ANNA ATAYEVNA

2016

Abstract

This study explores the process of cultural adjustment in the case of extreme differences between the original and new environment. This is done by looking at the case of East Asian students from highly populated areas of East Asia moving to an American, semi-rural area, most commonly described by participants as "nothingness." The three research questions guiding the study are: 1) How do students go through the process of adaptation, and is integration possible for them? 2) How does their cultural background, being from Korea, Japan, or China, affect the adjustment process? and 3) What helps and prevents the students from adapting to the host environment? This study implements a qualitative research design. Data was gathered in a rural mid-western American university from May 2nd, 2015 to May 12th, 2016. Data was gathered through participatory observations, in-depth interviews, surveys, and a collection of other artifacts. An online survey was conducted from June 2016 to August 2016.

The differences between the three groups are explored during three types of adjustment: physical, academic, and social. Physical adjustment represents the change in the physical environment, such as food, region, living conditions in the dorm, and so forth. Academic adjustment is explored from the perspective of the students and how they describe the differences between studying in Korea, Japan, or China, and the U.S. The third type of adjustment is the longest-term type and relates to social integration into the new environment. The results are analyzed in the context of differences in the ideologies of Japan, China, and Korea. The majority of students from all three countries reported disappointment in their interactions and relationship formation with local populations. Some students reported not having one American friend although they had been in the U.S. for several years, and despite Americans making up 93% of the school population. Social adjustments also look into the romantic relationships that had been

formed, as well as the cultural differences between dating Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and American people.

The results of the ethnographic inquiry suggest that the expectations of both East Asian and American students, as well as their desires and needs in interacting with each other, were considerably different. This hinders the process of adjustment. Many students reported Americans avoided interaction with Asian students because of their stereotypical expectation that Asian students are not able to speak English. Conversely, Asian students had pre-conceived notions of all Americans being fun loving, friendly, outgoing, and open-minded. After East Asian students arrived to the U.S. Americans were more commonly described as "fake nice," "polite but cold," and "not easy to get close to." Although many students were able to adjust to their new lives in the U.S., only a few students moved in the direction of integration. A majority of the students were unable to form meaningful relationships with American students, and instead mingling with other international students.

According to the online survey, when reflecting back on their studies, the most difficult out of the three types of adjustments was an academic adjustment. Not surprisingly, three of the students faced academic probation at one point during their studies.

Looking at the contributing and prohibiting factors of cultural adjustment, the formation of relationships is one of the major factors. According to the data, the factors that improved the chances of forming relationships with American students involved living on campus, joining campus events, participating in school organizations, remaining positive, and having a sense of humor. The role of the institution becomes particularly important in protecting the minority groups from discrimination and harassment. Forming relationships with American students that

have an interest in the native country of the participants who have similar interests and hobbies was observed to be effective in becoming closer and more intimate.

The findings supported the IAT theory; however, discrepancies surfaced between the results of this study and the 6-D Model. The critical and sociocultural approach suggested that the process of adjustment can be positively affected by changes in the behavior and attitude of not only the East Asian students and local American students, but also through changing the role of the institution to help prevent student alienation and to encourage integration. This is explored with some practical recommendations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common experience of human beings is the process of adaptation. Even without any unexpected circumstances, like being transported to a foreign land, most people have to adapt to different aspects of life starting from going to daycare as a child up to and including adjusting to the life of retirement. First weeks at a new school or a new job often linger in people's memory, accompanied by the feeling of excitement and uncertainty. Very few things in life stay at a constant, and the inevitability of change brings with it the necessity for us to adapt. Daily people have to make adjustments to their behaviors according a myriad of factors in their social settings. One of the common yet drastic adjustments people have to make is when one moves abroad, and has to adapt to the new environment of a foreign country. Any serious changes in a person's life, let alone studying abroad, can cause anxiety, stress, and loss of security. These in excess can increase the risk of strokes, heart attacks, ulcers, dwarfism, and depression (Sapolsky, 2004).

Overall, the United States hosts the largest share of the world's international students studying abroad, serving as a temporary home to over one million student sojourners with the numbers increasing[1]. There is a problem with treating this number as a simple statistic. In reality, it represents not just a head count, but over a million emotional stories of the struggle that these students have to go through when adapting to a new environment and circumstances. The number of international students in the U.S. is continuing to grow, and these students are faced with language barriers, culture shock, unfamiliar social norms, adjustment to consumption of foreign food, different educational expectations, isolation, and an inability to establish social

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[1] According to an article by Miriam Jordan, this increase in the student numbers is partially due to the rise of the affluent class in China and the recruiting efforts of American universities

networks (Church, 1982; Furnham & Trezise, 1983; Leong & Chou, 1996). The process of adjusting to a new culture has many different names with different nuances, such as acculturation, assimilation, cultural adjustment, sociocultural adaptation, integration, culture shock stages, and so on. Although these terms are distinctly different, they all refer to the phenomenon of an individual adapting to a new environment. This phenomenon is especially fascinating in its extremity when the host environment is tremendously different from the native environment. These cultural differences can make it challenging for international students to adjust to their host nation (Lin & Yi, 1997; Mori, 2000).

The fundamental problem that this dissertation addresses is exploring the process of cultural adaptation of East Asian students to the rural U.S. The exemplar that will be taken is the adaptation of students from densely populated areas in East Asia to a much more rural area in the U.S. The location of the American university in this study is not disclosed for privacy reasons, but in the middle of nowhere in the U.S., where the annual snowfall can be up to 400 cm, and the temperatures can reach over -40°C. This university has less than 6,000 students. In the city where it is located there is no public transportation available on Sundays, however, over 430 international students gathered there for the purpose of pursuing American higher education.

There are several reasons for choosing Asian students. First, these students are confronted with extreme differences between host and home cultures. Second, they are the largest demographic of international students in the U.S.[2], making the probability of Americans having to interact with an Asian student at their university much higher than other international students (IIE, 2016). Finally, as it will be demonstrated in the literature review, there are few studies

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[2] According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), in the academic year 2015-2016, over 41% of the international students in the U.S. were from China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan. Furthermore they were listed under the category of the "Top 10 places of origin and percentage of total international Students Enrollment" China was the #1 while Japan ranked #9, which is the lowest among the East Asian countries

about the East Asian students in the rural U.S., and none that compare the different groups of East Asian students in a longitudinal manner. Though it is widely accepted that there are differences in the process of adaptation among students from different cultural backgrounds; commonly, students from various parts of East Asia are grouped together (Cummings, 1984; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Jiang, 2015; Li & Gasser, 2005).

The majority of international college students studying at American universities not only have to overcome the same challenges faced by the native students but are additionally confronted with other barriers (Church, 1985; Furnham & Trezise, 1983; Leong & Chou, 1996). The American college students graduation rate are much lower than in Asia, and native students struggle to obtain a college degree in 6 year.[3] This suggests that undertaking an undergraduate degree is not an easy task for American students, let alone for international students. Among numerous problems faced by international students, the most commonly discussed challenge is language. Researchers found that African, Asian, and Latin individuals face more language difficulties than other international students, a factor that significantly contributes to the adjustment difficulties (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992). Although, there are more Asian students than any other ethnic groups, few studies qualitatively explore the experiences and challenges faced by each of the cultural groups from East Asia in the U.S. The process of integration into the host culture depends heavily on the interactions and relationships formed with the local populace, therefore making the role of communication indispensable in exploring the discourse of integration.

The experiences of East Asian students studying in the rural U.S. has largely been

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[3] According to the U.S. Department of Education, the 2013 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in 2007 was 59% https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40 (accessed December 7, 2015)

ignored but is crucial for the understanding of, and assisting in, student orientation and adaptation as well as students' academic and social success. Many studies on cultural adjustment, group all of the students from Asia into one category, without differentiation the cultural background of these students. The differences between the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students is also imperiled in seeing how cultural differences and native countries' social norms affect adaptation. Although an abundance of literature is available on the difficulties of these students with the academic and social environment during their studies in the U.S., little attention is given to describing their experiences from the students' perspective. The students' high concerns with their academic performance, homesickness, inability to form close relationships with native students, and even alienation, are often treated as variables in the discourse of adjustment to the host culture. Leading to the struggles of these groups, who are a minority on campuses around the U.S., often to be reported as lifeless facts and written off under language barriers or cultural differences, grouping all of Asia into one culture. The voices of the students reflect their inability to participate in class discussions, which research discusses as differences between high context and low context culture.

Overall, studying abroad can be a highly emotional experience, full of hopes, dreams, gratification or disappointment, not to mention the stress of adaptation to the new environment and the struggle to survive or strive, making many quantitative studies not sufficient to tell these stories. Only recently did scholars start addressing the questions of feelings and how these are elicited in international student experiences beyond the inquiries of psychology. This thesis examines the cultural adaptation from the perspective of the students and accounts of their battles while differentiating the students according to their cultural background and sharing their stories in their words.

1.1. Conceptualization

In the body of literature on the process that foreigners go through when they arrive at a new country, there is a vast number of terms tied to this process such as: acculturation, assimilation, cultural adjustment, cross-cultural adjustment, and adaptation. There are many definitions for each of these terms; however, in this paper, cultural adjustment and cultural adaptation is defined as the process of sojourns being exposed to and coping with a new physical, cultural, and emotional stimuli for an extended period.

Definition of Terms

Academic Adjustment – adjustment to the environment of the American university, and is measured by academic success.

Adaptation – is defined as coping with the new environment, and is distinct from the concept of integration. Integration is one way to adapt, but not the only way.

Culture – is defined as the learned and shared values, beliefs and behaviors of a group of interacting people. They are different in their language, behavior patterns and values. Therefore, in this thesis, the East Asian students are not grouped together, and this study focuses on Japanese, Chinese and Korean culture and the differences between them in the American cultural context.

East Asian Students – students holding a student F-1 visa that have come from East Asian countries and identify themselves as one of the following: Chinese, Taiwanese, Chinese-Malay, Japanese or Korean. The groups selected are students from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Chinese-Malay students from Malaysia

Integration – is what Ward & Kennedy refer to as sociocultural adjustment and is defined

as "The ability to 'fit in', to acquire culturally appropriate skills and to negotiate interactive aspects of the host environment" (Ward & Kennedy, 1999, p. 660-661). In this study it refers to fitting into or becoming part of the American local culture, and is measured by the number and the distance in relationships between the sojourners and local students, as well as the understanding of local cultural norms.

Physical Adjustment – the adjustment of students to the new physical environment

Social Adjustment – social interactions with the people around them, the support network in the host environment

Sojourner – an individual who resides in a place temporarily and in this study refers to East Asian students

The East Asian students include both students enrolled in the bachelor degree programs as well as the short-term exchange students from East Asian countries making up the population that was examined.

1.2. Problem Statement

Recently, the process of foreign nationals adapting to a host country has attracted overwhelming interest. The debates in the political arena about multiculturalism, the problem of accepting refugees, and the immigration policies of Trump in the U.S. all center around the topic of integration of foreigners into host environments. The U.S. is a country that was built on immigrants, and in 2014, the number of foreign-born individuals constituted over 13% of the total populations in the U.S. (Zong & Batolova, 2016). Sojourners also have not been left without attention; however, there are numerous gaps in the knowledge about the experiences of international students' experiences in the U.S. that are left unfilled.

There is a change in demographic of newly arriving sojourners, students that were able to study in the U.S. twenty years ago, are not from the same demographics as today, especially in this case of students from East Asia. Currently it is no longer the elite or the exceptionally smart students that go to study abroad, but also students who were not able to pass the entrance exams in their home country. Studying in the U.S. with some university offering in-state tuition[4] prices and more easily available student visas are a viable option for more people. The largest group of students studying in the U.S., the Asian students, and with rapid economic growth of China more Chinese students are arriving to study in the U.S. than ever before.

Another problem is the lack of exploratory descriptive studies in the field of the student experiences during their adjustment. The concepts that are commonly associated with the adjustment process are from the discipline of psychology and are: stress, anxiety, pride, and the emotional impact on self-awareness and identity. However, there is an array of different feelings, an amalgam of experiences that go beyond just negative and positive. The experiences of students through subjective accounts and narratives is needed to understand the phenomenon of cultural adaptation more deeply. Moreover, there are immense differences in studying in small, mid-sized and large universities, just as there are enormous differences between studying in Hawaii compared to Alaska. In-depth studies of various phenomenon in non-research are very rarely done in academia, as research universities provide a more convenient sample. To summarize the problem, there is a deficiency of exploratory studies on the experiences of adjustment processes of East Asian students in the rural non-research universities in the U.S., leading to the first research question:

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[4] Majority of universities in the U.S. have three types of tuition prices. In-state tuition is offered to all residents of the state where the institution is located. Out of state tuition is higher and is for all other American students. Finally the tuition for international students is the highest and can be two or three times higher than in-state tuition.

RQ#1: *How do the East Asian students perceive their experiences through the phases of cultural adjustment in the rural U.S.?*

Additionally, there is a lack of exploratory research on the effect of cultural differences between East Asian students and their adaptation to the host environment. Cultural adjustment is dependent on the cultural differences between the home and host countries, however there is no such country as East Asia. Chinese, Japanese and Koreans have significantly different culture, and though many studies center around "Asian students" and their cultural adjustment, there is a necessity to look at them as separate groups, leading to the second research question:

RQ#2: *What are the cultural differences and how do they affect the process of adaptation among the different groups of Asian students in the rural U.S.?*

There is another problem that is much more general, and looking at the macro level, there is no theory or functional model that explains the factors contributing to success or failure to adjust to any environment, whether it is urban or rural. The phenomenon of adjustment, and all the factors that influence this process, have also not been sufficiently explored. Though some might point out to the model of acculturation and adjustment phases, the acculturation model is designed for immigrants that stay in the new environment, while sojourners have to go back and readjust to their home environment, meaning many go through reverse culture shock. The W-curve does not shows the process, but does not include the factors that influence cultural adjustment and the problem of why some succeed while others fail to adjust is far from answered. Looking at the case of East Asian students in a non-research university it is important to understand what factors according to the students helped or inhibited their adjustment process, which is the final research question:

RQ#3: *What inhibits and contributes to the East Asian students' adaptation and integration into the local culture?*

By answering these three research questions a comprehensive understanding of cultural adjustment of Korean, Chinese and Japanese university students to Non-research University in the rural U.S. is attained, addressing the problems of the lack of studies of this phenomena in this specific context.

1.3. Organization

This study starts out with a broad introduction to the undertaken research in chapter one, that which focuses in on the main concepts and terms. Chapter two outlines the broader dialogue in literature and focuses on the literature regarding cultural adaptation, East Asian students' cultural adaptation, and what factors were previously shown to affect it. First, the chapter explores the phases of adjustment suggested by other scholars, following with research on the factors such as: MP, self-efficacy, motivation, communication, and social support. Then, studies done on Chinese, Japanese and Korean students are explored leading to the conclusion of no study to date that has been done on cultural adjustment, where all three groups were represented in a non-research university. Chapter three looks into the theories, models and approaches that scholars have used to explain the general process of adaptation and cultural differences. The three approaches and the theories that are applied in this study are explained. Chapter four explains the methodology of data gathering, triangulation, and the various tools of data gathering that were employed. Furthermore, the methods chapter addresses the Grounded Theory approach and the influence of its underlining assumptions on this research as well as the method of data analyses. Chapter four is concluded with the introduction to the participants of the study and their demographic information.

Chapter five is the first section of the findings. This chapter presents the data that addresses research question one, and explains the process of adjustment across the five conceptualized stages. The students' expectations, motivations and individual stories are described, allowing for further understanding of the process they went through, and how some were able to integrate into American culture through cultural identity negotiations, while others socially adjusted through withdrawal and seclusion. The local population and culture is described focusing on the opinions of local American students toward East Asia.

In chapter six, research question two, on the differences and similarities between the Japanese, Chinese and Korean students' experiences, is explored in the context of three types of adjustments. First, the data is presented on the physical, academic and social adjustment. Then the Cultural differences are pointed out, and an attempt is made to explain them through ideological differences between Japan, China and Korea. Finally, Hofstedes' 6-D model of cultural dimensions is compared with the results, where some of the dimensions match the results, and others show strong contrast.

Chapter seven, addressing the last research question, looks at the pragmatic side of the adjustment and the factors that affect it. Further looking at the advice the students gave, their experiences, their best and worst moments in the U.S., and an analytical frame is developed for inhibiting and contributing factors of cultural adjustment. The roles of institutions become more evident, and the critical approach is taken in this section. Coming together to form a more comprehensive model of factors influencing adjustment of East Asian students.

Chapter eight is the discussion and conclusion chapter. It brings to light the theory that emerged from the data, and looking at the theoretical implication of the results. I try to develop a more comprehensive theory of cultural adjustment. The conclusion is simple, showing that there

exists a myriad of factors affecting cultural adjustment. It is impossible to get a comprehensive model without looking at three things: cultural differences between the host and home culture (without generalizing any groups together), understanding the needs, desires and expectations of both sojourners and locals, and finally the role of institutions. It then summarizes and concludes the results of the study, points out its limitations and underlines the implications as well as direction for future research.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The experiences of East Asian students in non-research universities have not been sufficiently explored, and according to William Cummings: *"Students who are overseas report back on their experiences, influence the decisions of their younger peers, and help them to gain overseas admissions"* (Cummings , 1984, p. 244). This makes one of the reasons making the study of the East Asian student experiences in rural and semi-rural U.S. imperative, as more and more students will be reporting their experiences back home. The experiences Asian students have in metropolitan areas might not be the same as in the countryside. Another point of significance is in the effect that Asian students have on local American students they interact with. Research indicates that intercultural contact between white American students and Asian students contributes significant variance to the attitude American students have toward the Asian ethnic group in general (Dinh, Weinstein, Nemon, & Rondeau, 2008). Furthermore, cross-cultural adaptation and integration into a foreign environment that is extremely different from the home country is imperative to understand from the sojourners perspective. This study takes an ethnographic approach, and a more open and flexible research design that gives insight into various aspects of East Asian experiences in the U.S. The source of data is varied and comprises surveys, focus groups, interviews, observation notes, two diaries, and various reports provided

by the participants as well as testimony from the Japanese university staff and informal interviews with American students. The study contributes to an existing body of knowledge in several specific ways. First, it expands the knowledge on the differences in the experiences the Chinese, Japanese and Korean students have in the U.S., including comparisons in friendships and romantic relationships back home, and in the U.S. as well as in-group and out-group relationships. Second, it outlines the difficulties that the East Asian students experience in the rural area of the U.S. Third, it describes the behaviors of East Asian students that helped and constricted their process of cultural and academic adjustment. Finally, the multi-discipline approach in looking at the results provides some suggestions to institutions on improving the sojourners' experiences.

The role and background of the researcher also plays a major role in the data collection and analyses. My personal experience of living eight years in East Asia and twelve years in the U.S. allows for an understanding of cultural background and everyday life experiences of both American and East Asian students. The significance of this thesis lies in the hope that it might even so slightly promote mutual understanding between various East Asian students and Americans in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the literature concerning international students studying abroad is examined in the fields of psychology, communication, education, counseling, cultural studies and sociology. This chapter examines the way researchers have reported Asian students' cultural adaptation process in the past. It is important to note when searching for literature about Asian students in the U.S., there is an overwhelming number or articles, books, and theses that surface in electronic searches; however, the majority of that literature is on Asian-American students, many of whom were born and grew up in the U.S. This study looks at sojourner experiences and focuses in particular on literature relevant to experiences of students from East Asian countries who live in the U.S. temporarily. The common academic and social problems the students are faced with were first identified through works done by Barratt & Huba (1994), Church (1982) and Han (2007). Issues with mental health and social difficulties in foreign cultures also are incorporated into this category (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985 ; Furnham & Trezise, 1983). The overall question guiding the literature review is what factors have the studies so far identified in effecting cultural adaptation.

Following the overview of the international students' experiences, the focus will shift to studies pertaining specifically to Asian students, where the culture shock is even higher than students from English speaking or European countries, where once again we are confronted with an overgeneralization of international students. There are also numerous writings on particular East Asian student difficulties in adjustment to the Western culture (Cheng, Leong, & Geist, 1993; Fritz, Chin, & DeMarinis, 2008; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). For a visual representation of where the current study finds itself in

the discourse of academic literature see Figure 1. Five major themes were chosen, though there could be much more, and at a more micro level. The red dot represents the gap in the literature that is demonstrated in this chapter, and which this study attempts to fill.

Figure 1: Literature Map
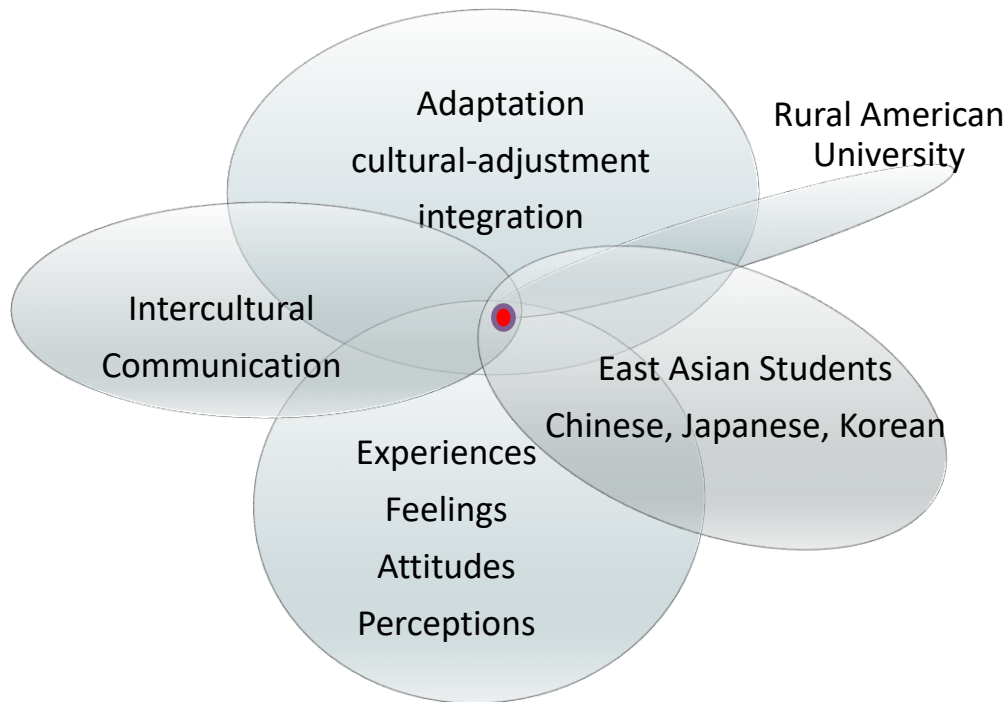
This chapter aims to review major studies in cultural adaptation and integration identifying the gaps in the literature that this study attempts to fill. First, the process of adaptation is explored, followed by the stages of adaptation suggested by various researchers. Next, the most commonly researched factors that influence the adjustment of Asian students are reviewed. By going through all of these factors it becomes evident that cultural adaptation is highly influenced by the cultural background of the international students. However, few studies compare the differences between Chinese, Japanese and Korean students' adaptation to the U.S. These studies, and studies that specifically look at one of these groups, are then explored. Finally, it is evident that the destination of international sojourners would also highly influence

their ability to adapt. Therefore, the location in the U.S., rural or urban, might affect the students'

adaptation and integration into the local host culture.

2.1 The Phases of Cultural-Adjustment

First, it is essential to understand that the process of coping with a new environment is an

ongoing process that consists of various stages. There is ampleness of research on the phases

different groups go through during the process of adaptation, and differences in opinions on the

number of stages, as well as what they consist of. The research described in this section pertains

to the major works on the proposed stages of cultural adaptation, and cultural adjustment phases

prescribed specifically to East Asian students.

A pioneering scholar in this phenomenon, anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (1954)

described cultural adjustment in four phases: 1) Honeymoon, 2) Culture shock, 3) Gradual

Adjustment, Humor, and Perspective, 4) "Feeling at Home"—Adaptation and Biculturalism.

According to Oberg the process of adaptation is the changes in the attitude of sojourners toward

their host environment (Oberg, 1960). Furthermore, Oberg (1960) suggest the cure for culture

shock is in getting to know the local people. However, the attitude and the level of familiarity

with the host environment are highly dependent on the pre-existing expectations and preparations.

This happens before the sojourners depart their homeland, but Oberg does not include this phase.

Conversely, Adler (1975) suggested five stages. Firstly, the contact stage, which is similar to

Oberg's honeymoon phase, it includes the initial excitement akin to the experience that a tourist

might have. The second stage suggested by Adler is the disintegration stage, similar to culture

shock, where the individual is overwhelmed with the requirements of the new culture. The third

stage is the reintegration stage, like that of gradual adjustment. The interaction is increased, but it

also can increase the resentment toward the host culture. The final two stages are autonomy and

independence, which is different from the one phase that Oberg suggested in that it was separated into two distinct phases. The autonomy stage is where the individual negotiates between home and host culture, establishing a balance, while the independence stage is the precipice interdependence in reaching biculturalism.

The phases described above are consistent with the U-curve hypothesis, but as it was suggested the sojourners return to their home countries and re-adjust to their home culture. Therefore, a W-curve is proposed in the case of sojourners (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). The W-Curve, which is an extension of Oberg's model, includes the stages of readjustment as the re-entry, reverse culture shock, and readjustment to the home country.

Another primary example is the model suggested by Berry et.al. (1987), identifying five distinct categories of acculturation without including the reverse culture shock stage as: 1) physical change (location), 2) biological change (nutrition), 3) cultural changes, 4) social relationships (in-group-out-group), and 5) psychological changes (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) focuses on stress associated with learning second-culture firsthand. However, these categories do not fully capture the complexity of the process for East Asian students, and many of these stages can be grouped under the term culture shock. In his later works Berry (2009) further argues that not everyone will acculturate and become part of the dominant group. He suggests that there are four strategies for ethno cultural groups as they negotiate their identity: 1) separation, 2) integration, 3) assimilation, 4) marginalization. Assimilation is when the individual chooses to actively immerse into the host culture seeking daily interaction, while rejecting or neglecting their own cultural identity. Integration is when the individual preserves their own cultural identity and at the same time participates and interacts with host society. Separation is when the ethnic cultural identity is tightly held onto, and the host culture is rejected,

commonly through avoidance of interactions. The final strategy is marginalization, when neither ethnic cultural identity is maintained nor interaction with host culture is avoided (Berry, 2009). Berry further notes that integration is only possible when the dominant society is open and inclusive of foreigners. This has significant implications for this study, meaning the attitudes of the local Americans must be examined to better understand the process of adaptation of East Asian students into rural American environment.

Moving away from the filed of psychology, in the field of education Gebhard describes the phases of students' adaptation being consistent of: 1) getting ready to leave, 2) initial experiences, 3) increasing interaction 4) culture shock, and 5) adaptation (Gebhard, 2010). The students go through the phases in a non-linear way and often skip a phase and go back to a previous phase. The five phases of cultural adjustment as constructed in this study follows four phases proposed by Gebhard, and the fifth phase of reverse culture shock was added. Gebhard has gathered data for more than 20 years on the international students in the U.S., after which he published the book in 2010 on the experiences of various international students in the U.S. Unlike the acculturation models that are based on quantitative data, Gebhard focused on the feelings and experiences of individuals from various countries. International students unlike other sojourners face unique challenges in the academic settings. These challenges are intertwined with interaction with classmates and professors, language difficulties, and educational system differences with native culture. Challenges in the social setting consist of the toggle war between the desire of social support from nationals from similar countries, and the willingness to integrate into the American culture through interaction with American students. Overall, as suggested by Oberg (1960), feelings and cultural adjustment of international students rely heavily on their interactions and communication with the people around them.

Experiences of students during the five stages of adjustment are highly varied and the transitioning through the phases is non-linear. In this study the *first phase* consists of getting ready to leave, and is often accompanied by excitement, anxiety, sadness, and is tied with the accumulation of expectations (Burgoon & Hubbard, 2005). The first stage of adjustment starts long before the students ever board the plane, but was not included in some of the earlier mentioned studies. Some students' dream of going abroad since childhood, and their impressions, expectations, and dreams play a major role in the experience they will have. Contrary to the dreamers, some students go abroad almost against their will. For example, Gebhard (2010) shares a narrative that describes a male student holding back his tears, with no excitement for his journey. The student was anxious, nervous, and with a shaking voice, he yelled to his six siblings that he will go to the U.S. and send them money soon. For Asian students especially, the social responsibility left at home can be a major concern. Now with Facebook, QQ, line and WeChat, we are more connected than ever, and keeping up appearances is as important as ever. Some Chinese parents might expect their children to make enormous amount of money upon graduation. The Japanese might expect the Japanese students to be unchanging, and remain faithful to the Japanese mentality accusing the Japanese student abroad of becoming "Americanized". During the pre-departure stage, students often feel an array of feeling, from sadness to ecstatic, nervous, and anxious as described by Gebhard, but the feelings and expectations of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean students have about their journey to the rural U.S. is still unknown.

The second phase is of initial experiences and increased interaction, based on previous research this is the honeymoon stage and it is usually filled with elation, gratitude, fear, excitement, frustration and confusion, as well as happiness. This phase which are students having

changed their physical location, started consuming the local food, and are now experiencing their numerous firsts. Like the first time riding in a subway, first time going to class, listening to a lecture, or going to a party. The majority of international students usually go through an international student orientation, or some other kind of orientation. Some research indicates that anxiety about English ability can decrease during this stage. Kie Kawauchi (2006) conducted a study that addressed the anxiety the Japanese students felt associated with studying abroad, making a direct inquiry into the problems of cultural adjustment, and pointing to the reduction of anxiety as one of the key measures of success. According to the results, 80% of the Japanese students adjusted to using English within two weeks; not because of the English language improvement but due to the reduction in anxiety (Kawaguchi, 2006). This is followed immediately by increased interactions and challenges, as the interaction with host culture increases numerous everyday encounters can overwhelm international students. As Gebhard describes it "Many students start to feel inundated by the multitude of small, everyday interactions, many of which are beyond the students' awareness" (Gebhard, 2010, p. 43). Due to the change in social cues in their new social settings, the student can feel strong discomfort without realizing the reason behind it. For example, a Japanese student due to cultural norms in Japan will not ask for a second helping during dinner, even when starved (Gebhard, 2010). Gebhard describes the case of a student losing a lot of weight when instructed to "help yourself" during dinner. In Japan when offered something the first time, the polite thing to do is to decline, because the norm is for the person proposing to ask again a few more times and to insist you eat more food, while in the U.S., the exchange ends with the first "no thank you". This stage is usually accompanied by a feeling of uncomforted, misunderstanding, fear of speaking, and increased awareness about certain differences in social cues. The first time experiences for East

Asian students arriving to metropolitan cities can be considerably different in rural areas. These first time experiences are described in this section.

In the *third phase* is culture shock. Although it can occur at any time, it is often caused by the increased interactions during the third phase. Culture shock is commonly accompanied by a feeling of uncertainty regarding social norms, loneliness, and isolation. It is experienced in the U.S. from noticing the differences and confronting expectations. Culture shock is the stressful feelings triggered by social difficulties international students experience in the host culture. Often the students anticipated some discomfort in their adaptation to the new environment, but not the extent of which it occurred. Furthermore, there are challenges in micro-behaviors described by Hall (1966) in nonverbal cues and personal distance, which often act as guide to human behavior varying across cultures. Signs of culture shock include anxiety, homesickness, helplessness, boredom, depression, fatigue, confusion, self-doubt, weeping, paranoia, and physical ailments (Gebhard, 2010). The U.S. is highly diverse and the interactions one might have with Americans in Los Angeles can be very different from interactions with Americans from small cities. This makes it important to understand the way relationships develop and what causes culture shock in rural areas.

The fourth phase consists of adaptation, integration in the constant process of negotiation. Few sojourners reach assimilation, as they are in the U.S. only temporarily. Students can conform to host culture expectations, resulting in feeling confident, self-assured and an increase in self-esteem. However, not all of the students reach the stage of integration, even though most students might be able to adapt to the local culture. The fourth stage is the reaction to the culture shock, or general way students choose to adapt to the host culture. Some might choose to distance themselves from the local population and adapt to the U.S. using their co-ethnic social

group. While others in negotiating between their home cultural values and host cultural values can lean more toward host values, choosing to associate more with local students and integrate into the local community becoming a part of it instead of being isolated.

The last stage is the reverse culture shock or re-adaptation to home culture. This second culture shock is upon return to the native country, and is described as even more severe, particularly for Asian students. They are faced with the reconstruction of their identities and their roles. An example of this can be seen in a story presented by Gebhard (2010) detailing how a Japanese female student, who has achieved independence and equal treatment, was asked to do menial tasks and serve tea when she returned to Japan, and started working. However, there is some good news, too. A Japanese scholar Nakagawa (2013), who researched the cultural adjustment of Japanese students in the U.S., looked into the effects of studying abroad on the identity of the Japanese students upon their return. In her finding she found that studying abroad helped students increase their self-esteem and confidence once they returned (Nakagawa, 2013). Reverse culture shock is often not included in the studies of sojourners adjustment due to the difficulty in getting data, and often not knowing how long international students will stay in the U.S. After understanding the stages of cultural adjustment, it is also important to comprehend what factors in the literature have shown to influence cultural adaptation.

2.2. Research on Factors Affecting Cultural-Adaptation

There is a plethora of research on the phenomena of adaptation as it is a common necessity in our daily lives, making reviewing the literature on adaptation in any one field in one lifetime a difficult if not an impossible mission. Adaptation to foreign countries of various sojourners both in business and academia, have been thoroughly researched. However, as this review will demonstrate majority of the studies review the various processes of adjustment and

21

possible variables that affect cultural adaptation, but the two biggest factors are too often ignored. The argument is that the most crucial factors are the home culture and host culture, which makes it necessary to explore the differences between each of the sojourners country of origin and the local host environment. There are numerous quantitative and qualitative studies done. Only the major works that showed to pertain to Asian students are explored in this section. Only factors that were found to influence cultural adaptation in numerous studies are explored. Therefore, factors that were suggested to be influential by one or two studies were omitted.

2.2.1. Multicultural Personality

As the largest part of research done on assimilation and cultural adjustment is done in the field of psychology, unsurprisingly, personality is said to be one of the predictive factors of cultural adjustment. The effect of personality on cultural adjustment is of particular interest in its application not only in academia, but also in business. Identifying personality traits of managers and employees that can effectively adapt and strive in a foreign environment is a holy grail for many researchers. In the past, some researchers suggested that personality scales could be used to predict the success of sojourners abroad, but surveys for the Big Five were deemed too broad (Hough, 1992). Five personality characteristics were identified to be related specifically with successful adaptation: cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, flexibility, and social initiative (Van Der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Labeled as multicultural personality (referred to hereafter as MP), these characteristics are said to be highly predictive of a person's ability to adapt to a new environment. Cultural empathy, also known as the sojourners' sensitivity, is the person's interest in others, and ability to understand them (Ruben, 1976). It is also described as empathy toward the nationals of the host nation (Van Oudenhoven & Van Der Zee, 2002). Open-mindedness refers to being unprejudiced and open toward different cultural

norms and values. Interest in the host culture and its people is a major factor, being open-minded is correlated with success in adjustment according to various scholars (Hammer, Gudykunst, and Wiseman, 1979; Van Oudenhoven & Van Der Zee, 2002). Emotional stability is the ability to stay calm in stressful situations and not show strong emotions. This includes the capacity to deal with stress that according to Abe and Wiseman (1983) is a vital skill. Flexibility, is the ability to adjust to a situation, and includes learning from mistakes, changing behavior when necessary, as well as learning from new experiences in the host country (Van Oudenhoven & Van Der Zee, 2002). Furham and Bochner (1986) firstly mentioned and stressed the necessity of sojourners to develop new social skills to fit in. The social initiative is the inclination to be active in social situations and take the first steps. The success of adjustment in testing MP was measured by examining academic performance, overall well-being, and social interaction. Multicultural personality was shown to be an accurate predictor of the successful adjustment of international students in this study. MP was then tested for its effectiveness among Asian students (n=330), in mid-western universities in the U.S. by Lee and Cifty (2014). The results showed MP was indeed associated with socio-cultural adjustment (Lee & Cifty, 2014). Kim (1988) in constructing the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation also includes open/resilient personality as a factor influencing adaptation.

When all other conditions are equal, an individual with high MP will adapt better than a sojourner who is close-minded, shows no initiative, and is emotionally unstable. However, considering the context is also very important. No matter how empathetic, open-minded, and a flexible one is, the host environment plays a major role in adaptation. In rural areas the local people might have no interest in foreigners, or worse, have a negative prejudice against Asians. If this is the case, then regardless of how much a sojourner tries to initiate contact, he or she

23

might not be able to adjust. Another factor that is not considered by MP is the sojourner's motivation for coming abroad, and the level of confidence they have to succeed overseas.

2.2.2. Self-Efficacy and Motivation

Self-efficacy is the person's beliefs in his or her ability to succeed or accomplish a set of goals. Academic self-efficacy was a main concern of many studies done on academic adaptation of student sojourners (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Differences in self-efficacy were shown to exist between collective and individualistic societies (Klassen, 2004).

Many studies were done of self-efficacy among Asian and non-Asian students indicating the differences among the groups (Klassen, 2004). Klassen reviewed twenty studies and concluded that self-efficacy is not always an accurate predictor of performance among collectivist groups, instead it reflects, "Differing construal of self" (Klassen, 2004, p. 205). Contrary to the results of Klassen, other previous research suggests that international students with higher levels of academic efficacy are more successful academically (Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Oisecco, 2002). Watters (1999) also confirmed that self-efficacy was one of the internal variables that was strongly associated with college adjustment. In a recent study on Asian students' adaptation to the U.S. academic efficacy, self-efficacy was shown to be a mediating factor of socio-cultural adaptation (Lee & Cifty, 2014). These studies indicate that the construct of self-efficacy among Asian and non-Asian sojourners is far more complex, and is tied to the idea of self, and the construal of self is dependent on cultural background, but the cultural background is different among various East Asian countries, and cannot be grouped together in one category of Asian culture.

Looking at research on the motivations effect on cultural adjustment, the results suggest a possible relation. A study done on Asian international students' cross-cultural adaptation by Yu

(2013), demonstrated that integrative motivation affected competence in communication and played a role in academic adaptation (Yu, 2013). The results further show that academic adaptation acts as a predictor for social adaptation as well as their persistence. Another extensive study done on the adaptation of Chinese students studying abroad demonstrated that self-determined motivation to study abroad is more beneficial than other types of motivation (Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman, & Playford, 2007). The persistence and motivation of the students' affects their academic adaptation, what often is not taken into consideration is the educational background of the students. For example the moral education is no longer part of American education system, but it still is part of Chinese curricular. The moral values of working hard, self-improvement, and reflection on self can also influence the motivation of the students. Home and formal educations as well as cultural values are not the same among East Asian countries, but all can affect motivation to study. This makes it once again important to differentiate the factors that affect students from China versus Japan or Korea.

2.2.3. Communication and Language

It has been commonly noted that the English language proficiency plays a major role in international students' adaptation to the U.S., it also affects their academic success and social interactions (Fletcher & Stren, 1989; Hsu, 2011; Huang, 2006; Kim , 2006; Lee, 2007; Trice, 2004). In a study done by Ee Lin Lee (2007), the results confirmed that East Asian students' self-perceived English ability, and fear of negative evaluation, was significantly correlated with oral participation. Lee argues that linguistic factors influence oral participation more than cultural factors, and this was supported by consequent research on East Asian students (Kim, 2006). In particular, whole-class discussions and were most challenging for Asian international students (Kim, 2006). This is consistent with the results from previous studies (Perrucci & Hu, 1995)

which showed that other international students often had more similarities in learning with American students, and students from Western and Asian cultures were significantly different in English learning and communication. Hsu (2011) in his study of international students' sociocultural transition, he also found supporting evidence that Asian students, particularly, experience difficulty in class discussions, supporting Kim's (2006) conclusion. It can be questioned how language and culture can be separated, but putting aside the question of the relationship between language and culture, linguistically the native language will affect the acquisition of the second language. For example, students from Japan due to Japanese language not having the sound "L" might have more difficulty with English words containing that sound compared to students from China. Therefore, even in linguistic terms of learning English the country of origin plays an important role.

The majority of the literature on the problems of Asian students in the U.S. point to language ability (Lin, 2002; Liu, 2001; Parker, 1999: Wan, 2001). The European students are less stressed about the language, but had more difficulties associated with being apart from family, while the students from Asia have more problems with language, and find it to be very hard when it came to making new friends. Fritz et.al point out "*Asian students may feel more anxiety and pressure because their failure is not perceived as an individual one, but rather implicates their whole family, since Asian culture is of collectivist nature compared to the more individualistic nature dominant in North American and European cultures*" (Fritz, Chin, & DeMarinis, 2008, p. 251). Other studies also have consistently shown Asian students struggling more than European students with language ability as well as shared cultural understanding (Trice, 2004; Zhang & Dixon, 2001). However, it is not rudimentary English fluency that is suggested to be the problem, but instead it is the academic language that poses a challenge

(Gebhard, 2012). The complications that stem from academic language difficulties include not understanding professors' expectations, the inability to express themselves in essay exams and oral presentations, and the limiting interactions with fellow classmates during class discussions (Coward, 2003; Gebhard, 2010; Han, 2007; Huang, 2006; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011), all of which can lead to high levels of anxiety and stress. Another obstacle that international students face is the differences in communication styles and the unfamiliarity with American social norms (Ingman, 2003; Lee, Kang, & Yum, 2005; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). The differences are profound in the communication styles of Japanese and Americans of the direct versus indirect messages being interpreted based on a different set of standards. Furthermore, communication apprehension also varies widely between Japanese and Americans. The Japanese students scored significantly higher on the communication apprehension, results suggest a possibility of low levels of communication apprehension to correlate with unfavorable social perception (Pryor, Butler, & Boehringer, 2005). The communication influences the perception of the interaction, and is indispensable for mutual understanding. In academic settings, Asian students report the common problem of participating in discussions and group work. Counter-intuitively students from collective cultures dread group work in the U.S. due to the nature of the interactions. I have talked to many students from Asia studying in the U.S. and the majority, no matter if they have been in the U.S. for one month or five years, prefer to work on a project alone rather than in a group (for further descriptions see Coward, 2003). Gebhard (2010) described an instance of how an international student felt left out due to the professors' style of teaching. The student kept raising his hand during the class discussion to be called on; however, other students just yelled out their answers. The student continued to have his hand raised, but felt as if on purpose, the professor never called on him. This kind of interactions in class settings

elicits the feeling of alienation, loneliness and frustration. In Asia, waiting your turn patiently is embedded into the psyche of children from a young age, and not showing any disrespect to teachers is another fundamental part of the Confucius ideology. Chen (1992) looking at the cultural shock as an aspect of cross-cultural adjustment and its effect on communication adaptability showed that there is a positive relationship amid communication adaptability, interaction involvement, and coping ability (Chen, 1992). The study was done using data from 142 international students studying in the U.S. In this study, the author set the goal to look at the effects of communication adaptability and interaction involvement on cross-cultural adjustment (Chen, 1992). This study provides a different perspective on adjustment, and unlike most of the studies that categorize it into psychological and sociocultural adjustment, "*Sojourners with abilities of communication adaptability and interaction involvement are less likely to encounter social difficulties when sojourning in the host culture. No variable was shown to predict the public rituals dimension.*" (Chen, 1992, p. 37). A study showed that adaptation and social decentering were related to stress, while communication effectiveness was related to effectiveness in managing stress (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). This study explores the intercultural communication competence (hereafter referred to as ICC) and the stress of international students as well as their ways of handling stress. ICC was defined to include: communication effectiveness, adaptation, social integration, language competence, knowledge of the host culture, and social decentering (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). Results showed that the reported adaptation and social decentering were related to stress, while the communication effectiveness was linked to the effectiveness in handling stress. This study focuses on international students from various nations and gives insight into both the stress and the communication patterns of international students. It adds to the argument of how effective communication is key for the adjustment of

international students, but ignores that communication is a two-way process, overlooking the need for American students to also need to learn to effectively communicate with the international students. This and previously listed studies show the importance of communication and proper strategies to improve the quality of interactions between the international students and local populations. The communication processes vary among East Asian countries, just as humor.

Gebhard suggests that humor is one of the best strategies to effectively adjust to host culture, followed by optimism, observation and behavior matching, reflection on behavior, and seeking support among the American university community (Gebhard, 2010). In his observation of international students for over twenty years, he concluded that students, who use these coping techniques with the arising challenges of cultural adjustment, have shown to adapt more easily to their new environment.

Overall, the literature suggests that the actions that the Asian students can take to improve the process of their adjustment are increasing the frequency of interactions with the local population, enhancing the quality of these interactions by working on improving communication skills and staying positive, using self-monitoring and reflection. Using these strategies is suggested to help students to improve their study abroad experience. Another strategy is to avoid the behaviors that inhibiting adaptation.

When comparing the stress of international and local students, international students were significantly less satisfied with their social lives, and reported having more stress compared to the local students (Furnham & Trezise, 1983). Numerous behaviors act as an obstacle to adaptation. Chen's study looking at the relationship between the dimensions and components of intercultural communication competence showed a significant association among self-

consciousness, self-disclosure, communication adaptability, social situations, and interaction management (Chen, 1989). The dimensions of cultural awareness were only significantly correlated with communication responsiveness, meaning significant relationships only exist between cultural awareness and communication skills (Chen, 1989). Looking at RIBAI (which includes respect, empathy, relational roles, social anxiety, tolerance of ambiguity and so forth), results suggest significantly positive relationships between the display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, ambiguity tolerance, and communication competence (Chen, 1989). The results also found some gender differences. However, the language and communication skills are learned through interactions, and are highly dependent on the level of interactions with other American students. In accordance to the above-mentioned studies, this study will also look at the communication styles, but focus on the differences in the styles of communication between Japanese, Chinese and Korean students during their process of adaptation to the U.S.

2.2.4. Social Interactions and Social Support

In the process of adjustment, the interactions and social support the students receive is a major factor in how well they adjust to their new environment, which has been demonstrated in previous studies (Adelman, 1988; Chavajay, 2013; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004, Watters, 1999). Loneliness was shown to be a negative predictor of sociocultural adaptation as well as psychological adaptation (Wang & Sun, 2009). Furthermore, recent research done in the area of social interactions demonstrates that interaction with more people helps students cope with their process of adjustment (Miyazaki, Bodenhorn, Zalaquett, & Ng, 2008). This does not only include the communication with family and friends back home, but also interactions with the local population as a key contributing factor to the students' adjustment

to the host culture. Numerous studies show this to be true; the more frequently the international students interact with friends from the host country the better they adjust (Furnham, & Bochner, 1986; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Perkins, 1977). For example, the classic study by Sellitz and Hook (1962) showed that international students felt a stronger connection to the United States if they have at least one close American friend. The results of a more recent study also suggest that social support available to international students, even today, plays a major role in making the adjustment to a new cultural context (Chavajay, 2013, Watters, 1999). Findings also suggest that age is an important factor, and younger international students perceived getting more support from others compared to older students (Chavajay, 2013). This suggests that it is important to differentiate the help that graduate students might need from much younger undergraduate international students. Looking at how social support affects East Asian students in a study done by Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002), results suggest that extracurricular activities are positively related to Japanese student experiences in the U.S. through increasing life satisfaction as well as better academic performance.

Another study showed that interaction with the host nationals and cross-cultural self-efficacy were related to Asian students' successful sociocultural adjustment, however, ethnic identity was negatively correlated with contact with host nationals (Li and Glasser, 2005). Li and Glaser focus on Asian students specifically, and on the theoretical framework of social learning cognition. Instead of focusing on the psychological adjustment, they looked at the sociocultural adjustment. In their study sociocultural adjustment involves communication competency, understanding the body language of native populations, as well as being able to perform the ritualized routines (greetings, leaving, making requests, and so on.). The ability to learn and apply the new cultural knowledge affected the adjustment process (Li & Gasser, 2005).

A study on Chinese exchange students done in Canada showed that greater contact with the local population was correlated with less stress, and stress has been demonstrated to be correlated with self-rating and adjustment (Berry, et. al. 1987). Westwood and Barker (1990) also suggest that interaction with local students increases academic achievement and adaptation. They looked at the peer-pairing program, which proved to be effective, suggesting that students who had a local student as their pair did better academically. Zimmermann conducted a study in a mid-western medium sized university where the communication competence of international students was explored in relation to their adaptation to the university (Zimmermann, 1995). Zimmermann looked into the affective and behavioral dimensions of intercultural communication. The most important factor was the perceived frequencies of interactions with American students. Interestingly, the results showed that the length of the stay was not related to the adjustment of international students to the U.S. All of the above studies show that increasing the interactions with local populations, no matter if it is through tutoring, extracurricular activities, or just talking, positively affect the process of adjustment. There is also an emerging pattern of strategies in communication influencing the adjustment.

Furthermore, there are non-verbal communication differences and misperceptions due to the differences in perceptions. Looking at Japanese and Caucasians, a study found their perceived dominance, with both sex and ethnicity being related to the observers' judgment on dominance and affiliation (Hess, Blairy, & Kleck, 2000). Personal space differences as described by Hall (Hall, 1966), vary across culture in particular between highly populated countries like China and Japan compared to the U.S. Eye contact and body language varies widely. In Japan, direct eye contact is viewed as impolite and challenging, while in the U.S., constant avoidance of eye contact might be perceived as rude. A study on the influence of facial emotion displays,

gender, and ethnicity on judgments of dominance and affiliation was done by Hess et.al. (2000).This study looks at Japanese and Caucasians and their perceived dominance. Both sex and ethnicity were related to observers' judgment on dominance and affiliation (Hess, Blairy, & Kleck, 2000). This study focuses on non-verbal communication; particularly on how facial emotion displays, gender and ethnicity affect judgment of dominance and affiliation showing variance in the judgment based on the ethnicity of individuals.

One study that is closely related to the qualitative inquiry into the contributing and inhibiting factors of cultural adaptation was done by Hsu (2011). The results suggest that Asian students have limited time to interact with local people, or to explore American culture (Hsu, 2011). This study further demonstrates that Asian students often chose to adapt to their lives in the U.S. without much interaction with American students. The study reported Asian students being more comfortable with other international students compared to Americans. Although this study is very similar to the research undertaken by the author, there is little explanation as to why there is limited interaction between American and Asian students. It is not clear why it is more comfortable to be with co-nationals or other international students, while many students arrive to the U.S. in hopes to interact with Americans.

2.3. Research on adaptation differentiating country of origin

It has been noted that the process of cultural adjustment is highly dependent on the country of origin and the country of settlement (Berry, 1997). Cultural differences in social interactions during the adjustment of Asian students are evident through the application of communication theories such as interaction adaptation theory (IAT) and expectancy violations theory. Both theories pertain to expectations. The first one deals with violations of expected behavior, including verbal and non-verbal, while IAT looks at expectations in interactions

expanding into social norms. According to EVT there are predictive and prescriptive expectations, however the relationship between the behavior frequencies and its evaluation is not linear. Asian students in the U.S. are from collectivist cultures such as China and Japan, and may expect greater verbal indirectness, politeness, and non-immediacy, than individualistic cultures such as the U.S., Canada and Australia (Burgoon et. al., 2005). The Japanese have a greater attritional confidence about how strangers from their own and disparate cultures will behave, than do North Americans (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984). Moreover, there are many examples of variances in expectations between Americans and nationals of other countries, as well as positive and negative consequences, including the stereotypes of Americans in Asia that are formed through images on television and through interaction with the few foreigners that are in Asia. These cultural differences that are unique to Asian cultures also contribute to difficulties in adjustment. Gudykunst and Nishida (2001) looked over the previous research done on collective and individualistic levels in communication, focusing on how it affects communication. Looking at the group vs. individual precedence, impact the kind of information that is emphasized in the culture. For Japanese culture, the focus is on contextualizing, while other collective cultures emphasize different cultural constructs. There are differences in the social norms of self-disclosure between Western and Eastern cultures, and overall self-presentation differences between Asian and Westerners have been researched in depth by (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasokkunkit, 1997; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001). Possible effects of uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension (Hofstede, 1980) in communication and interactions during the adjustment of international students, were explored along with other factors by Nishida showed that for the Japanese students only the ambiguity tolerance was correlated with culture shock, and speaking and listening skills were correlated with interaction effectiveness (Nishida, 1985).

When people need to adapt to a new environment, the most dominant factors are stemming from what they need to do to adjust. Therefore, I would like to argue that more than factors such as personality, motivation etc., it is the differences between the home and host environment that play a major role in cultural adjustment. It is easier to adjust to moving to a neighboring city, than it is to adapt to life across the world. Furthermore, it has been noted by numerous scholars that the cultural values strongly affect foreign students' adaptation, and various differences among different international student groups have been found (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). In the majority of the studies described in the previous sections, the students from Asia are grouped together. However, students from India have very different values than students in Japan or China. Even studies that look at the Far East often group the data of Japanese, Chinese and Korean students together into one category. It is clear that students from Japan, China and Korea have different values, absolutely different ideology, education and experiences, which influence their adjustment to the U.S. Another factor that was not explored is the way these students adapt to rural areas than the major cities. Students coming from populated areas in Asia to the countryside of the U.S. are bound to have very different experiences. This section will first look at the studies done on the adjustment of Chinese, Japanese and Korean students as separate groups, followed by the limited research done on the adjustment to rural and urban areas of the U.S.

2.3.1. Japanese Students

Looking at the studies on Japanese students difficulties in American colleges there are numerous studies done in the 1990s and 1980s (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Ito, 2003; Lebra, 1976; Nakane, 1970; Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 1998; Watanabe, 1993). One study looked at Japanese sojourners in American universities that provided numerous insights into the

phenomenon of Japanese students adjusting to life in the U.S. The majority of the students were highly satisfied with their stay in the U.S., and only 14 percent were unable to get along with Americans. Japanese students perceived their ability to deal with stress related to the capacity to deal with different societal systems (Abe & Wiseman, 1983). The results also supported the previous finding of Japanese students being perceived as more empathetic and reflective, while Americans are perceived more frank and open.

A study done by Kimura (2009) used Ericson theoretical framework, and concluded as a result of the study abroad, the Japanese students became more positive, and reconfirmed self-identity. Results also showed that self-confidence and motivation increased during the study abroad and remained high after their return. Another study done by Takeda (2009), looked at specific perceived differences and feeling of Japanese students between studying in Japan and studying in the U.S., which would prove to be very helpful in educating future students on what to expect in the country of destination compared to the home country. In this study, Japanese students gave examples of classroom behavior differences between Japanese students and U.S. students, such as playing on their cell phone, and their attitude toward attending class (Takeda, 2009). Japanese students perceived Americans to both study and play hard, actively use self-appeal to get good grades, and ask many questions in class. In the U.S., there were many electives and undecided majors (Takeda, 2009), and it was easy to change majors, which some of the Japanese students said was a better alternative to the rigid Japanese system (Takeda, 2009). There is more freedom, but it is accompanied by a lot of responsibility for their academic performance. Japanese students perceived teachers' evaluation forms to give the teachers a lot of pressure to perform well. Takeda concluded that American universities made students think about the point and goal of university studies for themselves and each student had to take that

responsibility, with the support and advice of an Academic Advisor. Takeda's research reflects the views of Japanese students which might be a bit naïve, as they ignore the darker side of the American education system, which includes the low university graduation rates and large amounts of debt that many Americans incur.

A few more recent extensive studies, done by Japanese scholars, into the Japanese students' adjustment to the U.S. include research of Tanaka and Takahama (2013). They provide powerful insight on what could be done by Japanese students prior to departure to increase their success abroad. In their most recent study, authors point to the importance of learning social skills as part of the preparations to go to the U.S. (Tanaka & Takahama, 2013) However, their findings were based on only two participants. In 2010, they did a study on the improvement of social skills to live in America by providing the students with an opportunity to do roleplaying with American people. They found roleplaying to be effective in increasing social skills. The influential factor of success was the students' attitude (Takahama & Tanaka, 2010).

A study on Japanese students showed that participation in extracurricular activities is related to a more positive assessment of the studying abroad experience as well as better academic performance (Toyokawa, & Toyokawa, 2002). Their findings showed that being active in extracurricular activities was positively correlated with academic performance in the case of Japanese students studying in the U.S. Taking part in school organizations and spending a lot of time socializing made the students report an overall positive experience. The psychological test they performed looked into the feelings of the students, and the frequency of interactions with American students was higher for students who participated in extracurricular activities. This is another study that uses psychological instruments of inquiry into the factors influencing the adjustment of Japanese students to university life in the U.S. This study supports the theory that

the frequency of interaction with American students increases the positive assessment of international students experience in the U.S.

Looking into more descriptive studies addressing the experiences of Japanese students in the U.S., a recent in-depth qualitative study was undertaken by Izumi (2010), with profound results in self-identity, Japanese student perceptions, and communication with American students. Japanese students described Americans as unfriendly and difficult to understand. The results further indicate that Japanese students struggle to communicate with American students because of limited common conversational topics (Izumi, 2010). Izumi concluded that there was a significant discrepancy between how Japanese students wanted to present themselves versus how they thought Americans perceived them. The Japanese students believed that Americans did not perceive them as intelligent and socially attractive as the Japanese students believed themselves to be (Izumi, 2010). In another in-depth qualitative study of Japanese graduate students in American classrooms Yamashita states: *"Merely acquiring English-speaking ability alone does not help prepare Japanese students for participating in class discussions or writing qualified academic papers. Cultural differences, learning style differences, and language barriers, are all related to one another."* (Yamashita, 2009, p. 13). The results of the study found a number of cultural differences that affected the Japanese students' adjustment to the U.S. Such as individualistic versus collectivistic, direct versus indirect communication, small versus large power distance, task-orientation versus relationship-orientation, and weak uncertainty avoidance versus strong uncertainty avoidance (Yamashita, 2009, p. 220).

A study by Ito (2003) that explored the cultural adjustment of Japanese students to San Francisco Bay Area through qualitative inquiry identified five processes of adjustment they went through: building the dream, discovering, surviving, overcoming obstacles, and reflecting on the

journey. This study showed that the U-Curve hypothesis was only partially supported, and revealed that Japanese students prefer to be friends with other Japanese or Asian students, rather than local American students. According to Ito (2003), "*Large sociocultural differences between Americans and Japanese are likely to impose difficulties in the adjustment of Japanese international students in the U.S., and thus become a source of adjustment stress. Japanese international students who grew up depending on others and defining themselves in the contexts familiar to them therefore must adjust into American culture that encourages individualism and independence.*" (Ito, 2003, p.37).

The above-described studies focus on Japanese students and were mostly done in large research universities. The problems of communicating with Americans were at time attributed to the cultural differences, such as collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Yamashita, 2009). These are the dimensions of Hofstede's 6-D model (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), and it might be beneficial to apply them to this study as well. The few qualitative studies that do describe the experiences of Japanese students in recent years are about graduate students, and the experiences are not contrasted with other Asian groups.

2.3.2. Chinese Students

There have been an increasing number of publications about Chinese students in the U.S. and their psychological and sociocultural adjustment. A quantitative study by Wang (2009) was consistent with the literature on Asian students in that English self-confidence, perceived cultural distance, and length of stay are positively related with sociocultural adjustment. Another study on undergraduate Chinese students concluded that the duration of residence does not affect intercultural communication apprehension, but has an effect on intercultural communication competence. Another finding of the study showed that frequency of speaking English outside of

the classroom was positively related to both intercultural communication apprehension and competence (Lin, 2012). However, this does not give any clarity on what could be distinct in the adaptation of Chinese students from other Asian groups (Wang, 2009). Kong (2014) did another qualitative study of Chinese students in the U.S. The results indicate the mediating factors of language and discuss the sense-making process. One example in the findings discusses the cultural difference in the interpretation of the word "interesting". An episode is described about the Chinese student's reaction to an incident on television. A child suggested killing Chinese people by throwing cannons to deal with American debt was followed by the response of "That is an interesting idea" by the host of Jimmy Kimmel Live. This lead to numerous protests and an apology by Jimmy, however the Chinese students in Kong's study reports frustration and understanding that the word interesting has ironic meaning, while the Chinese usually associate it with encouragement of ideas (Kong, 2014). In another qualitative study on Chinese students in the U.S. the experiences of 33 Chinese students in Kansas is explored by Wakefield (2014). These Chinese students perceived Americans as outgoing and friendly, but at the same time closed minded (Wakefield, 2014). The Chinese students further reported disappointment over friendship, communication, and cultural differences that led them to separation instead of acculturation. Wakefield concluded that Chinese students work hard on their studies and language ability, but have weak adaptation behaviors (Wakefield, 2014).

Another study found that the American students are more willing to communicate with students from China that are perceived to assimilate rather than the separated and marginalized student (Imamura & Zhang, 2014). Zhang (2015) used ethnographic approach to explore Chinese students' experience in the U.S. The findings show that after the initial adjustment, Chinese students were confronted with racial and ethnic discrimination that made them stressed, forcing

them to reorient themselves as an ethnic minority (Zhang, 2015). In another similar study, Valdez (2015) explores the experiences of international undergraduate students in the U.S. classrooms, focusing on the perceptions of Chinese students. He describes different classroom practices and the way they affect student experiences and their sense of membership, trying to find out whether they promote the integration of international students or facilitate their segregation (Valdez, 2015). The author concludes by suggesting improving critical thinking skills, intercultural communication, and cultural competence with other such recommendations. (Valdez, 2015).

Reviewing further recent literature on Chinese sojourners, one extensive qualitative study was done Xu (2002), on Chinese students' adaptation to a Midwestern American university. Finding revealed that Chinese graduate students had a lot of difficulty with language proficiency, and lacked awareness of differences between Chinese and American higher education practices (Xu, 2002). Another study by Luan (2012) also supported these findings, further adding that Chinese students had cultural-related relationship problems. In another study on Chinese students living in the U.S., results demonstrated that accumulative stress was positively related to depression (Wei, et al., 2007). It was also suggested that when Chinese students experience this stress, due to the possibility of "losing face" which might prevent them with sharing their experiences with others. Furthermore, being in the U.S. longer, adds more pressure such as increased expectations from self and others (Wei, et al., 2007). Xiao (2015) did a research on Chinese students and Korean students in a Christian university in southwest U.S. the results of this study supported previous research on the relationship of sociocultural adaptation and intercultural involvement.

2.3.3. Korean Students

Looking at studies done on Korean student adaptations to the U.S., one qualitative study is done by Green, comparing U.S. and South Korean higher education. The limitation of the study was that there were only six South Korean students interviewed (Green, 2010). Another study done by Kim, analyzes communication patterns of cross-cultural adaptation in two groups: Korean expatriates in the U.S., and American expatriates in South Korea (Kim, 2003). This study explored the associations between mental health and communication competency, interpersonal communication, as well as mass communication, using both statistical data and interviews (Kim, 2003). Another cross-cultural comparison study surveyed Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean students was done by Kim et al., This study found that Korean students showed the least motivation to go abroad, while Taiwanese were highly motivated to go abroad after graduate school. All three groups indicated the U.S. as their preferred country for a study abroad program (Kim, Guo, Wang, & Agrusa, 2007).

Another study done by Lee et al., (2004) showed that Korean students studying in Pittsburgh area, reported significantly less acculturative stress levels if they had more social support. The social support both from other Koreans and local Americans had a stress-buffering effect (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004). Looking at the academic challenges of Korean students in the U.S., a lack of participation in class, viewing professor as an absolute authority, difficulty is expressing critical thinking and avoidance of eye contact were observed by the professors (Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006). The Korean students themselves felt comfortable in large group classes, perceived academic knowledge as public domain and preferred lecture classes. These results might be similar to the observations over Japanese students, but unless compared in the same place it is difficult to say which of the East Asian students struggle more in these domeigns.

2.4. Research on Adaptation in Rural vs. Urban areas

There is very limited research on international students in the countryside, let alone Asian students in non-urban or non-research universities. There was one study on international MSW students' field placement in the countryside that discussed issues in communication, transportation, and cross-cultural competency (Zunz & Oil, 2009). But, where these students were from was not identified, and the study was done around fieldwork, not academic experiences. There are very few studies available on Asian students' adaptation in the rural U.S. Many studies do not disclose the location of the university, and only provide information about the region of the country, giving no information on whether it is rural or urban. Some studies like Cheng et. al., (1993) explicitly state that it was done in a "large metropolitan area". But, for others, it is safe to assume that the majority of the quantitative studies are done in large universities, because the surveys were sent to more than 1,000 international, or in some cases, hundreds, of just Asian students on campus. Other quantitative studies that use an online survey, do not distinguish the size or whether it is in a rural or urban area, but instead collect data across the U.S. only inquiring the region, or at times the state, of where the Asian student is located.

Overwhelmingly, there are more quantitative studies done on sojourners from Asia, because it would be tough to do a quantitative study on Asian students in a rural area because in any one university their numbers might be enough to reach statistical significance. As the rural and urban U.S. differs greatly across numerous factors, there is evidence to believe Asian students might have different experiences in Los Angeles compared to a small city in Alabama. Another problem is of measuring "successful adjustment", for example Lee and Cifty (2014) in their assessment of adjustment noted "using the transportation system", "going shopping", "understanding the local political system", and "understanding the local value system", as part of

the process of cultural adjustment. It might be difficult for Americans to adjust to daily life when relocating from urban to rural areas, or vice versa, let alone international students (Lee & Cifty, 2014). The authors also added, that getting accustomed to the local food and finding food might be difficult, this can vary widely depending on the location.

2.5. Conclusion

First, this literature review provided various explanations of cultural adjustment by looking at the phases of adaptation suggested by different scholars. From these, the framework for this study emerged to be: pre-arrival phase, initial experience phase, culture shock (or conflict) phase, adaptation/integration phase, and finally, reverse culture shock phase. These phases are a combination of various other cultural adjustment processes and are argued to be most comprehensive, but also could be labeled in many different ways. For example, the pre-arrival phase is also known as the preparation phase, and initial experience can be labeled as the entry phase, tourist phase, honeymoon, etc. It is the goal of this study to use these phases, and to see what they entail for the Chinese, Japanese and Korean students studying in the rural U.S.

Next, the literature on various factors affecting cultural adjustment across disciplines was examined. The major factors were personality, motivation, language, communication, and social support. However, few studies looked at how these differ among Asian students from different ethnic backgrounds, and few studies were done in the rural U.S.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE ON MODELS OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

In this section, dominant explanations of cultural adjustment are explored. The models presented in the first sections can be divided into four categories: general adaptation, cultural adaptations in business, cultural adaptation in academia, and culture-oriented models. Visual representations of these models are presented and explored. The problem of using these models for the purpose of this study is parochial. A more multidisciplinary approach is needed for a comprehensive understanding of sojourners experience in higher education. Interpersonal Adaptation Theory and partially the 6-D model are suggested for exploring the socio-cultural differences in the process of adaptation. However, even with these two theories, the complexity is not adequately addressed. The final section suggests using three approaches: socio-cultural, anthropological, and critical theory. It is suggested that the combination of these three is necessary for addressing the cultural differences, subjective experiences of the students with the relationship to the host environment. Critical theory puts a spotlight on the often-ignored role of both home and host institutions, as well as the experiences of sojourners as a minority and a less powerful group that might be victimized.

3.1. Visual Models of Cultural Adjustment

One of the widely known models of cultural adaptation comes from Kim's book titled "*Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*" (Kim, 1988). Kim is a highly cited scholar that explored the process of adaptation, and presented the following model to describe the factors influencing communication between the host and the foreign population. This visual representation was done to show the relationship between numerous variables during cross-cultural adjustment. Therefore, it is a network type of visual display that depicts the

relationships between themes and subthemes or categories and subcategories. This is an excellent model of cross-cultural adjustment, although it is not a complete one. One of the strengths of the model is that it captures the core elements of adjustment which are: the predisposition, host environment, and adaptation outcome. The outcome is not final and can affect the personal communication again (see Figure 2). Kim's model focuses on communication as the centerpiece of cultural adjustment. This is true as adjustment is heavily influenced by the communication and interaction with host cultures. This model further shows the interpersonal communication between ethnic groups, as well as the host group.

Figure 2. Communication Model of Cross-Cultural Adaptation
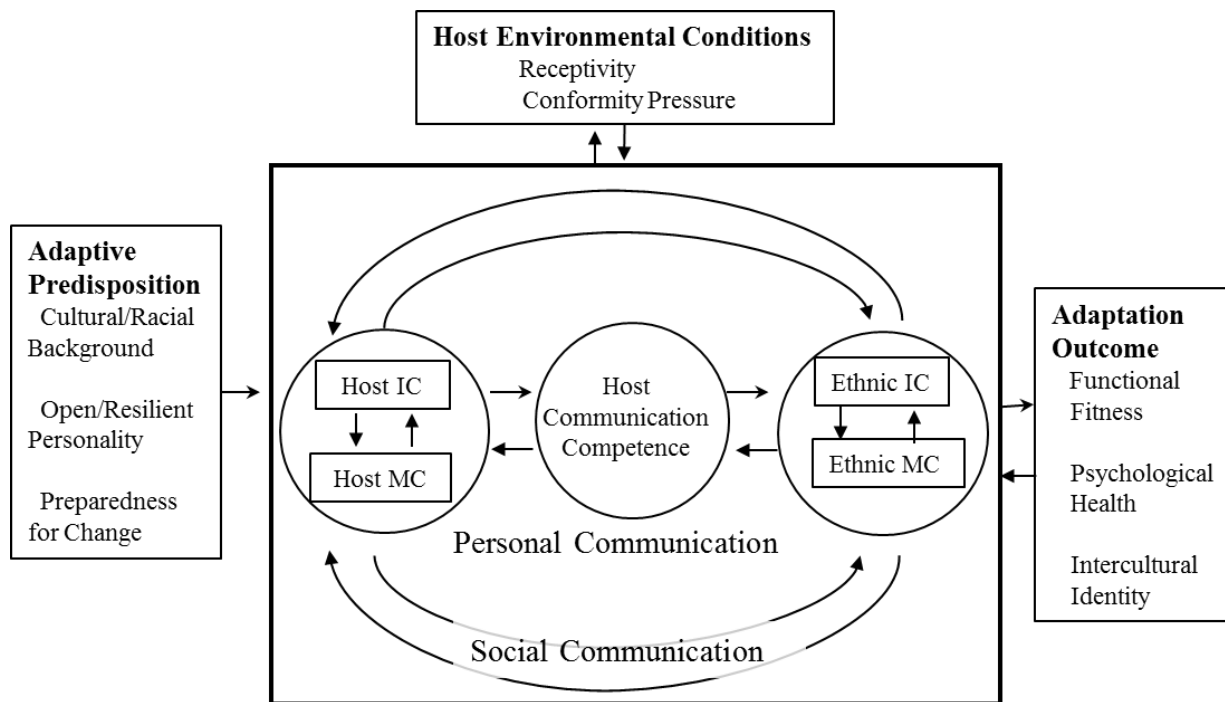
Source: p. 79 Kim Y.Y. (1988) Communication and cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory

Kim proposes another model focusing on intimacy between host and foreign individuals during the process of integration (see Figure 3). This model shows that foreign individuals integrate into host culture through forming more intimate relationships with host nationals at the cost of intimacy with the co-ethnic group. In particular, Kim's representation of the intimacy

level is helpful in making a clear visualization of the network and relationships. During the data-gathering process for this dissertation, this model was used to judge the participants' level of integration. Interviewees were asked to draw these kinds of representations of their relationships by filling in their friends' names and indicating which friends were American or co-ethnic.

Figure 3. Kims' Intimacy Model of Cultural Adaptation
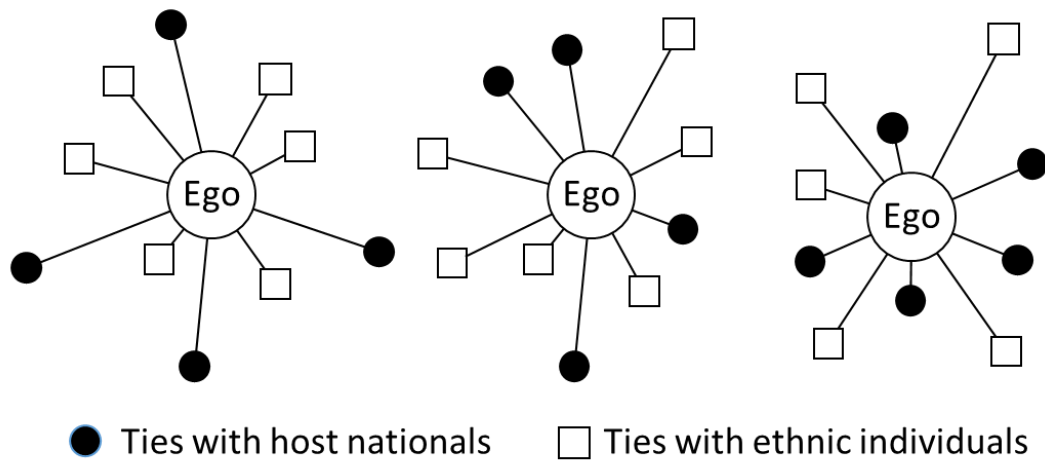
Source: p. 112 Kim Y.Y. (1988) Communication and cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory

Although this model is very effective for intercultural communication, Kim's later work suggests that it is inevitable for foreigners to give up their ethnic culture while adapting to host environment (Kim, 2001). According to Kim, this process is called deculturalization, which means it is impossible to gain something new without paying the price of losing something old (Kim, 2001, p. 51). I do not agree with Kim on this point, because acquisition of foreign languages and culture can give new insights about home culture.

The next model is from an article published by Zhou et al., (2011) "Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education". It is based on the data of Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001). This flow chart type of a visual display depicts the process

of acculturation. It illustrates the factors in the society of origin and settlement. These are

identified as social, political, economic, and cultural factors (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Acculturation Process Adapted for Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001
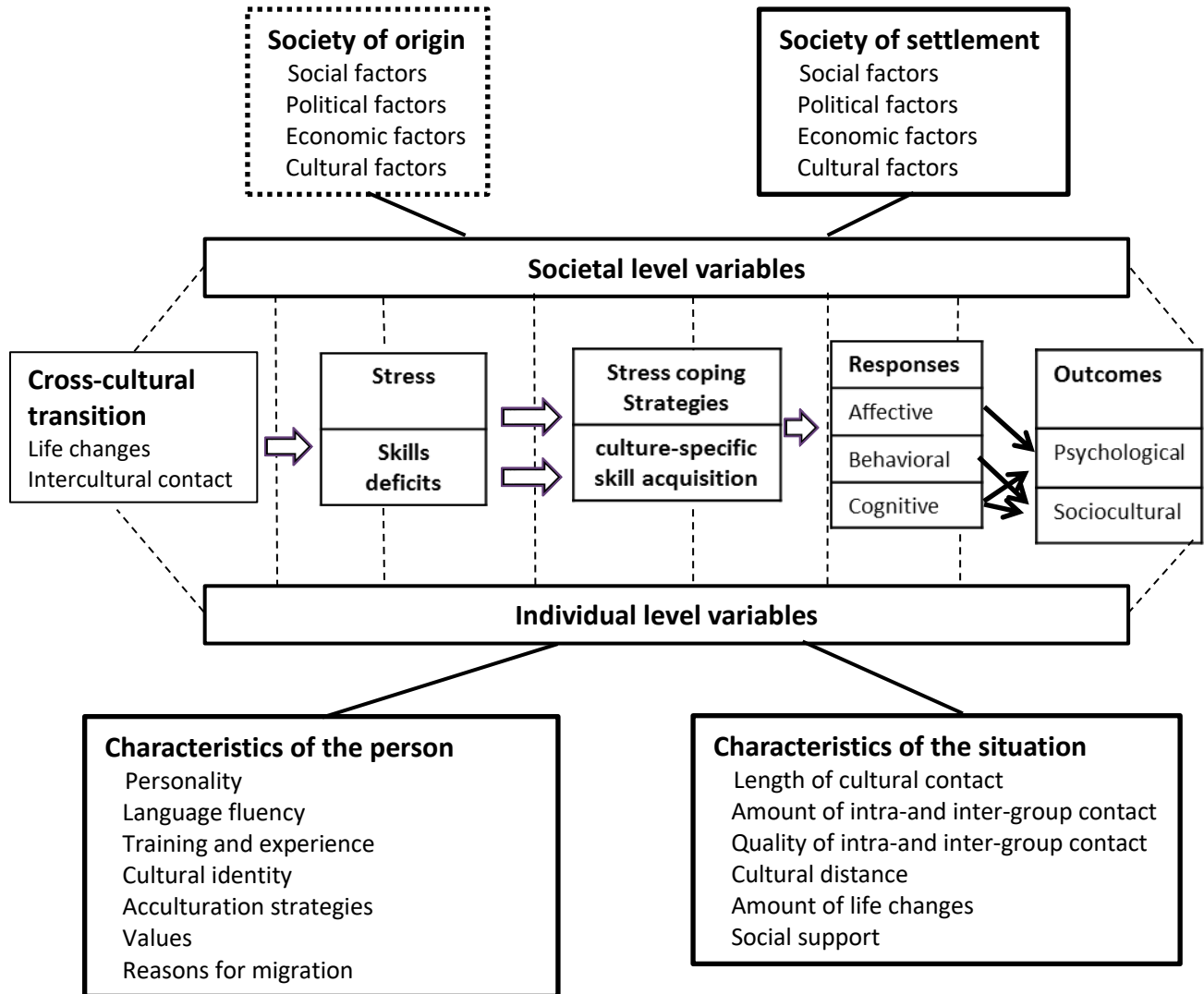
Source: p. 69 Zhou et al., (2008), Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*

The first step in the process of adaptation starts with life changes and intercultural contact,

the author labeled this as cross-cultural transition. However, it can be argued that it is not the

first step, since the whole process of adaptation is a cross-cultural transition. Second step is stress,

third step is stress coping strategies, followed by responses and outcomes. These steps are too

broad and only focus on the mental health of sojourners' without explaining the causes of stress. The figure shows that it is not only the societal level but also the individual variables that affect acculturation. This visual representation in my opinion does not effectively explain the phenomenon of acculturation. It does not include sojourners' pre-arrival expectations, or the attitude of host nationals toward foreigners. Furthermore, the outcome does not include the adaptation to the physical environment, nor the problem of sojourners' reverse culture shock.

The third model is a model of cultural adaptation in the context of organizations. This model becomes highly relevant to international students experiences abroad if the word "job" is replaced with the word "study", and instead of organization we look at it as university. This is a flow chart that not only explains the process of adjustment, but also looks at the degree of adjustment (see Figure 5). What many other models miss is the first part, in this model referred to as "Anticipatory Adjustment". The differences between the academic and working environment are the skill requirements and consequences of actions. Furthermore the role of an employee in the organization is different than the role of a student at a university. All students are equal in the universities, while there is a hierarchy for employees ranging from CEOs to janitors.

Figure 5. Framework of International Adjustment

Anticipatory Adjustment

Individual

Training | Previous Experience

Accurate Expectations

Anticipatory Adjustment

Organization

Selection Mechanisms and Criteria

In-country Adjustment

Individual

(1,2,3)Self-efficacy
(1,2,3)Relation Skills
(1,2,3)Perception Skills

Organization Socialization

Socialization Tactics
Socialization Content

Mode of Adjustment

Job
(1) Role clarity
(1) Role Discretion
(1) Role Novelty
(1) Role Conflict

Degree of adjustment

1.Work Adjustment
2. Interaction Adjustment
3. General Adjustment

Organization Culture

(1) Organization Culture Novelty
(1) Social Support
(2,3) Logistical Help

Nonwork

(2,3) Culture Novelty
(1,2,3) Family-Spouse Adjustment

Source: p. 303 Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. Academy of management review, 16(2), 291-317.

The W-curve mentioned in the literature review is a general representation of the process of cultural adjustment, where horizontal and vertical axis represents time and mood. Not all students follow this model (Figure 6). In the past studies of East Asian students, few of them were able to make American friends, and the East Asian students process of recovery involved social support from co-ethnic individuals. For some students the process of recovery was not possible, and even if recovery was achieved as Gebhard suggested many students revisited the culture shock phase (Gebhard, 2012).

Figure 6. W-Curve Adaptation Model
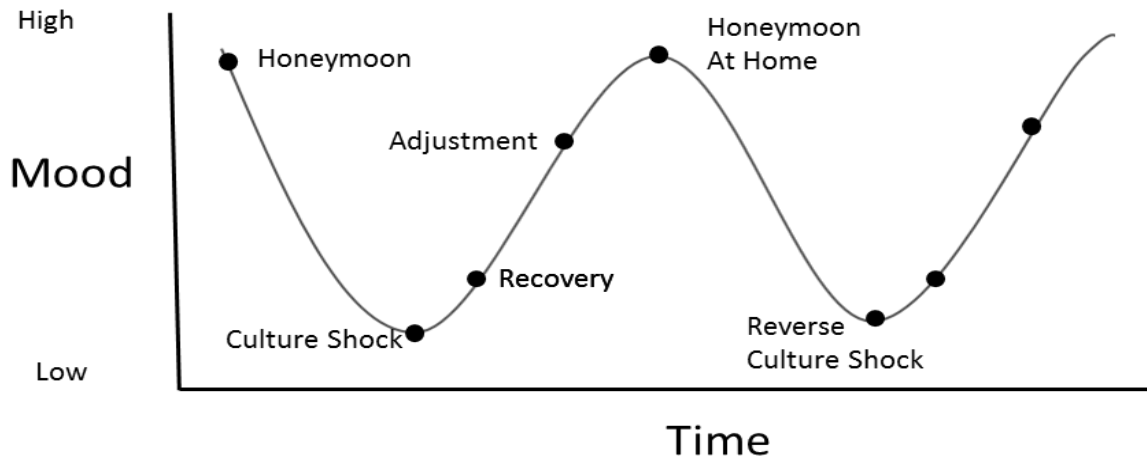
Source: Based on U curve (Oberg 1960) and extended by (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963)

Overall, other than Kim's theory, there is no attention given to intimacy in the interaction between the sojourners and their host population. Others models also lack the pre-arrival expectations of sojourners and attitudes of locals toward foreigners. Finally, another gap is the role of the institutions, whether it is a company or university, institutions play a major role on the experiences of sojourners. Kim's model is the best representation of the general phenomenon but does not account for the degree of adjustment and cultural identity. To better explain the communication and interactional behavior between sojourners' and host nationals, Interpersonal Adaptation Theory (hereafter referred to as IAT) will be used.

3.2. Interpersonal Adaptation Theory (IAT)

One of the theories germane to the study of interpersonal communication is undoubtedly Interpersonal Adaptation Theory, commonly known as Interaction Adaptation Theory, and hereafter referred to as IAT. This theory attempts to explain dyadic interactions through a formula showing that a combination of expectations, desires, and needs yields to interaction position (IP), which is "a net assessment of what is needed, anticipated, and preferred as the

dyadic interaction pattern in a situation" (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995, p. 266). To stabilize interactions individuals try to minimize the gap between predicted behavior and actual behavior. The theory predicts that if there is a gap between IP and actual behaviors, then one of the partners in the interaction will adjust their IP. This not only can minimizes the gap, but also signal to the other person to change their actual behavior. An obvious example of this can be seen in the interactions surrounding the discussion of washing dishes between husband and wife. The wife needs the husband to pitch in around the house, she desires him to do it without her saying anything, but expects that he will end up doing it once she explicitly tells him. However, if the husband comes home and goes to watch TV, and the wife tells him to wash the dishes but he says, "Do it yourself", this will create a gap between the predicted behavior and actual behavior. Now, the wife will either have to adjust her IP or the husband will have to do so, as the interaction continues IP will adjust and actual behavior can change.

This theory derived from theories and models of four distinct approaches. First, the Authors looked at the biological approaches, looking at models such as interactional synchrony, mirroring, and mimicry. These biological models show that individuals will share similar patterns that are universal and involuntary. Furthermore, these adaptation patterns have an innate basis as satisfying the needs of bonding, safety and social organization. The second approach was arousal and affect approaches, analyzing the Affiliative conflict theory (ACT), arousal-labeling theory, Markus-Kaplan and Kaplan's bi-dimensional model (BM), discrepancy-arousal theory (DAT), and dialectical model. The commonality found among these is that internal emotional and arousal states are the driving forces in people's decisions to approach or avoid others. For example, ACT states that when the stability is disturbed in an interaction, there will be pressure to compensate by restoring it intrapersonal or interpersonally. BM works similarly,

but the approach and avoidance tendencies are attributed to individuals' personality traits and attempts to predict conjoint interaction patterns through individual predispositions. DAT predicts that moderate arousal is caused by the discrepancies in expected behavior patterns, and will produce reciprocity, while high arousal is negative and causes avoidance. The dialectic model focuses on the changes in a person's behavioral patterns and the cyclical pattern poles of approach/openness and avoidance/ closeness etc. The third approach consisted of the social norm approach, which is mainly looking at: the norm of reciprocity, social exchange, and resource exchange theory, couple interaction and the "dyadic effect", as well as the communication accommodation theory. The norm of reciprocity states that people feel a social obligation to reciprocate what other people do to them. CAT states that convergence and divergence strategies are used depend on in-group and out-group status, motivation to identify with one another and other factors. Finally, the last approach is the communication and cognitive approach; the models that were used are Patterson's Sequential-Functional Model (SFM), Expectancy Violations Theory, and Cognitive-Valence Theory, Motor Mimicry (MM) revisited. SFM looks at pre-interactional and interactional factors that regulate the stability and degree of accommodation in interactions. MM shows that matching is functional and may be deliberate. EVT and CVT are a combination of abounding similar elements from the previously described models, for EVT the behavior change needs to be identified as a positive or negative violation and it predicts a number of outcomes. Based on the above theories and models, the principles of IAT were identified.

Principles of IAT

The principles that guide IAT identified by Burgoon et al. (1995) are as follows:

1. *There may be an innate pressure to adapt interaction patterns*

However, this pressure might not be comfortable for international sojourners, and students from East Asian cultures, with little knowledge of the host countries norms might not know how to adapt.

2. *At the biological level, the inherent pressures are toward entrainment and synchrony, with the exception of compensatory adjustments that ensure physical safety and comfort*

In the literature review it was demonstrated that students from Asia preferred to socialize with co-ethnic or international students, with whom it might be easier to interact and achieve synchrony.

3. *Approach or avoidance drives are not fixed or constant but cyclical due to satiation at a given pole.*

4. *At the social level, the pressure is also toward reciprocity and matching*

If the matching behavior goes against the home countries' cultural norms, then it is hard to precipitate or exhibit matching behavior for sojourners. At times, they might find it easier to avoid the dissonance caused by the pressure to match and at the same time preserve their own cultural identity.

5. *At the communication level, both reciprocity and compensation may occur.*

6. *Despite predispositions to adapt, the degree of strategic, conscious adaptation present in any situation will be limited due to: (a) individual consistency in behavioral style, (b) internal causes of adjustments, (c) poor self-monitoring or monitoring of the partner, (d) inability to adjust performance, and (e) cultural differences in communication practices and expectations.*

The effect of the cultural differences and expectations is considerable, but little is known about both American predispositions and the predisposition of Asian students before and upon arrival to the U.S.

7. *The combined biological, psychological, and social forces set up boundaries within which most interaction patterns will oscillate, producing largely matching, synchrony, and reciprocity.*

8. *Many variables may be salient moderators of interaction adaptation.*

9. *Predictions about functional complexes of behaviors should be more useful and accurate than predictions about particular behaviors viewed in isolation of the function they serve.*

Usage Over Time

More than 20 years have passed since Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman published a book called *Interpersonal Adaptation: Dyadic Interaction Patterns* where they describe the IAT theory and its origins. Though this theory is, on average, cited more often, it is included in many communication theory books, and is founded by a very influential communications scholar. There are still very few studies have tried to empirically test it. Floyed and Burgoon (1999) and Le Poire and Yoshimura (1999) both tested it empirically and published the studies. Floyed and Burgoon did one of the most extensive studies by applying IAT to an experiment to predict nonverbal expression of liking (n=96). The results of the experiment showed that when individuals desired liking from their partners, they will enact liking behaviors, otherwise they will show less liking behavior if they don't desire the same from their partners, which is in accordance with IAT. Interestingly, when a person desires to be liked they will act in a likable way regardless of expectations and received behavior. Somewhat counter intuitively, findings suggested that expressions of liking could be considered negative, rather than positive, events.

Le Poire and Yoshimura, using an experimental study design, were able to empirically test IAT by manipulating communication expectancies (pleasant/unpleasant was manipulated by telling participants the interviewer was in a good or bad mood) and the level of involvement in the actual interaction. The results were also in support of IAT and also found that the strongest desire to continue communication occurred when the participant expected an unpleasant communication, but in fact received a highly involved communication.

In 2001, White and Burgoon conducted a study about honest and deceitful conversations, using IAT to predict patterns of reciprocity and compensation. This study was significant in two ways. To begin, the study added more empirical support of IAT in a different situational context (lying) Next, Burgoon changed interest from further testing of IAT and switched to the development and testing of Interpersonal Deception Theory. One of the last few journal articles with IAT in the headlines by Burgoon and Ebesu was in 2005, where they discussed the application of both IAT and EVT in cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Despite these studies the biggest criticism this theory faces is the lack of empirical evidence.

Though there are many illuminating factors of IAT, there is a limitation that might be unnecessarily more complicated than needed. IP is a combination of variables that show the position of your expectancies. There is high variance among the three elements that make up the IP, making it hard to be sure of what it is in different interactions, which in turn makes it hard to predict the outcome. The fact that in communication, we constantly influence each other and with our reactions can change the behavior of our partner is not new. Although, IAT help explain this process, it is not clear how well it can predict the outcome. For the theory to be empirically tested, the expectations need to be operationalized, which as Le Poire and Yoshimura (1999), said was difficult to operationalize. Furthermore, the variance among individuals' expectations is

also hard to measure. As the theory states the behavior can be involuntary and unconscious, we do not calculate our IP, and often struggle to identify our own desires, requirements, and expectations. Therefore, it is also hard for scientists to manipulate these variables. Another limitation that was noted by is regarding the ability of IAT to predict patterns of interaction, as little empirical data is testing it. The boundary conditions are not clear. Situational factors, cultural factors, and variance among requirements, desire, and expectations, could all affect the likelihood of compensation and reciprocity.

The most promising application of this theory is in intercultural or cross-cultural communication. The development of the theory is deeply rooted in many years of empirically testing other theories, and is derived from various traditions, offering a very comprehensive explanation of the processes in interpersonal communication. This theory provides a general picture of behavioral pattern in dyadic communication. Incorporating it to explore the interactions between sojourners and locals can explain many communication breakdowns. However, the requirements, expectations and desires, as well as the actual behavior, of sojourners is dependent on culture. When a sojourner is from Japan, China, or Korea, and a host national is an American from a small town, there are many discrepancies in cultural norms. Hofstede's M-6 model can fill this gap as it explains cultural differences in six dimensions.

Geert Hofstede`s *Culture's Consequences* opened up a new cross-cultural research and defining the dimensions of culture (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede was the first social psychologist to conduct a cross-national survey of this magnitude. He initially identified four cultural dimensions: power distance index (PDI), individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and masculinity (MAS). Based on the research of long-term orientation (LTO) by Bond in 1991, and on indulgence versus restraint (IVR) from Minkov's World Values Survey

data analysis, Hofstede added two more dimensions later (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). All six dimensions are described in the chapter on cultural differences.

By combining the principles of IAT and using the 6-D model as guidelines to see cultural differences, it is possible to better explain the interactions and behaviors of sojourners with locals based on the sojourners home country. However, the downfall of these theories is that the fundamental principles are based on psychology, not sociology. The adaptation of sojourners goes beyond cognition, and the colorful experiences of sojourners are not well represented in the context of the culture clash of a societal level. The institution's role in the process is also not evident.

3.3. Other Approaches

Three approaches were considered during the fieldwork: sociocultural, anthropological and critical approach. This is done to build a theory that sheds light on the inhibiting and contributing factors of Asian students' cultural adaptation to the American rural environment. These three approaches were chosen because they focus on different aspects of cultural adjustment. The majority of theories that were proposed on cultural adjustment in the past are from the fields of psychology, sociology, socio-psychology, or education. They examine the cognitive and neurological aspects of international students' way of adaptation to host environment. In this section I argue that through these three approaches can provide a more multi-dimensional model of cultural adjustment of East Asian students.

According to sociocultural tradition, communication is a process concerned with concepts such as social structures, identity, norms, rituals and collective belief systems (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 365). As Charles Lemert wrote: "*The new social theories are no longer beholden to the West Ideology of human history*", and social theories about the differences in

communication and interaction of Asian and American people are of great value (Lemert, 1993). The sociocultural approach is able to look at cultural adaptation not only from Western thought standpoint, but also from Eastern ideology. The differences between the social structures and norms of the native and host environments can inhibit Asian students' adaptation process.

Asian students might have a strong sense of cultural identity. They are Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Malaysian, Thai, or other. They are aware of being a minority, often trying to preserve their cultural identity. According to Giddens self-identity is the self as understood in terms of his or her biography (Giddens, 1991). When people are highly sensitive to being different from others, they perceive many actions that others perform toward them because they are different. It is common knowledge that America is full of guns, drugs, and discrimination, which were shown in the media.

The mere exposure to another culture is likely to impact cultural and self-identity. The way foreigners' construct their reality of the host environment acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy, and if the environment is perceived as hostile, the concept of everyone is against the self becomes real. Asian students who strongly value their cultural identity question American values and some even try to reform Americans to do things the "right" way. Other students who are open to host cultural way of doing things will look for explanation and reasons, and if it is reasonable, they will conform.

Cultural differences between the Western and Eastern thought are deeply embedded in philosophy and ideology. Sadly, the Eastern philosophy is not commonly taught in American high schools and colleges. Major Eastern ideology like Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism are only known in name in the U.S. The deep impact of ideology of East Asian people influences Asian students' adaptation to the U.S. In America, the Western perspective is often ethnocentric

and overgeneralized, for example oversimplifying the cultures of the East as collective and the West as individualistic. However, East Asia consists of various cultures, so the similarities and differences between Asian countries must be better understood. Understanding cultural differences increases the chance of having a mutually beneficial dialogue, and provides more learning opportunities for both host and Asian students.

Looking at the ethnographic approach, ethnography is a written description of the cultural life of a social group or community that focuses on a particular aspect of life in a certain setting (Watson, 2008). This approach is valuable not only as a method but also as an ideological approach in studying the phenomenon of adaptation. Asian students' interactions with the local population and other minority groups on campus give an in-depth look into the lives of the group members. Ethnographical approach provides new perspective on the lives of the individuals in a community. The rich data on the daily life of Asian students allows new aspects of adaptation to surface. It further allows the researcher to experience and partially live the same way the participants live.

Another approach which is imperative, but rarely taken is the critical approach, where the East Asian students are viewed as a minority. According to Craig and Muller (2007), "*the critical tradition conceptualizes communication as discursive reflection, a discourse that freely reflects on assumptions that may be distorted by unexamined habits, ideological beliefs, and relations of power*" (p. 425). It exposes unseen social mechanisms that are not representative, and supports the efforts to resist the power of this hidden truth (Craig & Muller, 2007). The concepts that are often associated with critical theory are ideology, truth, deception, power, resistance, liberation, democracy, identity, and participation. Through the critical approach, it can be seen how foreign students are disadvantaged in academic, social and economic terms.

First looking at the ideology of Marx and Engels, the ruling class uses certain ideology to keep lower class unaware of their unjust economic situation. Applying this to the Asian students in the rural U.S. is very befitting. Critical approach is necessary to explore any issues relating to the haves and have-nots. The American government sells the ideology of freedom, success, money, and an easy life. Some students arrive to the U.S. under the false belief think that it is easy to make countless dollars, and promise to send money back home in the future. However, upon arrival they are faced with a different reality. The U.S. law prohibits F1 visa students from working off campus, and the number of positions and hours available to work on campus are limited. Few studies critically look at the role of institutions and their involvement, which affect the adaptation process of Asian students in the U.S. The gender issues in regards to East Asian students and their experiences are imperative. Furthermore, as a minority in the rural area East Asian students might face discrimination and the problems they face might not be addressed by the system set in place that benefits the majority.

3.4 Conclusion

The models explored in this chapter provided suggestions of elements beyond the factors explored in the literature review. Kim's model strength is that it includes the predisposition of sojourners', and provides a diagram of integration of students through intimate relationships with host nationals. Kim also underlines the importance of the host environment in the students' adaptation. Wards Model is the most detailed and it divides the acculturation into two dimensions: societal and individual level. It also includes cultural identity, language ability, as well as various conditions in the country of origin and settlement. Finally, the last model dealing with adjustment in organizations, adds another element called "Anticipatory Adjustment", which

is the pre-arrival expectations. These elements above are necessary to use in building a theory on Asian students' adaptation to the rural U.S.

The three approaches provide a more comprehensive and pragmatic look at the adjustment of Asian students. The sociocultural approach focuses on the differences between the Asian and Western perspectives on social structure, social norms, identity, and collective belief systems. The theories of IAT and 6-D Model can be utilized to explore differences in ideologies between the ethnic backgrounds of international students. Looking at specific social and cultural differences that might be constraining the adaptation of Asian students in particular, can help provide more specific solutions to their problems. The anthropological approach allows for in-depth examination of students' lives, some of whom adapted or integrated into local culture, while others became secluded. Ethnographic descriptions tell the stories of students in a subjective and personal way. Finally, the critical approach allows for a glance in a more macro level. Institutions and the unbalanced power between host nationals and sojourners' influence the inequality and oppression of minority groups such as Asian students.

Each of the research questions in the introduction chapter is addressed with one of these approaches. RQ#1: *How do the East Asian students perceive their experiences through the stages of cultural adjustment?* Will be answered by ethnographic writing, where the results are reported in a more story-like fashion. The interactions with the local population were suggested to be imperative for integration according to past research. The Interaction Adaptation Theory is used in this section, because it can provide an explanation for the development of interactions between the East Asian students and local populace. RQ#2: *What are the cultural differences and how do they affect the process of adaptation among the different groups of Asian students in the rural U.S.?* Will be addressed through the socio-cultural approach, by looking at cultural differences

and using the Hofstede model for comparison. Finally the RQ#3: *What inhibits and contributes to the East Asian students' adaptation and integration into the local culture?* Is advanced by using critical approach. It looks at the minority and have-nots perspective, and considers social status, racial and gender issues, as well as the roles of institutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS

This study implements interpretive-qualitative paradigm and adapts ethnography as a research strategy. A qualitative approach should be used under the following circumstances: when the research questions are descriptive in nature, such as how or what; when the topic has not been sufficiently explored; when a closer look is needed into the circumstances of a phenomenon; and when the researcher is interested in understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Creswell,1998). Out of all the qualitative approaches, ethnography is the most suitable. By definition, it is a systematic study of people and cultures. According to various research, the adjustment phases and adaptation level undergoes constant changes (Adler, 1975, Gebhard 2010, Oberg, 1960, Pedersen, 1995). This indicates a necessity to observe the sojourners adaptation process over time. Ethnographic research is designed to view various cultural phenomenon from the participants' point of view over an extended period of time, which matches the objectives of this study. Triangulation was adopted by combining surveys, interviews, participatory observations as well as other artifacts provided by the participants.

The data gathering process started on May 2nd 2015 by gathering preliminary data and establishing the relationship with Dr. M who introduced me to the Japanese students studying at M. University. I stayed at an apartment with three Chinese students, one of whom, Sam, I knew from my years in China. Sam served at the gatekeeper into the Chinese student community. The gathered data for two weeks, and then returned to Japan for the summer as the majority of the students returned back to their home countries over summer vacation. I have completely relocated to the city where M. University was located on August 12th 2015 and stayed there

conducting fieldwork until May 11th, 2016. Using convenient sampling, an online survey was administered from June 18th, 2016 to August 30th, 2016.

The methodology section is written to describe the exact process of the systematic inquiry used in a study, so that anyone could replicate the study. However, when reading many dissertations using qualitative methods, I found it difficult to understand how the data was gathered, analyzed, and what assumptions were used. The epistemological ideologies of the researcher in their approach to their study are rarely clarified. For these reasons, the process of the development of the method used is described in great detail in this section.

4.1. Grounded Theory

The method employed in this study has stemmed out from the Grounded Theory approach, however there are many controversies related to this term, and many contradicting methods of analyses. Grounded Theory branched out into unique methodological approaches. One of the underlining ideas is that it is a qualitative method, using inductive reasoning. The three most common approaches to Grounded Theory are Glaser`s classical theory, Strauss and Corbin`s model, and Charmaz`s constructivist theory. Glaser and Strauss in their early works urged beginner practitioners of Grounded Theory to advance innovative explanations and make new theories that are data driven (Charmaz, 2006). They advised gathering and analyzing data prior to the literature review. This allows the researcher to have an unbiased look on the phenomenon firsthand. After Glasser and Strauss collaborative research on the perception of death in the U.S. hospitals[5], their opinions split. Glaser continued to insist on Grounded Theory in its classic form, focusing on it being a method of discovery, with a more open analyses and

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[5] The original Grounded Theory was developed in the research described in the book "Awareness of Death" where Glaser and Strauss conducted interviews with hospital staff and terminal patients to understand how death was perceived in the U.S.

categories emerging from the data. However, Straus collaborating with Corbin, moved in a different direction, focusing on verification more than discovery.

Instead of the comparative method, Strauss and Corbin suggest more rigid and technical strategies in data analyses. Glaser (1992) adamantly disagrees with this method as it goes against the free emerging categories forcing the data into preconceived concepts. The Strauss and Corbin model is very rigid and constraining, furthermore this approach was deemed inappropriate to this study because it strays from exploring the perceived reality of participants and how they define the challenges they face. Glaser argues that this theory is focused on conceptual descriptions (Glaser, 1992). Therefore, out of the two Grounded Theories described above, Glassers' approach was chosen. In addition, some concepts were borrowed from the constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The appeal of the classic approach is its formation and generalization, while the constructivist approach focuses on the narrative of the participants. The main assumptions of the classical Grounded Theory are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Components of Grounded Theory used in this study

Used or not	Components of Grounded Theory
Yes	Data collection and analyses is done at the same time
Yes	Codes and categories emerge from data, not logically deducted from hypotheses
Yes	Constant comparative method is used
No	Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
Yes	Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
No	Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
No	Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis

Source: Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide through qualitative research by Charmaz, (2006)

Scholars have been using the term Grounded Theory to serve their own needs and designing their own methodology. Sometimes their methods are not reflective of the classical ideological beliefs behind the theory. I found it impossible to continue the inquiry without doing

the literature review during the fieldwork, also the sampling did not follow the Grounded Theory approach either. This study is not using Grounded Theory, but borrows many of its concepts and tools of analyses (Table 1).

The constant comparison approach was utilized to collect and analyze the data. I will use an example of how categories emerged and were narrowed down by constantly comparing each case with the next. During the first focus group discussion, the students talked about what surprised them in the U.S., and it quickly became evident that the reasons behind their surprise was the unrealistic expectations and lack of preparations prior to arrival. So based on these concepts a questionnaire was made, which included questions about the preparation to study abroad, expectations, interactions with Americans, and motivation. Based on these surveys, the biggest anticipated challenges were language, social interactions with Americans, and academic performance. Later interviews were conducted again focusing on the challenges at school, and in the social life of the participants. As the interviews continued, the data was coded and the concepts that emerged previously were further explored in the following interviews, funneling down and zooming into emerged patterns. The benefit of this system is that a new concept, when inquired about to other participants, seemed to be present among the whole group.

Another example, a sub-category of academic adjustment emerged from questions about social adjustment. When students were asked about interactions with Americans, most students said "classmates or roommates" and talked about wanting to form more meaningful relationships or the problems in communication. But, one participant mentioned having an American tutor and visiting the American professor during office hours. Then during all subsequent interviews, participants were asked, "Do you have a tutor or go to professor's office hours?" and a number of stories emerged about the helpfulness of the professors or tutors, their interactions, and how it

affects the student's academic performance. Then these stories that initially emerged from the questions on interaction with Americans formed a new sub-category of interactions with professors and tutors, which affected the academic adjustment of students. Having access to the same participants and verifying the existence of a new categories is easier in an ethnographic study, where the same students were observed over a long period of time.

As this inquiry was longitudinal in nature, the number of interviews with each participant depended heavily on the availability of the participants. At first the goal was to conduct interviews every two to three months, but the number of interviews was decreased because the sample group grew to the size of over thirty students and the students became progressively busy. Each participant was interviewed one to two times per semester. The initial interviews were mostly about the participants' background and initial experiences, while later interviews focused on the changes that were happening in their lives. Final interviews, after some of the exchange students returned to their home countries, were difficult to conduct in person, and it was only possible with the students in Japan. Other exchange students from China and Korea were asked to complete an online survey on their experiences of reverse culture shock.

4.2. Data Gathering and Analysis

The data collection process started on May 2nd 2015 by gathering preliminary data and establishing the relationship with a Japanese professor at the M. University. The university and the city where the study was done are referred to as M. because the students most commonly stated it being in the Middle of nowhere. There were three reasons why M. University was chosen. First, the location was very remote and local population is representative of rural Americans. Second, the website indicated that the university had China Club, Japan Club and Korea club, signaling there were students from all three ethnic groups. Third, the researcher

personally knew one Japanese professor and one Chinese senior student both of whom indicated willingness to help with the project. Upon arrival in May, Dr. M introduced me to the Japanese students studying at M. University. Arrangements were made for me to stay at an apartment with three Chinese students, one of whom, Sam, I knew from my years in China. Sam served at the gatekeeper into the Chinese student community.

During the first two weeks in May, I gathered data though informal interviews, by approaching both Asian and American students. Originally the research plan included an inquiry into the attitudes of local Americans on cultural differences between China, Japan and Korea. However, after intervening American students it was understood that the students have not had any interactions with Asian students, and struggled to differentiate the three countries other than associating China with Chinese food and Japan with sushi. The results of these interviews are described in Chapter five, in the section on local culture. However, this led to redesigning the study to focus primarily on Asian students. Secondary focus was on American students who were more familiar with Asian cultures or were observed interacting with East Asian students.

After the data was gathered for two weeks in May, the summer vacation began and majority of the students returned back to their home countries. I relocated to M. City on August 12th, and I have moved with the Chinese student signing a one year lease for an apartment near M. University. Sam and Dr. M. introduced the Japanese and Chinese students to me one by one. The most difficult group to access was the Korean group of students on campus. From September, I started attending the weekly meeting of Korea Club. The initial survey was administered after the club meeting ended, when the majority of the Korean students were present. The research project was explained to the whole group and any students who were willing to participate in the interviews were asked to take a consent form. However, only four

Korean members of the club at that time agreed to participate in the study. Thankfully, in January two more Korean exchange students arrived, who were eager to help. From January to May 2016, I have spent considerable time with these six Korean students.

The survey data from American students was collected from the three culture clubs and the Anime club. The three culture clubs had few Americans, but combined with the Anime club members, a total of 33 surveys were gathered. The questions asked included not only the views the participants had about Asian countries and people, but also about the views of other Americans, and perceived difficulties Asian students might have at M. University (see Appendixes B).

Using convenient sampling, an online survey was administered from June 18th, 2016 to August 30th, 2016. The participants were recruited through the East Asian students at M. University. These students per my request asked their friends, who were studying in different U.S. institutions, to take the online survey. This added more data on East Asian student experiences in other rural and urban universities in the U.S. The summary of the data collected is represented in Table 2.

Table 2: Data Collection

Data Collection Table		
Method of Data Collection	Quantity Collected	Time of Collection
Semi-Formal Interviews	12 (6 East Asian, 6 American students)	May, 2015
Initial Survey of Asian Students	23 surveys	September 2015, January 2016
In-depth-Interviews	Over 160 single space pages	August 2015 to May 2016
Focus Groups	2	September and December
Observation Notes	Numerous	August 2015 to July 2016
Other Documents	2 diaries, 3 assignments, 3 reports	May, 2016
Survey of Americans interested in Asia	33	November, 2015
Online Survey	17	June-August 2016

To be able to look at the students' experiences from fresh perspectives, without any restrictions, the patterns were allowed to emerge freely. The sensitivity and the nature of the topic as well as the desire to generate new knowledge, pointed to the implication of interviews as one of the main tools of gathering data. The semi-formal interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes and the data collected was in the form of extensive notes. All of the in-depth-interviews, which were much longer were recorded and transcribed. The scripts went through three cycles of coding. The first cycle includes descriptive, In Vivo and causal codes. The descriptive and In Vivo codes were chosen because they help understand the lives of the students using the participants' words. The causal coding was used to underline the possible causes of progress in adaptation or what caused the adaptation process to not go so well. The second cycle of coding was comparing the data and making more analytical codes to bump up the level of generalization. Mostly, the second and third cycle of coding used axial and longitudinal coding where it was relevant.

Hierarchies, comparative coding, analytical memos and models, are all tools that help organize and analyze the data. The coding hierarchy is when similar codes are sorted into branches and sub-branches. This helps identify possible themes, prevents duplication in coding, and makes it possible to ask analytical questions in engaging the data. Comparative coding is useful when making case-by-case or chronological comparisons. Model is a framework that attempts to explain the most important aspects of the phenomenon in relation to other aspects or elements of the situation. (Gibbs, 2007, p. 86). The two models described by Gibbs in Grounded Theory are: axial coding and selective coding. There are seven elements of axial coding. Selective coding involves identifying just one of the coded themes that seem central to the study and systematically relating it to other codes.

Another valuable tool to use in theory building is an analytic memo, used by researchers to document the coding process and code choices, emergent patterns, categories, themes and concepts in the data. Memos are like notes, diaries, or blogs about critical thinking and examining the researchers own actions during data analysis. These memos can help organize your own thoughts, and remain as a written record of coding choices. Also, memo writing is the main focus of Grounded Theory, not just coding.

However, as the classic Grounded Theory states, "everything is data". In addition to the standard interviews, group discussions, observations, and open-ended surveys, an array of other artifacts was also collected. The artifacts include diaries, copies of class assignments, return home reports[6] and chat logs from social media. These artifacts, observations, and research notes were also incorporated into the analytical coding process and added to the data on the comparison of activities, which the three groups organized during this one year.

Overall, without using these tools, I believe qualitative researchers will be buried under hundreds of pages of transcripts, note cards, and overwhelmed by the quantity of data that does not make sense and is impossible to systematically analyze. The above-described tools are what make it possible to analyze the data and build theory in a valid and reliable way.

4.3. Participants

There were more than 50 East Asian students (6 initial interview participants, 37 in-depth interview participants[7], 15 survey only participants) and 38 American students that were part of this study in various ways. First in May 2015 the semi-formal interviews were conducted with

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[6] Return home reports 帰国報告書 are reports some of the exchange students are required to submit to their home University upon return to their country. These reports vary according to the university requirements and some are in a form of questions and answers, while others are 5 to 10 page written accounts about the student's experience during their studies abroad

[7] Out of the 37 in-depth interview participants 9 Japanese students participated in a separate focus group, and 4 Chinese students also had a separate focus group

the East Asian students who were about to graduate or finish their exchange programs. These students were no longer at the field site in August 2015 when I arrived to begin the ethnographic study. In 2015, for the Korean group, many Korean students filled out the survey, but did not agree to participate in the interviews. The total number of Korean students studying at M university was 14 students, 6 participated in surveys and interviews, 4 participated in surveys only, but did not volunteer to take part in the interviews, and 4 other students were outside of the researchers reach. The Korean Club president said it would not be easy to contact them, as they lived together and were too busy. These students did not come to Korea Club, so there was no opportunity to meet them directly, and my request to contact them was denied by the Korean students that knew them due to either that these students were seniors and should not be disturbed, or that the freshmen and sophomore Korean students did not know the two seniors well enough to ask for such favors.

There were two Chinese students who did not participate in this study because I was not able to contact them. They lived off campus together, and were not in close relations with the Chinese students that were observed in this study. For the four Korean and these two Chinese students that I did not meet, it was deemed best to not pursue to contact them, as it would negatively affect my position within the groups. Finally, in the Japanese group, which was the largest on campus out of the three groups, there were five participants that did not participate in the study. I met four out of five of them in person. One Japanese student, who did a survey and at first agreed to set up an interview, two weeks later, withdrew from the study through a message on Facebook saying he was too busy to participate. In late November, I met four Japanese students who lived off campus, and said they would help in any way possible. However, due to the lack of time I ended up having interviews with only one of them instead of all four. The last

Japanese student was male, and arrived in January. But, no one could tell me his name or how to contact him. During the time of the fieldwork at the University of M., I was aware of 52 students who were Japanese, Chinese, or Korean.

Out of the 52 students:

- 37 participated in surveys and in-depth interviews
- 5 completed survey only
- 7 were not contacted
- 3 were not interviewed or observed due to time restraints

Students from Mongolia, Vietnam, and other Asian countries sometimes make a brief appearance in the observation sections, but were not asked to be a part of the study as the focus was on Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. The students who did provide consent forms, filled out surveys, and the majority of whose interviews were transcribed are listed below are listed in Table 3. This group consists of 20 females, and 17 males, 6 Korean students, 16 Japanese students and 15 Chinese students. The status of students is divided into two categories, international students who are studying to earn their Bachelor degree in the U.S., and exchange students who came to study in the U.S. for one semester to one year. The sample population represents students from various socioeconomic backgrounds and different majors. The last column of the table shows when the students arrived to M. University.

Table 3: Demographic of Interview Participants

	Ethnicity	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Major	Status	Arrived
1	Korean	Haneul	F	23	English	Intl.	2014
2	Korean	Ho	F	22	n/a	Intl.	2013
3	Korean	Wook	M	26	Business	Exch	2016
4	Korean	Yong	F	22	n/a	Exch	2015
5	Korean	Kim	F	22	n/a	Exch	2016
6	Korean	Jun	M	34	Compt. Science	Intl.	2012
7	Japanese	Maki	M	20	Sociology	Exch	2015
8	Japanese	Saori	F	21	Physics	Intl.	2016
9	Japanese	Masahiro	M	22	Communications	Exch	2015
10	Japanese	Katsu	M	21	Business	Exch	2015
11	Japanese	Hiro	M	22	Intl. Studies	Exch	2015
12	Japanese	Eri	F	21	Salesman	Exch	2015
13	Japanese	Kei	F	23	Chemistry	Exch	2015
14	Japanese	Miya	F	23	Intl Business	Intl.	2013
15	Japanese	Rini	F	23	English Litrtr	Exch	2015
16	Japanese	Ima	F	21	English Educat.	Exch	2015
17	Japanese	Megu	F	22	Design	Intl.	2013
18	Japanese	Saki	F	20	n/a	Exch	2015
19	Japanese	Yuna	F	21	Sociology	Intl.	2014
20	Japanese	Aya	F	23	Psychology	Intl.	2014
21	Japanese	Tai	M	22	English	Exch	2015
22	CN/JN	Kim	F	22	Business	Exch	2015
23	CN-Malay	Mark	M	23	Computer.Science	Intl.	2014
24	Chinese	An	F	20	Economics	Intl.	2013
25	Taiwanese	Shane	M	24	East Asian Study	Intl.	2014
26	Chinese	Jack	M	23	Computer Science	Intl.	2011
27	Chinese	Bei	M	23	Business	Exch	2015
28	Taiwanese	Austin	M	25	Graphic Design	Intl.	2010
29	Taiwanese	Lane	F	23	Business	Exch	2015
30	Chinese	Chao	M	21	Chemistry	Intl.	2016
31	CN/Mala	Hua	F	22	Project Mgmt	Intl.	2015
32	CN/Mala	Ya	F	22	Intl. Business	Intl.	2014
33	Chinese	Bob	M	22	Economics	Intl.	2013
34	Chinese	Yu	M	25	Engineering	Intl.	n/a
35	Chinese	Sam	M	28	Marketing	Intl.	2013
36	CN/Mala	Enlai	M	21	n/a	Intl.	2015
37	Chinese	Que	F	21	Business	Intl.	2015

4.4. Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

According to Gibbs (2007) qualitative validity is ensured by the researcher checking the accuracy of the findings through certain procedures, while qualitative reliability pertains to the investigator's approach being consistent with other researchers or projects.

The most commonly used strategy to improve validity is triangulation, which means using different sources of data to build a rational justification for the themes (Creswell, 2014). In this research, triangulation was used to improve the validity by looking at secondary sources that reported similar findings around the United States, and by using the surveys, diaries, reports, and observations to ensure that the emergent data accurately captured the experiences of the students. Participant checking was used during all of the interviews and the data from the surveys was also verified with the participants. During the research, I was mindful of how my background and experiences might influence the interpretation of the results. The bias the researcher brings is addressed in the last part of the "role of researcher" section of this chapter. Creswell (2014) also suggests prolonged time in the field, and I spent over 10 consecutive months in the field, and was previously also well acquainted with the area and the people there. Furthermore, peer debriefing was used, and is required by the professors at the University of Tsukuba. Mandatory presentations in front of peers and professors takes place three times per year, for which I flew back to Japan, to report the progress of the research. The weekly seminars prior to and after the fieldwork, as well as the yearly presentation of research progress allowed me to receive ample feedback on the data gathering, the data itself, and the analyses. Using these strategies helped ensure the validity of this thesis.

Reliability is the consistency of researchers' analysis, which for this project was systematic, and focused on specific codes. On reliability, in qualitative research, Creswell (2014)

suggests the following strategies: checking transcripts, checking the meaning of the codes is accurate, and more than one person coding same material and cross-checking it. In this research project, the transcripts were double checked, and the coding was done in cycles (Creswell, 2014). As it would be too difficult to have a second coder to go through and code 200 single-spaced pages of transcripts so, only a part of the whole data was cross-checked with another Ph.D. student.

Overall, qualitative research focuses on "discovery", of new information, categories, and relationships, while canonical science makes prediction its ultimate goal. Although the sample might not be representative of a larger population, it is representative of East Asian student experiences in the rural U.S. I would like to argue that it is not a stand-alone case, instead it looks at the general phenomenon of how perception, cultural background and experiences influence cultural adaptation of East Asian students. For example, if you expect your submitted article to be great, but get back a rejection, you are likely to react in certain ways like being disappointed. It doesn't matter if you are in a village or New York, the overly positive expectation influenced the level of your reaction. Looking at the relationship between the perceptions of East Asian students, the way they chose to cope with their new environment and their interactions with American students, all represents a larger concept of adaptation, and not an atypical case of it.

Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss, is a data-driven approach to coding. In concept driven coding, a set of codes is developed based on previous research dictated by a concept or theory. Then, when the data is coded, you make it fit into those pre-established categories. Conversely, in data driven coding the codes emerge from the data, and there can be many different codes the researcher didn't expect and needs to create new categories. Grounded

theory is grounded in the data, and the theory emerges through the constant comparative method. So, it is not a pre-established theory that guides the data analyses. Instead, the patterns and concepts emerge from the data that help discover and formulate a theory.

4.5. Role of the Researcher

The researcher is related and inseparable from the undertaken research, whether it is in qualitative or quantitative inquiries. The topic that is selected is a choice dictated by the researcher's feelings, interests, and preferences. The questions asked by the researcher, the answers that stand out, their interpretation, selecting and reviewing the literature, cannot be absolutely objective. In qualitative research, especially in the interviews, the researcher plays a central role on how much and what information the participants provide. It is the job of the researcher to do their best in reporting the results and conducting the research in an impartial manner. However, personal views are affected by their past experiences. Although I am an American national, I was born in USSR and I myself experienced what it was like to be a foreigner in the U.S. My family immigrated to the U.S. in 1998 and my twelve years in the U.S. helped me better understand American culture and people. Moving from one state to another and from Chicago to a small town in Ohio, I personally understood how different the life, culture and people are in the rural vs. urban U.S.

My personal experience in Japan started with a high school exchange in 2002, when I arrived at Ebina in Kanagawa. I was driven by a strong desire to understand every aspect of the Japanese life. Later, as a university student I did one year of studying abroad in Nagoya, and was able to experience the life of a college exchange student in Japan, and went through the Japanese becoming an adult ceremony. After I graduated from university I worked for a Japanese logistics company in the U.S. and was sent to work in Japan for one year. I wanted to experience the life

of a Japanese high school and college student and gain insight into what it means to be a worker or part of the society (shakaijin 社会人) in Japan, all of which I was fortunate to experience. Doing my masters and doctorate degree in Japan contributes to appreciation of Japanese people and their language. Studying abroad numerous times helped me to understand the students' perspective of arriving at a foreign land filled with contradictions. My relationship with Chinese and experiences in China was so different from when I was in Japan that it is mind boggling how so many Western scholars group the East Asians, let alone all Asians, in one category, without differentiating the country of origins. Though my educational background was in East Asian studies, and I was familiar with the history of China, experiencing modern China was very different. In 2010, I arrived to China and taught at a college located in a semi-rural area.

During my first day of working in a public college a face greeted me from my childhood, stepping into the empty classroom it was a portrait of Lenin that looked down at me. I spent two years teaching business, logistics, and English to college students, the majority of whom were from farmer families. My experience with these students is another variable that affected my current research, especially in understanding of Chinese students' perspectives. I have had short visits to Taiwan, and only through personal encounters with people from Taiwan and extensive reading I am familiar with the cultural background of Taiwanese students. Data on modern Korea was mostly from books published in Korea complemented with a short two-week trip to the country. During my time in Korea, informal interviews were conducted with Korean and American nationals on the cultural differences between the two countries they have experienced. This was not directly used in the data, but served as a clue for exploring the literature on Korean culture. Overall, I believe my experiences in the U.S. and East Asia were indispensable to this research.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPERIENCES DURING PHASES OF ADJUSTMENT

The five phases described in this chapter emerged through literature analyses and patterns emerging from the data. Majority of the data described here was gathered from the interviews, two surveys and the observations. The initial survey was distributed at the beginning of the year and second online survey was conducted at the end of the year. Some students did not participate in the study throughout the year (especially students from the Korean group) but participated in the initial survey. The online survey was conducted in order to better understand the later phases, especially after many students returned back to their home countries. In this chapter, the individuals are in the spotlight, their differences in background, attitude, personality, and etcetera. Their stories are presented from their perspectives and in their own words.

5.1. Phase One: Pre-Arrival

Phase one for some students only lasts a few weeks, while for others it continues for many years. In the pre-arrival phase the motivation for coming, the expectations and their formation, as well as fear, anxiety and preparations for study abroad were examined. This phase is accompanied by many different feelings. The stories in this section are not about the nationality but focuses more on the personal circumstances of individuals and their personalities.

5.1.1. Motivations for Studying Abroad

The reasons or motivations to study abroad for East Asian students varied greatly. The number one reason to study in the U.S. was to learn English, other reasons included experiencing foreign culture, failing the universities exams at home, wanting a better education, or it was their parents decision. Three Chinese students and one Korean indicated that they had no choice because it was their parents' decision. Different students were motivated by different factors, but

for many students that were enrolled in regular bachelor degree programs, the reason that they came to the U.S. was because they failed the university entrance examinations back home. For Chinese students, parents or relatives played a major role in the decision. As for Japanese students, there were instances where some family members did not support the decision of the student to go abroad.

There were students who were inspired by people in their lives or by other aspects of American culture. One female student wrote: *"When I was a high school student, my English Teacher told me the story about her experience of studying abroad, and I'm interested in it. My family wasn't surprised, and easily accepted it because since I was a high school student I had said that I wanted to study abroad when I was in the university."* Other students also mentioned that they wanted to go abroad since they were young. Another student said: "*I had wanted to study abroad since I was 12 years old."* In this category the study abroad was long awaited, well pre-planned experience which was highly anticipated by the participants. Another student in this category describes how his brother's experience influenced his decision: "*Study abroad was my dream. My brother has gone to Vermont State five years ago that inspired me to want to do it. My family knew that I would like to study abroad and I am learning English, so they did not stop me."* Students in this category had their pre-arrival phase begun years in advance, as they imagined, dreamed, and studied all about their future lives in the U.S. However, other students had little desire to go to the U.S. One extreme case is of a Taiwanese student who was not even aware that his parents applied to M. University on his behalf. Two weeks before his departure, his parents informed him that he will study in the U.S. for the next four years, then handed him the Acceptance Letter and the airplane tickets. When asked about his expectations, he said he had no expectations or any preparations about his life in the U.S. He was indifferent. There were

two other students whose parents decided that they should go to the U.S. and where they should study. There were other students who wanted to go to the U.K. or Australia, or big cities in the U.S., but ended up studying at M. University because either it was cheaper, or their TOEFL scores were not high enough to go to the other universities.

Although many of the students identified that learning English is their main motivation and goal, some students mentioned that America was not their first choice for learning English, while others indicated that America was the best place to learn English. Factors such as enjoying studying English since Junior High school, or importance of English for the students' future careers were the inspiration for this group. One student who aspires to become an English teacher wrote: *"I want to be an English teacher for the future, and I wanted to study at the country that English is spoken. In addition, English taught in Japan is American English not British English, so I decided to go to the U.S. I chose M because there is the subject[8] (at M University) in which I can join the fieldwork at elementary, middle or high school in the U.S. In addition, there are some classes that I'm interested in."* Most of the students from Korea indicated that learning English was their main goal to study abroad. One student from Seoul wrote, "*I wanted to study in the U.S. because my major is English, and my family told me to go abroad*".

The third group consists of students that were denied acceptance by the University of their choices in Japan or China, and decided to study abroad instead. This is a common reason why Asian students come and study at American universities. For example Chao wrote, "*I failed in the university exam in China, so (I) decided to go abroad. My family encouraged me to go abroad, without their support I could not come here, but I am always worried about money*". However, not all students admit this fact, so this group might be larger in reality.

Students were influenced by American pop culture, which made them interested in studying in the U.S. and influenced their expectations of the U.S. The reason behind choosing this particular university was that it had established exchange programs with many Japanese, Taiwanese and Korean universities. Some students selected M University because it offered classes they were interested in. For privately supported students, the tuition fee being low was the reason that made them chose M university. One Korean student said:

> *I searched "Cheapest University". Well, at first I got into the university in Minneapolis but their tuition was $40,000-$50,000 I couldn't burden my family [that much]. My dad was [like], "It's too much for two years." It could be even through three years. I tried to research again and I found two universities and one in Cleveland and another one is here. I asked my friend at the time, [he said] "Cleveland is more countryside and M. University is [good for the] field of education and safe and with wealthy people." That's what he said anyway. Better circumstances to study. I decide to come here and he was from here too.*

Many students wrote on the initial survey the exact same thing "*I Chose M. University because it was cheap*". One Chinese-Malay student wrote, "*I chose the U.S because it was the land of opportunities to explore more things and also the American culture intrigues me and I would like to know more about it. M. University was an easy choice for me due to the low tuition cost and also the opportunity to know more about the American culture, by beginning in a small city*". Another reason for a few of exchange students' decision was the university being located in the countryside. One Japanese student wrote in a survey: *"One of the reasons I choose M was that it is in countryside. There are two reasons I prefer countryside. First is safety. Countryside is safer than city. Second reason is that I wanted to study in quiet place; I believed it made me*

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concentrate on studying because there are not so many place to have fun. Another reason that I chose M is that I thought there were few Japanese people compared with other universities." As safety was one of the major concerns, some students chose to go to the rural area because of lower crime rated compared to urban areas.

5.1.2. Expectations of the U.S. and Americans

A student from Seoul, when asked how he imagined Americans wrote only three words, "Blond and Pretty". Then, he added that in the U.S., he expected more racist people. According to the survey the East Asian students said they expected Americans to be: friendly, positive, fun, interested in other cultures, talkative, kind, good at making friends, open-minded, skinny, tall, and fashionable, with the only downside that Americans are racist. Students further expected their life in the U.S. to be fun, partying and hanging out with many friends. The Americans that they imagined were eagerly waiting to talk to foreigners. One Korean student wrote:

> *[I expected] if I go to America I get freedom. I imagined I can do whatever I want to, and I can get a lot of chance to meet many foreign friends and improve my English skill and go to many places and want to experience party in U.S., but I haven't. I think Americans will have open mind to international people so I can make many friends, but most important is experience with another culture. In reality (it) is pretty hard for me, and many international students have (the) same problems…"*

Another Japanese student wrote: "*I expected that American people is more fashionable because my favorite clothes companies are from America and there are American celebrities fashion magazines in Japan.*"

The image of an easy going and friendly American was the same among Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students. Most of the students said this image came from the TV dramas

and movies that they watched before. A few students stated that they had met Americans back home and those Americans (who were in Korea and Japan) were very friendly and interested in the countries they were in. There was one student from Korea that did not have the image of the friendly and outgoing American. Instead, he wrote, "*I watched many American TV shows, so I thought it would be very busy, many drinking and drugs and scary people. American people always look serious and don't smile from these TV shows. I watched Prison Break and Gossip Girls and some Hollywood movies. And CSI too.*"

America as a country was mostly described using the word "freedom" by all three groups. Another word used by the Japanese in particular was "Big". America is a place where many people from various countries come together, and many students wanted to experience communicating with foreigners from many countries. This is an opportunity they did not have back home. Overall, East Asian students had high expectations for their lives in the U.S. With the exception of the few students who were indifferent following their parents' instruction, the majority were excited. However, the students from Japan especially expected America to be dangerous, which brings us to their worries and fears.

5.1.3. Fears, Worries and Anxiety

Everyone worried about something before arriving to the U.S. Out of over 50 students, all of them had some worries or were not confident in themselves and their English. The number one anxiety was unsurprisingly caused by the language ability. More than half of the students indicated that English was their main concern. A Korean student wrote, "*Language is the biggest concern and lifestyle is a little concern. Most scary is the language*". Besides the language barrier, other worries included economic issues, weather, safety, fitting in, making friends, academic ability, being able to get along with roommates, ability to communicate, gaining

weight, being homesick, and facing discrimination. One female student from Tokyo wrote: "*I am a chicken, so I was really afraid, I thought people said no (she was worried about the embarrassment of having a request denied). What if I can't understand what they say, in Japan foreigners are still rare so we talk a lot with them. Americans are not worried about details, and are powerful. And discrimination by white people is common. I was worried about many things, academic performance, my English ability, safety too, and discrimination. Worried and anxious.*"

The image of America being a place of drugs, crime, sex and violence was vivid in the minds of many Japanese students. One student during a focus group described her surprise that her dictionary was not stolen when she left it in the classroom. Other students seemed concerned about Americans carrying guns, and the shootings. In reality, the crime rates of this particular city are lower than that in Tokyo. One student described it: *"Mostly my concern was safety, since shooting incidents were often (showed) on the news."* Another student was concerned with public safety in relation to American law enforcement officers, which is very understandable. From my observations and personal experience in Japan and the U.S., it is a much more pleasant experience to deal with the law enforcement officer in Japan.

The few students who researched the area well were not concerned about the crime rates, being acutely aware that no gangsters are hiding in the cornfields. Instead, the students were worried about the lack of transportation. One student from China who did extensive research on the city where M. University was located found out ahead of time about how quiet the city was, and that there was no public transportation on Sundays, which made her somewhat concerned. This brings us to the actual behavior of preparing during the pre-arrival phase.

5.1.4. Preparations

Over 90% of the students said that they prepared either by studying English or by not doing anything in particular. All of the East Asian students took either TOEFL or IELTS, as it was a required by M. University. All American universities require a certain level of English, unless applying for an ESL program where you study English and then go on into the major study. Some students studied English by watching American TV Dramas (where they got the wrong expectation of America). Other students tried to read books to improve their English, or take English classes through Skype, or talk to Americans online. Although the students did not research the area where the university was located, most students did some research on the university itself. They looked at the beautiful website, colorful mascot, pictures of the campus in the summer and numerous undergraduate programs which were very appealing. One student from Korea did say she searched the state where M. University was located, and the first thing she saw was the skyscrapers and metropolitan images of the U.S. This is the correct image of the largest city in the state located over 500 km from M. University. Overall, the students did not have any clear ideas of how they could prepare to increase their chances of academic success in the American education system.

5.2. Phase Two: Exposure and Initial Experiences

Phase two is accompanied by an array of emotion and in the literature it is called the honeymoon stage. As it can be expected, the first common experience is the shock in regards to M University being in the countryside. In this phase, the students go through the physical adjustment and it is often accompanied by excitement since everything is new.

Upon arrival, the students go through a special orientation at M. University. This orientation is for international students only and takes place before local students arrive on

campus. This causes some confusion among newly arrived international students, because it gives them the impression that the only the school staffs and a few students are Americans while everyone else is a foreigner. The campus is mostly empty for the first week, however, international students are kept busy attending various orientations. During this time they learn: how to pay their tuition fees online, about volunteer hours, the laws and regulations prohibiting international students from working off campus. They also fill out many documents, and get vaccinations if needed. Some had a hard time recalling their orientation because they were sleepy and jet lagged. The following week consists of class registration and the arrival of American students. During the first two to three weeks, East Asian students become accustomed to the rural America, which many of them described as "nothing but cornfields". The next shock comes in the form of rural Americans, who are not what the Asian students expected.

Many Asian students were initially shocked by the physical appearance of local American students. In contradiction to their expectations, Americans are not all skinny and blond. They were not as fashionable as the Asian students thought they would be, and local students go to class wearing yoga pants, sweatshirts and sandals. For example, Tai described her initial surprise about local Americans when she just arrived:

There were brunets and red heads not just blonds. Eyes were brown, blue, green and so on

At the canteen sometimes I would talk to some Americans, but then they would not say hi

anymore after that. I feel they ignore me, like they don't know who I am. Other international

students also said that Americans from this state are cold (Interview L1-24, Lines 19-24).

Another difference in expectations about physical appearances, one student said he did not expect to see so many "fat" Americans.

Student E. stated that the appearance of American girls was a culture shock to her. Not only had many of them worn yoga pants to class, but also headbands. She said this does not happen in Japan, while in Japan black net tights are common while in the U.S. nobody wears them. Student S. added that although it is cold, American students wear sandals; he also commented on the appearance of American students: *"There are many fat people in the U.S. They are big, but they eat little. How did they get that big?"* K.S. added: *"Yeah, and because some of them are tall, I had an image that they would be good at sports. However in reality, I have a sports class, many Americans aren't that great, they are big, but they can't move."* A third student added: *"Do you think that I could play basketball with them too and keep up?"* K.S. replied: *"I think you could win, because they are slow."* Even more surprising than the physical appearance is the attitude of local Americans. East Asian students perceived that Americans are not friendly, outgoing, and not eager to learn about the culture of Japan, China, or Korea. The local students usually come from very rural areas, whose hometown is a few hours away and has a population of fewer than 1,000 people. Many of these students have never met foreigners, and East Asian students look foreign in appearance. Just like the East Asian students, American students have a predisposition which is an expectation of foreign nationals not speaking English. Local American students who do not have previous experience of talking to foreigners do not rush to welcome the Asian students, and they are puzzled on how to interact with Asian students. Some of the students directly stated that they had expected Americans to be different from what they have experienced during the first two weeks. One student wrote: *"I imagined Americans interested in other countries, but actually not so many (are)",* while another Japanese stated: *"I thought everyone would be more friendly."*

Students also feel a lot of stress and insecurity about their academic performance. They are not sure if they are studying the right material, they are not sure how to study and how to behave in the classroom. Many students have trouble understanding the lectures. Interestingly, students said they do not understand majority of what the professors say during the first week of classes. However, just a few weeks later, they could understand the lectures, but struggled to understand the professor's humor, or adjust to professors' accent. As the interactions at school increased, the insecurity subsided and attending class became a weekly routine for the East Asian students. Although students adjusted quickly to the new environment, the anxiety and stress the students felt during the first few weeks should not be underestimated.

5.3. Phase Three: Culture Shock

It is impossible to draw clear lines between the phases of adjustment other than for phase one and phase five. The division between phase one and two is clear, because the pre-arrival phase ends once you arrive. The last phase is the reverse culture shock, which happens once the sojourner returned back to their native culture. Furthermore, not all sojourners go through all the phases. With that said, the difference between the initial surprises in the second phase and the culture shock phase is the outlook and attitude of the East Asian students. The awareness of the cultural differences starts with students' arrival to the country, but the culture shock are those things that influenced the students in a long term. This varies a lot from student to student. For example, the majority of the Japanese students quickly accepted the fact that Americans are fat and unfashionable. By the second and third interview with the Japanese students, they focused on the differences in communication and interactions between Americans and Japanese. However, for one student it was not just an initial experience, but the topic of American girls being fat was a continuous discourse even after seven months in the U.S. In the interview he kept asking, "*Why*

90

can't American girls be skinny like (girls) in Japan?" In the literature it is stated that in culture shock, some foreigners will genuinely look for an explanation of a phenomenon, and try to gain an understanding of why certain things are done in a certain way. If students find explanations reasonable they will accept and adapt to the host culture. Other foreigners will reject the host culture. They expect the host nationals or environment should use the "correct" or "best" way, which is of the native country. This student belonged to the second category.

Many East Asian students were shocked by the American students' attitude toward time in school settings. Everyone leaves the classroom right away once the class is over. East Asian students were surprised about no students sleeping during the class. During group work, the activity is task-based and time oriented. If the students agreed to meet from 5 to 7pm, the students will all leave at exactly seven, regardless of the task being completed or not. Rini was shocked and disarrayed at this behavior:

> *So yesterday for the informative speech in the Public Speaking class we had set up a group*
>
> *meeting to determine the credibility of the sources we were going to use, like website etc. The*
>
> *assignment was to find five different kind of source and determine how credible they were. So*
>
> *the group 4 or 5 of the students in our group, we met at the library to do that, well they were*
>
> *all doing something on the Internet and then when the time came, all the American students*
>
> *just left. Even though we are not finished everyone left. I was not sure what to do at all.*
>
> (Interview #L9-7, Lines 20-25).

Other students said that it is very hard to approach American students because they leave the classroom quickly after class. However, most American students schedule one class after another and many of them have part-time jobs. The American educational system is set up in a way that

there are high chances you will never have a class together again in the future, unless you are in the same major.

When Asian students were asked about culture shock, the top three categories were about interactions with Americans. The most common problem was that Americans were perceived as unfriendly. The second category pertained to the East Asian students' disillusionment caused by the differences between their expectations and reality. The last category was American ethnocentricism, which was demonstrated by lack of interests and knowledge about foreign countries. One student recalled her first culture shock that happened during her flight to the U.S.

"This was my first time coming to U.S. one year ago, I flew using Delta airlines, before I always used JAL where flight attendants are slim and friendly, but on Delta the flight attendants were fat and walked the aisles with folded arms and unfriendly expressions. Other customers said "Excuse me", but the flight attendant was already talking to another customer, and the air attendant said loudly "Be quiet I am talking to another customer right now", she was shouting, I mean I know she was busy, but this would not happen in Japan. This was my first culture shock." (Interview # S5).

Other students also said customer service representatives in the U.S. lack smiles. There was a student who felt Americans are very ignorant about other countries, *"I was at the M. clinic center and the receptionist asked where I was from, so I said Japan. She asked me where that was, so I showed it to her on the map, and she said she wanted to visit it sometime. But I know she never will (visit Japan)."*

Students who were in the U.S. for longer periods of time have a more critical attitude toward U.S. They had more stories about negative interactions with Americans. Yuna, a junior Japanese student felt humiliated at a party: "A *blond girl said, "I am quarter Jap". I think there*

92

is a lot of discrimination, and the locals don't like outsiders. No one really talks to us, probably because they don't think we speak English."(Interview# S5). Another example happened while she was walking with two American friends. Yuna's friends were approached by another American girl, who said Hello to everyone except Yuna. She felt like she was an outsider. She noticed that many local American students knew each other since high school, so it is hard to join their group. It is even harder to participate in their conversations, which have inside jokes or unknown topics.

Five interviewees felt comfortable enough to discuss their romantic relationships. Two girls said courting in the U.S. is very different from Japan. American guys are more aggressive when approaching girls. One Japanese student said: *"At a party guys would come up and flirt, then when I would say "I have a boyfriend back home." Their response is "I don't care" but I care. Guys in Japan are less direct…"* The Japanese student denied the American students in an indirect way. However, American students are often not serious and do not mind her having a boyfriend back home. Another girl who dated an American said she doesn't want to date an American again because their way of thinking is too different. Interestingly, one of the Japanese male students who had a girlfriend back home, was frustrated not with Americans but with other Japanese. He was often teased about his relationship and angrily said, "*They (Japanese students) have Americanized, and not in a good way"* (Interview#Sh13). Another two Asian female students Saki and Kim were opened to dating Americans, but in reality they went on dates only with other international students. Because of the limited interactions those two girls had with American students, Saki and Kim spent most of their time fraternizing with other international students.

Another surprise for Asian students was that university events at M. University sometimes lasted late into the midnight. Moreover, they agreed that there was a lot more discussion in the American classroom than in their native countries, *"Students raise their hands and participate in answering questions, but some students talk without even raising their hand(s)."* Manners were another point of heated discussion. The students went back and forth discussing how punctual American professors are, while one music major student insisted his professors are always late. Nevertheless there was a consensus that all of the classes end on time. East Asian students were surprised that American students did not hesitate to rush the professor by packing their things before the class ends. The classrooms were empty one minute after the class. In Japan, students slowly pack up and often chat with each other after class. Most of the students had few personal interactions with their classmates, but noticed the difference in the manners. For example American students taking too much space. *"The American students put their feet up on the chair in front of them, even if there is someone sitting there. In Japan this would be an unbelievable kind of behavior, but the American professors say nothing".* The students who had roommates stated that it was difficult to get along with their roommates who lack manners. Katsu said: *"My roommate is always hot, he opens the windows and turns on the fan even when it is cold."* More detailed descriptions of the issues with roommates are provided in Chapter Six.

5.4. Phase Four: Integration or Adaptation

It is very difficult to measure students' adaptation to the U.S. What might be seen as success for one student can be considered as a failure by other students. Adaptation involves coping with the environment, but the ultimate goal is integration. It could be said that all of the students adapted successfully, since no one left school during the time of the fieldwork. However, very

few students integrated into the local culture and none of them assimilated into it. From the observations, it could be seen that each of the three groups were segregated from the local culture and each other. Few students in each group were able to achieve a healthy balance between preserving their ethnic identities and consuming American culture. This happens when Asian students have equal number of co-ethnic and local American friends. There is no clear line between students who assimilated, integrating or separated from American culture. The majority of participants in this study lay on the broad spectrum from full integration to complete seclusion.

A students named Ho, who seemed to integrate well into the local American culture. She was born in a big city but grew up in a rural area in Korea. Her parents owned a Korean restaurant and were very busy, so she spent a lot of time with her elder brother who took care of her. When the restaurant was not busy between lunch and dinner time, her father often spoiled her by bringing delicious food home. Like many other children, Ho studied piano and played saxophone in elementary school. She had many happy memories with the school band members. In Middle School, she was elected as a student council president. Ho graduated from a language high school majoring in English with a Japanese minor. Although Ho liked Japanese dramas and culture, she found it difficult to study the language, so she decided to focus on English. Her high school had many foreign teachers. They made her interested in going abroad and seeing the world. In 2013, accompanied by her parents she arrived at the city where M. University is located. She was expecting all of America to be like New York and with a lot of racism, but instead she met nice people in the countryside. Ho said,

What was difficult was the language and [being] homesick. When I first came here, I couldn't speak any English. I just like shutting my mouth and then sitting, and then just listening when friends talk to each other. I just listen, listen, listen, and listen. Then after

like three months, actually like for one month, I didn't say anything. After one month, I

started talking, and then start to hang out. English was hard to me. Right now, it's okay.

(Interview H2-16, Lines 132-136).

Now at M. University, she has an equal number of American and international friends. She is the leader of one of the school organizations, which has more than twenty members. Although her best friend is from Korea, she does not spend much time with the Korean group. Her boyfriend who is not Korean lives together with her and her best friend in an apartment nearby.

Like other American students, she drives a car, goes to bars and fraternizes with a few close American friends. In my opinion, this is a successful story since Ho is happy with her life in the U.S. She mimicked certain behaviors of Americans and still preserved her cultural identity. When she goes out with her American friends they usually go to popular local food places, but at home she cooks Korean food and the food from her boyfriend's country. She can see the good points of both Korean and American culture. She said, "*I came to experience individual life, Americans don't care about other people's life. Koreans want to know everything.*" Ho mentioned that she made many American friends who were interested in Korean culture at Korea Club.

Looking at the example of Japanese students, none of them joined or had friends from the Japan club. Saori, a new Japanese student came to the University of M. in January 2016. She adapted quickly to her new life. Saori is from a single-mom family, and she spent a year applying for scholarships and earning enough money to come to the U.S. Her dream is to work in academia and conduct research in physics. She deliberately avoided all contact with other Japanese students when she arrived. She explained that she missed home a lot and was afraid if she started hanging out with the Japanese students then she would not learn English at all. She

surrounded herself with American and international students and when she felt lonely she talked to them. Her American roommate helped her integrate, and after only two months of staying in the U.S., she had many American and international friends. However, as the time went by she started spending more time with other Japanese students. After her first semester, she moved out of the dorm and started living with a co-ethnic and another international student.

Ima, a female student from Kanagawa, had even less luck in making close friends. She was positive and did interact with many Americans. Ima successfully adapted to her physical environment and did well in school. She chose to cook food for herself even though it was not very convenient to do in the dorm. The problem was that Ima had very few intimate interactions with Americans or other international students outside of school. She said that she made friends in class, however they never met outside of the classroom. Majority of the time, Americans see interactions with classmates as fleeting encounters. Ima also identified her Resident Assistant (hereafter referred to as RA) as the closest person to her in the U.S. They have cooked food in the dorm together on two occasions and Ima visited the RA during her desk hours. Each week RAs have to be available to the students at the dorm for a certain number of hours. It is a required part of their job as Resident Assistants. After nine months, Ima said that she feels she learned a lot and had a positive experience.

Conversely, some students see their time in the U.S. as a trialing period they must endure for the sake of a better future. Students like Shane, after more than three years in the U.S., still have no American friends. Many of such students socialize only with other co-ethnic and international students. Shane is interested in Japan, since he is majoring in Japanese and has a Japanese girlfriend. His parents chose for him to go to the U.S. and he agreed it was good for his future career, but he has little interest in the U.S. He described local people as: "*The people here*

they are a little bit, not racist, but I think they are cold. They don't want to talk to you unless you talk to them. I'm the kind of person who aren't just talk to other people by myself, so for people like me I don't have much American friends." (SH1-17, Lines 74-77). Jack is another case of an alienated student who has little interaction with Americans; interestingly he calls himself a "playboy" as he often switches Chinese girlfriends. During his friends' birthday, he was devastated because his girlfriend broke up with him. He was upset and drank a lot "*She said I was immature and too childish*". The party ended with all the Chinese students' very drunk singing Jay Chou's songs, and Jack got a different girlfriend two days later. He majors in computer science and lives with Shane. Jack commented on the Americans as "*The people are not that open-minded not as I was thinking. There are still many people who are conservative. It depends, because each country has different people; some people are open-minded, some are not.*"(J1-18, Lines 63-65). When he first arrived to the U.S. Jack did experience a few American parties with his bad American roommate, who drank and smoked weed. However, after observing Shane and Jack for one year, I did not notice them having any interactions with Americans. Shane and Jack both had the image of California when they arrived to M. University. It seemed that they both were disappointed with the reality of what rural U.S. was like. They both play League of Legends, and the majority of interactions they have with Americans is virtual.

Bob from China has little desire to interact with Americans, and tends to avoid such interactions. He describes them as too different and difficult to understand, even though he does think they are polite. Bob's family in China is financially well off, so he can afford to go home every year, and last year he traveled around China. Nevertheless, at one point he did have a part-time job; he worked illegally a few days a week delivering Chinese food. Although it is outside

the scope of this research, many other Chinese students reported being treated badly by naturalized Chinese[9]. This is just another such case, Bob's boss paid him below minimum wage and did not reimburse fully for gas. Bob described one experience on the job:

I don't have American friends. When I deliver the food, some people are pretty terrible. One guy gave me the money not enough for the food. He said I delivered very late so I throw the food away in front of him, He wanted to punch me and I told him I have knife in the car. He went back then. He said some swear words. You are seeing many terrible people when you deliver the food. They are silly because they don't even remember their address. It was hard for me to find their address. Some people live in the poor place can be polite; some live in a rich place but can be really rude. I worked 3 times around 15 hours. I quit the job then, I worked over half a year. I quit it because the boss is terrible. The boss's son is terrible, but not so[that] bad as the boss. They don't give me enough gas fees. The food is better. But compare with the food in China, that restaurant's food is just so-so.

Bob in China seems to have many friends, he had just a few Chinese friends and zero American friends in the U.S. He worked with the Chinese and had limited interaction with his classmates. Next semester, he planned to live in an apartment with another Chinese student. In September 2016, I received news that he was suspended from school. Over the summer holidays in China, he had no access to his school email account. When he returned to the U.S., he was confronted with the harsh reality of being unable to register for classes and his visa was revoked due to his low GPA. After over three years of struggling in the U.S., Bob was boarding the airplane back home, with only his roommate who drove him to the airport. Instead of heartfelt

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[9] Chinese who either have American Citizenship or permanent residency

goodbyes, his roommate was complaining about not knowing what to do with Bob's apartment and all of his stuff. There was no farewell party, nor a group of students sending him off. It was a silent event that very few people knew about. Last I heard from Bob's roommate that Bob was not planning to return to finish his studies in the U.S. instead he wanted to buy a fake certificate. For a small university like M. no one would check the authentication of the diploma. Although he realized that he probably could not get a job at a big international company, he could still get a job at a Chinese company. He said he was done with the U.S.

5.5. Phase Five: Reverse Culture Shock

Kei was the first student to return back home, but she was in the U.S. on a short-term exchange and was away from Japan for only 5 month. She reported being surprised by the politeness of everyone. For her, what stood out the most was that all the people around were Japanese meaning there were few foreigners in Japan. The second reverse culture shock was the Japanese politeness, which included the "Irrashyaimasen" and other pleasantries and greetings.

Students from China sometimes have difficulty to readjust to the pollution and the car traffic. There are many cars and E-Bikes on the streets in China that do not follow the traffic rules and they communicate through honking. Another reverse culture shock is the uncleanliness, where people spit not only on the streets but also sometimes on the bus. One student reported that when he returned back to China after one week, his stomach broke down. Sam, from China, reported that after being in the U.S. for three years, he felt disgusted at everyone around the table in the restaurant using their own chopsticks to take the food from the plates in the middle. Prior to living in the U.S. it was normal and there were no second thoughts about it. But now, just imagining the saliva from the mouths of other people touching the food everyone shares, he says "*makes me want to throw up*".

One student who returned to Korea and was in the army complained the seniors around him were ridiculous. The hierarchical organizational structure at universities and workplace made him uncomfortable. He wished to return back to the U.S. He wrote, *"I really didn't like the part that I had hated when I was young. I am serving a mandatory service back in Korea right now. If I have a chance to get out of here, I will not live in this country ever. I will come back to see my family and friends, but the culture up here is quite messed up."* This problem also confronted students in daily life upon return to Korea. A student said: "*The age is very important in Korea. For instance, I cannot eat until the oldest person starts to eat. I get yelled at eating first... It just I forgot a lot of things about Korean culture, but there is no tolerance about that*." It is common for sojourners to get no sympathy from people back home while readjusting to home culture. It is expected that once you return home you will naturally fit in, but it is not always possible for students who spent a long time abroad. Furthermore, the process of readjustment is not instant, it takes time. The overall process of adaptation is visually displayed on Figure 7.

Figure 7: DURING PHASES OF ADJUSTMENT
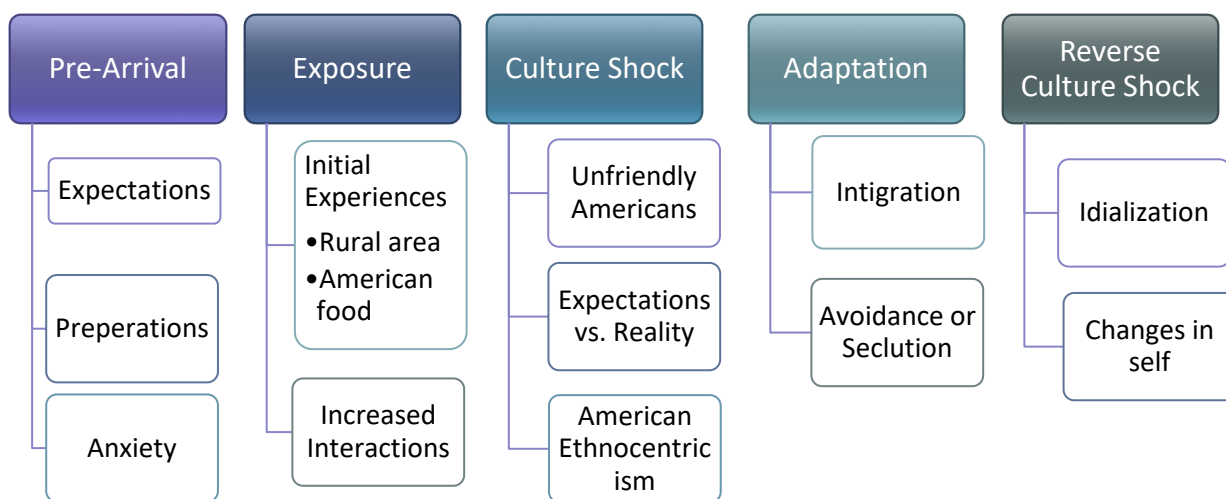
5.6. IAT and the Phases of Adjustment

The IAT looks into the requirements, desires, and expectations of two people in their interactions. Therefore, based on the gathered data, the requirements, desires, and expectations of East Asian students and the local Americans are explored in this section. Firstly, a majority of the American students attending M. University are from rural towns in the same or neighboring state. The population in these areas ranges from 500 to 5.000 people. Many students are from families of agricultural background, so when they arrive at M. University, it is very urban for them. These students have little to no interactions with foreigners, and are often unsure of how to communicate with them. When observing the interaction of local American students, they keep a much bigger distance between each other, compared to the Asian students who come from highly populated areas. The local students and local populations have a strong sense of sports culture. Particular attention is paid to American football, baseball, and to some degree, basketball. When going to a grocery store, the cashier often will ask the customer, "You going to the football game this weekend?" Answers such as, "I don't follow sports," are always met with a frown. Supporting the teams, watching the games, and cheering the local stars are like a second religion in the area. Looking at the Asian students, many Japanese and Korean students are unaware of the rules of American football, and many mainland Chinese students do not understand the point and rules of baseball. The American students, therefore, mostly interact with East Asian students on a need-to basis, when they are required to do so. Also, they often only engage in interaction in the classroom based on the teachers' instructions. Therefore, a majority of the local students don't have a true desire to communicate with East Asian students, partially due to the stereotype of foreigners not speaking English. For American students, according to the IAT, the formula would look like this: the expectation that this person doesn't speak English + desire to avoid

awkward situation + no actual need to interact (unless it is forced upon by the Instructor), leading to a somewhat negative interactional position. When the need to interact is required by an instructor, then the expectation changes after the East Asian student can demonstrate some degree of competency in the English language. However, for the American students to desire to interact with East Asian students, it is necessary for the East Asian students to overcome this initial negative predisposition or this shyness of American students from rural areas. There are certainly rural American students who are curious and are genuinely interested in other countries; however, those interested in East Asian countries are, by far, a small minority. Nevertheless, majorities only know about the local culture, rituals, and events, which East Asian students are unfamiliar with.

Looking at these interactions from the perspective of East Asian students, the initial interaction position was positive, as they had a lot of desire to interact with American students. They expected American students to be friendly, outgoing, and interested in their respective cultures. In order to integrate into American culture, they needed to form friendships or intimate relationships with the Americans to receive the social support that is necessary to cope with a foreign environment. Upon the discovery of the discrepancy between the expectations and reality, many students described Americans as unfriendly and cold. The need for social support still remained, but with East Asian students no longer expecting American students to be able to fill that requirement, many students turned to a more familiar co-ethnic group.

When the interactional position became negative, many students like Bob avoided interactions with American students. However, students with a positive attitude like Ho, found some Americans who were friendly, interested in Korean culture, and wanted to form intimate relationships with Korean students by joining Korea Club. This led to the formation of intimate

relationships between this Korean student and local students. Another anomaly other than Ho was a Japanese student, Hiro. He found Americans very friendly and formed intimate relationships with his American roommate and his roommate's friends. Hiro loves American movies and Marvel comic books, and this interest gave way for a lot of interactions with American students with the same hobby. Hiro took classes in film studies, where he ended up meeting even more Americans with the same interests. Although he faced some difficulties in group work, he concluded that some people make better friends than work partners. Interestingly, once the local Americans became more intimate and interested in Hiro, they developed an interest in Japan, often searching YouTube videos about Japan and running to Hiro's room to ask him things such as whether or not it was true that Japanese people eat KFC for Christmas.

Developing intimate relationships and increasing the interaction between sojourners and local students is imperative to the process of adjustment to a foreign culture. Loneliness has adverse effects on the sojourners (Wang & Sun, 2009) and social support is necessary for the students to cope with their process of adjustment (Miyazaki, Bodenhorn, Zalaquett & Ng, 2008; Wei, Heppner, Mallen, Ku, Liao & Wu, 2007). Interactions with the local population contributes to sojourners cultural adjustment, as demonstrated by numerous studies (Furnham, & Bochner, 1982; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Perkins, 1977). Furthermore, Sellitz and Hook (1962) showed that international students felt a stronger connection to the United States if they had at least one close American friend. However, the majority of the students in this study had few close American friends. Therefore, the importance of understanding mutual needs, expectations and desires to explain the behavior patterns of both East Asian and local students is of utmost importance.

5.7. Differences in Rural verses Urban Areas

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between the experiences of Asian students in the rural versus urban area, since the data of this dissertation was mainly obtained from field work in a rural area. However, some comparison is possible based on the findings from two sources. First, the perceptions of the students in this study often reflected a belief that the major factor of the dissatisfaction of their experiences in the U.S. stemmed from studying in such a remote area. Secondly, some of the students have spent time in metropolitan areas of the U.S. and were able to compare their experiences in rural and urban U.S.

<p style="text-align:center;">"My image of America was California"</p>

In many adaptation and culture shock models, the process starts with the honeymoon period, however, this experience is somewhat different for those Asian students in the rural area. The first thing upon arrival that they are confronted with is the countryside they did not expect. There was a uniformity among all of the Asian students regardless of the country of origin in the initial shock of the area being rural. Most of the students had a mental image of America equating to the Big City or the sunny state of California. One student from Japan said her first impression was: "*Nothing, like, it is so so countryside that like, WOW. My imagination is[that] it [is] like New York, I have been there or Los Angeles, but I have never been here in America and I was so surprised. I thought there would be more stores, more, more [pause] but this city has nothing*" (#SA11-11 Lines 9-14). Another student from China said:

> [My first impression] *like in my mind were those movies and cities should be a metro area, but V city[10] is a very, very rural area so it's like [pause] how can I say. I felt kind of sad. Like I thought it should be much better than Hangzhou but that's just my feeling at*

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[10] V city is an even smaller city than M, which is located 3 hours away from M University. This student first attended a college in V city prior to transferring to M University.

the beginning. After I lived there for 2 years, I felt it was a great place to live. The environment is much better, because Hangzhou has very severe air pollutions, and its quite here and [there are] many activities like fishing and hiking (Yu12-15, Lines 67-73).

A female student from Korea also described the initial surprise, "*Actually, before I came here I watched Gossip Girls, the drama. I kind of imagined it like that. Luxury life. New York. Handsome, that kind of stuff.*" While she likes her life at M University, she did feel a little disappointed when she first arrived "*Actually, I didn't know this M. [city] is rural area. I just said, "Okay, X state? Okay, fine." I came here and then as soon as I arrive to the airport. Yeah, this is rural.*" (Interview#H2-16 Lines 40-59). Another Korean student said "*People in Korea think America is the top one...: When I was young, I was learned that American is big cities, everything is big, bigger than us, then when I growing up, I know America has famous schools.*" (Interview OJ22 Lines 21-22) however, when he arrived he felt "*There were just fields and fields, it was not what I imagined.*" (Interview# OJ2-22 Lines 40-46) One of Chinese-Malay students described her feeling when she arrived to the rural city as: "*Dead. It is so quiet. I came here in early August, I knew no one here. I felt a little bit sad, I miss home, food, and my parents. I think people at M city is the same as the people from other cities.*" (Interview #HW3-15, Lines 76-79). One of the few students who did expect the area to be rural said "*I heard it is countryside, but I never thought it is so inconvenient like this, because America is still broad and strong. First we need a car to do everything.*"

There were a few students who were happy about the small town, but even they were initially surprised by the American countryside. The positive side of living in a rural area for the East Asian students were: for the Chinese students, it was the quietness and the lack of pollution, for the Japanese students it was the safety and lack of crime, one Korean student thought that

106

local Americans are nicer than the ones in bigger cities. Although many students did not have much of a choice, or were not aware of the rural area, there was one student from Japan who had a choice to go to a metropolitan area, but chose M University because of the countryside. She was on a short term exchange, lasting only one semester, as explained her decision:

Because if I go to [big] city, maybe I can't study a lot. Because it has many fun places there, so... And I just want to go [the place] where there is not many Japanese student. I don't wanna be with Japanese students, but many American people and I wanna concentrate on studying. And people in countryside might be very kind and it's cheaper than city.... I've been to New York for four days before I came here [what I imagined America] I thought everything is big...I really don't have any idea."(Interview#KEI11-25 Lines 22-30).

However, during her time at M. University, she spent majority of her time with other Asian students, and her closest friend was from Taiwan. She actively sought interactions with local students and had some American friends, but no deep meaningful relationships were formed with local American students. However, the relationship with her Taiwanese friend continued even after going back to Japan.

Students Perceived Experiences in Urban vs Rural Areas

Some of the students have visited or spent time studying in metropolitan areas. These students perceived that life in a big city is much better than in rural areas. One student from Taiwan noticed a difference between Americans in California and the local Americans:

I think they [local Americans] don't look at things the same way; they have different perspectives. I guess and it's because they have different life experiences. For example, they're not too familiar with foreign cultures or they're just not interested here, [but] in

California it's different. Even though you're not interested, there [are] many immigrants and you can see people from all over the world walking next to you... [there are] so many International students. However, here, there are some local students who have never met Chinese student in their whole life. It's like one in 20 people, maybe an occasion person who met one here, but in California there is many Asians and Little Tokyo and there's, like, so many Asians there and they have to just know them. (Interview# LI2-12 Lines 34-41)

Another student from Japan, who studies in California prior to transferring to M. University described how California was different:

So different, way better, people are different, and way more open. They are more racist in California, when I was walking once someone just started screaming "Yellow, Fuck You!!" Here [M. city] they pretend to be nice, fake nice. And [in California] when I wear a nice T-shirt, they talked to me a lot and would say "Nice T-Shirt" but here, no one talk to me. In California people are more friendly and active, more interesting… (INTERVIEW# YA9-19 Lines 176-182).

There is a tone of reminiscence and some regret when the students talk about their time in big cities. The students thought that their interactions with Americans would be much better if only they were in California. One student from Taiwan who spent time in California described his experience and stated that due to being in the rural area, he plays a lot of video games:

I think American students here are not like the students in California, I don't think they like international students, some part. Because I have been to California several times, expected people like the people there. Which is friendlier, but not really here. The people here they are a little bit, not racist but I think they are cold. They don't want to talk to you

unless you talk to them. I'm the kind of person who aren't just talk to other people by myself, so for people like me, I don't have much American friends. For example in California when I go to the festival in the summer, [some] people ask me "Do you want to join?" They respect you, you know like I said before…. You know I wear eyeglasses and when I play basketball here [gym at M University] people call me "glasses", something like that. I don't care, maybe I don't care right now but I can [care] later. Because, I'm from the city so I didn't expect such a rural area, not that rural but I think around here and there is nowhere to go. Maybe that's why I play a lot of video games and mostly I'm friends with Chinese." (Interview# SH1-17 Lines 73-87)

Another student from mainland China expressed similar sentiment, "*I would say so the people in that (rural) city are more conservative. Probably because they are in the middle of the country, there are not many foreigners there compared to other major cities. So people were not that open-minded.*"

Few of the Korean students mentioned big cities or had the experience of studying in other parts of the U.S. Two of the students mentioned traveling on vacation to major cities but they did not have much interaction with the local Americans there, so they could not comment. One student did say she thought there was no differences, in her opinion all Americans are equally nice and friendly.

5.8. Local Population and Cultural Traditions

There is a mutual exchange between the attitudes of the host nationals and ethnic groups, this is often moderated by the popular opinion (Berry & Kalin, 1979). This suggests that the attitudes held by the local population toward the Asian sojourners can act as a mirror, and reflected back the way East Asian students view their classmates, professors, and other local

populations. So data was needed not on a national level, but particularly on the attitudes of the American students at M. University toward the Korean, Japanese and Chinese. In May 2015, in the initial interviews, as described in the methodology chapter, American students on campus were arbitrarily approached and asked for informal interviews. With the exception of a Political Science major student, who was particularly interested in Asian politics, the majority of the students were very unknowledgeable about these countries. One student said that China is developed and has fast trains, while Japan is still developing. Therefore majority of the data on local students was collected from the East Asian culture clubs and Anime club. From Anime Club, 21 surveys were collected, and another 12 surveys were gathered from China, Japan and Korea Club. Some students were in more than one club and were asked to only fill out the survey once. Three students did not fill out the backside and they were not included in the analyses. The main purpose was to look at the demographic of the American students that participated in these clubs, as well as what their attitudes toward the people and countries in East Asia. Other questions regarding their interactions with East Asian students on campus were also included.

The results showed that Japan was viewed most positively, followed by China, then Korea. Korea was the least famous and known, with the largest number of students indicating either no interest or not knowing anything about Korea or Korean people. Overall, there were more positive impressions of East Asian countries and people in personal opinions of the students (Table 4).

However, when the students were asked about the image of people from East Asian countries that an average American holds, the results were inconsistent, with the "model minority". They perceived that an average American had more negative associations (n=12) than positives (n=9) about people from East Asia. The positive responses were more homogeneous,

with the most common responses being 'smart' and 'hard-working.' The negative responses were much more diverse: bad at English, prude, standoffish, workaholics, they don't like Americans, foreign, and so on. The third theme that emerged was not the stereotype of Asians, but pertaining to the views on Americans. Seven responses of how Americans view Asians indicated that the average American view was limited or biased.

Table 4: Local Students Impression of East Asian Countries and People

	China	Japan	Korea	Chinese	Japanese	Koreans
Positive	n=14	n=19	n=8	n=15	n=17	n=9
	Culture (7)	Tech Adv.(8)	Culture (4)	Welcoming(5)	Hard-Working (4)	Polite (3)
	Large (4)	Culture (6)	Modern (3)	Hard-working (2)	Polite (3)	Friendly(2)
	Diversity (3)	Cool (3)	Food (1)	Other (7)	Value Education (3)	Other (5)
	Economy (2)	Pop Culture(3)			Creative (2)	
	Other (2)	Beautiful (2)			Other (6)	
Negative	n=7	n=4	n=5	n=2	n=2	n/a
	In Control(4)	Over Pupolated (2)	North Korea (4)	short (1)	discriminating (1)	
	Bad Goverm.(2)	Nationalistic (1)	Risky (1)	Brainwashed (1)	distrusting (1)	
	Finncial Inequality(1)	Generation Gap (2)	Not as famous(1)			
	Polution (1)					

The top categories were American views are biased, Americans are racist, and Americans only know the stereotypes of "*dragons and ninjas*," or "*every Asian is a Chinese*". One American student responded, "*Honestly, we are racist bastards*." (S#15). American students seemed to be aware of the discrimination and the limited knowledge of an average American about people from East Asia. This was consistent with the initial interviews. The most interesting result is that these surveys provided additional proof, on top of the testimonies of East Asian students, that many local Americans have little knowledge and interest in Asian countries, and knew few things about Asian people. One 23-year-old female American student wrote:

"*Americans are ignorant of East Asian countries so they may not be able to differentiate the various countries or cultures*" (AM Survey#27).

Surprisingly, the American students were able to correctly identify what Asian students might be struggling with in the U.S. without even having interacted with any Asian students. They identified things such as language barriers, racism, and difficulty in fitting in the U.S. Interestingly, one 19-year-old American female, majoring in Advertising, wrote that the challenges of East Asian students' interactions with American students are: "*East Asian students tend to stick together, so it can be hard to approach them*" (AM Survey#23).

The American students' expectation of language being a problem, or Asian students not speaking English contributes to local students not initiating conversation. As previously mentioned, the majority of these students come from small cities, and had few opportunities to interact with foreigners prior to arriving at this university. It is important to know that America is very diverse, and Americans in Los Angeles might be extremely knowledgeable and have a much higher level of interaction with Asians.

5.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the process of adaptation was explored by using the narratives of East Asian students and the five stages of adjustment. During the pre-arrival stage, most of the students were not adequately prepared and had unrealistic expectations about America and American people. During the stage of initial experiences, as their interactions with Americans increased, the students realized their expectations were inaccurate. They were still excited and viewed their surroundings positively until they were confronted with culture shock. For many, their inability to form relationships with Americans became a major problem and they described Americans as fake nice or cold. The results show that although the students were able to adapt,

the vast majority could not integrate into the local culture. The interactions between American and East Asian students remained limited and shallow, while East Asian students mingled among themselves and other international students. Conversely, American students knew little about Asian countries and had limited interest in their culture or people. American students who joined culture clubs were curious about East Asia and American students in China and Korea Clubs had interactions with the Asian club members. However, they found it hard to approach Asian students outside of the club activities.

The interactions between the East Asian students and local Americans were consistent with the explanation provided by the IAT. In particularly, the wrong expectations from both sides and Americans lack of desire or need to interact with East Asian students were major factors in predicting the behavior of both groups during their interactions. Some of the East Asian students perceived that the reason they could not integrate into the local culture was due to the location being in the countryside. However, according to the studies outlined in the literature review, Asian students in urban areas also experience the same problem.

This chapter's contribution is in filling the gap in the lack of exploratory studies of East Asian students' adaptation to rural areas. Another significant contribution is that it provides rich data on the development of relationships between American and East Asian students. This chapter demonstrated that both groups have wrong expectations and know little about each other's cultures.

CHAPTER SIX

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ADJUSTMENT

In this chapter, the findings addressing the second research question are presented. The types of adjustment and the process of adaptation that East Asian students go through are described. The focus is on the adjustment the students go through caused by drastic changes in the environment. The majority of the students are from major cities in Asia such as Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Taipei, while the city where they study is in a rural area. The university is a non-research teaching university. Next to the city where the university is located, there is a more urban city, with the tallest building reaching eighteen floors. Students often take the bus and go to the Pine Mall located in this neighboring town. Furthermore, the American students studying at M. University come from even more rural areas where the population of their town is commonly less than 1,000 people. This chapter addresses the types of adjustment the East Asian students go through. The focus of this chapter is on the cultural differences between the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students during their time in the U.S.

6.1. Types of Adjustments

In May 2015, when I arrived at the countryside where M. University was located, I spent many hours walking around the surrounding neighborhoods. What amazed me the most was the number of churches. Every two blocks there would be a large building with signs soliciting the Saturday and Sunday worship services. At first, I considered that the churches were more evident to me because I spent a long time in China and Japan where there are few churches. However, after I had researched the area, I found that the city had two McDonald's, two Starbucks, and over 35 churches. For the Asian students, what stood out the most was the rural area and the physical environment.

There is an amalgam of things that Asian students must get used to. The three broad categories that emerged were: physical adjustments, academic adjustments, and the social adaptations. The physical adjustment is the most eminent and refers to the physical objects and surroundings that the students must acclimate to, which includes things such as food, the town, school amenities, transportation system, and dorm life. The three sub-categories of physical adjustment were: rural area, weather, food, and living space. The shock of the physical environment change was overcome within the first one to two months of stay, though there were students who did get used to it as fast as in two weeks. Regardless of how they felt toward the environment, the majority of the students became adapted to their new physical location with more ease than adapting to the academic and social changes. The only exceptions were the students living with bad roommates who refused to change rooms, which resulted in them suffering throughout the year.

Next is the academic adjustment, which is usually something that students adjust to within the first semester of their studies. Some students were not able to succeed academically, resulting in low GPAs or academic probation with one student suspended due to academic failure. The initial difficulties upon arrival are listening and comprehension of lectures, along with general English ability. Then, as the semester progressed, the challenges of participating in discussions, group work, critical thinking, and other assignment emerged. It is important to keep in mind the enormous differences in the educational system between East Asian countries and rural American colleges. China, Japan, and Korea all have an examination system through which students enter the university. Often, it is very competitive and education is highly valued in Asian cultures. However, in the U.S., there is no subject exam. For American students, ACTs or SATs might be required, but for international students, only proficiency in English (TOEFL or

IELTS) is required. In rural American colleges, such as at M University, the acceptance rate is over 80%; however the graduation rate in four years is less than 30%. So, as one student said: "*Hard to get into college, but easy to graduate in Taiwan, but it is opposite here.*" (Taiwan Focus Group, 12-15, Line 41).

The final adjustment is the social adaptation, which students achieved in various ways. Few students were able to reach a deep level of integration into the local community. This is evident through their inability to form meaningful interactions with local Americans. Most students found themselves looking for social support among their co-nationals or other international students, as having intimate relationships with local students often proved harder than expected. Many students were disappointed with their interactions with Americans. American humor, the expectation of American students, and cultural differences were also part of the social adjustment. The intercultural dating experiences in the U.S. are also described in this section.

6.2. Physical Adjustment

Rural Area and Weather

The city where M. University is located is very rural, and is surrounded by flat farmland. Some of the students knew that they were going to a rural area, and still were surprised by what rural meant in the U.S. Nevertheless, the majority of the students imagined America to be what they see on T.V., like New York City and Los Angeles. For example, a student from Japan said, "*When I first arrived I thought nothing, like… so countryside, there is nothing here, in my imagination it is like New York, I have been there, or Los Angeles, but I have never been here in America and I was so surprised. I thought more stores, more, but this city has nothing.*" One student from Taiwan who was looking forward to going to the museums and exploring downtown said that her exploration of M. City and the neighboring city was finished in less than

one week. Austin, who came to study in high school and college from Taiwan described his first impression: "*When I first arrived and the airplane was landing in the local airport, there were just fields. [Emphasis on fields] I thought OMG I am going to live here for my high school and college years. I almost had tears dropping as I was landing. Actually, it was and is nothing to do here, but people are nice. They are really nice, but their cultural expectations are very low, because they don't even know where Taiwan [is located] or like you know… they don't care about international stuff.*" (AU 1-24, Lines 49-54). The town was not exactly as anyone imagined it to be, whether he or she were from China, Japan, or Korea. The few students who did do extensive research and wanted to go to rural and secluded areas were still surprised at there being no public transportation available on Sundays. All of the students complained about the weather, which is understandable, as in 2016 in April it was still snowing, and the temperature in winter was then -25 C. The local population rejoiced at the mild winter, while the Asian students for whom this was their first winter in these conditions reported being depressed. This was most shocking for students who came in January, as the weather was part of their first impression of the area. One story comes to mind from January 2016, when the temperature was -20 C. Sam and I were picking up a Taiwanese student from his apartment. It was so cold that we went back and forth many times and wondered if our plans for dinner were even worth pursuing because it was so cold. Even the twenty-second walk to the car seemed too long. It was hard to breathe in the cold air, and our noses and ears became red and hurt after being outside for a minute. Sam and I were sitting in the warm car waiting for Shane when we noticed two students, who were undoubtedly local, happily walking outside without gloves or hats. Both Sam and I started observing them carefully, as these two began to blow bubbles outside. After a bubble was blown and released they would poke it and we only heard loud laughter. They must have noticed our

bewildered staring, as the girl waved to us to join them. Neither Sam nor I understood exactly what was going on, but we both got out of the car, leaving it running, and joined them. They demonstrated that when you blow and release the bubble, it almost instantly freezes and when you poke it, it shatters like fragile glass into pieces. Sam and I were able to do this for five to ten minutes before the excitement was overtaken by the freezing cold. When the Taiwanese student came out we were already in the car, and he walked passed the Americans without a second glance. When he got in the car, I suggested that we could wait if he wanted to try blowing the bubbles. He gave me a look that was difficult to forget, as if I suggested the most unacceptable thing and he said, "No." It must be noted that for the local population, this was the mildest winter in many years, but for the Asian students, it was an ordeal of torture, and not one student said they enjoyed the winter.

Food

Among challenges in everyday life in the U.S., one of the biggest daily challenges was food; however, there were some subtle differences between the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean groups. All of the Japanese students agreed that the food in the cafeteria, as well as in American restaurants, was not tasty. Two of the most common words that were used were "mazui" and "oishikunai." Most of the students, who lived on campus, ate at the cafeteria, while one Japanese girl cooked her meals in the shared dormitory kitchen. Though it seemed that most of the students were aware that American food might not be delicious, one student said, *"American food is bad, and I knew that from the Japanese who studied in U.S. before."* Another student said, *"Before coming, I knew the food is not going to be delicious, and it was exactly as I thought."* One student said that the food was worse than he expected. Out of all the Japanese students,

there was not one that came to the U.S. with a positive expectation of food being delicious. The majority of Korean and Chinese students also agreed that they preferred eating ethnic food.

When asked about what it was that did not taste good, they said everything did not taste good and was too oily. When requested to describe exactly what it was in the taste that they disliked, after a minute of silence, one Japanese student said it was the strength of the flavor. Anything sweet was too sweet and anything salty was too salty for them. The other students agreed that that was most likely the reason why they could not get used to it, as Japanese were used to more bland flavors. Although the canteen serves a variety of food in a buffet style, including salad, pizza, Mexican food, hamburgers, dessert, and a full range of dishes, the flavoring is for the American taste buds, which prefer intensity to subtlety. Megu, a Japanese student who has been studying at M. University for almost three years, went as far as to say, "*I apologize to Americans, but I really feel pity for them to have to live all their life eating that food.*" She referred to American food as junk food throughout the interview. Another student, Tai, commented that she was surprised that the drink refills were free in many restaurants and added that the portions are enormous, while the fish is expensive in stores. However, the Japanese students are able to once in a while go to one of the two Japanese restaurants that are located in the city nearby.

The Korean group, on the other hand, is at a significant disadvantage. There are few Korean food products sold at the local Asian market, and there is not a Korean restaurant within a four-hour driving radius of M. University. The food at the cafeteria and at American restaurants is described as not well. Hyejin, one of the Korean exchange students, described the problem: "*I lost a lot of pounds. All the food here is pizza or pasta. In Korea, we don't usually*

119

eat pizza or pasta; we eat rice. I didn't like that at first, but now I can eat everything." (H 1-29 Line 41-51).

The Chinese students were the most advantageous in respect of there being many Chinese restaurants and the Asian Market was full of Chinese products. Still, the Chinese students living in the dorms who had to eat at the cafeteria did not like the food. In China, American food is very popular, in particular KFC and McDonald's. Out of all the East Asian students, one Chinese student, Yu, who is from the vicinity of Shanghai, reported the food not being a problem, as he has preferred American food since childhood. However, all other Chinese students disagreed. One student from Jiangxi clarified: "*Before I came to the U.S., you know, there's American food restaurants in China like KFC or McDonald's, so I thought American food is like that, because American restaurants in China, they're more like Chinese food, not authentic American. For example, in a Chinese McDonald's burger, it's hard to describe, but the flavor is more Chinese. And, [China] also has Chinese style food, for example, in American KFC, it's just roasted style, but in the Chinese KFC's there is Beijing roasted style chicken. It's quite different.*" (JA1-17, Lines 71-76). An exchange student commented on the cafeteria food: "[*It was bad at first] It's okay now, but I couldn't eat salad at the beginning. We always cook the vegetable in Taiwan. I think it is yummy now.*" (CN1-20, Lines 27-28)

Overall, the vast majority of the students from East Asia firmly believed that American food was not delicious. For the Japanese students, the flavors were too strong, with the sweets being too sweet, and other food being too salty. For the Chinese, the food did not have fragrance and flavors that ginger, soy sauce, and oriental spices bring. Many were girls very concerned about their diet and reported gaining weight. At first, the pattern would be that they would lose

weight and find the food almost unpalatable. As the time went by, they got used to the food and ate more, resulting in some weight gain.

However, the biggest problem for many students from East Asian countries was bad roommates. Some decided to move out in less than a month, while others continued to live in hostile or unpleasant conditions. The most common problems for male students were the lack of cleanliness or excessive noise of their roommates. For the girls, a common problem was the boyfriend of the roommate. Aya, a transfer student enrolled in the sociology undergraduate program, recalled her memories from living in the school dorms: "I have a dramatic story for you", she said excitingly:

> *So when I first arrived at M. University, I lived in the dorms and I had a horrible roommate. At first everything was okay, we signed a roommate agreement, in which we agreed that her boyfriend could visit her on the weekends. But then her boyfriend started to be in and out of the room all the time. Furthermore, I would wake up and see him half naked lying in her bed. The worst thing was his snoring. Here, I recorded it.*

She took out her cell phone and after a few minutes she played a 20-second recording of a loud snore. She giggled and continued her story.

> *So I talked to the RA and the three of us had a meeting about it. After that, our relationship became worse. She would come home in the early morning and sleep, but I have to go to class, so I had to turn on the lights. When my roommate yelled, "Turn off the light, I am sleeping," but it was almost noon! Then when I got a boyfriend, and he came to my room and said hello to my roommate, she just ignored him. Finally, the night before we were supposed to move out, she was packing all night. So I said, "Can you turn off the lights?" cause it was really late and I wanted to sleep. She said when she was*

sleeping, I had the light on, so I have to get over it. We started to argue, and she screamed, "Bitch!" at me and slammed the door." (Interview# S4).

When asked why she did not move out or change roommates, Aya said that she didn't want to lose, and felt that if she was the one who moved out, she would be defeated by her roommate. There was a sense of rivalry and hostile competition between them about who would last longer in the dorm.

Two other Japanese students moved out of their dorm rooms to live together because they were unable to live with their American roommates. Within two weeks of school starting, the two Japanese students turned in their documents to the Housing Department to move into an empty dorm room together. Shu describes it:

First month was very hard for me because of the roommate because he played computer games late at night, and I talked to him about playing games late at night. Like, I study late and I want to sleep, but he is noisy. He is speaking with someone during the game, and it is noisy, so I asked him to stop playing at night. He always said yes, but he didn't stop playing games. It's one of the … reasons to move out of the dorm… The other problem is that he is very smelly. He didn't wash his clothes often, but he often played basketball, so [he was] sweaty and smell. The smell of the sweat is very strong. These were the two problems. T. (Another Japanese student) he had the same problem, but his roommate not smelly, just played a lot of games. (SU 11-13, Line 84-92).

The two Japanese students moved out within two weeks and lived together for the rest of their exchange. Jack, a student from China, reported that his roommate was not only unclean and smelly, but also drank alcohol and stayed up late being loud. Jack not once said anything and lived with that roommate for a year.

Overall, the experiences with roommates could be divided into good and bad experiences, with positive experiences being rare with American or other international students. The summary of the results of the experiences with their roommates is illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Roommate experience

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                                    ┌─────────│     Rude     │
                                    │         └──────────────┘
                                    │                              ┌──────────────────┐
                                    │         ┌──────────────┐ ┌───│  Used my things  │
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                                    │         │    Space     │   │ ┌──────────────────┐
                       ┌──────┐     │         └──────────────┘   └─│ Other people in  │
            ┌──────────│ Bad  │─────┤                              │    the room      │
            │          └──────┘     │                              └──────────────────┘
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            │                       │                          ┌───│  Drunk and       │
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┌────────────────────┐                        └──────────────┘ ├───│  Not clean and   │
│  Experiences with  │                                         │   │    Smelled       │
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            │                                                   └───│    Different     │
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            │                       ┌──────────────┐           ┌───│  Same interests  │
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                                    │                              └──────────────────┘
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                                    │         ┌──────────────┐ ┌───│ Friendly/ Helpful│
                                    └─────────│Good Personality│──┤ └──────────────────┘
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                                                                 └─│    Outgoing      │
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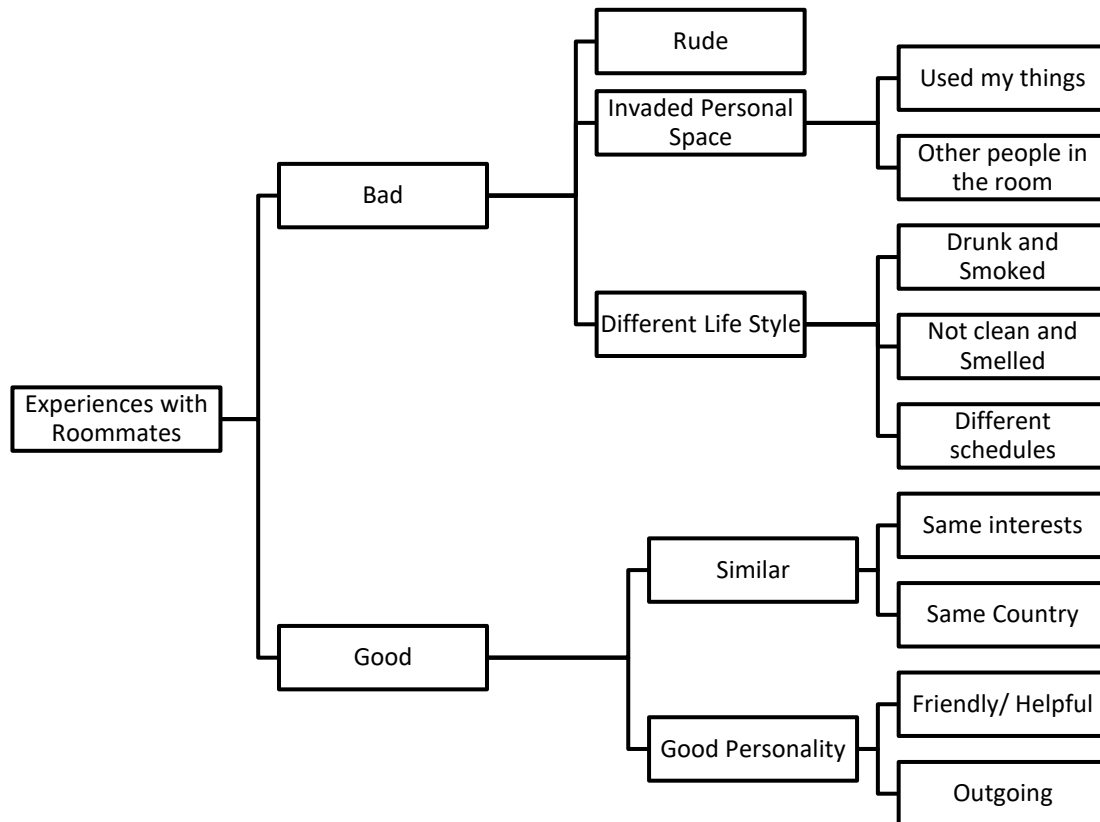
6.3. Academic Adjustment

All students said the biggest difference and their biggest worry in studying in the U.S. was their English language ability. Many students lacked confidence in their English level at first, and after one semester, were able to achieve higher marks and adapt to the academic environment, saying English was no longer the biggest problem. However, other students struggled long term. Students with low GPAs said their inability to succeed academically was

due to the language, even after years in the U.S. It is important to note the differences in the system of education in East Asian countries and the U.S. Although there are some similarities between all educational facilities in the world, there are distinct differences in the system of education between the East and the West. It is commonly known that American elementary and secondary students are at an academic disadvantage compared to counterpart students from East Asia. Many argue that the East Asian model of education can provide solutions for the problems faced by American students. Conversely, this idea is commonly dismissed because scholars argue that the cultural differences would make the East Asian educational system inapplicable in the U.S. (Jeynes, 2008). In 1964, the gap between American and Japanese student performance was not very large, making this a more recent trend. School attendance rate has increased in East Asian countries, while the scores of American students went downward. Though students from East Asia have been noted to particularly exceed in math and science, Berliner (1993) has pointed out that the emphasis on tests and problems in creativity in the East Asian educational models are a real problem. Countries in East Asia such as Japan and Korea, where American presence was felt first hand, were more affected by the Western education policies (Shibata, 2003). After Meiji restoration, Japan was education system was influenced by the West, and so was Korea, but through missionary schools (Jeynes, 2008). One of the differences between the Eastern and Western approach to education is that in the West, it is more common to divide the class into small groups. Whole class teaching is much more common in East Asian countries, and fits well with the Confucian notion of community welfare over individual.

Another cultural difference between the Eastern and Western education paradigm is the focus on ability versus effort. In the U.S. the ability is emphasized, while in the East Asian countries precedence is given to individual effort. Preparatory schools in Japan and Korea, called

jukus and hogwons, are commonplace. The biggest difference is that the education system in many East Asian countries is focused on preparing the students for the university entrance exams. The American education system is very different and focuses on freedom and maximizing each student's abilities, yielding in a wide variation in the skill level of graduates (Jeynes, 2007). Another distinction in the educational background of students from East Asia and America is that in Asia, they have classes on moral education (Jeynes, 2008), which was removed from the American education system. It is important to understand these distinctions and keep them in mind when interpreting the narratives of East Asian students studying in the U.S.

English Comprehension and Humor

During the first months of study in the U.S., students reported that listening to lectures and comprehending what the professors said was the most challenging. In class discussions, American students would speak too fast and many students were unable to follow the lecture or discussion. After the first semester they were able to understand more. Many students reported not being able to comprehend when professors would joke. Later, students indicated that their issues weren't in English comprehension, but in American humor. It was something that was reported from all three groups, and more than half of the students explicitly stated there was a problem with American humor. When prompted, other students confirmed without hesitation that the humor and jokes of American professors were incomprehensible to them. For example, when asked, one Korean student recalled, "*The marketing professor, talked about the condom, and talk about their marketing. Like, they make, usually the condom companies make a small, medium, large, but one company make a large, and super large, like kind of that. All of the students laughed, but I couldn't understand why that's so funny.*" (NA 3-1, Line 138-141) Mia, a Japanese student, told her story of America jokes as, "*I never laughed at them. I never*

125

understood what was funny. First, I thought maybe I couldn't understand what they said, but even when I think I understand what they say, I dont know what is funny about it. Now it's different. I can understand what they say most of the time, but I just don't think its funny." (MI 3-7 Lines 130-133). Hiro, a student from Japan, said it was not just the classroom humor; even American comedy shows are lacking and not funny compared to Japanese bonsai comedy. Interestingly, Gebhard (2013) describes a story of a Japanese student at a comedy show not being able to tell what was funny and when to laugh and ended up just laughing wherever the audience around him laughed.

Textbooks

The first thing that all the students reported being surprised at was the amount and the price of textbooks for each class. The students also discussed that the price of textbooks was extremely high in the U.S. compared to Japan. The size of the textbook and having the option of renting the textbook from a bookstore were alien to all of the students.

During the focus group, students reported having to spend more than $200 on textbooks just for one class. Some classes required more than one textbook, while other classes had additional readings, but had no main textbook. The edition of the textbook was also important. Ordering online sometimes resulted in getting the wrong edition of the textbook, and the page numbers did not match what was outlined in the syllabus. A student from Taiwan explains, "Reading [is difficult] because when I study in Taiwan, the professor will actually use the textbook during the class; it's like we're studying together. But in the United States, professors are usually using their own data or materials instead of the textbook, so you have to read by yourself. And I think it's better to review before you go to class and I don't think I have that kind of habit." (SH1-17, Lines 128-132)

<u>Professors</u>

The style of teaching is different and students from Japan, China, and Korea noted this. The biggest difference is the distance between the professor and the student. East Asia is influenced by Confucianism, which has strict rules of social order, and demands veneration of elders. Furthermore, civil servant positions in ancient China were awarded based on academic merit through imperial examination (*kējǔ*). This leads to Asian students having a high respect for education or educated people, as well as someone older than them. However, most of the students on the first day of class are confronted with the American classroom culture that breaks these deeply embedded ideas when the professor states something similar to, "Welcome to my class, my name is Bob Clandestine, but I want all of you to call me Bob. Let's have a great semester together." In Japanese, Korean, and Chinese language, anyone older than you is referred to with an honorific term, and a teacher deserving an even higher level of respect has a word similar to "Professor" or "Instructor" added to his or her name. This also addresses the problem of social norms. As Cameron (2000) wrote, "The norms of written language have been codified and taught for centuries … In the case of the spoken language, by contrast, only the most formal and ritualized instances have been extensively codified and their rules explicitly taught." (p. 2) This applies to the Western cultures and English language, but it is faithful to a lesser degree in the East. The way you address your teacher is hammered into Asian students from a young age. Never talk back, use formal language, bow your head, avoid prolonged eye contact, at the end of each conversation thank them for their guidance, etc. Furthermore, the Asian students report being shocked at the disrespect they see in the classroom toward professors, such as American students packing their belongings even if the instructor is talking, as well as eating or drinking in class. Most shockingly, the East Asian students witnessed the American

students putting their legs up on the desk while the professor was lecturing. Confucianism promotes verbal and non-verbal respect toward elder and wiser individuals, while the American culture and history is more rebellious, and questioning authority cannot only be a norm, but is encouraged by promoting critical thinking and critiquing starting early on in educational institutions. One Korean student noted that American professors try to joke and be funny, while professors in Korea do not try to make the whole class laugh. From the observational notes and experiences of teaching at a university in Asia and in the U.S., as well as from the testimonies of the students, another difference in the classroom is that in the U.S., it very rare to see a student sleeping in class, and the professors usually arrive to class five minutes early and start class on the dot. A Japanese student studying Art and Film reported the only negative case. He reported that his professor was constantly five to ten minutes late, but the class always ended on time. This was the only case reported of American professors being unpunctual.

All of the students have reported having visited their professors during office hours at least once. The majority of the students reported not knowing about what office hours were until after they had arrived. A student from Korea noted that her university in Korea has an appointment based system, while a student from Taiwan said that there were office hours at his home university, but he never used it and it was probably different than in U.S. The students went to ask professors many things, such as upcoming assignments, tests, asking to double-check their assignment prior to turning it in, for advice, and sometimes just to chat. Four students reported either going to lunch with their professors or visiting their home.

Classmates

The majority of the students reported never having the experience of becoming close friends with their classmates. One Chinese student wrote in his survey response, "American

classmates are very friendly, although our friendship only stays "Hello" and "Bye."" Most East Asian students reported not talking to their classmates and not knowing the majority of the students in their classes. In smaller classes where the interactions were forced by mandatory group work, students did get to know their group members, but after the semester had ended the relationship did not continue. Saki, a Japanese student, went through an uncomfortable experience in her paralegal class:

> *It was a small class of ten people and I was the only international student [in the class]. With only Americans, it was hard to understand what they were saying and their vocabulary was hard to comprehend. It was a little difficult for me at first to be friends with Americans who kept having conversations with only each other. After that my Professor was very kind and gave a group assignment to the class, asking there to be three people in each group. My group members were very nice, and after that time they always helped me. I asked them [why they did not talk to me before] and they said they thought Asian people could not speak English and were different [from them)] but after we talked they said, "I changed my image of you." But at first I didn't talk to them and they didn't talk to me. I think [this continued] for 2 weeks. Sometimes they said, "Hi," but that's it.*" (SA11-11 Lines 73-85).

Group work

Mainly the Japanese students and some Taiwanese students identified group work as one of the most challenging tasks. There was only one Chinese student from mainland that complained about group work. One of the students had a class assignment where her American classmates offered feedback on the Japanese students' behavior during group work. After reading the feedback, the Japanese student wrote a short reflection that she offered to share:

There are three kind of comments I got from my group members: how did I work for the task, how did I communicate with group member, and what can I improve. First of all, I got comments such as "Committed to the project," "Doing her best to understand the text," "Slide was very well," "Portion was always done on time," and "Great job speaking in front of the class." When I worked for the group, I thought that all I could do was doing my best. Because I knew I could not speak English like other group members did, I believed I should have made up for it. That is why I decided to finish the entire job on time and understand the text book. Also, I did my best for the presentation. For example, I made a slide that was easy to understand by using few keywords, and made a script for the presentation and practiced before the presentation. From their comments and my perspective, I would say that I committed to the project by doing portion on time, practicing speeches for better speaking, making understandable slides, and understanding the textbook.

Secondly, I would like to talk about how I communicated with group members. My group member said that I was [a] "Very kind group member," "Struggled to understand what the group members were saying," "Always communicate through messages if she was struggling or had any questions," "Asked for help when it was needed and always asked for someone to look over her work to make sure it was correct," "Helpful and positive," "Hard worker, tried hard to involved during group meetings," "Praised those who helped me," and "Best fit under the task-related role of the information/opinion seeker because she was great about asking questions if she was unsure or didn't understand something." During the group work, I kept my mind that I should not have left something without understanding, and asked anything until I fully understood what they said. This is the reason why I said that I asked for help and best fit for information/opinion seeker. I also attended all the meetings even if I could not talk to them a lot

since I need to understand what our group member thought about. On top of that, I got comments that I was positive and praised those who helped me. Actually, I tried to be positive because it got through by my attitude. Overall, I believe that I communicated with our group members by asking for help, attending every meeting, and be positive.

Finally, I would like to talk about suggestions I got from our group members. They said that I should speak more, such as, "Should express my own opinions and thoughts," "Speaking more in person and showing us what I was working on so they could help in person for better understanding on both sides," and "Participation in group conversation about ideas and brainstorming about the project as a group." This was the hardest part for me because all I could do was keep up with their conversation. But, I think I should be conscious of expressing my own thoughts, and at least say something.

The struggles of the student and the reactions of the American students in their natural environment are clearly demonstrated by this narrative. During group communication, American students saw K. as struggling and actively asking questions, demonstrating that the Japanese student did not have an entirely passive role; however, the focus of suggestions for improvement revolved around "speaking more."

One student from China explained why she started to hate group work when she came to the U.S.: "Most of my teammates are lazy; they want me to do their work for them. When we set up a meeting to work together they show up late or don't show up." (AN1-19, Lines 104-105). Many students say that group work is the hardest thing in their academic life. One Japanese exchange student states:

The group work is hardest of all other things right now. You know if it is just me I can later look up the word, read books, but in group work we have to right there and then

131

solve the problem or come up with an answer. It is very difficult." (Interview #L9-7, Lines 86-90).   Saki said, "*When we did the group work, American people, they are so fast to solve questions, but for me it takes long time. My friend solved two questions already and I still cannot solve the first one, its very difficult for me. Like, it's hard to search in the textbook and translate in my brain, was very hard for me. Then I was like, "I have to do it, I have to hurry," but still couldn't do it. It was so stressful for me.* (SA11-11, Lines 87-92).

Many problems emerged. Two stories that illustrate issues of difference in values are from two Japanese students: one who just came to the U.S. (Hiro), and one who spent more than three years in the U.S. (Aya).

Hiro: "*The kind of problems at school is like more like problems that often happen   in class, like group work. Always problems. Like, when I was working for the action sequence production assignment, I had a partner, and one Thursday, it was due on Monday, so Thursday we were taking photos. We were, that was really good. And we were doing sequence shots, and the camera was going to come from here (pointed to his side) and we were going to take a silhouette shot. When I checked the footage on Saturday or Sunday, we had a kind of distraction, we had [pause] a spectator see the light. So I say, "We need to shoot again," to my partner. I said that, it was [on] Sunday. He said I am so tired, okay. It was 4 pm on Sunday and it was due on Monday. So I said, "Okay, you can take a rest right now for two hours or so. Two hours," and he said, "Maybe, okay." I said, "I am going to get food right now, Taco Bell or McDonald's." He then changed his mind. "Are you going to go to Taco Bell? If you go to Taco Bell with me I will shoot again." I said "What?" That's not the point, so going to Taco Bell would*

make him do the shoot? So, I was the leader in a club in Japan and I was organizing hundreds of people in Japan. I was that kind of person and wanted to know how working together is really good, but my partner was kind of lazy and the reason he was kind of exhausted is he stayed up late. Maybe he went to a house party. He went there, that's his problem. That was a problem, 'cause I wanted to work with dedicated people who were trying to make something good. After one hour or two, I came back to his room, and asked, "Are we going to try again?" He said, "Only 2 shots." "Alright," I said. So we took again, and edited again and it was good, but I don't know. He is a very good person and good as a friend, but (long pause) not good for my coworker."

Shane said: "*Group work [is the most difficult] I didn't experience group work in Taiwan. I think I did less than three times in my life, so because I'm a shy person, every time we group work, maybe it's my fear, because I don't talk and people don't talk to me. Sometimes I don't belong to any group, but the professor will help. They will put me in some group, but it doesn't matter. I still don't talk and still no one talk to me. Sometimes people will talk to me, but I still respond very easily not talking much.*" (SH1-17, Lines 128-132).

Another student described her interaction in a class group activity:

So, for speech class we had the assignment to go to the library to look up some information in our group. We decided to meet on Thursday from 6:00 to 7:30 at the library. I did not know what to do, and how or what to look up, and mostly stayed quiet. Around 7:30 everyone started to pack up and leave. I was nowhere near being done, and some other students were not finished, but they all left. Thankfully, Andrea emailed me later that night and said because she wasn't finished either, the two of us can meet up and finish it together. (Interview# S3).

Overall, not only the newly arrived students, but also all of the interviewees commented that the biggest difference between American and Japanese classrooms was the amount of activeness of the students.

The most challenging activity in the classroom was identified as group work, especially for Japanese students. Six students said during their interviews that group discussion and group work resulted in the most conflict. One student described a situation during a group project where they had to take pictures, and his partner was satisfied with mediocre photos. When he asked his partner to help him redo the pictures, his partner said he was sleepy and needed a nap. During this part of the interview, the outrage the Japanese student felt was re-lived and he described this experience with frustration and disbelief, repeating "I don't know what he is thinking," numerous times at the behavior of his partner (Interview#H13). Another student described a group project in a leadership class as very stressful for her. *"I asked her [one of the group members who was taking charge] if I could help with the poster, and she said, "Don't worry about it." When I contacted her about helping with the fliers, she said she already did them."* (Interview#K15). The students often felt alienated and were lacking any say in group projects while other group members made all the decisions. Yuna, a 21 year old student from Japan, described one of the most traumatic experiences.

> *While we were preparing for the presentation she [my partner] was always busy, but I still tried to do all I could to do a good job. The day we were supposed to present, I asked her to meet and practice together, but she was busy again. Finally, when we had to do the presentation, she told me in class that she changes the whole PowerPoint. I asked her to change it back because I did not know what is in the new power point, but she just said "Read the slides, you'll be fine." My part of the presentations went horrible, I cried at*

the end of class and felt so embarrassed. English is not my first language, I have to

practice many times before class to do a good job on class presentations.
*(*Interview#YA16).

It is important to note once again that the majority of the bad experiences in group work were reported by the Japanese and Taiwanese students, as well as one student from mainland China. The majority of mainland China and Korean students did not report any problems with group work, and some said it was easier for them to do assignments with American students because the American students knew what they were doing.

<u>Discussions</u>

Many students struggled with class discussion, especially when they first arrive. It was rated as the most difficult thing to do among all other challenges in the online survey. East Asian students often are reluctant to express their opinions, or are unable to complete the group task in the given time. There are two types of discussions: one is a group discussion, and the other is a class discussion. Students have their own way of adjusting and thinking about class participation. One Korean student reported that, at first, she was trying very hard and raising her hand, only to be disappointed by the reactions of her professor and classmates, and gave up completely by the second semester. On the contrary, Masahiro, a student from Japan, found it hard and arduous at first, but after gaining confidence was able to express himself more. Hiro also found himself expressing his opinion more and more in class as the year progressed after being encouraged by his professor. Shane, who said that most of his classes have had discussions in his two years at M. University, said, "So far, I don't think I have discussed anything so far... I feel like people don't understand my English." If asked, Shane said he keeps his answers as a short "Yes" or "No". One testimony demonstrating this is by Yuna:

In America, there is a lot of discussions and often we have to talk to the person who is sitting next to us. I was sitting normally, and an American was sitting to the right and to the left of me. I didn't know anyone in the class. I didn't know whom to talk to, when everyone just found someone and started talking to him or her. The girl to the left of me and to the right of me ignored me, and began to talk across me, never asking my opinion or anything. They didn't say anything, just became a pair and completely ignored my existence. (Interview #AY9-19, Lines 50-56)

Critical thinking and Critique

Other challenges a few students mentioned are the essays and discussions that required them to critique certain material. The Japanese students did not perceive this as a linguistic problem. Two students explicitly stated that they would not know what to say or how to properly critique, even in Japanese, as it would be very unlikely of a Japanese person to directly state their feelings or point out bad parts of someone's work in front of a classroom of students. The Japanese students' unconscious usage of self-inhibition (*enryou*) and *sasshi* might be affecting their ability to succeed in group work and critique assignments. Hiro said, "*Any kind of... critique. Sometimes we have to critique a film or photography or something like art, so we have to talk about how good or bad it is, so I have to explain something about my feelings. Even in Japanese I didn't do that, didn't do critique, so that is really hard to explain. So I am taking a sociology class, my test is not good.*" (HI11-11 Lines 66-70). Another student also mentioned the same difficulty of not being able to express their thought and opinions. Also, taking a critical viewpoint on something was challenging for some Asian students because they were not used to it. In particularly doing so in front of the class was difficult.

6.4. Social Adjustment

<u>Communication and Interaction</u>

How one communicates with another person largely depends on their previous experiences, expectations, and attitude toward that person. The majority of the East Asian students admitted to having wrong expectations about Americans. All three groups expected Americans to be "friendly, open, outgoing, fashionable etc." Many expected American behaviors to be revolved around partying and drinking. In reality, American students were not as friendly and very few students had any particular interest toward foreigners. In the interactions of East Asian students with local students there was a deficit of cultural empathy on both sides. Cultural empathy, known as the sojourners' sensitivity, is the person's interest in others, and ability to understand them (Ruben, 1976), was a detrimental factor to social adjustment. Often, the Asian students did not think or consider why Americans react the way they do, and focused on the negative side.

The most common interactions start with "Where are you from?" and the Americans' reactions are different toward Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, however not to a big extent. The most common reaction is, "Oh, I see," and moving back to their task. Another reaction that one Japanese student reported was, "Where is that?" Students from Taiwan and Malaysia also reported having been asked by Americans where their native land was located. Americans have enquired about a variety of things, such as about anime or origami. "So you like sushi?" "Is it true in Japan they eat KFC for Christmas?" For the Korean students, comments revolved around Gangnam Style, K-Pop, and Kimchi. Chinese students reported Americans mostly being indifferent unless the American has been to China, which was very rare, and was reported only once. One Taiwanese student reported having been asked about Taiwan and mainland relations and felt very uncomfortable.

Americans are heavily influenced by the Asian stereotypes. Local students do not talk or avoid talking to Asian students, assuming Asians students do not speak English well. A Korean student said with disappointment, "*My goal was to make a lot of American friends, but I am afraid Americans don't like to hang out with Asians who don't speak English well.*" (H.S. 1-29 Line 42-53). One Japanese student was ignored for two weeks in class because all of her classmates assumed she did not speak English. Another stereotype is that Asian students are smart and good at math. Students in natural sciences report American students coming up to them and asking about how to solve the problem assigned in class. One student from Taiwan noted another difference in communication style:"*Americans think more happy. They seem more energetic and they talk more widely about everything. Taiwanese people, when they talk, we talk about one topic, and they don't really greeting and we don't hug that often. We also don't high five." (SH1-17, Lines 238-240)* Another student, Jack, had trouble with American slang *"Usually don't get them [slang words] and when American people talk, they say that "That's awesome" or other words like that. Other than that, communication goes well.*" (J1-18, Lines 187-188)

Many of the Chinese and Korean students play a game called League of Legends, and they interact and communicate with Americans more often at times in the virtual world than the real one. Austin and his two roommates all play League of Legends. He noted that the way Chinese and Americans play is profoundly different:

Americans are most likely to show off their ability to kill something, but not joining the team or as a group. Americans don't join the team or group fight, they like to solo most of the time to show off and they lack determination or leadership or decision making. That is why we lose the game if the American is in the position to carry. Chinese follow orders, because they want to win and then they have good tactic and strategy, unlike Americans

who are on their own. They use Ochat to chat and say shit to people. They say "newbs[11],"

"kill your mom," "idiots…" they are just flaming[12]. Chinese don't usually say that. We

don't communicate as much." (AU1-24, Lines 26-36)

Another player also noted that some Americans flame a lot, and he just mutes the chat option.

When describing the activities the students had partaken in with American students

outside of class, it was mostly a night out at the bars or a party at a friend's house. One student

captured the essence of the differences between Japanese youth and American youth interactions:

I think there is a difference in the way people interact in Japan and the U.S., particularly

different ways of hanging out. For example, talking for a long time at a family restaurant

in Japan is very common, but American people don't like that. How should I say it…

when hanging out with Americans, they usually eat at a restaurant very quickly and then

go to another place, then another place. You can go to a bar or bowling or to some other

activity. The emphasis is centered on an activity they do together, but in Japan it's more

about hanging out and we sit around chatting for hours. Another example is in the dorms,

the floor meetings, where Resident Assistant organizes an activity, usually some kind of a

game; however, in Japan this kind of meetings would be consisting of just sitting around

and talking about our problems. (Interview #M8)

Direct and Indirect Communications

It is often said that Americans are direct in their way of communication, but there is

something known as "the mid-west nice": an American way of politeness, which many

international students describe as "fake nice." There is also a misperception about the directness

of the way Americans communicate, and many Americans try to avoid confrontation. In both the

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[11] Newb – is a short form for newbie, which means an inexperienced newcomer
[12] Flaming – is a negative form of interaction on the internet that often involves insults and profanities

U.S. and Japan, silence can speak volumes. One Chinese student, Jack, recalls that his roommate was quiet and moved out within one week of Jack moving in. At first, Jack thought the American was a racist; however, later he mentioned that it was his first week in the U.S. and he used the refrigerator in the room, only to find out that the room doesn't come with a refrigerator and only when his roommate was moving out did he realize that he was using his roommate's stuff without permission. Yet another student notes that she left in the morning and when she came back in the evening, half of the room was empty and her roommate was nowhere to be found. She texted her roommate and got a reply of, "It's just was not working out, so I moved out."

Yes Means No

It is commonly known to anyone who has been to Asia that yes and no are not used as often in Asian cultures as they are used in the English language. For Americans (the majority of whom do not own a passport), and especially for American students in the rural U.S. (many of whom do not know any cultural differences between East Asian countries), when someone says yes, it really means yes. One such instance is recalled by An:

> *When my roommate was still there, her mom came to visit, and you know how Chinese always say, "Yeah, go ahead," when they actually mean, "No, just dont." So my roommate's mom came and asked if they can borrow my rice cooker so I said, "Sure, go ahead," but what I actually meant was, "Why don't you get yourself one instead of using mine?" But if my roommate was Chinese, my roommate would understand that, "Oh, okay, I won't use yours."* (AN1-19, Lines 64-69)

Another student who was Japanese, also recalled an experience when her indirect no was mistaken for a yes by an American.

Friends

The majority of the students were not able to form close relationships with American students. The students who did have close American friends either met them in their dorms or found Americans on campus who had an interest in the Asian students' home country. One Japanese student had a roommate with similar hobbies and they bonded over their love for American films and comics. Often, Asian students who made American friends spent Thanksgiving at their American friends' house, experiencing American cultural traditions. One exchange student from Taiwan described his experience: "*For Thanksgiving, K and I went to Sam's [K's roommate] hometown. Most of the time, we just watched TV. I felt relaxed. Actually, first and second day I felt relaxed, then I felt bored on the third day because we just watched TV. I think American Thanksgiving [is] just for people to relax.*"

Commonly, when students are disappointed with their interactions with Americans they retreat into the co-ethnic or international community. The Korean students were a primary example, and the majority of them only interacted with each other and were always together. One exchange student from Korea expressed his frustration:

> *We have few opportunity to meet many American or other foreigner, and if we or I take a class it's hard to make friends. They [Americans] do not talk. I did not know it is so hard to make friends in U.S. I got to get along with someone from Korea and often use [speak] Korean. I hate it. I don't like it but I get to do it. Most of people already have their friends and my English is not good, and it's hard to understand what they are talking about. I have nothing to talk to them about other than, "What's your major?" "Where you live?" or "What do you do?" I do tutoring with one girl. I try to make new friends and get opportunity to go somewhere with people. One semester is so short and I want to get English skill and experience [in] whatever I can do.*

The Korean students who lived in the same dorm ate together and went out together. One Japanese student, Saki, became very close friends with a student from Korea. Saki described her relationship with the Korean student:

> *First we met at the orientation. It's kind of, "Hi," "Hello, my name is," "What's your major?" Then because we are Asian we are from close countries, we think we will be good friends. We ate the same thing, we (pause) you know, our faces are similar, and we talked a lot, and added each other on Facebook, and one of us said, "Let's go to the local grocery store," and we talked a lot, a lot. We both think our thinking is similar. Yeah, after we stayed over, she stayed over at my room. I also have another Korean friend and she also knows that we hanged out, after we don't hang out with the other Korean guys. But the two of us hang out every day, eat lunch together, and talk.*" (SA11-11 Lines 180-188)

Saki's Korean friend was also interviewed, and said that although at first she did try to fit in with the Korean group and be friends with other international students at the same time, she was criticized for not spending all of her time with the Korean group. Another Korean students who has been at M. University for 3 years said that 2 years ago, the relationship between the Koreans and Japanese on campus was appalling, but now it has improved from before.

Body Touch

Many Asian students were surprised by the amount of physical contact among local students. The Japanese students explicitly noted that there is a lot of "body touch" among members of the opposite sex. One Japanese student pointed out that in Japan, it is not very appropriate to have many male friends and to go out with them one on one, if already involved in a romantic relationship. Another male Japanese student said that at first, he felt uncomfortable

with the way American girls could casually touch his hand or shoulder or just hug him, because back in Japan he had a girlfriend. However, after a few months he got used to this casual flirting and physical intimacy.

School Organizations

At M. University, there are representative cultural clubs for all three groups of East Asian students. The Korean Club was the most successful, with less than twenty Korean students enrolled in the university; almost half of the Korean students attended the meetings and events. American students were highly involved in the Korean Club, with a total membership of over 20 regular members and weekly meetings. The officers of the club were Korean, while the majority of the members were American. The Japanese club had approximately ten regular members with weekly meetings, but this included the members of the Yasakoi Club. The officers and members were also American. One graduate Japanese student (not included in this study) joined the meetings, but not on a regular basis. Unlike the Korean group that was proud to share their Korean culture and talk about K-Pop, Korean dramas, and Korean food, the Japanese students avoided the Japanese club, labeling the Americans there as "otaku" or nerds. Interestingly, Japanese students often mentioned that they did not feel that Americans had any interest in Japan. The Americans in the Japan Club were interested in Japanese culture, but were seen in a negative light by Japanese students. The Korean students embraced the attention and interest that was received from American students, and the observation of the club meetings showed a highly interactive and culturally integrated view. Conversely, the Japanese students displayed signs of embarrassment and shame, often making fun of the Americans engulfed in the consumption of Japanese cultural products.

China Club, had the fewest regular members, but when it hosted events, which are only a few times a year, many Chinese and international students joined. Both the Korea and China Clubs had Japanese students occasionally join activities and meetings. American interest toward Korean and Japanese culture was much higher than then the interest in China. One Chinese student explained the difficulty in attracting Americans' attention to the China Club with his words full of bitterness: "*Americans are in Japan Club because they admire animation and manga, right? And for Korean Club, they are there for K-Pop, but for Chinese, what? Calligraphy? Chinese night or what? Dragon Boat Festival? No, they don't [care] because we are celebrating for traditional events, not pop culture that is more entertaining. That is why they are not joining our club.*" (AU1-24 Lines 11-15).

Romantic Relationships

Intercultural romantic relationships also serve as an important part of integration. A few of the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean female participants that had experienced dating with both males from their own country and Americans provided valuable insight into differences in courting and intimate relationships. One commonality was that all Asian female participants agreed that American males are more aggressive and direct in their romantic pursuits. They are also less interested in dating, and more focused on casual relationships. There is a clear gender bias in this section as male participants did not disclose intimate information about their relationships, while the female students felt much more comfortable telling their stories, sometimes in shocking detail. The information provided by male participants about differences in dating American girls and Asian girls was attained, but it consisted of very brief and ambiguous responses.

Dating Japanese vs. Americans

In the discussion with two Japanese students, Maki and Saori, it was said, "*American boys are so obvious. If they are not interested in you they don't treat you well. Like, in the bar, if American guy likes someone, he will talk to her right away, but if it's in Japan, the Japanese guy is going to talk to the group and treat everyone to a drink, but American wouldn't do it.*" (Interview # AY9-19 Line 201-204) They agreed that this is only good if you are the girl that is being targeted and not the one on the sidelines. Another Japanese student commented on the difference in the process of intercourse:

> *Ecchi no toki zengi ga nai. No foreplay [with Americans]. Japanese take longer time with that to make you feel good, but Americans are like, "Ok, let go." And, I was talking with my American friend about sex and I said about licking nipples, and she said, "What?" That's the boy's job!" It's not for girls, but in Japan it's not uncommon for the girls will lick the boy's nipples.*

Saori specified the difference in courting as:

> *I think in Japan people get to know each other well then have sex, but Americans want to do it right away. I once told a guy, "I don't want to do it, because I barely know you," and he said, "There is a good way to get to know each other more." It's like if we don't do it, then we can't get to know each other. It's like sex is a tool to get to know each other. In Japan they are not like that. がつがつ来る. They are so aggressive. I don't think the Japanese could be that way.*

Many Japanese students said they prefer to date other Japanese or international students.

Dating Korean vs. American

Haneul, a student from Korea who spent more than two years in the U.S. had the experience of dating two Americans, and explained the difference:

Americans are more independent. When I date with Koreans, I needed to text a lot or call or some stuff like, "I'm here right now," or "I'm there right now," "I'm going to sleep right now." Something [like that]. This whole trivial thing, I always need to say or they got mad. With American boyfriends I got more freedom. They didn't ask me so much and we either meet and hung out. Emotionally, other ways are same… It's my experience. American boyfriends were [more] active than Koreans. They always wanted to go somewhere."

Nevertheless, regardless of this testimony, she was dating a Korean at the time of the interview.

Dating Taiwanese vs. Japanese

One Japanese female student who spent more than three years in the U.S. was dating a Taiwanese students. Though she did not have any experience in dating Americans she commented on the differences in dating a Japanese compared to a Taiwanese male.

Taiwanese are more, more like gentlemen, you know Japanese guys are not going to open doors for you. Samurai, the idea like the man should stand in the front and the woman behind him, and he gives orders. Bottom line is the woman takes care of the household, and does the house work, well that is the image at least. Taiwanese are nicer and are gentlemen, like he will offer to carry my bag for me, open the door; he will cook some dishes for his girlfriend. I heard Koreans are also like that, I hear that Korean guys also take good care of their girlfriends. For example, if the girl in the middle of the night says I am hungry he will go buy food for her, but there is no way the Japanese would do that.

Dating Chinese vs. American

A female student from Taiwan who dated an American and a Chinese relayed a story about how she thought that she was in a relationship with an American male for half a year, when he

146

suddenly asked her out. She was surprised, as she thought they were already in a relationship, but he replied with, "We were just dating, not boyfriend and girlfriend." She did not have these misunderstandings when dating Chinese males. She commented on the differences as,

> *Well in Taiwan, we don't talk about [things directly]; we tend to be more shy and polite. For me it's not rude, but just straightforward, like asking, "What's your purpose?" But in Taiwan, we start with a greeting and slowly go to the main point. Like, if I want you to take me to the supermarket, I will not just say, "Anya, take me to the supermarket." I will just start with, "Hey, how are doing? Are you busy? Do you have time maybe to go the supermarket?"*

One Chinese male student, Yu, who "kind of" had an American girlfriend said, "*[I had] kind of girlfriend but not so serious. She is an American. American girls are more independent, but Chinese girls want more interaction to be together.*" (YU12-15, Lines 135-136)

<u>Dating Japanese vs. Korean</u>

One student from Korea, although never having dated an American, has dated Japanese and Koreans. The student said that at the time, the Japanese and Korean students hated each other and she was confronted by a few Korean male students as to why she was dating a Japanese. Although the relationship did not last very long, the student shared interesting insight into the differences between dating Japanese and Korean males.

> *There is not that much cultural differences between us [herself and the Japanese male], but the one thing I felt is this guy kind of, definitely, it's a father-centric house. You know what I mean? Like, guys has most the power in the house, in home, so men-centric. Japanese is man-centric… if he decided what he want to do, he has to do it. "Let's do this." But he never forced me. But other times when baseball practicing, but I couldn't*

understand why he has to go baseball practicing every day. Not every day, but three or four times in a week. He's Japanese and Japanese loves baseball, so I have to understand that part, but I couldn't. I even asked my Japanese girl friend, "Why does he all the time go to baseball?" She said, "Oh, it's common to Japanese. Japanese really like baseball, so you should understand." "Okay."… Most of Koreans like soccer, but they don't have the crazily love sports. Japanese really like baseball. Korean, I don't think so… Korean guys are more romantic. They take care of girlfriends a lot, like Valentine's Day, 100 days anniversary, and one-year anniversary. They care a lot. Japanese doesn't care. Mongolian, they don't care also. They care, just some special for the New Year, Valentine's, and birthday, but they never count how long the day. But Korean guys, they care like 200 [day] anniversary, 300 anniversary, 500 anniversary… They count, but not Japanese and Mongolian.

This student has dated two Mongolians and says they are very independent. Furthermore, it was her ex-boyfriends from Korea and Japan who asked her out, but in the case of her Mongolian boyfriend, she asked him herself.

Overall, the narratives in describing the differences between dating Korean and Japanese men compare how gallant they were. American and Chinese males are more gentlemanly than Japanese, but the Korean males are more romantic than both the American and Japanese. American males are more direct and will pay attention to the girl they are interested in, while Japanese males are more group oriented and will be more considerate of the girl and her friends. However, Korean and Japanese males are more controlling than Americans in relationships, and American males were described as persistent.

Relationship Between Korean, Japanese, and Chinese Students

As can be seen from above, many of the students from Asia often date other Asian students. The most common dating pairs were Japanese and Chinese, as well as Japanese and Koreans. From the testimonies of the students who have been at M. University for two or three years, it was obvious that the relationship between groups has changed in recent years. During the initial observations, there were numerous cases of not only romantic involvement, but also deep friendships forming between Japanese and Chinese students, as well as between Japanese and Korean students.

One example is the relationship of Saki and Nam. They met at the international student orientation, and became friends. Saki started to study Korean, and joined the Korea Club, which ironically made Korea Club have more Japanese members than Japan Club. At first, Saki hung out with Nam and the whole Korean group, but ultimately the tightly knit Korean group and the two girls had a split. Nam hinted that the Korean group criticized her for not being involved in all of their activities and hanging out elsewhere. Furthermore, no matter how much Saki tried to fit in and learn Korean it was hard for her at the time, being surrounded by people who mostly spoke in Korean among themselves. The split happened two to three months after, but this made Saki and Nam even closer. They traveled together to Las Vegas for Thanksgiving, and to Chicago for Christmas. They ate lunch together and made many other international friends. Nam started dating a Nepali student, but Saki and Nam were inseparable for the whole year, and they asked to have interviews with together a few times. Last I heard, Saki was planning a trip to Seoul a month after she goes back to Japan.

Another example is of Kei from Japan and Lane from Taiwan. Kei spent much more time with students from Taiwan than she did with the Japanese students, and identified Lane as her best friend in the U.S. Unfortunately, Kei was on an exchange for only one semester, while Lane

stayed in the U.S. for the whole year. However, Lane was planning a trip to Japan in July 2016 to visit Kei.

There are also cases of close friendships forming between male students. One Chinese student, Enlai, wrote, "*The closest person to me is a Japanese exchange student named Tai. He is older than me, so he often takes care of me. He is very adventurous, and has big ambition. We often talk about our future and so we understand each other pretty well. We both hate the canteen food so we always make food together. He is like my brother in M.*" These two students lived in the same dormitory and became very close in their interactions. The Chinese student's roommate was American, but the two did not talk much, and instead Tai and Enlai became very close. Tai mentioned often going to Enlai's room and having long chats and hanging out.

As can be seen, the students from East Asian countries are more likely to form deep relationships with each other, the only exception being the Chinese and Korean students. Among the Korean and Chinese students there were no friendships recorded. One of the Chinese students said he had friends from many places including Korea, but when I asked who it was, apparently Bob didn't remember his Korean friend's name, nor met him more than a few times in class. Overall, the Korean group was the most difficult to get to know. Although they had many activities for American students to get involved in, there seemed to be a clear separation of private and public or school activities in their interaction. The private hanging out revolved around hanging out with other Korean students, and the only few exceptions were Nam who ended up distancing herself from the Korean group. Half of the Korean students, the ones who lived on campus in the dorms, I was not able to convince to participate in the study, and the survey answers that a few of them provided consisted of short answers. So, it is difficult to make any claims on their account, other than they seemed very isolated. When the Chinese students

were asked about why there are almost no interactions between the Chinese and Korean, one student mentioned that the Chinese students are more spread out, while the Korean community is so tight it makes it hard to interact with them.

Religious Organizations on Campus and Off-Campus Churches

In the rural area where M. is located, churches fulfill important roles in the lives of American people. Another difference between the three groups was that more Korean students participated in religious activities than other groups by going to Korean or local American churches. Two Japanese students also attended religious organization functions. One of these Japanese students was Christian. Another reported it as an excellent opportunity to meet many Americans and learn many English words. Only one Chinese student went to a Chinese church regularly, and he was not religious. At times, he even argued with the church members about God. His motivation for attending church was the ethnic Chinese food that was served before each service and meeting new Chinese people, while networking with Chinese students from a nearby university that joined the bible studies. Overall, for the Chinese and Japanese groups, they were not concerned with religious matters. The local American culture and inside of the university were overflowing with symbols of Christianity everywhere, although it is unlikely that the symbols of fish[13] hanging on the walls of the campus were understood by the East Asian non-religious students.

6.5. Analyzing Cultural Differences among the East Asian Students

The literature about Japan, China, and Korea is abundant, but at the same time very limited. The making of modern Japan, China, and Korea, is often explored in historical, economical, and political terms. However, few books look into the differences in their ideology or other cultural

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[13] Ichthys is a Christian symbol that looks like a fish and it represents ΙΧΘΥΣ translating into English as "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

aspects. In cultural terms, all three are high context (Hall, 1966) and collective cultures. But as previously stated, they have very different beliefs and social norms. Furthermore, the origin of modern social norms is a complicated subject to explore in terms of a single culture, let alone a comparison of the three. In this section, ideology is defined as a collection of beliefs held by society.

Each of the East Asian countries discussed are all very paradoxical and contradicting. Japan values harmony above all, but invaded Korea and China, and staged an attack against the U.S. Koreans are orthodox and conservative, valuing tradition and original form, but their current largest religious group is Christianity. China, which is a communist state, is said to have money as the current religion, with its youth working hard to become rich. This makes it very difficult to capture the essence of these countries' culture in a few words. These cultural values and beliefs strongly affect modern society and people of Japan, China, and Korea, making it imperative to explore them in the context of cultural adjustment.

Overall, East Asian students had many similarities in their experiences adapting to life in the rural U.S. However, some profound differences were present in physical, academic, and social adjustment. Though many problems and difficulties in academia and social adaptation might be similar, the behavior and coping strategies among the different groups of East Asian students exhibit strong reflections of their cultural background. Everything is relative, and how the East Asian students perceive their experiences in the U.S. depends heavily on their home culture. The deep routed ideology, the cultural values, beliefs, and norms, are part of what distinguishes the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students' experiences in the U.S.

6.5.1. Home Country Ideology and Students Experience

Japanese Culture and Japanese Student Experiences in the U.S.

Starting with Japan, a word often used to represent the essence of Japanese society is 和 (*wa*) representing harmony, and is the combination of the character for rice and mouth. In linguistic and social norms in Japanese society, the preservation of harmony in a group has been a top priority since ancient times, as can be seen in Article One of Price Shotoku's Seventeen Article Constitution. On an island country, which is covered in mountains and plagued by earthquakes, tsunamis, and limited food supply, the community's survival is dependent on cooperating together (Minamoto, 1969; 1992). To not upset the balance and atmosphere inside the group, the concepts of *honne* and *tatemae* most likely surfaced. Honne and tattemae represent the opinions expressed in public versus the true feelings of an individual (Davies & Ikeno, 2002). The Japanese language also evolved in a way of ambiguity prevalence, where answers can be interpreted in different ways and swear words are almost non-existent, avoiding possible conflicts among group members. In addition, silence is another important aspect of communication and mutual understanding. With true feelings hidden, along with ambiguity and silence dominating communication styles of the Japanese, ways of deciphering what is said also became necessary. These include the concepts of *haragei* - understanding implicit messages in the conversation, *ishin-denshin:* 以心伝心 -understanding what is in the heart of the other person, and *sasshi* - sensitivity to what is meant. The main point is that it was all for the purpose of smooth interactions and avoiding conflicts. Other concepts such as *enryo* (self-restraint), *nemawashi* (laying the foundation), and *kata* (form) were also used not to disturb the harmony of the group or community. It is uncommon to see strong displays of emotion in public, either positive or negative in Japan, even today. Overall, the Japanese adapted to their environment through preserving harmony inside the group and taking foreign ideas and adapting them to Japan. This is very different from the Korean way of thinking.

Looking at the adaptation strategies and problems reported by Japanese students, it can be clearly seen that the students themselves are not fully aware of why they are struggling with adapting to certain academic practices and why they struggle to integrate into the local American culture. Looking at American education and society from the Japanese perspective might seem like complete chaos. The concepts I would like to suggest that explain the perspectives described in this chapter are socio-cultural concepts that are rooted deeply in the Japanese minds. The main concepts that seemed to influence the Japanese students in various concepts were: aimai 曖昧 (ambiguity), kata 型, enryo 遠慮 (self-inhibition), sasshi 察し (sensitivity), ba 場(place) ma 間 (relation) wa 和(harmony), and nemawashi 根回し(ground laying).

To survive, the Japanese prioritized group needs and set out to avoid any intergroup conflict. One of the most severe punishments in Japan was ostracism (murahachibu 村八分) and in more serious cases exile or banishment (tsuiho 追放) of an individual from the community. Ambiguity 曖昧 was one of the ways to prevent tensions among group members. It is hard to get upset if what is said can be interpreted in a number of ways, and the Japanese language has numerous words which have more than one interpretation. However, with a lot of ambiguity, there is also a need for keen observation and correct interpretation to understand the difference between what is being said (tattemae) and what is meant (honne), and this is where the concept of sasshi comes into play. Japanese students often mentioned that they felt some of the things Americans said were just *tattemae* – said for appearance's sake and not what was in the person's heart. In this sense, for western scholars to understand these two concepts, it is easier to refer to Goffman's dramaturgy concepts of "front stage" and "back stage." Front stage is the face you present to the public or a certain audience, while back stage is *honne*, or what you really feel or think. In other words, it is the contrast between the genuine vs. socially controlled opinions.

154

The kata (型) is another way of avoiding tension. Like an SOP[14], there are standard procedures of how to behave in certain situations, serving as short cuts to how to act without being different from others. In Japan, the simple action of checking out at a register in a convenience store is streamlined and standardized. From the place where you line up, how you will be greeted, the numerous questions you will be asked, the way your plastic bag is given to you, and how your change is stacked on top of the receipt is exactly the same across Japan. This simple task of paying at a register is so ritualized and predictable that it resembles a ceremony in itself. On the contrary, in American stores the same process of checking out is completely different. There may or may not be a greeting, often depending of the mood of the cashier, and the greetings are different from store to store. You might be asked, "How are you?" but no one expects you to say anything other than "good" or "okay." At many gas stations, you have to ask for a plastic bag, and it will surely not be handed to you with two hands and a courteous bow. It is not just about the Japanese students perceiving American customer service as being rude, but it is the lack of consistency and order in each encounter, enhanced with the fear of language barriers. When one orders food at a university café, the customer often has to initiate the conversation after a greeting of, "Let me know when you are ready," by the counter staff. For the Japanese students this might be difficult, similarly as it is difficult for them to initiate conversations with classmates and in class discussions. "*Enryo suru*," demonstrating Japanese self-restraint, is a thing that Japanese students often unconsciously do, not only in classrooms but also in social situations. For Example, during one of the significant events of "China Night" two Japanese students were recruited to help out with the event. One of the students was to be in charge of music, and the organizers asked him to set up the computer and equipment. Another

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[14] SOP – Standard Operating Procedures

Chinese student, Bob, who came late and was not aware of what was going on, came up to one of the Japanese students, telling him to get off the stage. Bob set up his computer, which was not compatible with the speaker system, and started playing on QQ[15]. When we asked the Japanese student what was going on, he said he was told to get off the stage and he thought about saying something to Bob, but restrained himself, because Bob acted very confident in what he was doing. In the U.S., the avoidance of conflict and the refraining from speaking up in this case, resulted in a delay of setting up the equipment, and the wrath of the organizers of the event.

Group discussions can at times be chaotic and is the source of great dissonance for Japanese students. From the observation made in an American classroom, a group discussion usually consists of four to five people. The students quickly form groups and the professor will ask students who do not have a group to raise their hand in order to assign them to groups. The students will move their chairs or reseat themselves, not necessary facing each other, and some might quickly make themselves comfortable by putting their feet on the chair nearby. The usual assignment is to go through a few problems or questions. One or two students will start quickly generating ideas or pushing their solutions, while other students will honestly agree, disagree, or if there are some uninterested parties they will quickly agree to whatever or just stay unengaged to quickly finish the assignment. Many times, the students in a group do not know each other and are not interested in getting to know each other, as there is a high possibility of never interacting with each other again after the semester is finished. For the Japanese students who have come from a culture of considering the place, relationship, and harmony, the action of group work and discussion is very different, and involves consideration of feelings of every participant. The students give their opinion one by one, neither physically infringing on another person's space

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[15] QQ is an equivalent of Facebook in China which has games, videos, and serves as a platform for online communication

nor taking more time to talk about what they think than others while incorporating other ideas. Instead of being like American students shooting out their ideas like playing dodge ball, the Japanese discussion more like gently passing the ball in an orderly manner to the person next to you. The Japanese students usually observed, listened, and formulated their thoughts before stating them, as in Japan being inconsiderate or harming a relationship with someone in a group can be a big offense. However, in the U.S., having a conflict of opinions does not usually lead to harming the relationship between people. The values of Americans are more on the honesty and integrity of a person as it relates to saying and doing what you believe. This is the cultural difference in values that often was observed in the difficulties of Japanese students during group work and discussions.

For example, Lena's frustration with communicating with Americans can demonstrate the clash between the American style of communication and the Japanese deep-rooted concept of *sasshi*. *Sasshi* is a concept of being sensitive to what the other person is feeling; not only to what is being said or not said, but understanding that individual's needs. Lena recalled during one of our interviews: "*Americans don't change topics and talk deeply about something. Everyone don't finish until they say everything they want to say. Japanese all talk together but if one person gets tired of the topic they change the topic, but Americans don't really notice that someone might be bored.*" (LI06-02).

Other concepts such as giri and ninjo (forms of obligations, duty and emotional owe) are extremely hard to translate, but are all related and demonstrate the importance of human relationships in Japanese culture. As Seki said (1971), "*As I stated, the ideal type of human behavior of the Japanese is to fulfill the "give and give" relationship. This is a Japanese view of life. The Japanese have been trained in always considering the situation of others and respecting*

157

others' standpoint. The purpose of self-discipline of the Japanese is self-control and self-sacrifice. Or service to others." (Seki 1971, p. 112) Minamoto, who wrote a book on *Kata* (model or form), as well as works on *giri* and *ninjo*, explains the necessity and origins of these practices as the following: "*The basis for life among the ancient Japanese was the rice crop. Working conditions were not severe but it was not easy as just planting and waiting for rich harvest. Rice working requires intensive cooperative work for short periods, such as planting and harvesting. This kind of labor encourages the formation of the hamlet where people had to cooperate with one another.*" (Minamoto, 1969, p. 42) Furthermore, the earthquakes, tsunamis, and other natural disasters can be numerous. In order to survive, human relationships needed to be preserved, people needed the goodwill of others, and they had to work hard (*gambaru*). Other concepts, such as *nemawari*, also demonstrate the importance of human relationships in Japanese culture. It follows to conclude from the interview and observation, which the cultural difference in adaptation behavior between Japanese and other groups of students from East Asia derive from the way the Japanese ancestors chose to adapt to the environment of Japan, and that was through preserving harmony in a group, regardless of the means.

Finally, in exploring the Japanese culture and its effects on the minds of Japanese students studying abroad, the concept of uchi and soto in relation to foreigners must be considered. Foreigners are outsiders and are still to this day a rare sight in Japan, accounting for only 1.6% of the total population. Historically speaking, Japan had comparatively little contact with the West until the arrival of Black Ships, and during the Edo period Japan was very isolated. This accounts for the Japanese lack of practice in dealing with foreigners.

Chinese Culture and Chinese Student Experiences in the U.S.

Looking at the Chinese national character, the word often used is *yi*, meaning "one" as

well as "best." China has been the exporter of cultural and ideological concepts in East Asia. It is a large country and being united was imperative for China throughout its history. China is ethnically much more diverse than Japan and Korea, with over fifty minorities having been ruled by Mongolian and Manchurian dynasties. It has been ruled with absolute authority, and has unified as a country to achieve peace. The oneness of China unifies its people and gives them a great pride. China used to view all its neighbors as barbarians, and in the 18th century was culturally much more ahead of the West, therefore considering itself the best. However, in the latter half of the 19th century, numerous countries heavily disrespected China, resulting in Japan invading China. The current mindset of the Chinese is the value in once again becoming the best. The Chinese people have suffered throughout history going through wars, internal strife, foreign invasions, and have had both famine and operation in the last fifty years. Like a pendulum after swinging to one extreme, it swings back. Often having little and living in communes in the earlier days of the communist regime resulted in the Chinese feeling that now is the time for more indulgence. The economic growth is favorable, and the Chinese people are able to afford to spend a larger amount of money on luxury goods, new cars, and real estate. The idea of "one" also represents one person or self. The Chinese people today have to look out for themselves and their families, and many strive to become rich and display their affluence. It is often said that money has become the new religion in China. There is a saying 有 *yǒu* 錢 *qián* 能 *néng* 使 *shǐ* 鬼 *guǐ* 推 *tuī* 磨 *mó*, meaning "if you have money you can even make the devil do your work (pull the grindstone)," representing how powerful money is. There is another saying in Chinese that also shows the high ability of Chinese people to perform well individualistically: "中国人：一个人是一条龙三个人是一条虫," meaning "Chinese, one person is a dragon, three people are a bug." Other important concepts to understand Chinese mentality are "*guanxi*" (关系), which means

"relationships or connections an individual has with other people that can be relied on," and the idea of "*Mianzi*" (面子) or "face." As previously stated, Chinese people are very proud, and preserving a person's reputation and dignity is crucial. There is a Chinese saying that says, "As a tree needs its bark, a person needs face." (人要脸, 树要皮) In Chinese society, it is likely that during so many times of unrest, people could not depend on the government or just anyone. They developed a system of personal connection where keeping face is paramount. Even today, family and social relationships are maintained through mutual gift giving and red envelopes on many occasions such as a wedding, birth of a child, death, etc.

Anyone who has been to China knows that orderly is the exact opposite of the description of Chinese life. The concept of *kata* in daily life, or the importance of not offending anyone like in Japan, is very different. None of the Chinese students complained directly about customer service. Although there were cases of discrimination at service counters, the daily customer service in America was not perceived to be rude. Compared to China, America is immaculate, orderly, and the occasional smiles of American clerks can be enough to make a good impression on the Chinese students. East Asian countries share many commonalities. The profound effect of Buddhism and Confucianism ideology is a strong influence on the people and their relationships. However, there are even more differences. China is a country that in the last one hundred years has metamorphosed numerous times and emerged as the 2nd largest economy in the world. As Yu Hua wrote, "*With the flick of a wrist Chinese history has utterly changed its complexion, much the way an actor in Sichuan opera swaps one mask for another.*" (Yu, 2011, p. 2) He further states, "*China's high-speed economic growth seems to have changed everything in the blink of an eye, rather like a long jump that let us leap from an era of material shortages into an era of extravagance and waste, from an era when instincts are repressed into an era of impulsive self-*

indulgence. A quick jump seems to be all it took to cross a span of thirty years." (Yu, 2011, p.70)

In the years of Cultural Revolution people grew up sheltered from the literature of the world, with only a few works authorized by the Communist Party as appropriate for reading such as Mao Zedong and Lu Xun. Since the increase in the number of internet users, the Chinese youth is overwhelmed with reading materials available to them (Yu, 2011).

<u>Korean Culture and Korean Student Experiences in the U.S.</u>

   The word that best describes Korean ideology is *chung*, pronounced as "choong" (忠). It is loyalty and upholding what is considered right and fair. Foreign countries have attacked Korea more than 1,000 times, but still preserved their cultural identity. They were able to accomplish this by valuing equality and the original form or orthodoxy. Koreans are said to be persevering, conservative, and place a high value on legitimacy, which are characteristics needed for a nation to survive through numerous foreign invasions. Things that are traditional and legitimate are deemed original and considered to be correct. Confucius ideology influence is very evident in the relations to family and other social relations. For example, the Korean language has a vast number of words to describe family ties, such as *danggomo* (grandfather's niece on the brother's side). Koreans, unlike the Japanese, are not afraid of conflicts, and their language is ornamented greatly with curse words. They express their emotions more freely and place a high value on family. Certainly, Korea has concepts similar to the Japanese about harmony and reading moods such as *inhwa* and *kimbun* (Lee, 2012); however, the orthodoxy of keeping the Confucianism ideas in stressing the importance of the different types of relationships sets Korea apart from Japan and China.

       Korean students were the most disadvantaged when it came to finding ethnic food and restaurants. Another difference was in that more Korean students than Chinese or Japanese

161

participated in religious activities. This is not surprising, as in 2010 the Christian population in Korea was estimated to be 31.6%[16]. In the sphere of academia, Japanese students had more difficulties than the other groups during group work, often concluding that American students are irresponsible in their approach to a group project, and many problems in communication were reported. If we look at high and low context culture (Hall, 1959) to explain the difficulties the Asian students experience in their communication with Americans, it can be seen that not all three high context groups of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students are experiencing the same problems. For example, the Chinese students do not report as much difficulty as Japanese students in understanding and communicating with American students. Furthermore, Chinese students reported much less difficulty in working in groups compared with the Japanese students. It is commonly stated that East Asian cultures follow Confucianism, but Buddhism and Shintoism still heavily influence modern Japan, while modern China has been influenced by communist thought and rapid economic development. Korea, unlike Japan and China, no longer uses pictographic ways of writing and was recently influenced by the increased popularity of Christianity. The values of the three groups are very different, especially among the youth of the 21st century, such as these students studying in the semi-rural U.S. For the Japanese students, politeness, respect, being humble or reserved, and achieving things as a group in a harmonious way is paramount. For Chinese students, losing face is something be avoided at all costs, especially in front of other Chinese. The measurement for success amongst the Chinese youth is by their car, money, and the ability to find a high-paying job in the future. Their overall ambition and values are very different from the Japanese group. In the context of the classroom, this desire to get what one wants matches well with American individualism and could explain why Chinese

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[16] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html#ks

students have less difficulty in group work and communicating with Americans. The Chinese students did not report any problems in doing critique assignments.

6.5.2. Hofstede's 6-D Model of Cultural Dimensions

Looking at the comprehensive studies of cross-cultural comparison, it is impossible to ignore the work of Geert Hofstede. Cultural values are present in all aspect of life, whether it is studying at a university or working for a company. In the 6-dimensional model created by Hofstede, when Japan, China, and South Korea are compared, there are clear differences in some of the dimensions. The smallest difference is in the dimension of long-term orientations, and all of the students in this study were very long term oriented compared to American students. They had high goals and made plans, or prepared to achieve them far in advance.

First, looking at power distance (PDI), as defined by Hofstede et al., "PDI scores inform us about dependence relationships in a country. In small-power-distance countries, there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses, and there is a preference for consultation subordinates will rather easily approach and contradict their bosses. In large-power-distance countries, there is considerable dependence of subordinates on bosses. Subordinates respond by either preferring such dependence or rejecting it entirely. In these cases the emotional distance between subordinates and their bosses is large: subordinates are unlikely to approach and contradict their bosses directly. Power distance can therefore be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school, and the community; organizations are the places where people work. Power distance is thus described based on the value system of the less powerful members. The way power is distributed is usually explained from the behavior of the more powerful members, the

163

leaders rather than those led." (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 61-62) The scores are based on three questions regarding the manager and subordinate scenario; however, the score is defined to be representative of family, school, and community relationships. These questions about work relationships were also asked of students and similar results were found. Furthermore, students in countries scoring high on power distance, such as China, stated that having few desired moderation and keeping oneself disinterested and pure was particularly important. The power distance is described to be the same at home and at schools, as the younger respect the elder in larger power-distance cultures and more equal is smaller-power-distance cultures. Though there is some critique of Hofstede's theory, a bigger issue is the validity of numerous correlations that are stated in health care, blood donations, schools, and situations at home with the correlation to power distance measured through three questions on manager and subordinate relationships. Hofstede et al. argues: "The role pairs parent-child, teacher-student, and doctor-patient are now complemented are part of our mental programming, are transferred toward bosses." (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 73) However, the supervisors pay money to the employees, while the relationship between patient and doctor are of a different authority, and the patient pays money to receive services. The situations are very different. Another critique is that what people say they will do is not reflective of what they will actually do.

Looking at power distance in the experiences of students, there is a discrepancy with Hofstede's model. A hierarchy in the student groups was least felt in the Chinese group, while strongly felt in the Korean group, and to a slightly lesser degree, the Japanese group. There were two types of hierarchy displayed first between the professor and students, and second between students more than five years older. The Korean group had a Korean professor, and students felt somewhat obligated to dine with him and show their respect. There was a Korean student who

was over thirty years old, and the younger students treated him with the utmost respect. When I asked the older student to act as a gatekeeper into the Korean student group and to ask if anyone might volunteer to take part in the study, he said, "If I ask them, because I am older they will feel like they have to do it, so it would not really be volunteering; it's a thing that's part of Korean culture." In the group of the Japanese students there was also a Japanese teacher, whom some students respected and followed his advice. There was an incident when a Japanese student, who was an alumnus of the university, came to visit. One of the Japanese girls addressed him too casually and was reprimanded by the words of, "You should show a little more respect to your senior." A friend of the girl who relayed this story felt that they were in the U.S. and on an exchange; the conversation was going well, but that sharp comment ruined the atmosphere.

Figure 9: Hofstede 6-D Model

Source: Data from https://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html
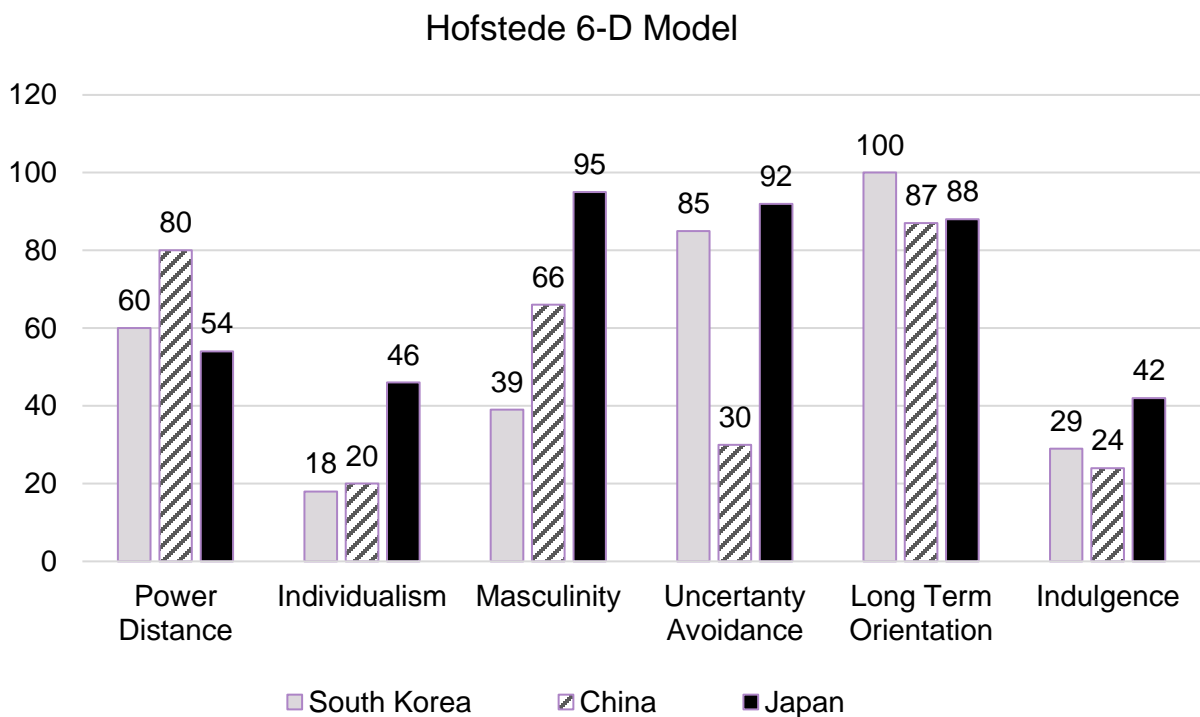
The next dimension is collectivism versus individualism. "*Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 92) An example provided by is the case of the Saudi Arabia brothers who, when dealing with a Swedish company, spent a lot of time getting to know the representative of the company and had an intermediary party present at the meetings. In the collectivist societies, "*The "we" group (or in-group) is the major source of one's identity and the only secure protection one has against the hardships of life.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 91)

In individualism, the Japanese scored the highest, making it the least collectivist culture out of China, Korea, and Taiwan (score of 17) According to this data, the Japanese people value individualism more than twice as much as Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese. As the family is one of the basic groups, Hofstede explains, "*The fact that Japan scores halfway in Table 4.1 (with a rank of 35–37 and an IDV of 46) can at least partly be understood from the fact that in the traditional Japanese family only the oldest son continued to live with the parents, thus creating a lineal structure somewhere in between nuclear and extended.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 106) Obviously, this is not true, and it did not take centuries for norms and values to change as Hofstede predicted. The term "parasite single" did not exist when this study was done, but it is common in Japan for children to live with their parent for an extended period of time, partly due to real estate prices. The word "no" is not commonly used in collective cultures. This is true for Japan, and in China it depends on the relationship and the closeness of the relationship. For example, the cultural norm is for Chinese to not say thank you to close family members, because

it will be fake and put distance between the two individuals. In collective countries, silence is normal. It is more shame-based than individual countries that are concerned more with guilt. This pertains to Japan to a large degree, and it is very paradoxical why Japan scored so much higher on individualism than China, Korea, and Taiwan.

In this study, the Korean students were undoubtedly the most collective and exclusive of others. However, the Chinese students and the ideology of the modern China focus on the "self" much more than Japan. Though the relationships (*guanxi*) are crucial, Chinese people are seen as more ambitious and work hard for self-gain as well as for their families. Though, as stated by Hofstede, the Japanese in Asia might seem individualistic, readily adapting foreign concepts to Japan, overall this cultural value did not change and since ancient time. Overall, the Japanese people are group-oriented. The group they belong to, however, can be situational.

The third dimension is masculinity and femininity in which the largest differences are observed among the three countries (Japan scores 95 and Korea scores 39). The definition is: *"A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 140) The masculine society is where challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement are important. Men are assertive, ambitious, and tough. However, recently the Japanese language had a new addition: "herbivore men." This refers to the Japanese men lacking ambition and toughness. As could be seen from the section of relationships, the Korean and Japanese boyfriends were the most controlling, but the Korean boyfriends were also the most romantic.

Next, the uncertainty avoidance dimension is defined as, "*The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 191) China scored the lowest and Korea the highest on this dimension. For uncertainty avoidance, the students from China were much more comfortable with ambiguity, though students from Taiwan did express some frustration in not knowing the exact way of assessment of their assignments. The Japanese students were extremely stressed before the first exams they took in the U.S. Rina expressed her anxiety about not knowing what to expect: "School is most difficult. The way I review and study, I am not sure if it's effective for America. I feel very insecure about that. We still have not had any tests yet, but next week I have a test so we will see." This might seem paradoxical as the Japanese language is full of ambiguity, but this ambiguity is for the purpose of avoiding any unpleasant surprises in the reaction of others to what is said. Unpredictability is dangerous to the harmony of the group, so in accordance with ideology of harmony in the group, the Japanese naturally try to avoid anything unpredictable. These observations align with uncertainty avoidance scores in the 6-D model.

Indulgence is defined as: "*[A] tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.*" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 281) In the dimension of indulgence, the Japanese, according to the Hofstede model, are the least restrained compared to China and Korea. However, overall all three countries scored more on the side of restraint than indulgence. In the context of business, Japan is known for death from overwork, since the children are taught from childhood not to cause any inconvenience to others. In social terms, it is common for Koreans and Chinese to express their emotion. Meanwhile, the Japanese practice self-restraint. In terms of the students,

the Japanese students often had to restrain themselves from participating in social events, and prioritized work. Therefore, further research might be needed in the dimension of self-indulgence among the East Asian nations and the reasons for current development in this area.

The practical implications of this study consist of the importance for both East Asian and Western institutions to better accommodate the students going and coming to study abroad. Cultural differences between home and host culture should be pointed out prior to student arrival, which would reduce the uncertainty level in their experiences abroad. American institutions, on the other hand, need to increase cultural awareness on campuses and also better understand the differences between the East Asian cultures, keeping in mind that differences in ideologies go beyond individualistic versus collective or low versus high context cultures. Albeit, some of the Hofstede dimensions did not align with the data collected from the students, and in certain dimensions, they might be over-reaching their proclaimed scope. The biggest criticism of Hofstede's theory is that the values indicated on surveys are not representative of reality. It can be suggested before taking the dimensions at face value that the level of susceptibility to social desirability across cultures is conducted. Another comparison would be needed of what the individual indicates his values are compared to what that individual thinks the average national of his/her country values. A more accurate data, which is more diverse and specific, is from the GLOBE study; the dimensions are separated into "as is" and "as should be."

6.6. Conclusion

Overall, as predicted, the cultural differences between China, Japan, and Korea affected the process of adaptation and adjustment of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean students to the semi-rural U.S. The differences were observed in all three broad categories: physical, academic, and social adjustment. Though there were similarities, there were also differences. For example,

some Japanese students had trouble adjusting to only showering and missed taking a bath. Korean students had limited access to their ethnic food. In academic areas, some Korean exchange students were not motivated to study because their home university did not accept American grades, only pass or fail evaluations of the classes taken abroad. Chinese students had little trouble with the American directness of communication, compared to Japanese students. Intergroup relationships in the Korean group were highly dependent on seniority. Furthermore, Japanese students struggled with group work and critiquing. As explained in the differences in ideologies, home country values strongly affect the behavior of students in their host environment.

Another clear difference was in the East Asian students' participation in cultural school organizations. Out of the three groups, the Chinese students reported perceiving few differences in the way the Americans and Chinese communicated. Finally, in dating, there were clear differences in the experiences of female participants dating American, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean males. However, the biggest surprise was in the perceptions that American males had of Asian females. They had an image of Japanese females as being promiscuous. This attitude seemed to pertain only to Japanese females in particular. Korean and Chinese females did not mention American males treating them disrespectfully or having any trouble after turning down their advances, while Japanese students reported American male students not only being overly persistent, but also outright asking one Japanese participant to have sex with him. Looking at the differences in experiences and difficulties the East Asians faced, it can be concluded that the cultural background does play a role in their integration into American society. Making the lumping of all people under one continent of Asia, as was done in many studies in the past, may not be an accurate portrayal of reality. Comparing the results to the Hofstede 6-D Model

demonstrated that not all dimensions coincided with the observations and results of this study. This suggests that more studies are needed in order to measure cultural differences among Asian students on university campuses.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPACTING FACTORS OF ADAPTATION

This chapter explores possible factors that affect the adaptation of East Asian students. Firstly, the factors that impact academic adjustment are explored, followed by factors affecting social adjustment. A more critical perspective is taken in this chapter, and the factors that hinder the process of adaptation are described. The problems students had with discrimination and sexual harassment are also described in detail. The data used in this chapter is based on interviews, observations, surveys, comments from the M. University staff, and the reports which the students submitted to home institutions. During final interviews, students were asked to reflect on their experience abroad and provide advice for future students. These suggestions as well as advice for students, educators and universities are also included in this chapter.

7.1. Impacting Factors of Academic Adjustment

First, the preparations the students did prior to arrival was demonstrated as a major factor in the adjustment process. As discussed in the previous chapters, students who prepared well and had more realistic expectations experienced less stress and uncertainty during the exposure stage of adjustment. The study abroad is a challenge beyond imagination for East Asian students who believed that the exchange program is just a language study experience. A primary example is the students from one of the Japanese universities that had a well-established exchange program with M. University. They were equipped with prior knowledge of the classes they were going to take at M. University; furthermore, they had good studying habits prior to arrival to the U.S. The results demonstrated that the key to predicting the academic success of Japanese students was if they were coming prepared academically or not. The Japanese staff at M. University organized the study groups and advised students in order to help them understand the course subjects

undertaken at M. University. According to the Japanese staff at M. University, these students all received over 80% in all of the classes they took during their one year study abroad.

One of the questions the students were asked was: "What advice would you give yourself if you could go back in time and talk to yourself a few month before you came to the U.S?" The majority of the students said they wished they would have studied harder, or studied English more before coming to the U.S. Many Japanese students also wished they would have brought more Japanese food with them. One of the Japanese students said she would tell herself, "*Don't expect too much,*" while another Chinese student said, "*Don't think about it too much, just do it.*" The practical advice for future students according to this study is to prepare more. However, many students are not aware of what they can do to prepare.

One of things suggested, when choosing a location to go abroad, is to thoroughly research the geographic location of the city where the university is located. The students should determine if that location matches their expectations and goals. Some of the key points are the population of the city, weather conditions, and points of interest. It is important for the students to realize that the Hollywood portrayals of Americans and the Americans in Japan, China and Korea are atypical of average Americans. America is extremely diverse in its climate, nature and people. The image of a blond, blue eyed American in a big city like New York is not representative of the lives of all American college students. Prior to arrival to the U.S., East Asian students would benefit more from watching shows like *National Geographic* and *History Channel* instead of *Sex in the* City or *Gossip Girls*.

Another way students can prepare is by watching American university lectures online. Those two students who did so, had better GPAs during their first semester compared to students who did not. Watching online lectures on YouTube, Coursera or EdX can help the students get

accustomed to academic English and various teaching methods used in the American classroom. For exchange students, it would have been beneficial to receive more support from their home institutions to prepare for studying abroad. The students did not receive any special preparation courses from their universities prior to going abroad. Furthermore, the orientation at M. University was not tailored to the needs of students who were oblivious about the basics of American Higher Education. This proved particularly detrimental for two students. One student took classes that an American peer adviser told him would be easy but ended up failing and dropping many of those classes. An easy class for American students who graduated from an American high school, proved to be dificult for the student from Taiwan. Classes about American society, history or government may seem easy for American students who were required to take American constitution as part of their high school curriculum. However, this caused severe damage financially and academically to the Taiwanese student, who because of this received an academic warning. Another example is not knowing when to withdraw or drop a class, as there is a schedule which indicates until what date it is possible to withdraw or drop classes. Dropping the class during the first few weeks of classes will not affect the academic record of the student. Withdrawing from a class past the first few weeks will result in a "W" on the student's transcript. Withdrawing from too many classes can lower the students' academic standing. The student at the interview sighed and said:

> *I have to admit that during the first two weeks, I tried to escape because I did not know what's going on, and because of that I did some bad things. For example, I withdrew from too many classes, so because of that I almost got suspended last semester. I should have talked to the advisers the first year I came here but I didn't, I just ask my friends,*

and they said withdrawing from class doesn't matter, but in fact it matters. Dropping the

class is fine but withdrawing stays on the record.

Another issue that can contribute to the students' struggle is their motivation and self-efficacy. In 2014, the International Survey of Youth Attitude was published by the cabinet office, government of Japan, on the attitudes of Japanese youth compared to six other countries. According to this survey, Japanese youth scored lower across categories that play a fundamental role in academic success in the American college environment. Looking at the self-reported ability to clearly express one's thoughts to others, 83% of American and 74% of Korean youth indicated they were able to do it, while the majority of Japanese youth (52%) said that they did not think they had this ability. In the American college environment, the capacity to express yourself clearly to others is an enormous factor for success. Another factor is making decisions and having willpower; 85% of American and 58% of Korean youth felt proud of being able to do so, while the majority of Japanese students (57%) disagreed with the statement. An even graver outlook is given by the responses on the motivation factor: 77% of Japanese and 65% of Korean youth felt unmotivated and bored, compared to 49% of American youth. Additionally, over 70% of Japanese youth felt sad and depressed. In the comparison of youths from seven countries, Japanese youth scored the highest across three categories: unmotivated, depressed, and sad. The lack of motivation by the majority of the youth in Japan is one thing to consider; however, the motivation to study hard in the U.S., instead of enjoying American life, is another factor. The value of the "study abroad" experience on a Japanese resume during the job-hunting period is not as valued as the attainment of knowledge from a foreign country. The companies do not make exceptions for the deadlines of job applications and tests that are required to apply for the job. The Japanese students studying abroad are often at a disadvantage as they return from the U.S. to

Japan after the job-hunting period has already begun. Japanese students who consider the study abroad as a fun experience exhorted their effort on making friends, and seemed to finish their study abroad thinking to study is useless. For the purpose of finding employment in Japan, the "study abroad" is perceived as merely a kind of experience, and not as evidence that a significant amount of knowledge available abroad was attained through the "study abroad." However, according to the Japanese staff at M. University, students who have an extensive overseas experience and utilized it to their advantage were able to become English teachers in public and private schools as well as attaining jobs at a large trading company. As for their job-hunting, the results have been wonderful. Even though due to the study abroad they started the process of job-hunting later than their Japanese cohort, they still found jobs.

Some short-term exchange students from Korea were also not motivated to study, but because of a different reason. The grades they earned in the U.S. did not transfer as letter grades, but only as pass or fail. Therefore, the effort to get an A (90-100%) in a class and to get a C (70-79%) would be rewarded equally. These students said that they did not come to the U.S. for the academic knowledge, but instead wanted to improve their English and experience life in the U.S. Conversely, students like Saori, Bob and Bei as well as others came to the U.S. to gain the know-how, pursuing the fields that they wanted. For example, Que was studying nursing back in China but wanted to study business. However, it was nearly impossible for her to change her major at her university in China. The U.S. business programs as well as the opportunity to learn English language made her want to study in the university in the U.S. Therefore, she set a goal for herself to earn high grades, like many other students enrolled in bachelor degree programs. Students who came with the goal to succeed academically and do so, feel a higher sense of achievement

compared to the students who came to make friends or experience the American culture. One Japanese student wrote:

> *I would like to say to future students, who will go to study abroad, that having a purpose to study abroad is the most important thing. All of Japanese exchange students had great goals and my friend who lived next to me did English way better than me. I always respected her and I asked a lot of stuffs about class and when we had conversation. I heard other students who came to M. did so for fun and they didn't study then went back to Japan. I didn't want to be like them, so I set goals and I achieved them.*

Students participating in extracurricular activities made more American friends, had more out of school setting interactions, and an array of positive experiences. One example is Miya, who joined Greek Life[17]. She was the only international student in her sorority. She said everyone was so nice and treated her like a sister. She was very surprised and said it was a very positive experience. Miya joined the sorority after already being in the U.S. for two years, and said she has a feeling that she can make many close friends in this place. Even though Miya is not Christian, she also joined Christian Fellowship, and said it helped her improve her English, and she learned many new words from every Bible reading. Another Japanese student and two Korean students also joined religious organizations, and sometimes they would join the church to celebrate special holidays. Another school organization that three Chinese students and one Korean student participated in was DECA[18]. They said it was a great chance to make American friends and develop their skills. Through DECA East Asian students had an opportunity to join American students' house parties, pair up with American students for competitions, and even

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[17] Greek Life is a number of sororities and fraternities organizations on campus across the U.S.

[18] DECA is a school organization that aims to prepare future leaders in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. DECA members at M. University have weekly meeting, where they discuss the preparations for the next competitions. DECA also often invites guest speakers who are businessmen or business owners.

present in national conferences. Other organizations that East Asian students participated in were: Korea Club, China Club, Dance Club, Learning Community, International student organization, Mongolia Club, and Gamers Club. The finding from this study supports the works of Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002) that extracurricular activities positively benefit the adjustment of East Asian students, as well as academic performance. However, the academic performance of club officers is higher because one of the requirements to be an officer is to maintain an above average GPA. The socioeconomic standing had some affect on the the adaptation process, however, having a higher standing did not contribute to more accademic success. Students who needed to have a part-time job were exposed to more international and some American students, while other students who were financially well off spent most of their time playing video games and traveling on holidays. Counter intuitively, students who did not have to work and had more free time did not get higher grades than those who had part-time jobs.

7.2. Impacting Factors of Social Adjustment and Integration

There are many elements which can impact the students' experiences in adjustment, such as: socioeconomic status, motivations to study abroad, goals, preparations, expectations, interactions with Americans, attitude, personality, differences between the native and host culture, as well as many other factors. However, as it was demonstrated by IAT, the expectations, requirements and desires of sojourners have to be given special attention when looking at their social adaptation process. Furthermore, many cultural differences among the Japanese, Chinese and Korean students' show that each group has different needs when they study abroad.

Interactions with Americans play a crucial role in social adaptation. There are a few ways in which students bonded closely with Americans. Although, there were some students like Hiro and Ho who had many American friends, majority of the students chose to spend their time with

co-ethnic and international students. One student explains the reason why during her one year abroad she chose to fraternize with other Japanese students:

Some people think hanging out with Japanese friends is not good but I did [during] whole year. Since we are from same country and having a same culture so we can share what is culture shock and what was new discovery. We also share information like class and what exchange students need to turn in business center. It is very comfortable when we speak Japanese so we could relax too. Sometimes it was hard to convey my feelings in English and it took a while before the listener could understand what I was trying to say. Thus, hanging out with Japanese has many merits.

Although, it might be comfortable to spent time with co-ethnic nationals, most students came to the U.S. with the expectations to make American friends. The amount of knowledge and discovery that can be obtained from co-nationals about local culture is extremely limited, compared to the knowledge that could be gained from local Americans about local culture. By being exposed to more people, the probability of meeting someone you might become close friends with will significantly increase. As a minority, East Asian students are disadvantaged in the knowledge of the local culture; however, as university students they are able to pursue personal interests, which would shift the focus from cultural differences to common personal interests. Students that were able to make American friends that had no interest in their country, bonded either through repeated contact and proximity, or through commonality in hobbies. This brings us to the next factor of living on or off campus.

Students who lived off campus with co-ethnic students had fewer interactions with American students, compared to students who lived on campus. East Asian students who lived on campus usually had more interactions with Americans. The only exception was the Korean

group, who lived together on campus on the same floor in the same dorm, had limited interactions with Americans. In general, the students who lived in the dorms and were surrounded by American students, reported becoming friends with some of Americans. Some of the activities they did together were eating together daily and hanging out at each other's dorms. Students who went to the school gym also reported having some interactions with Americans, but these interactions did not develop into deep friendships. The frequency of interactions did play a major role in the development of the relationships, but proximity is not the main factor as it could be seen from classroom interactions of East Asian students. From this, it can be observed that living on campus is an important element for providing opportunities for East Asian students to interact with the local population outside of the classroom.

First impressions, greetings, and interactions dictate the continuation and the quality of the relationship. The common complaint from some East Asian students was that Americans (American roommates especially) are rude, because they do not say "Hello". One Japanese exchange student from the 2014-2015 academic year, said that her roommate ignored her and would enter and leave the room without a single word, not saying hello or where she was going. Another student in an interview recently said: "*You know I had a roommate, and we shared a room together. The first time she walked into the room she didn't even say "Hi". I thought "she is the worst". She ignored me, and then her friend came to help her move in, that friend said, "Oh did you two get to know each other yet", and that [is] when we first talked to each other.*" (YA9-19) Another student had a similar story, but the girls finally talked to each other when the mother of the American girl asked if they have gotten to know each other. What is interesting is that in every case, the East Asian student expected and waited for the Americans to greet them first, but to my knowledge there is no code of etiquette that says the person who moves in last

must initiate contact. East Asian students rarely invite an American out, but instead wait to be invited. This passive behavior has a high impact level on all possible interactions. For example, Rini said that luckily her American friends invite her out, sometimes they go to bars and other times to the gym to work out, but she never asks or will ask them to hang out. When asked why not, she said she would not know what to do if they said no. It would be beneficial for this kind of simple cultural differences to be explained at the international students' orientation, as this is a common experience for international students.

According to the Japanese professor at M. University, the Japanese students who assisted in teaching Japanese language courses were able to use this experience to make American friends. In the past, other cases of Japanese students becoming close with American students included living on the same floor in the dorm, attending sports events, and participating in Japan Club. Although the staff refrained from commenting on the influence of romantic relationships of the Japanese students with Americans, they did state that the case of Japanese female students dating American male students was indeed common. More often than not, it did affect the Japanese students' studies. This did not only pertain to Japanese students, gender seemed to influence romantic relationships as more female East Asian students were dating American males than East Asian males were dating American females. The major factor that influences the feeling of adapting to the host environment is the sense of belonging, for which interactions with the local population become imperative. However, the formation of meaningful relationships with local people is influenced by numerous factors and is extremely complicated.

7.3. Personality, Attitude and Motivation

Undeniably, the students' personalities played a role in their adjustment and interactions with local students. There were 37 students and most of them had very different personalities,

interests, majors, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Very few students succeeded in making close American friends, and these few have very different personalities from each other. For example, Hiro is an introvert who loves comic books and enjoys talking about movies with his American roommate and his roommate's friends. While Masahiro is an extrovert, who enjoys talking to people, lives with his Japanese roommate but goes to house parties and has fun with his American and Asian friends. So students who did not show any social initiative were unsuccessful in making many friends and stayed in the most comfortable circle of friends from their own country, while other introverted students found Americans who had similar interest and became close friends. Personality does matter. Personality just might not matter as much in accounting for the adaptation of East Asian students to the rural U.S. as other factors such as attitude.

Attitude influenced the quality of the experiences that exchange students had, the interactions they had with local students, and it certainly reflected on their mental state. Having a positive attitude is one of the most important factors in adapting to a new environment. On the opposite side, complaining can be detrimental to the study abroad experience. One Japanese student who was in the U.S. for three years described her observations on the topic:

> *I was excited, but also scared [to study in the U.S.]. My English was not good. I was very concerned about my life in U.S. Others spoke better than me, and I have never been here before. I was surprised about how rural this area was, nothing around. But I came to study not to play, and there were three of us that came together through the same agent. Those two were always complaining, like there is nothing to do, the town is empty. They transferred after two years, they hated the rural area, they preferred city, with one of them had many close friends but the other girl just complained and didn't find many*

friends. We were very close, the three of us. They are lifelong friends, we went through so much together. But looking at their example, I thought even in rural area or anywhere if you want to find things to do you can, but if you complain only, you can never find friends and fitting in is hard. It's more fun with friends, no matter what happens. I asked them why they kept complaining, we came to study anyway. In daily life I didn't have too much trouble.

Students with a positive attitude were better equipped to deal with their unrealized expectations. The betrayal of the expectations they had affects different students in a very different way. Some easily step over it and move on, while others continue to dwell on the fact that everything is not how it should be, and how they expected it to be. Another effect of staying positive was it motivated students to keep improving themselves. Having the social support and getting positive reinforcement helped students improve their English. One student reflected on her experience in the return home report:

Many friends praised my English and my motivation to learn English was improved. I'm very interested in what my friends said my English has an accent like Black, white, and Japanese. It depends on who listening to my English and I could know how I speak English, because their feedback really helped me. It caused my English skills to improve. Moreover, M. University has many international students, so I could have a good opportunity to talk with them very often. Communicating with foreign friends meant we can talk to each other about our languages and cultures such as food, the way of thinking, rules etcetera. I noticed that it was especially different from Japanese culture such as food, greeting and responsibility. Although it depends on person but Japanese tend to keep a promise but foreigners tend to be lazier than us. And they have a lot of greetings

like "How is going?" and "What's up?" I thought it is key to start a conversation. Talking about school, they have many events and they often served free food and gave free stuffs as well.

It was also observed that professors often take examples from American or local culture. When explaining a concept, they use famous American TV shows of past generations, or American companies, the context, which is unknown and makes it more difficult for international students to follow the lecture. This lack of international perspective might become a serious barrier for American universities in the future when attracting international students. It can be argued that the burden should be on the international students to learn about the environment and culture of the host country, but it would be nearly impossible to learn all of the things that American students have been exposed during their whole life.

7.4. Discrimination

The common prejudice that was against Asian students is that American students believed that Asians could not speak English. In class discussion or group work, American students would walk past Asian students, avoiding eye contact and not form groups with them. Other types of discrimination were outside the school, including on the bus, in the bank, on the street, etcetera. Overall, the topic of discrimination came up often during interviews and this theme emerged during initial interviews, when some students were worried about discrimination even prior to their arrival to the U.S. Although there were a few students thought America was a melting pot without much thought to discrimination. Some students did have a few awful experiences. Here is a short conversation about one incident with two female Japanese students:

A: Always in class, there is one pretending to be nice to Asian and African person
Y: The mean blond?
A: Yea the mean blond, Hahaha. My classmate.
Y: Blond girls are so scary always

A: Yea the blond girls
Anya: Scary? Why?
A: Their attitude is always bad toward us.
Y: They call the Japanese, Japs. Remember the party?
A: Yea at a party, at an American party, a blond girl came up and says: "I am Quarter Jap" … Making fun of me. I felt that I was discriminated against.
Anya: Is there a lot of discrimination?
A: I think it's especially in this state.
Y: They don't like outsiders.
A: The white people think we can't speak any English, so they never try to talk to us. Thinking we don't speak English.
Y: Yea, that's true.

Many students had incidents of discrimination, and even though they were one-time fleeting experiences, they stood out and were clearly remembered. During the first two weeks in the U.S., three Japanese exchange students were walking down a street. Across the street from a gas station they saw an African American man yelling and walking toward them. He was swearing and shouting various racial insults and that his genitals were bigger than theirs. They recall the incident: "*So we were just walking around on the sidewalk in downtown when this black man started yelling at us. He got out of the car and came really close to us just swearing for no reason.*" When asked what exactly the man was yelling the students felt very uncomfortable and just said it was "racial insults". The students quickened their pace and turned the corner, but they could not understand, and months after the incident at an interview, one of the Japanese students kept asking, "*What did we do? Why was he so mad at us, we were just walking*". Another incident took place outside in a major city during winter vacation; the Japanese students recall the experience:

By the way, I had one very bad experience. On the way to go back to the airport in the train; my girlfriend sitting on the seat, then there are many people there. Then there was a black old woman who was kind of crazy. She was talking around loudly complaining about, I don't know what, but about her things. Suddenly she stared at us and she started

185

to discriminate us. She said, "Mother-fucking Chinese/Japanese, fucking blah-blah-blah." Like that then I just ignored and my girlfriend couldn't understand why, she said. It was okay, but I couldn't understand why she said so. I was very confused and angry, but I just ignored.

There was a particular instance on the bus that was described by Saki:

Sometimes, like last week I went shopping with a Chinese friend and on the bus, when talked to by a guy, an older guy approached us and he pointed to Lihua and said "are you Korean?" so we said no why do you think so? He said I know how to identify Korean, Chinese and Japanese apart. Japanese have down eyes, Korean have straight and Chinese have upper eyes. He pointed to another friend and said you totally look Chinese you look so on. He didn't point at me, but when I said I was Japanese he said "I don't think so, but sometimes my opinion is not correct, but most of the time I can identify them" Maybe he did not think it's wrong, and maybe it is kind of ... discrimination maybe, but I felt a bad thing from this, not so good, not so….

Saki was uncertain if this was a kind of discrimination, but it was certain she felt very uncomfortable, especially her national identity being questioned. Other forms of discrimination both direct and indirect were reported. Being approached when in a group with other Asian students and being yelled derogatory terms at, was another form of racism, such as being referred to as a "Jap". Another Japanese student through the online survey who was studying in urban Illinois reported being insulted on the train. There were also positive attributes prescribed to Asian students.

Americans think Asians are good at math. They also do not know where Malaysia is, sometimes then we explain it's between Thailand and Singapore, they still do not know. They really don't understand that we can be ethnically Chinese and live in Malaysia."

Other students also reported that Americans believe that Asian students study hard, are good at math, but bad at English. One Chinese student felt that Americans had a dislike toward China, when she said that she was from China, she had the feeling that American students became withdrawn. It was common for students to mention that Americans were not interested in foreign cultures, and the subtle discrimination in the classrooms was not uncommon.

7.5. Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Twelve female students reported some form of discrimination or sexual harassment based on their gender or being Asian. Japanese female students reported the most discrimination based on their gender, and had the most severe encounters with sexual harassment compared to Chinese and Korean female students. The worst case was the online anonymous report of rape, with no other information provided.

One Japanese student, Saki, had two very disturbing experiences. Saki came to the U.S. in January 2016 from Tokyo. She was raised by her single mother in Tokyo, and has a dream of becoming a researcher in the future. She is very passionate about Physics, but failed the exam to get into the university of her choice in Japan. Instead of being a Ronin for a year and retaking the exams, she studied English and worked part-time jobs to make money to study in the U.S. She was very concerned about not putting financial strain on her mother. When she arrived in January, she was looking forward to taking Physics, but the class was already full, so she took Astronomy. In her astronomy lecture class, one day in an auditorium full of students, an

American boy sat next to her. He asked her where she was from, and when Saki told him she was from Japan, his comments made her very uncomfortable.

> Saki: American guy asked me is Japanese really easy, you know to have sex? And I asked why he asked me and why he think so, he said some TV show or website I don't know, he said some Japanese girls always want to have sex with American, so he asked me if I wanted to. (She paused and looked down)
> A: He asked you if you wanted to have sex with an American guy?
> S: Yeah… It is so mean, maybe he is a mean person, and my other American friend said that guy is mean. We have a big lecture for Astronomy class and he sat down next to me and asked me weird things
> A: So what did you tell him?
> S: I never replied him, I just don't like that, I am not...you know... and I didn't want to talk to him, so I see him I don't talk to him and I changed seats.

This sadly, was not her only experience, when asked about any difficulties she was having in socially adjusting to the life in the U.S. she said that American guys asked he many things that made her uncomfortable. She describes some of the things they asked:

> *Well you know if it [what they ask] is just "Do you have a boyfriend?" that's still okay even though we don't know each other I was asked "Are you still a virgin?" so I didn't know if that's normal so I asked my American roommate, I told her "In Japan we would not ask this, but in America is it okay?" I mean this guy wanted to play 21 questions, and I had to answer the truth, so I asked is it normal to ask this in a game?" and my roommate said it was disgusting. Also how American guys behave toward females, obviously because they are female, if between girls it may be okay, but when a guy is suddenly overly friendly it's kind of uncomfortable. Now I became more wary of such attention, I think they think because I am Japanese I am open and easy to have sex with. I am thinking, what the guys are thinking, now when I interact with guys. In Japan we are conscious of not creating a bad atmosphere, we don't want to be hated. And I really*

wanted to interact with Americans, because it really improves my English and I can learn

so much, like recently I learned "lol[19]".

On our way home from the interview, Saki remembered another question that she was asked, that made her uncomfortable, pertained to Japanese high school girls. An American guy asked to see her high school picture and commented that he heard the skirts were really short. Furthermore, Saki was not the only one who was asked if she was a virgin, and was confused if this was an American norm. A classmate asked another female Japanese student on the bus if she was a virgin, and they were not playing a game. She also had the same reaction. She asked me if it was normal or not, is it common in the U.S. She said she was not sure if she should get mad, or had to answer, she later also consulted with her friends on if it was a normal behavior or not.

Talking with another Japanese girl from Tokyo, she was also confronted with a few American guys that were very aggressive in their sexual pursuits. She said that Americans view Japanese girls as easy, and offered a few explanations such as the possibility of half white guys being popular in Japan, or it's a stereotype of American guys that Japanese have, or Asian girls being rare in a rural area and that's why they were popular. She also mentioned that it could be due to the popularity of anime culture, and reflected that it could be partialy because "*In Japanese culture it's hard to say no, so Japanese girls pretend to be nice, and it was hard for her to get away from this guy*". Another Japanese student explained it as:

I think in Japan people get to know each other well then have sex, but Americans

want to do it right away. I once told a guy 'I don't want to do it because I barely

know you' and he said 'there is a good way to get to know each other more'. It's

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[19] LOL stands for Laugh Out Loud, but Saki explained she just recently learned what it meant and how it was used

like if we don't do it, then we can't get to know each other. It's like sex is a tool to

get to know each other. In Japan they are not like that.

Another issue concerning gender as well as ethnicity was reported by Mina "*Americans often talk to us like we are children, that Asian females look very young and they think are 5 years younger than what we really are, this is especially true for me and other Asian girls here,"* Mina's friend also mentioned that she sometimes is treated like a kid in the U.S.

The results demonstrated that Japanese females reported the harassment and gender based discrimination more, while the Chinese and Koreans female students reported mostly discrimination and prejudice based on their ethnicity. The only student other than Japanese females was Ho, a Korean student who commented on this issue: "*Some guys [American] just come and like, how do I say, like put their hands around you, and whoo. This is like wrong."* Other Chinese and Korean students did mention that American guys are more direct, but they had no difficulty in stopping this unwanted attention. Many students reported more physical contact between sexes, and an ambiguous sexual relationship was a culture shock to them. One student reported in online survey, "*My roommate often stayed with a boy in our room, so I thought he is her boyfriend. But actually, he wasn't. Then I thought the relationships in the US are closer than Japan*."

Often when confronted with uncomfortable situations, the Japanese girls are ambivalent, because they want to fit in and obliged by the norms of the American society. They are at the same time not sure if this is a norm in the U.S. The position of being a foreigner makes these young women very vulnerable, and as Saki described in Japanese society, not offending anyone and preserving harmony is very important as Japanese are afraid of being disliked or excluded from the group. The question of virginity has no right answer, as it is related to what Tolman et

al., (2005) referred to as the slut/prude tightrope. Where if the answer is yes, the woman might be viewed as a prude and if the answer is no, she could be viewed as a slut. In discussion forums on the Internet, young American females are often in disarray on how to answer such a question, especially when coming from someone who they are not in a relationship with. However, there is a consensus that it is inappropriate. This problem for Japanese females is tripled.

Besides the regular dissonance that the American females experience, the other two factors: being a sojourner, who does not know social norms of America and the influence of Japanese culture and their cultural identity. The Japanese values prevent the Japanese females from providing witted responses suggested in forums such as "Why, are you trying to start a club?"[20] "Why, you planning a sacrifice ritual?" or "No life screws everyone over"[21]. In the Japanese culture, the importance of the atmosphere and relationships between people is a top priority. Offending or disagreeing with another person will damage that relationship. Furthermore, in many Asian countries the status of being a virgin still hold special meaning, and is not viewed negatively. The socially constructed image of a woman's sexuality in American modern society is very controversial, and pressured by social desirability. It is confusing to know what the desired answer would be.

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[20]

https://www.reddit.com/r/TwoXChromosomes/comments/2djni1/whats_your_goto_response_to_the_question_are_you/ accessed October 8, 2016

[21] http://www.ishouldhavesaid.net/2012/02/are-you-still-a-virgin-more-snappy-comebacks/ accessed October 8, 2016

Figure 10: Nature of Discrimination
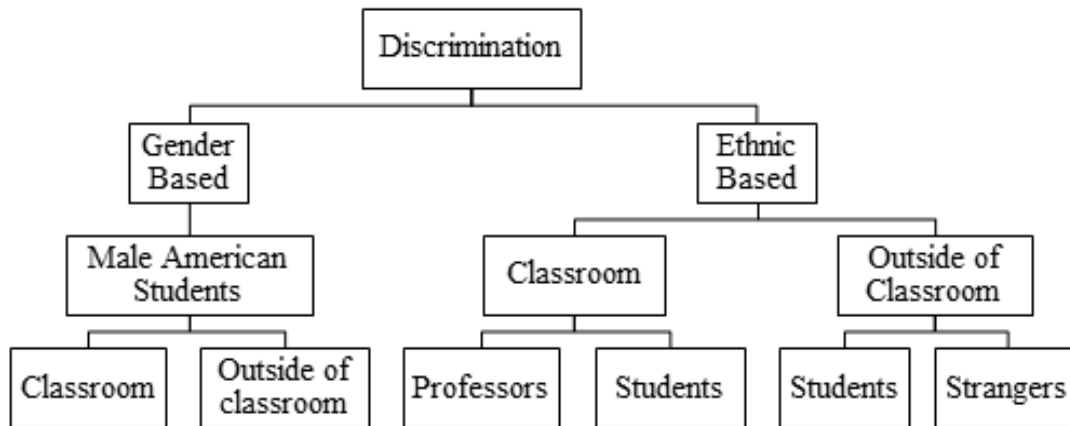
There is a misleading stereotype of Asian women in the U.S. For example, in the American advertisements, East Asian women are portrayed as "servile" (Wang & Cooper-Chen, 2010; Van Zoonen, 1994) and "passive, sexual objects". These images derive from Japanese geisha culture and massage parlor advertisements (Wang & Cooper-Chen, 2010). These depictions of Asian women being exotic and eager to serve men can often be seen in U.S. movies (Memoirs of Geisha, Sayonara, M. Butterfly, etc.). Besides, some Asian women state that when dating American men, they feel that Americans are interested not in their personality but rather in the generalized image of an Asian woman and Americans' fantasies about them (Sharp, 2010). Asian women are desirable because of their mysteriousness, pliability, agelessness, femininity, exoticism, and servility. As was noted above, in the U.S. there are online dating services where American men can find "classy, desirable, loving, sweet, and gentle" Asian girlfriends. On dating websites the Asian women are contrasted with American women that accused of becoming too masculine[22]. The Asian dating websites and advertisements on the internet might

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[22] Dr. Sharp examined how Asian Dating sites generalize Asian women as servile, supportive, not complaining

192

be influencing the young male college students to believe the Asian exotic female mystique. Another influence might be blogs about the prestige and the benefits of dating an Asian girl compared to the American one.[23]

7.6. Role of Institutions and Power Balance

Taking a critical approach to the roles of institution and power balance in the process of East Asian students' adjustment is not commonly done. However, according to Craig and Muller (2007) "T*he critical tradition conceptualizes communication as discursive reflection, a discourse that freely reflects on assumptions that may be distorted by unexamined habits, ideological beliefs, and relations of power*" (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 425). It exposes hidden social mechanisms that are not representative, and support the efforts to resist the power of this hidden truth. The concepts that are often associated with critical theory are ideology, truth, deception, power, resistance, liberation, democracy, identity, and participation. Through the critical approach, it can be seen how foreign students are disadvantaged in academic terms, social terms, and economic terms.

The majority of the Asian students that come to the rural U.S. chose M. University because of economic conditions. The living costs are considerably cheaper in a rural area and the tuition is also cheaper for international students. Prior to coming to the U.S., the students must provide the proof that they will be able to support themselves financially by showing a large sum of money in the bank account and prove that their parents have jobs to continue to support them in the future. In order to show the financial proof, one Chinese student, Sam, had gathered the money from many of his relatives and friends. The money was put it in the bank so the bank

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with Eastern values Accessed October, 11th, 2016 https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2010/03/03/the-submissive-asian-stereotype-classy-asian-ladies-dating-site/
[23] A blog titled "Why Asian Women are Better to Date than American Women" received over 5oo comments majority supporting the title as a true statement. Accessed October 30, 2016

statement could be printed out, after a few months the money went back to the rightful owners. The parents on paper are entrepreneurs, owning their own agricultural business, while in reality; they are farmers with little private property.

The American government sells the ideology of freedom, success, money, and an easy life. The students, arrive at the U.S. under the false belief that it can be very easy to make countless dollars. However, they are faced with a different reality. The U.S. law prohibits F-1 visa students from working off campus, and the number of positions and hours available to work on campus is limited. The scholarships are offered on merit bases, but only to American students, and work-studies in the library or offices on campuses are reserved for American students who applied for financial aid. Many Asian students, who are unable to rely on their parents, end up taking jobs at the university that no one wants, like cleaning floors at night. The easiest way to see the economic oppression of international students is by looking at who is serving food at the canteen. At M. University, where international students make up less than 10% of the school population, they make up 80% of the working force in the cafeteria and janitorial work. Americans might think that if life is hard for these students in the U.S. they should just go home. The discriminating remarks "Go back where you came from" are common. So, the obvious question is why not just going back home? The American ideology of work hard, make money, and get rich, fuels the desires of international students. Asian students dream of the day they will graduate and find a job and can make money. They are constantly reminded at the university about how proud they should be to be a Hawk, a Dragon, a Squirrel or another creature of the animal kingdom, which is the mascot of the university. They are preached about how great American education is and how in the future when they are alumni (and make lots of money) to make donations to the school. However, this almost never happens, because the U.S.

immigration laws are strict. Even for a student with a Ph.D., let alone an Asian student with a Bachelor degree from M. University, it can be difficult for a foreigner to find an employer that will sponsor him or her for a green card. The students on their F1 visas often apply for an OPT after their studies, work for one year doing manual tasks in an office, as no employer wants to entrust important work or train an employee that will not be around for one year. Although, science major students can get a 3 year OPT, majority of the students in this study were from business and social science majors. Not being able to find a job, or after the one year of an OPT, most students give up on the American dream and go back, while others take the money they saved up for a year and invest it into a graduate education where again they are faced again with economic oppression. Either way, few get what they hoped for, meaning that the Asian students are put in an economically disadvantaged position by the higher institutions.

The majority is ignoring the minority and their needs are not addressed in the higher education institutions. Language is not accounted for when teachers evaluate the work. Even though the international student might have to exhort two or three times more effort and time in completing the same assignment as an American, they are getting rewarded less. No provisions, of any kind are provided for international students to integrate into the local culture let alone help students fit in with their classmates. For example, many East Asian students struggle to understand the questions during exams, one student explained the difficulty of taking exams at M. University, "*I think its understanding the questions on the test. Even when I prepare for the test and understand the text, review my notebook, but sometimes I don't understand the questions.*" Most Asian students, when asked, reported not being comfortable to raise their hand and ask questions, and of course dictionaries are not allowed on the tests. The professors need to either

use lower level vocabulary on the test questions, or create an atmosphere in the class where the Asian students would not feel uncomfortable to ask questions.

Furthermore, the international students are not familiar with office hours, tutoring systems, and other services provided by the school. All of the students and the institution of higher education are not so concerned about publicizing the services that cost money, and instead are more concerned about making money. During the international student orientation, the focus on tuition payment, how it is done, and the deadline as well as consequences, was emphasized. Most of the jet-lagged students find the orientation of little help, as it is centered on limiting university liability by warning the students what things will be troublesome like working illegally off-campus. As a lion cub is thrown off a cliff, the international students embark on the road of American college education without any preparations. Therefore, higher institutions need to accommodate the international students' needs more during orientation and throughout their academic career.

With globalization and world advertising of nation branding, there are almost universal symbols that are recognized by both Asian and American students. These include watching the same TV Dramas, visiting McDonald's, hanging out with friends, and other similarities in the lifestyle of students born of the same generation. What was said by Horkheimer and Adorno (1976) over 40 years ago is as true as ever, they said the products that are not advertised are the ones that seem suspicious, and not the other way around. The highly advertised cultural products are sold in abundance and are well marketed. They represent only one part of life in the U.S. TV shows about the mundane lives of students in small cities would not sell. Asian students come to the U.S. with the expectations of an American college life being a liberation from study, and the initiation to the life of drinking, partying, and extremely friendly Americans. However, this is

not the reality of small town life. The gaps in expectations based on American cultural products create a pitfall that most of the Asian students fall into upon arrival to the rural U.S. The consumption of American cultural products by Asian students causes initial and at times long-term disappointment upon arrival to the rural U.S.

In the majority of research on cultural adjustment of sojourners, the role of institution is often ignored. A critical approach is taken to the roles of various types of institutions: 1) the host and the home universities role, 2) legal and social institutions in the U.S., and 3) business organizations in home countries. First looking at the universities that send exchange students to the U.S., these institutions continue to receive the tuition fees from the student, while the student studies abroad. There are some scholarships offered, but home tuition still stays the same. These institutions only rarely help prepare the students for the experience that awaits them. The universities that the students are sent to abroad are not often matched with the students' academic interest, but instead by TOEFL or IELTS scores. The majority of the information the students are able to get is from students who went to the same American institution the year before, or through faculty who have visited that institution. Some Japanese and Taiwanese institutions set clear academic goals, such as the number of credits that must be taken and the grades received that will be transferred back to the home institution. Sometimes, the Japanese students have to attend an extra year at the university in Japan to make up for the year abroad due to credits not transferring or being unable to do job searching. A worst-case scenario occurs when the home institutions do not accept the credits from the American university where the student studied, or only transfer the grades as pass or fail. Often, institutions advertise study abroad programs as a mere experience where students get to travel and make new friends undervaluing the educational benefits, and the rigorous studying needed for obtaining adequate

grades. In Japan, few Japanese students want to study abroad, and there are few foreigners in Japan. In an article in the Japan Times it stated, "*If foreign students will not come here and Japanese students will not go abroad, Japan's current isolationism in education will only continue.*"[24] In many Asian countries, it is hard to enter the university of your choice, but graduating is comparatively simple. While in the U.S., it might be easy to enter, but hard to graduate. American universities as host institutions have little staff that is familiar with education systems abroad.

The training regarding what constitutes sexual harassment or how to deal with discrimination is provided for teacher assistants and employees of university in the U.S. But the most vulnerable groups, such as newly arriving international students, are not warned about the dangers and abuse they might confront on campus. From a critical approach, the power balance is overly on the side of the university and American students. Having been sold on a higher level of education, and bright opportunities, the students spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in the U.S. without being able to find a job, being discriminated against, and sexually harassed, with the status of being an alumni of a non-research university not giving any networking power back home. The cases of discrimination that were retold by the students in this study, and of sexual harassment, were not once reported to anyone in the university. Although throughout the universities in the U.S., there are signs for help due to psychological distress, depression, and violence. The phone numbers to contact are provided, but other than these services, little support is provided for international students and after the orientation they are treated equally with American students, and are expected to consume the services designed to support American students.

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[24] http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/04/11/editorials/university-tokyo-failing-non-japanese-students/#.V9g5UJh97IU accessed September 12, 2016

7.7. Conclusion

This chapter explored the coping strategies and other factors influencing cultural adaptation. Positive attitude, social initiative, cultural empathy and a sense of humor can help students adjust, while discrimination and sexual harassment are indisputably the factors that constrain the process of cultural adjustment. Instead of complaining, having a more positive outlook and initiating conversations would improve the students' experiences abroad. However, the fear of failure or embarrassment most likely inhibits the East Asian students' interactions with Americans. One of the biggest obstacles is fear of rejection, which prevented Asian students from asking American students to spend time together. From observations of all the students, few students tried to understand the local culture and take the perspective of the local students. These results were consistent with the previous findings on MP, where success of cultural adaptation was reported to be dependent on individual's cultural empathy, open-mindedness and social initiative (Van Der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Perhaps flexibility and emotional stability also play an important role as suggested by MP, however, for the East Asian students in this study the key factors were those three listed above.

American students' blatant discrimination against Asian students, and the lack of professors' intervention are major problems. In class professors could intervene by pointing out to the local students that there are international students in the class, and it would be beneficial for American students to form groups with these international students. This might have prevented students like Shane from being left without a group or other Japanese students feeling like they were avoided or ignored. Professors in institutions should not single out East Asian students and offer special treatment to them because of presumptions that they will struggle with

the class. Instead, professors should create a friendlier environment in the classroom, influencing American students to be more open-minded and culturally empathetic.

The role of American institutions is imperative in protecting vulnerable minorities on campus, but this role has not been sufficiently fulfilled. The orientation for international students should point out some of the cultural differences and give hints about some of the challenges the students might face in the local context. Some of the inhibiting factors were based on the negative experiences of East Asian students, such as marginalization, discrimination and sexual harassment. The home institutions can help motivate their students to study harder in the U.S. by requiring a certain GPA, instead of transferring the grades on a pass or fail bases. The institutions back home and in the host country can vastly contribute to students' adaptations by providing a better environment for the students to study. Motivating the students to not only to study hard but also to show initiative was very important. To summarize the lessons from the critical approach, Asian students are put at an economic, academic and social disadvantaged position in the U.S. The institutions, both governmental and educational, are concerned more with their own profit than with the quality of experiences that Asian students have.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrated a large gap between the expectations the East Asian students had prior to going abroad and the reality they faced in the rural U.S. This, along with the prejudice of local American students strongly inhibited cultural adaptation of East Asian students to the rural U.S. The local students were seen as lacking an international perspective by the majority of East Asian students and were described as cold, unfriendly, and somewhat ignorant. A majority of East Asian students adapted to American life but failed to integrate into the local culture, and chose to interact with co-ethnic or other international students. This chapter starts with a summary of the key findings on each of the three research questions that were posed: 1) the process of adaptation to the rural U.S., 2) the cultural differences between Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students, and 3) the factors impacting the cultural adaptation of East Asian students. Then, the results are discussed in the larger discourse of cultural adaptation and the significance of the study is reviewed. Practical suggestions for institutions and students are provided, and are followed by the limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies.

8.1. Summary of Key Findings

Looking at the process of studying abroad, five phases of adjustment were conceptualized: pre-arrival, exposure, culture shock, adaptation, and reverse-culture shock. During the pre-arrival phase, the students were worried, anxious, excited, hopeful, and full of unrealistic expectations about America and American people.

In the second phase upon their arrival, they faced disappointment, disillusionment, and disgust, especially with the food. At the same time, everything was still new and students were excited. As the novelty wore off, the students made the transition into the third phase. The

culture shock was marked by a more sober outlook on the surrounding when everything that was new and exciting becomes mundane and rutine. There was a certain feeling of discomfort that arose in daily interactions and activities during this stage. Most of the students were able to adjust and recover, however a few students were unable to accept the cultural differences and continued to complain about various cultural differences until they returned home.

The fourth phase was adapting and overcoming the culture shock which was different for each individual. Majority of the students neither completely acculturated, nor did they fully reject the host culture or voluntarily returned back home prematurely. Most of the East Asian students were somewhere in-between, leaning toward one or another side. The last phase was reversed culture shock, where students experienced another surprise, although it was not as severe as some literature predicted. Most likely it is because the students were away only for one to two years, and many students were just very happy to be back home to metropolitan cities.

One of the key findings on the staged of adaptation was that the prejudice of local and East Asian students negatively affected their interactions. American students were often under the impression that Asian students did not speak English. Another key finding was that some of the East Asian students believed that the rural area and the local Americans were significantly different from larger cities in the U.S. They attributed not being able to form meaningful relationships with local Americans or not being very active to the location of M. University.

In exploring the differences between the Japanese, Chinese and Korean students, three types of adjustment emerged: physical, academic, and social. For the physical adjustment, Chinese students have the most advantage as there are plenty of Chinese restaurants, while Korean students were at the biggest disadvantage. The academic adjustment was reported to be the most difficult especially for group and whole-class discussion tasks Notebely Japanese

students struggled with critique assignments more than other students. Social adjustment for majority of the students consisted of relationships with co-nationals and other international students. Looking at the national characteristics, just like China itself, the Chinese group was the most diverse and inclusive. There were two types of Korean students, those who were in an exclusive tight Korean group, and the other is of a few independent well-integrated students. The well-integrated Korean students in Korea club formed relationships with local students around the Korean popular and traditional culture. All of the Korean students were proud of their history and their country. For the Japanese students there was a vast diversity in attitude, with some students even purposely avoiding interactions with other Japanese students to improve assimilation. None of the Japanese students felt pride about Japanese popular culture, and had a negative reaction to Americans interested in J-Pop, Japanese culture, anime, or manga. The Korean students strictly followed the seniority system within their group, while Japanese students started to question if it is necessary to treat the seniors differently. Out of the three groups Japanese students were the least confrontational, and had the most difficulty with expressing their own opinion. When the observations were compared with Hofstede's 6-D model, the results were only partially consistent with some of the dimensions.

The impacting factors of cultural adaptation and the role of institutions were explored by the last research question. The key factors were identified as attitude, social initiative, motivation, and the cultural empathy of both East Asian and local students. Studying English, listening to online lectures and setting goals prior to arrival significantly contributed to academic success of East Asian students. The factors that inhibited students' adaptation process included complaining, viewing the exchange as "for fun" experience, and the discrimination from the local Americans. Another key finding was the sexual harassment that East Asian students face on and off-campus.

In particularly, Japanese female students suffered the most from what they perceived aggressive American males. Institutions were suggested to take a more active role in proving a safe environment for East Asian students.

8.2. Discussion

This study implemented the Grounded Theory approach, from which a general pattern of the process of adaptation emerged. The emerged process from the case of East Asian students studying abroad was slightly different from the W-Curve model, as can be seen in Figure 11. One of the differences consisted of the "middle of nowhere shock" caused by the rural location of M. University. The students quickly recovered from this as they entered into the exposure stage, when everything was new and exciting. Once the classes started, students settled into a more routine daily pattern. With the increased exposure to the local culture, the students were faced with culture shock.

Figure 11: Curve Model for East Asians Adaptation to the Rural U.S.
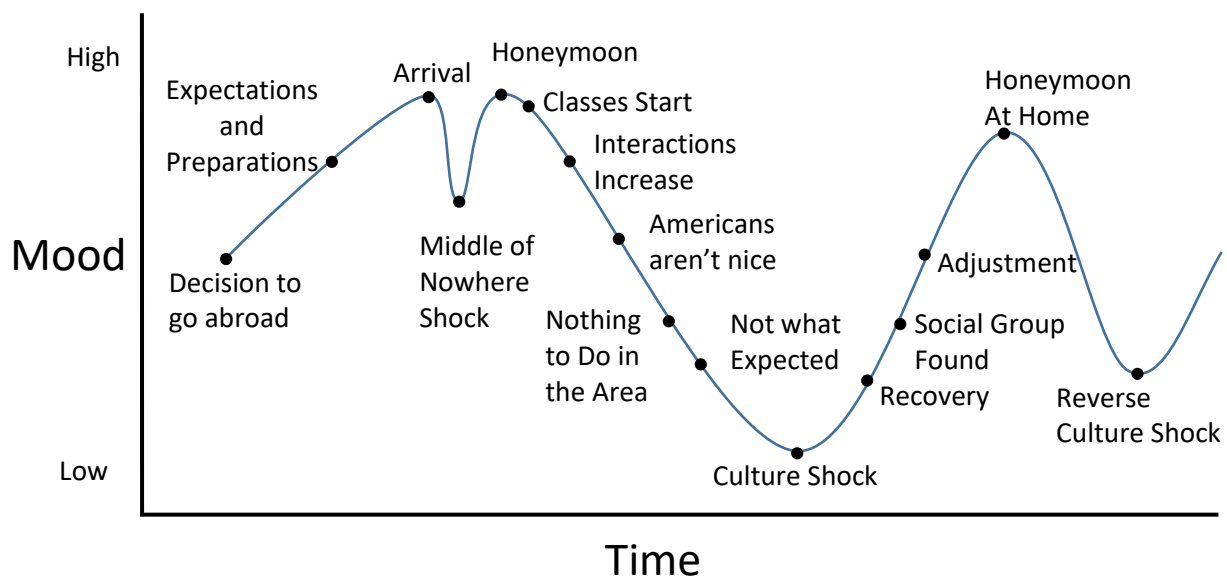
Although, the students themselves found the accademic adjustment as the most challenging, the bigger challenge was that the students did not have close friends among locals and gave up on trying to befriend Americans peers. Becoming integrated into the local culture is the biggest goal of adaptation, which in the past literature was shown to be one of the key factors in adapting to the host environment. From the data in the study, as well as the combination of IAT and other theories, a model emerged on the relationships between Americans and Asian students in the rural Midwestern U.S.(see Figure 12). The phenomenon of cultural adjustment was explored through the Asian students' ability to form meaningful relationships through interactions with Americans, since the major factor in measuring adjustment is the ability to positively interact with the host environment. The presented model looks at the factors that influence the formation of such relationships. The relationships between Asian students and American students are dependent on both American students and Asian students, as well as their psychological (attitude, intimacy, quality of interaction) and social distance (frequency of interactions and context). The central concept is a description provided by the Asian or American students, and could be of friendship, romantic attachment, acquaintance, or other relationships as defined by the participants.

One major factor that moderates perceptions, expectations, and desires of American and Asian students, was the media and past experiences. A few students reported that interactions with foreign teachers in their home countries inspired them to go to the U.S.; however, the majority of Asian students reported that some of the unrealistic expectations they had, were based on what they have seen in American movies. In particular, stereotypes played a major role in the perceptions of both American and Asian students. Stereotypes are perceptions about groups (McGarty, Yzerbyt, & Spears, 2002, and an important psychological process that helps

205

people understand the social world, and saves cognitive effort and time. However, just like any shortcut, important information can be missed and while stereotyping plays a role in our understanding of the world, it can be inaccurate. Stereotypes about race, religion, and gender in particular have been found to have huge potential for perpetuating erroneous information (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996). American students at M. University believed a stereotypical image of an Asian, who doesn't speak English, but is hard working and smart. Interestingly, the Asian students majoring in natural sciences, report much more positive interactions in class, when American students initiated interactions revolving Chemistry or Math problems. Conversely, Asian students who major in the social sciences report being ignored or feeling isolated.

Figure 12: Relationship Model
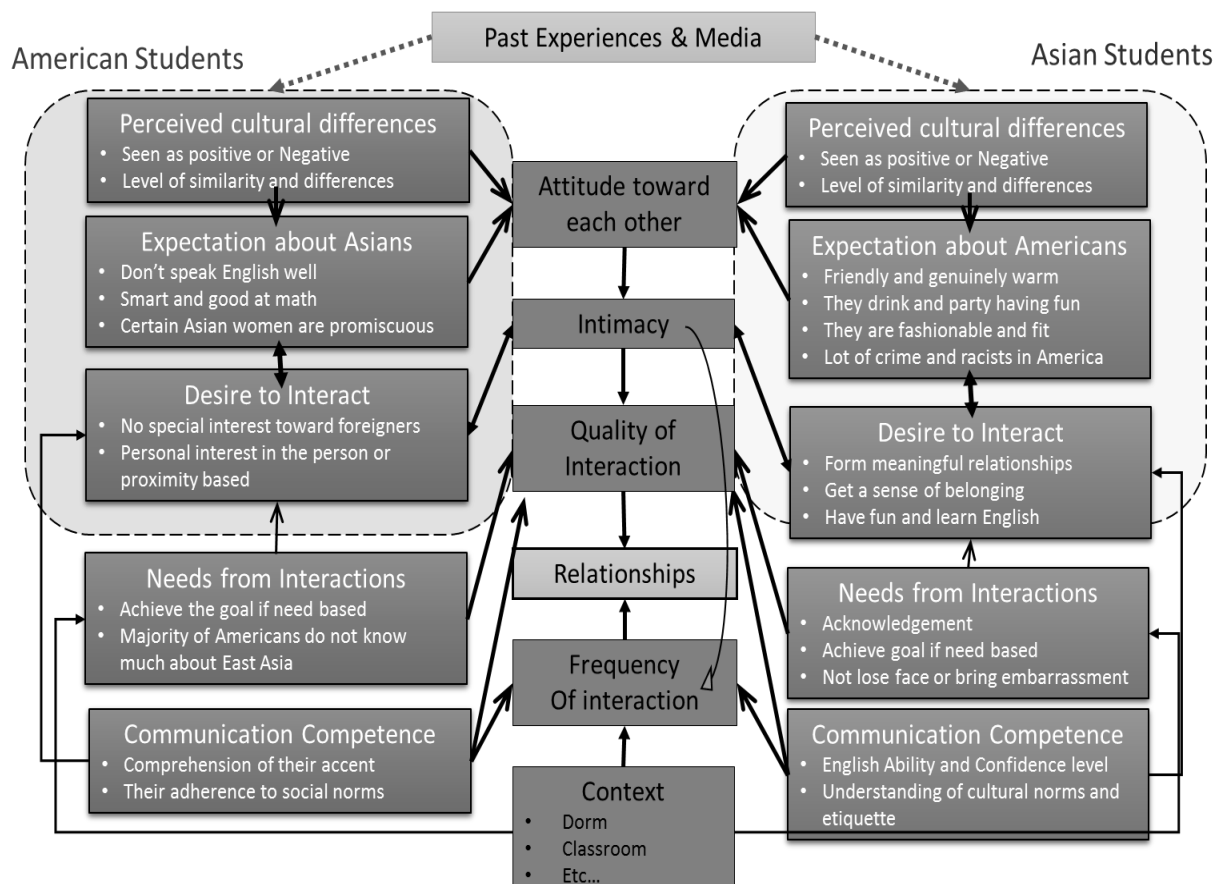
The mutual attitude includes the feeling of the two groups toward each other, which influences the intimacy of the relationship. The frequency of interactions is another factor that influences the formation of relationships. It is logical that the closer you feel to someone, the more frequently you might try to see them, however frequency did not seem to affect intimacy, and students who in classes interacted with their classmates three times a week for a semester, did not feel very close to each other. The IAT theory is supported by dependency of both American and Asian student relationships on their expectations, desires, needs, and ability to communicate with each other. The problem of why many Asian students were not being able to form meaningful relationships and close friendships with Americans did not just stem from cultural differences and language barriers but as well from how the Asian students constructed their reality of how different they are from Americans and if it was a positive or a negative thing. This was one of the key factors influencing the attitude they had toward each other, and their own expectations as well.

In regards to expectations, both American and Asian students have misconceptions even prior to their first interactions. The stereotypical American is similar to what Asian students see portrayed in Hollywood movies. Americans are imagined to look like a teenage version of Barbie and Ken, who have parties and drink every day. Many Asian students watched Gossip Girl, Sex and the City, Fast and the Furious, and other American films prior to coming to the U.S. The Asian students also know that America is not safe, and there is a lot of discrimination. Americans, on the other hand, have difficulty differentiating Korean, Japanese, and Chinese students. When they try to do it based on looks it becomes very offensive. For example, a Japanese and a Chinese student were waiting for a bus when an older gentleman came up to them and told the Chinese student she must be Korean. When she said she was not, he was doubtful

and said he could tell them all apart based on the angle of the slant of their eyes. However this is a negative case, and most Americans do not know enough information about each of the East Asian countries to tell differences in cultural traditions and physical appearance (like the style of clothes, and haircuts). Therefore, due to the lack of knowledge the majority of American students base their expectations on stereotypes such as Asians are smart, they are good at math, all Japanese like sushi, Korea = Gungdam Style and kimchi, and China is communist and steals jobs. Though there are these differences, there are much more common misperceptions, such as foreigners don't speak English well and Asian girls are easy to get. The problem of these mutual misconceptions is just the starting point, and could be overcome if both American and Asian students desired to do so.

However, the desire is one sided, and the stories of the Asian students trying to form meaningful relationships with American students often reminds me of a one-sided relationship. American students are indifferent or often just lack curiosity about people from other countries. The interactions are superficial, routine, and mostly consist of greetings and need-based interactions in class. The exception is when American students start having a personal interest in the person, which can often happen if the Asian and American student focus on similarities, such as both having the same hobby, interest, or religion. Many Korean students are Christians and are sometimes able to fulfill their needs and desires by attending American churches; however, Chinese and Japanese students who are atheists, Shintoists, or Buddhist, do not have the same opportunity.

The desire to interact, and intimacy, affect each other. So, if American students have little to no desire to interact with Asian students, it would be hard to achieve a high level of intimacy. While if American students feel very close and intimate with an Asian student, then they will

have more desire to interact with them. The needs from interactions influence the quality of interactions, which also depends on communication competency of both Asian and American students. Many Asian students are having their desires and needs unfulfilled end up changing their expectations about Americans, and retracting into their own communities, often limiting the opportunity of interactions by moving off campus, which makes the frequency of interactions go down. Many Asian students then end up describing Americans as "fake nice", distant, and/or cold, which often comes with the bitterness of not being able to acquire the desired relationship. Students who from the beginning of the year reported no close friendships or even American acquaintances, remained this way throughout the year. Context or proximity plays a major role in the frequency of interactions and the needs from those interactions. The students who live in the dorms reported having more frequent interactions with American students, and the quality of interactions was rated higher than of students who lived off campus. The needs are also dependent on context, what you want from interaction with your group member in a class project might not be the same thing you want from interaction with a classmate during a drinking party.

Communication competence affects the desire to interact, quality of interactions, and the frequency of interactions. For interacting with American students, the adherence to certain social norms is a must, including personal space and etiquette. The perceived English lanuage incompetence of international students often makes Americans hesitant to interact wth foreigners. Cultural ideologies and differences in core values were outlined, and can provide deep insight to prevent cultural misunderstandings. The significance of this study is in proving a more detailed model for the experiences of East Asian students to the rural U.S. and its comparison to the normal W-Curve Model. Furthermore, the proposed relationship model provides insight into the

209

interactions of East Asian students and local Americans. Both models were based on the findings from the research questions that were answered by this study.

8.3. Practical Implementations for Institutions and Students

Practical Advice for Institutions and Students

Based on these findings, a few suggestions can be made to institutions and students. Firstly, home institutions that sends students abroad need to educate the students about the differences in the education system, as well as encourage researching the local area of the town where they will be going. Preparations also need to be done by the students by for example taking on-line class from American universities. The host institutions are suggested to give more support to East Asian students by explaining cultural differences and institutions must realize that the support system for American students, such as counseling and other support groups, are unlikely to be used by East Asian students. Another viable option that was shown to be effective is a peer-support system (Westwood & Barker, 1990), which is when the international students are introduced to a local student who provides support in the process of academic as well as social adaptation. As the Japanese female students were often made uncomfortable by the sexual advances of American male students, and as one case of rape was reported in the study, sexual harassment training is necessary to protect the minority group that is not familiar with the norms in the U.S. Programs in educating American students are also necessary, in these programs cultural differences should be pointed out and local students need to be educated on intercultural competency and the importance of making international students feel welcomed.

Looking into why Asian students feel that the locals might be prejudiced against them will help facilitate dialogue. The professors and the students, as previously demonstrated, play a crucial role in the international students' adjustment. A Japanese exchange student shared with

me a story of how during group work, they were assigned to look into a corporation, and local students were discussing a small local organization. When the Japanese student suggested a few internationally renowned organizations, the students suggested that they would do her part of the project because they were not as familiar with international corporations. The student was very bitter about this experience and stated that the local students see little outside of their small town. American students and professors having multicultural perspectives would help in the adjustment of Asian students. Looking at the American educator's concerns with the current college curricula, it seems not reflective of the real international complexities (Bardhan, 2003). Bardhan points out limited research in this field, and in a conducted study, international students from public relations majors expressed that their public relations curriculum was not reflective of global views. There are some curricular and structural impediments expanding their multicultural and international competence. The educators expressed the desire to learn and provide self-reflexive accounts that explain the sociocultural contexts of this education style, and to engage in multicultural and international experiential learning. Unlike all the other studies in the discourse of international student adjustment, this is one of the few that puts the host educational facility as the focus of international students' adjustment experience. Though it is obvious that most researchers look at the international students, what international students can do to adjust, how they should behave, prepare, and what personality traits can give them an advantage but the host culture, or the university the students are studying at, also plays a crucial role in the adjustment of the marginalized group.

Gadamer has stated: "*Genuine experience always involves some negative challenge to our traditional assumptions",* and avoidance will not achieve this. Idealistically, both Americans and Asian students should experience more of these genuine experiences when confronted with

211

something violating original assumptions (Craig & Muller, 2007). However, even when confronted with negative cases, instead of re-evaluation of current beliefs, the old assumptions prevail. Both American and Asian students must re-examine their perceptions and expectations as they are negatively affecting their continued interactions. The differences in the desires of Asian and American students play a major role in achieving intimacy. Craig and Muller state, "*When face to face with another person, we cannot avoid implicit obligation to try to understand each other*" (p. 221). However, for the majority of the American students in the rural U.S., the motto seems to be "We cannot not communicate, but we can still try not to" according to Asian students. One example of this is how an Asian student described her experience of the girl to the right of her and to the left of her starting a group discussion and completely ignoring the Japanese student. There is no openness in the communication, and the Asian students came to U.S. to learn English (by talking to Americans) and in hopes of forming meaningful relationships with American students (which also involves talking to American students). Of course Asian students are also a part of the problem, their expectations of Americans being outgoing and interested in foreign cultures often makes them passive, and instead of initiating conversations they wait to be talked to, which often does not happen. Concept of dialogue emphasizes direct mutual awareness and openness to one another as unique beings. Both Asian and American students need to put effort into openness and genuine dialogue, but for this to be possible, Americans need further understanding and interest in international students, which would mean being less ethnocentric.

When Asian students come to study in the U.S., there are some similarities and differences between the host and native environments; however, the differences seem overwhelmingly more dominant in our perception. We often ignore the similarities, such as that

212

the students no matter where in the world might have the status of a student. However, being a student in different countries means different responsibilities or variation in behavior. The common point between local and foreign students is that they are classified or more accurately labeled with a social construct of a "student". Gadamer's theory of communication is a parallel concept of conversation emphasizing the object or subject matter of conversation that brings people together in dialogue. The subject matter that is discussed is also very important in establishing intimacy. To increase the feeling of intimacy, the East Asian and American students should start their dialogue surrounding commonalities and personal preferences, and after building rapport, move toward the differences.

Both East Asian and American students need to take a step toward genuine dialogue, and put themselves into each other's shoes when communicating. A better understanding of the system and local culture would help East Asian students to integrate into American culture, and some interest from Americans toward foreign countries could also contribute to an ongoing dialogue between the cultures. They should talk about commonalities and free their minds of expectations, stereotypes and other perceptions of each other that inhibit communication.

The suggestions for East Asian students are to be more persistent in pursuing friendships with the local students and not giving up. Learning about local culture is also recommended. The people living in the area where M. University is located are fanatic about American Football, however, none of the students in this study attempted to learn about it. The only sports events that students attended were basketball and baseball games, an experience which they felt as highly satisfying. Starting conversation instead of waiting for the Americans to initiate contact would also benefit the East Asian students. It is central for East Asian students to understand that American students from rural areas are not accustomed to communicating with foreigners. Many

Americans might have the assumption that international students cannot speak English. Increasing the interactions between students will be beneficial for both local and foreign students.

Looking at the data from the sociocultural approach, numerous studies confirm the findings to be true. The more frequently the international students interact with friends from the host country, the better they adjust (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Perkins, 1977). For example, the classic study by Sellitz and Hook (1962) showed that international students felt a stronger connection to the U.S. if they have at least one close American friend. In a more recent study done by Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002), results suggest that extracurricular activities are positively related to Japanese student experiences in the U.S. through increasing life satisfaction as well as better academic performance.

As previously stated, the interactions and intimacy between international students and American students is one of the major contributing factors to integration into their host environment. For universities, it might be easier to reform their orientation program for international students, but laws on employment and visas, are hard to change, and therefore, hard to see if it would affect the adjustment positively. It is logical; however, that if a student works with other international students more, than he/she interacts with Americans, their adjustment might be impaired.

The adjustment of Asian students depends on the Asian students, Americans, and host institutions. For Asian students to adjust better, both American and Asian students must gain knowledge about the realities of each culture and people, and the predispositions and attitudes formed in native societies have contributed to unrealistic expectations and stereotypes. Then, both American and Asian students must be open to genuine communication and understanding by accepting each other's uniqueness. This can be achieved by taking the other person's

214

perspective or having genuine interest and appreciation of the "otherness" in others. Perceiving differences as learning opportunities rather than "aliens" or strangeness will go a long way to opening up the channel for genuine dialogue.

Finally, the host instructions both local and national need to make better provisions for Asian and all international students, considering their needs instead of the cash flow they might bring. At the beginning of the school year, student orientations should address the problems past students faced, instead of how to transfer money to the university. The United States as a whole needs to rethink the national branding, as there is a clash of the ideology of what is said in the media inside the U.S., and how it is portrayed to the world.

8.2. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

This study is exploratory in nature, and was designed as a case study. Therefore, it is advised to be cautious of using any of the data for generalization purposes. The student sample was relatively small, but the author was committed to getting rich and descriptive data of Japanese student experiences. The students were often busy and the interviews were not done as often as it was desired. The frequency of the interviews had to be compromised in exchange for getting more stories from different people. In particular, the final assessment of their study abroad and the culture shock data had to be gathered through an online survey, while only three Japanese students had face to face "closing" interviews in Japan. Another issue is how veracious the participants were during the interviews, in particular, regarding their academic performance. Often, their testimonies did not correspond with the observations made.

As few studies are available on the experiences of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students studying across the U.S., I hope more scholars will explore this phenomenon with larger samples utilizing various tools of inquiry. As the results of this study suggest, there are cultural

differences between each of the East Asian student groups, therefore it would be beneficial for scholars to conduct more cross-cultural comparisons between these groups.

These studies primarily looked at the rural U.S., so more comparisons between the experiences of cultural adaptation in rural versus urban areas are necessary. Some students in this study said that if only they were in a more urban setting they would become more involved with Americans; other students blamed the local population being ignorant and less friendly than people in the major cities of the U.S. It would be beneficial to test this hypothesis. John Berry, who paver the road in acculturation psychology wrote: *"[E]very acculturative arena requires initial ethnographic research to identify the domains of concern to the two groups in contact; only then can they be rendered into a reliable and valid research instrument for use with acculturating individuals*." (Berry, 2009). In future studies this ethnography can do exactly what Berry hopped for.

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APPENDIXES
A: INITIAL SURVEY
Questioner for International/Exchange Students

Dear Participants,

I am a foreign student at University of Tsukuba and this research project is conducted for the purpose of understanding the East Asian students studying abroad experiences. This survey is administered for academic purposes only. You may skip any question you don't feel comfortable answering and your answers will remain anonymous. When the results of the study are reported, you will not be identified by any information that could be used to infer your identity. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this research any time you wish. Your honesty will be appreciated in filling out the questionnaire and is the key to the success of this project. Thank you for your time.

Basic information

SEX:	☐Male	☐Female
AGE:		
NATIONALITY:		
HOMETOWN:		

Please answer the following questions by writing the first thoughts that occur to you.

1. What made you decide to study abroad? What was your families' reaction?

2. Why did you choose U.S. as your destination? Why MSUM?

3. Prior to arrival to U.S. what were your expectations of America and American people? (How did you imagine your life to be)

4. Prior to coming to U.S. what were your concerns? (Ex: academic ability, safety, etc.) Please describe your feelings.

5. Describe your academic preparation to study abroad.

6. How long have you been in U.S. now? Please describe your experience so far.
7. Please list your experience abroad before coming to MSUM
8. Please describe your interactions with the local population
8.1.Please describe your experience during your MSUM orientation? 8.2.Describe your interactions with American students? (Roommate, classmate) 8.3.Describe your impression of your professors? 8.4.What about other international students? 8.5.Other interactions with locals:
9. How do you feel when interacting with Americans? Any difficulties in communication?
10. Who do you feel is the closest person to you in your life in the U.S.? Please describe that person and your relationship with them.

Questionnaire for East Asian Club Members

Dear Participants,

I am a foreign student at University of Tsukuba and this research project is conducted for the purpose of understanding the East Asian students studying abroad experiences and interactions with local students. This survey is administered for academic purposes only. You may skip any question you don't feel comfortable answering and your answers will remain anonymous. When the results of the study are reported, you will not be identified by any information that could be used to infer your identity. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this research any time you wish. Your honesty will be appreciated in filling out the questionnaire and is the key to the success of this project. Thank you for your time.

Basic information

SEX:	☐ Male	☐ Female
AGE:		
MAJOR:		
NATIONALITY:		
HOMETOWN:		
Student Organization	☐ Japan Club ☐China Club ☐Korea Club ☐ Other: _____	

Please answer the following questions by writing the first thoughts that occur to you.

11. What made you decide to join this club?
1.1 What was the reasons that you joined this club? What influenced you decision?   1.2. What were your expectation from this organization? 1.3. Please describe how your expectations have been or not been met?   1.4.How long have you been part of this organization? 1.5.What part of the culture attracts you? How did you become interested?
2.   Have you been abroad? If so, describe your experiences
3.   Describe your relationship with fellow club members. Do you interact outside of the club etc..?
4.   If you could go abroad list your top 3 choices for your destination and why.
1. 2. 3.

5. Impression of East Asian Countries
5.1.Please describe your impression of China
5.2. Please describe your impression of Korea
5.3. Please describe your impression of Japan

6. Impression of people from East Asian countries
6.1.Please describe your impression of Chinese people
6.2. Please describe your impression of Korean people
6.3. Please describe your impression of Japanese people

7. What level of interaction have you had with East Asian Students?

8. In your opinion how do average Americans view people from East Asia?

9. What do you feel might be some difficulties in communication between Americans and East Asian students at MSUM?

10. What do you think are some of the difficulties East Asian students face when studying in U.S.?

If you might be willing to provide an interview about your involvement with the student organization you are in, please provide an email address below. If you are selected for the interview you will be entitled to a 10$ gift certificate to Walmart.
EMAIL:

C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sample Questions:
- Please describe your daily life in U.S.
- Before coming to U.S. what were your expectations?
- What are some of the difficulties you faced?
- Where did you live? Any roommate?
- How have your recent months been?
- Interactions with Americans?
- Any discrimination?
- Differences in communication?
- Are you participating in any clubs or other activities?
- Relationships with professors, classmates, friends and lovers?
- Please describe your life in U.S.
- Before coming to U.S. what were your expectations? What did you know about U.S.?
- What are some of the difficulties you have faced?
- Socially
- Academically:
- How have your recent months been? What about Christmas and Easter holidays?
- Describe some of you interactions with Americans?
- Differences in communication?
- Are you participating in any clubs or other activities?

D: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS
Survey about East Asian students experiences in the U.S.
This survey is for students from East Asia that have had or are currently studying in the U.S. Your honesty is much appreciates and if you can answer the following questions in detail it will provide the researchers with more comprehensive data. You can skip over any questions and participation is voluntarily. Please feel free to share this link with other East Asian students who have studies in the U.S.:

By completing this survey you are giving your consent for this information to be used for research purposes only. None of your personal information will be linked to you and your identity will remain protected.

SEX: Male   Female

I identify myself as:

Japanese   Korean   Chinese   Malaysian Chinese   Other (Please Specify)

Please enter your hometown, and country where you grew up: _____

What University did you study at in the U.S.? What program/major? _____

1 What was your cumulative GPA in the U.S.?
3.6 - 4.0 (Mostly As) around 3.5 (half A and B) 3.0 - 3.4 (Mostly Bs)   2.5-2.9 (Cs and Bs)
 2.0-2.4 (More Cs) Under 2.0 (Many Ds)

2 Did you study in a rural or urban area?
Rural   Urban

3. How long have you been in the U.S.?
Less than 6 months   6 months to 1 year   1 to 2 years   2 to 3 years   3 to 4 years   4 to 5 years more than 5 years

When did you study in U.S.: I arrived in U.S.: month/year   I studied in the U.S. from: (month/year) to (month Year)

If studies in the U.S. multiple times please write when and where

If you do not mind giving an online interview or being asked follow up questions Please provide email address:

Experiences in the U.S.

3 While I was in the U.S. it was most difficult for me to adapt to
            The Physical Environment (food, area, weather, etc.)
            Academic Environment (school, studies, etc.)
            Social Environment (friends, communication, relationships, etc.)

4 Before coming to the U.S. what were your expectations about America and American people? What was it really like?

5 What culture shock did you experience in the U.S.? Or what cultural differences did you see and experience?

6 During your stay in the U.S. please rate the difficulty you had with the following

Very difficult   somewhat difficult   neither difficult or easy   somewhat easy   Very easy   other
(Please Specify)
Understanding the lectures
Completing the homework
Tests
Reading assignments
Class discussions
Group Discussions
Group Work
Vocabulary
Talking to my classmates
Talking to professors
Communicating with Americans
Making American friends
Becoming friends with
International Students
Getting used to the food

7 Do you feel you have in any way changed during your time in the U.S.? How so?

8 When talking to American students for the first time what are the most common questions they ask you?

9 During your adjustment to life in the U.S., what helped or made it difficult for you?
What are some things that helped you to adjust?
What were some things that made your adjustment more difficult?

10 How would you describe your experience studying in U.S? (Choose TWO)
Exciting   Boring Positive   Negative   Challenging   Not what I expected
Fun   Educational   Waste of time Horrible   Great   Other (Please Specify)

11   What differences did you notice between how Americans Communicate and how people communicate in your home country?

12 What was the best and the worst moment or memory you have of your study abroad?
13 What are the differences that you noticed in friendship and romantic relationships in the U.S. and back home? Please describe in detail or provide an example if possible.
14 How many close friends did you have or currently have in U.S.? Please describe where they are from and how did you become friends?
15 Do you feel you adapted well to America? Why or why not?
16 What advice would you give to other students coming to U.S. to study?
17 After being in the U.S. when you returned to your home country, what reverse-culture shock did you experience? What surprised you about your own country when you came back?

E: CONSENT FORMS

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Anya Hommadova from the UNIVERSITY OF TSUKUBA, International and Advanced Japanese Studies Department. I hope to learn about the daily lives and interactions of Asian students studying in rural areas of U.S. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are one of the Asian students studying at M. University.

If you decide to participate, you will be requested to participate in interviews and small group discussions once a month during this academic year. The times will be scheduled according to your convenience, at a location near M. University for your convenience. During these meetings the conversations might be audio recorded. If you feel any discomfort discussing your experiences in U.S. you can always stop the interview at any time. This study is design to help institutions understand the difficulties Asian students face in rural areas of U.S. as well as help provide more information for future students, as well as improve communication between international and local students. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Subject identities will be kept confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with your professors, friends or organizations that directed you here. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Anya at (701) 404-3634. Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims.

Name _____

Signature   _____
Date _____