Chapter 5
Contact Effects on Intercultural Friendship Between East Asian Students and American Domestic Students

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Abstract Intercultural contact has been shown to reduce stereotyping and prejudice by lowering intergroup anxiety and the perception of intergroup threat. Recommendations on how contact can be promoted in the context of higher education often focus on extracurricular measures (including mixed-student housing, international events, and off-campus activities). This chapter examines how contact can be fostered through class assignments requiring the collaboration of international and domestic students. The study induced extended intercultural contact between pairs of East Asian international students and American students via a semester-long ethnographic project, during which students explored each other's cultures. Results showed significant improvement in intergroup knowledge, attitudes, and social distance. The perceptions that students had of each other's cultures also shifted, with stereotypes (especially of Asians as smart, quiet, and reserved) being replaced by more differentiated views. Previously reported negative portrayals of Asians as disliked, cold, and annoying could not be confirmed. Instead, mutual descriptions of friendliness were noticeable before and even more so after the project. Students expressed interest in maintaining contact following the semester at hand.

Internationalization (foremost through increased international student enrollment) has become a strategy for many U.S. colleges and universities to enhance their prestige, global competitiveness, and revenue. Critics warn, however, that in the midst of this focus on strategic goals, we are losing sight of the core rationale for internationalization: the promotion of international good will.

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   This chapter focuses on the question how institutions of higher education can promote international good will by facilitating interaction between domestic and international students. In particular, it explores to what extent the contact afforded by pair assignments in college classes affects variables aiding or hindering friendship development. Students from China, Japan, and South Korea were paired with domestic students and conducted a series of ethnographic assignments together. Pre- and post-surveys gauged cross-cultural knowledge, attitudes, social distance, stereotyping, and interest in continued contact of the domestic and international students.

   With international students on the rise, college campuses worldwide are an ideal arena for intercultural contact and friendship formation. Intercultural friendships not only reduce prejudice (Pettigrew 1997); for international students, friendship with host nationals is also tied to stronger language skills, better academic performance, greater life satisfaction, lower levels of stress, a positive mood, and an enhanced image of the host country (Furnham and Alibhai 1985; Gareis et al. 2011; Searle and Ward 1990; Selltiz and Cook 1962; Ward and Masgoret 2004). Likewise, domestic students gain cross-cultural knowledge, an enhanced global perspective, and an international network.

   Despite these benefits, it is not unusual that a third or more of international students and half or more of Asian students have no American friends (e.g., Gareis 2012a, b), making the lack of meaningful contact with host nationals one of the uppermost complaints of international students (Kudo and Simkin 2003; Marginson et al. 2010; Ward and Masgoret 2004).

   The question then arises how interaction between East Asian and U.S. students can be promoted. Before measures for encouraging interaction can be determined, one needs to explore the factors influencing intercultural relationship development.

Factors Affecting Intercultural Friendship Formation

Cultural Difference

In the context of Asian students on U.S. campuses, one stumbling block is cultural differences. Cultural similarity provides attributional confidence and reduces uncertainty; that is, interactants can more easily predict behaviors in people who are similar to themselves (Clatterbuck 1979) and are therefore more at ease during contact initiation and exploration. East Asia and the United States are culturally dissimilar. To illustrate some of these differences, Fig. 5.1 compares China, Japan, and South Korea with the United States and another Anglophone country, Australia, in terms of the value dimensions identified by Hofstede (Hofstede and Hofstede n.d.).

   With the exception of the Chinese score for masculinity, the East Asian scores differ sharply from the U.S. and Australian scores in power distance (i.e., the acceptance of unequal distribution of power), uncertainty avoidance (i.e., the mini-
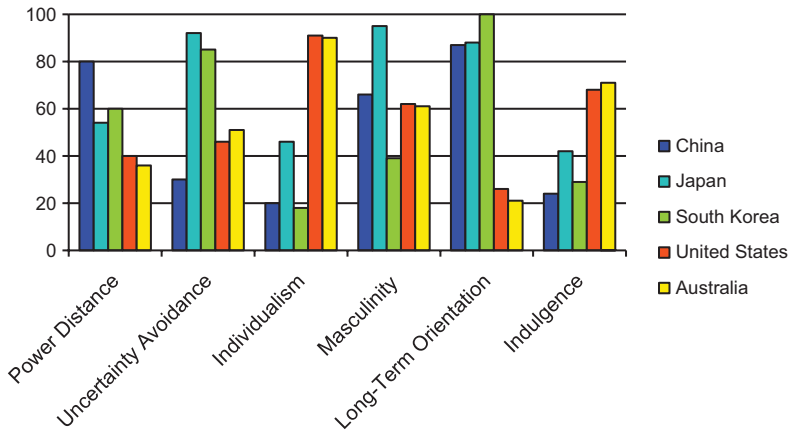
Fig. 5.1 Differences in value orientations between China, Japan, and South Korea versus the United States and Australia

mization of unstructured situations), individualism (i.e., loose ties between individuals in society), masculinity (i.e., assertiveness, career orientation, demarcation of gender roles), long-term orientation (i.e., pragmatism oriented toward future rewards), and indulgence (i.e., gratification of human drives related to enjoying life and having fun).

East Asia and the United States also differ in specific friendship patterns. Most guidebooks to U.S. culture warn that American friendships are easily formed but not as deep and long lasting as friendships in other cultures (e.g., Stewart and Bennett 2005). Du Bois (1956) explains that U.S. friendships are marked by relatively low obligation and low duration (i.e., less committed and permanent than friendships in some other cultures). She cautions that foreigners often interpret American openness and friendliness as promises of closer involvement and that a sense of disappointment and failure ensues when this promise is not realized. These sentiments are echoed in interviews with international students about their friendship experiences in the United States. Invariably, students assert that, although Americans are friendly and open and that it is easy to initiate contact, friendships are superficial and noncommittal and don't last long. A female Asian student in a study by Gareis (2012a), for example, expressed regret that she and her American friend "don't talk something deeply in the heart" (p. 319).

Baumgarte (2013) frames the difference between U.S. and East Asian friendship patterns as a contrast between independence and intervention. Focusing on Korea, he explains that the concept of *choeng* (which is typically translated as *love* or *affection* and refers to a strong emotional bond) carries implications of unconditionality, sacrifice, empathy, caring, sincerity, and fate (e.g., friends are destined to be together). Although friends offer each other support in the United States, they typically don't take "care" of each other as in Korea. There, caring for friends means to intervene actively in one's friends' lives, to an extent that would seem intrusive in

the United States. Even the connotations of *independent* and *dependent* are opposite. Whereas in the United States, independence has the positive connotations of freedom and self-expression, in Korea, as in other parts of East Asia, it is seen as desirable to be dependent (or interdependent), that is, to have strong reciprocal obligations and to feel responsible for taking care of one another.

Ting-Toomey (1989) also found that persons from individualistic cultures tend to focus on attractive personal attributes in potential friends, whereas persons from collectivistic cultures look for cultural or social role attributes. In that vein, the bonding of international students from collectivistic cultures with each other is often aided by preexisting conational networks and the absence of peer support for venturing out to establish intercultural relationships with host nationals (Trice 2007).

Communicative Competence

Another prominent factor is communicative competence, defined as a combination of language proficiency, nonverbal appropriateness, and effectiveness in a number of other communication skills (including levels of verbality and topic selection) (Chen and Starosta 1996). In the intracultural context within the United States, successful relationship initiation and development have been linked to self-disclosure, emotional support, responsiveness in conversation, entertaining storytelling, and competent conflict management (Samter 2003). These competencies require sophisticated language skills, especially in oral communication.

English differs significantly from East Asian languages and is therefore more difficult to learn for East Asians than for speakers of related languages (e.g., speakers of Germanic languages spoken in Northern Europe) (Odlin 1989). In addition, the informal oral communication skills needed for relationship development often take the backseat to communication skills for academic purposes in language education overseas. The resulting proficiency problems in interpersonal communication not only compound cultural insecurities and make East Asian students more apprehensive to communicate (Chen 2006; Ritter 2013), they can also lessen interest in host nationals.

Even if students have relatively good English language proficiency, friendship-specific communication styles may differ and cause conflict. Although at first glance, close friendships in Western and non-Western cultures seem to share a core of desirable traits (e.g., mutual affection, trust, and support) (Argyle et al. 1986; Gareis 1995), a closer look at individual traits and related communicative competencies, however, reveals subtle differences between cultures. For example, Barnlund (1989) found that the rate and amount of self-disclosure tends to be more modest in Japan than in the United States. Of the four stages of social penetration (orientation, exploratory, affective, and stable exchange), the orientation and exploratory stages are most affected by problematic intercultural complexities (Gudykunst et al. 1987), and differences such as in self-disclosure can throw a budding relationship off balance. At the latter affective and stable stages of relationship development, inter-

cultural interactions have a more personalistic focus, with cultural dissimilarities retreating into the background (Gudykunst 1985).

East Asian students have an additional disadvantage regarding contact initiation. In highly collectivistic cultures, "people have less need to make special friendships, [because] one's friends are predetermined by the social relationships into which one is born" (Hofstede 2001, p. 225). East Asian communication strategies (e.g., implicit communication in China, little value on oral interaction in Japan, and an exceptional regard for status and position in Korea) (Chen 2006) fit this cultural pattern and work well in communities with preexisting social networks, but they are not helpful for friendship initiation in the United States. The social skills (e.g., small talk) that are necessary for establishing friendships in the United States (Trice 2007) are frequently not part of East Asian students' repertoire and are not going to be acquired without regular exposure.

Host Environment and Stereotypes

Stereotypes of Americans toward Asians have evolved over time. In the classic Princeton Trilogy, American students were given lists of traits and asked to check the ones that apply to a number of given national or ethnic groups (including Chinese and Japanese) (Gilbert 1951; Karlins et al. 1969; Katz and Braly 1933). Results show early signs of Asians being perceived positively on competence (e.g., sly, industrious) but negatively on sociability (e.g., quiet, loyal to family ties). The trend of polarizing between competence and lack-of-sociability stereotypes continues today. On the one hand, research findings strongly support the existence of a model minority stereotype regarding Asians as being intelligent, capable, ambitious, hardworking, and self-disciplined (e.g., Ho and Jackson 2001; Lin et al. 2005). On the other hand, in popular media, Asians and Asian Americans (the difference is often not made clear) are mostly depicted as technologically savvy nerds or workaholics who speak poor English; are quiet, shy, passive, and non-confrontational; and lack social skills and cultural knowledge (Lee and Joo 2005; Park et al. 2006; Taylor et al. 2005).

The stereotype content model (SCM) explains that this type of polarization is common and that out-groups often fall into two clusters: envied groups respected as competent but disliked as lacking warmth and paternalized groups liked as warm but disrespected as incompetent (Lin et al. 2005; Rosenberg et al. 1968). With scores high in competence but low in sociability, Asians and Asian Americans appear positioned in the cluster that is respected but somewhat disliked. Scholars also caution that, although competence appears to be a positive trait, its endorsement can be associated with negative attitudes based on the perceived threat emanating from these groups in terms of educational and economic opportunities (Ho and Jackson 2001; Maddux et al. 2008). In other words, admiration of the model minority may mix with resentment and envy (Lin et al. 2005). This mix of emotions also has repercussions for intercultural friendship development. Zhang (2010) found that, among different racial and ethnic groups in the United States, Asians were least likely to be approached for friendship.

Issues related to desirability and attractiveness are especially pronounced for Asian males, who are perceived as lacking masculinity. Lu and Wong (2013) argue that this stereotype causes marginality, inferior body consciousness, and persistent fears about physical adequacy. Studying the issue in the context of international education, Wong et al. (Wong et al. 2014) found that the stereotype impacts male Asian international students' mental health. Especially students for whom men's masculinity is central to their identity have reported greater perceived discrimination and psychological distress. Illustrating the distress, a male East Asian respondent in a study by Gareis (2012a, p. 319) commented: "I think Americans don't need to make Asian male friends."

Only few studies focus specifically on stereotypes toward Asian international students. In one such study, Ruble and Zhang (2013) investigated the stereotypes that Americans held of Chinese international students. Five stereotype clusters emerged: Chinese are (1) smart and hardworking; (2) kind, friendly, nice, and polite; (3) bad at speaking English, only friends with Chinese, not well assimilated, and socially awkward; (4) quiet, shy, loners, and not very social; and (5) oblivious, loud, intrusive on personal space, conceited, annoying, and strange and do not care to adapt. The findings include the stereotypes determined by previous research on Asians and Asian Americans (competency, lack of communication, and social skills). However, they also introduce the stereotype that Chinese are loud and annoying, which is disconcerting and likely a function of the growing density and concomitant more noticeable conational networks of Chinese students on U.S. campuses.

Another study (Bonazzo and Wong 2007) explored discrimination and stereotypes experienced by female Japanese students in the United States. The students reported having encountered few Japanese-specific stereotypes. Instead, stereotyping seemed to focus on Asians and Asian Americans as overachievers. The Japanese students noticed that Americans either racialized their ethnicity as Asian or tended to perceive the Chinese ethnicity as representative of Asians. Likewise, Lee and Carrasquillo (2006) found that American professors perceived Korean students as nonparticipatory, low in English proficiency, unable to express critical thinking openly, and lacking eye contact during conversations; that is, Koreans were seen in the same vein as other East Asians.

Promoting Stereotype Reduction and Intercultural Friendship

Stereotypes can lead to status hierarchies in the minds of international and domestic students that all but preclude friendships (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Gareis 2012a; Grant and Lee 2009; Ritter 2013; Zhang 2010). How then can stereotyping be reduced to create fertile ground for friendship development?

Ward et al. (2009) view stereotypes as antecedents of perceived intergroup threat and contend that contact (quality and quantity) "leads to a reduction in intercultural anxiety, which, in turn, results in lower levels of perceived threat and finally more positive attitudes toward international students" (p. 92). In other words, contact

influences stereotypes indirectly by reducing intergroup anxiety and lowering the perception of threat. In addition, a multicultural ideology (including positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and inclusiveness) exerts a direct positive influence on international students' attitudes.

Recommendations on how contact can be promoted in the context of international education include mixed dorms, club events, international student programming, and sponsored off-campus experiences (e.g., Ritter 2013; Rose-Redwood 2010; Toyokawa and Toyokawa 2002).

One promising type of in-class contact promotion is projects with international/domestic student dyads working collaboratively on various tasks in the course of a given semester. If the activities are focused on the students' ethnographic exploration of each other' culture, cultural knowledge is likely to increase. And if the contact is qualitatively rich and repeated, attitudes should improve (Ward et al. 2009). Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1:   Students will have greater knowledge about their partner's culture following an ethnographic pair project in a college class.
H2:   Students will have a better attitude toward their partner's culture following an ethnographic pair project in a college class.

The Bogardus social distance scale (1933) provides a measure of the degree of intimacy that respondents would grant to members of particular racial or ethnic groups. Scores range from one to seven along a continuum of marriage, close friend, neighbor, co-worker, speaking acquaintance, and visitor to your country (e.g., "Would you marry a person from that culture?", "Would you be close friends?", etc.). A low score indicates low social distance (i.e., a high degree of intimacy).

Since its inception, multiple studies have applied the scale to measure interracial and interethnic distance in the United States. Recently, Parrillo and Donoghue (2005) found that, in some ways, little has changed in the pattern of responses. Continuing a 70-year pattern, U.S. Whites remained top ranked, with Canadians and various European groups following closely behind. Racial minorities, including Asians, ranked near the bottom. Thus, out of 30 groups, Chinese ranked 17th, Japanese 22nd, and Koreans 24th. Muslims and Arabs ranked 29th and 30th. On the positive side, the overall mean score was lower than in previous studies, indicating a growing acceptance of other cultural groups. Likewise, the Pew Research Center (2010) found that nine out of ten Millennials (the demographic cohort aged 18–28) approve of a family member marrying someone of a different racial or ethnic group. Approval is significantly lower in older age groups. Based on the relationship between contact and increased empathy toward out-groups, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3:   Students will be more willing to marry a member of their partner's culture following an ethnographic pair project in a college class.

Research comparing the experiences of Asian and American students and research on differences between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students in the context of paired classroom activities is still outstanding. As a result, the following research questions were formulated:

R1:   How do Asian students compare to American students with respect to knowl-
       edge, attitude, and willingness to marry a member of the partner's culture
       prior and following a pair project in a college class?
R2:   How do Chinese students compare to Japanese and Korean students and how
       do the partners of Chinese students compare to the partners of Japanese and
       Korean students with respect to knowledge, attitude, and willingness to
       marry a member of the partner's culture prior and following a pair project in
       a college class?
R3:   How do stereotypes that Asian students hold toward American students and
       vice versa change following a pair project in a college class?

Page-Gould et al. (2008) studied how intergroup anxiety can be reduced by
inducing intergroup friendships. To do so, they used Aaron et al.'s (1997) Fast
Friends procedure which generates interpersonal closeness by presenting lists of
questions to paired partners that progressively encourage self-disclosure. Research
is outstanding on whether friendship can be promoted through pair activities in col-
lege classes that don't make use of procedures, such as Aaron et al.'s. The following
research questions were formulated:

R4:   How much contact do students expect to have with other members of their
       partner's culture following a pair project in a college class?
R5:   How much interest do students exhibit in contact with their partner beyond
       the semester of enrollment?

Method

The participants were students enrolled in an intercultural communication course at
an urban commuter college in the Northeast. Of the college's 17,000 students, 1300
students (7.6%) are international students. With domestic and international students
speaking more than 110 languages and tracing their heritage to more than 170 coun-
tries, the college has one of the most ethnically diverse student bodies in the United
States. Due to generally limited funds, however, activities promoting interaction
between domestic and international students depend largely on initiatives by stu-
dents and faculty. A small number of student clubs, for example, are devoted to
fostering domestic and international student interaction.

This study was conducted with students in an intercultural communication class
during five semesters (from Fall 2012 to Fall 2014). The five classes were taught in
a jumbo/hybrid format: 110–114 students were enrolled in each class, and class
time was divided into 57% face-to-face and 43% online sessions, the latter of which
took place in small asynchronous discussion groups on a discussion board.

One of the assignments in the course was for students to complete a semester-
long ethnographic research project focusing on a culture other than their own. For
the purpose of the project, each student filled out a demographic survey at the begin-
ning of the semester, listing one to three cultures with which they identified and for
which they would be willing to serve as expert. This demographic information was
then used to match students with students from dissimilar cultural backgrounds

(e.g., East Asian and European American). Each student was informed of his/her future partner's cultures (e.g., Korean, Buddhist) and, before meeting the partner or learning his/her name, filled out a survey indicating their level of knowledge about and attitude toward the partner's cultures, their willingness to marry someone from each culture, and adjectives describing each culture. Following survey completion, the partner pairs met briefly during class to exchange contact information and arrange for an informal, out-of-class meeting at their convenience. The assignment for the meeting was to get to know each other and to decide which of the partner's cultures they wanted to investigate during the semester. In the course of the semester, the partners then observed each other's cultures (e.g., an East Asian student paired with a Jewish American may have visited a religious event with the Jewish partner), interviewed each other, wrote a literature review comparing and contrasting an aspect of their cultures, and produced a narrated slideshow or video about this aspect together. The individual assignments were spaced 2–3 weeks apart. At the end of the semester, the students filled out a survey that largely mirrored the pre-survey but had two additional questions eliciting information on their interest in maintaining contact with each other or contact with members of their partner's cultures. Students were also able to reflect on the project overall in a general comment section. All aspects of the ethnographic project served pedagogical purposes (i.e., the students reflected on their progress throughout the semester and were graded on deliverables, such as the observation and interview report).

Participants

Of the 560 undergraduate students enrolled in 5 semesters of the intercultural communication class, 71 students were from East Asia. For the purpose of this study, the ethnographic project data from 142 students (the 71 East Asians and their 71 other cultural partners) were evaluated.

Participants consisted of 48 (34%) males and 94 (66%) females. The most common age range was 21–25 years ($n = 91$; 64%), followed by 20 years or younger ($n = 32$; 23%), 26–30 years ($n = 15$; 11%), and 31 years or older ($n = 4$; 3%).

The East Asian group consisted of 57 (80%) Chinese, 12 (17%) Koreans, and 2 (3%) Japanese. Reflecting the diversity at the institution of enrollment, the American partners of the East Asian students were of differing cultural heritage, including 27 (38%) students with Latino background, 20 (28%) students of Western European and 11 (16%) students of Eastern European ancestry, 7 (10%) students of South Asian heritage, 4 (6%) African-Americans, and 2 (3%) students of Middle Eastern descent. (*Note:* Percentages don't add to 100 due to rounding.)

While the American students all focused their project on the Asian students' ethnic cultural heritage (i.e., Chinese, Korean, and Japanese culture), the Asian students focused either on the American students' cultural heritage (e.g., Italian-American, Dominican) ($n = 50$; 70%), on a job or hobby (e.g., waitress, bodybuilding) ($n = 12$; 17%), or on their partner's religion (i.e., Christian, Jewish, Muslim) ($n = 9$; 13%). Which of their partners' cultures they studied was the students' choice.

Research Design

Following Astin's (1991) input-environment-output (I-E-O) model, the ethnographic project consisted of questions that established the students' background characteristics, levels of knowledge, and attitudes (input), then exposed students to contact and potential learning experiences (environment), and finally measured what students had gained (output). For the purpose of this study, input and output were assessed through pre- and post-surveys that elicited a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative items of the pre-survey consisted of the following five Likert scale questions:

- How would you rate your knowledge about the culture? (5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = neutral, 2 = bad, 1 = very bad)
- How would you rate your attitude toward this culture? (5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = neutral, 2 = bad, 1 = very bad)
- Would you marry someone from this culture? (5 = yes, 4 = probably yes, 3 = neutral, 2 = probably no, 1 = no)

The post-survey repeated these questions and added the following:

- How much contact do you expect to have with people from this culture in the future? (5 = frequent, close contact, 4 = more than average, 3 = average, 2 = less than average, 1 = no contact)
- How interested are you in staying in touch with your partner after this semester is over? (5 = very interested, 4 = somewhat interested, 3 = neutral, 2 = somewhat uninterested, 1 = very uninterested)

Pre- and post-survey also included an open-ended opportunity to comment and the following qualitative free-response question:

- What three adjectives come to mind first when you think about the culture?

Results

Contact Effect on Knowledge, Attitude, and Willingness to Marry

All Students Hypotheses 1–3 posited that students will have greater knowledge, better attitudes, and be more willing to marry someone from their partner's culture following the ethnographic project. The pre- and post-survey results show higher ratings on all three items: With the Likert scale ranging from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good), average knowledge ratings increased from a pretreatment average of *neutral* to *bad* ($M = 2.42$; $SD = 1.03$) to a posttreatment average of *good* ($M = 3.97$;

$SD = 0.58$). Likewise, average attitude ratings increased from between *neutral* and *good* ($M = 3.76$; $SD = 0.82$) to between *good* and *very good* ($M = 4.39$; $SD = 0.69$). With the Likert scale ranging from 1 (no) to 5 (yes) on willingness to marry, average ratings increased from between *neutral* and *probably no* before the project ($M = 2.76$; $SD = 1.27$) to between *neutral* and *probably yes* after the project ($M = 3.12$; $SD = 1.37$). To test for significance, paired sample *t*-tests were performed. All three hypotheses were confirmed (see Table 5.1).

East Asian Versus American Students   Research question 1 asked how East Asian students compare to American students with respect to knowledge, attitude, and willingness to marry a member of the partner's culture. Welch two-sample *t*-tests showed that there was no difference between Asian and American students with respect to pre-knowledge, pre-attitude, and pre-willingness to marry (see Table 5.2). Likewise, no difference was found between Asian and American students with respect to post-knowledge, post-attitude, and post-willingness to marry (see Table 5.3). It can therefore be inferred that there is no significant difference in contact effect between the two groups.

Chinese Versus Japanese and Korean Students   Reflecting national trends in international student enrollment, sample sizes for Chinese ($n = 57$), Japanese ($n = 2$), and Korean students ($n = 12$) differed markedly. Because of the very small sample size for Japanese students, inferences could not be run on this group sepa-

Table 5.1   Contact effect on knowledge, attitude, and willingness to marry

Variable	*t*-value	df	*p*-value
Knowledge of partner's culture	16.9376	141	<.0001
Attitude toward partner's culture	8.51	136	<.0001
Willingness to marry a member of partner's culture	3.6365	134	<.0001

Table 5.2   Asian and American students' pre-knowledge, pre-attitude, and pre-willingness to marry

Variable	*t*-value	df	*p*-value
Pre-knowledge of partner's culture	−0.2445	139.96	0.8072
Pre-attitude toward partner's culture	−1.0029	134.657	0.3177
Pre-willingness to marry a member of partner's culture	0.7518	134.417	0.4535

Table 5.3   Asian and American students' post-knowledge, post-attitude, and post-willingness to marry

Variable	*t*-value	df	*p*-value
Post-knowledge of partner's culture	−0.8632	139.83	0.3895
Post-attitude toward partner's culture	−1.4425	135.197	0.1515
Post-willingness to marry a member of partner's culture	−0.3074	136.664	0.759

rately. As a result, Japanese and Korean students were grouped together and compared to Chinese students.

Mann-Whitney tests were performed to determine differences between the groups with respect to knowledge, attitude, and willingness to marry before and after the project. We chose Mann-Whitney tests due to the small size of the Japanese/Korean sample. Mann-Whitney tests can determine whether a population tends to have larger values than another population, while being nonparametric (i.e., without being dependent on knowing the exact distribution of the underlying populations). The distribution of responses of Chinese students and Japanese/Korean students showed no significant difference with respect to pre-knowledge ($W = 451.5$, p-value = 0.4325), pre-attitude ($W = 374$, p-value = 0.6996), and pre-willingness to marry (W = 444, p-value = 0.3565). Likewise, no difference was found between Chinese and Japanese/Korean students with respect to post-knowledge ($W = 427.5$, p-value = 0.6325) and post-attitude ($W = 411$, p-value = 0.8562).

The only test showing close to a significant difference was for post-willingness to marry ($W = 482.5$, p-value = 0.1695). When we tested the one-sided alternative hypothesis that Chinese students have a greater post-intervention willingness to marry someone from their partner's culture than Japanese and Koreans, the difference was significant at $\alpha = 0.10$ ($W = 482.5$, p-value = 0.08475).

Partners of Chinese Versus Partners of Japanese and Korean Students Mann-Whitney tests were also performed on the responses of the American partners of Chinese versus partners of Japanese/Korean students. The distribution of responses showed no significant difference with respect to pre-knowledge ($W = 370.5$, p-value = 0.6657) and pre-attitude ($W = 382$, p-value = 0.8824). Likewise, no difference was found between the partners of Chinese versus the partners of Japanese/Korean students with respect to post-knowledge (W = 387.5, p-value = 0.8233) and post-willingness to marry ($W = 367.5$, p-value = 0.7146).

There was some evidence that the partners of Chinese students had lower post-project responses on attitude than the partners of Japanese/Korean students ($W = 285$, p-value = 0.06765). Likewise, there was evidence for difference in pre-willingness to marry, with partners of Chinese students having lower pre-willingness scores than partners of Japanese/Korean students ($W = 238.5$, p-value = 0.01269). In combination with the Chinese students' greater post-project willingness to marry, we can say that Chinese students and their partners when compared as a group had a larger overall positive shift toward willingness to marry than Japanese/Korean students and their partners.

Contact Effect on Stereotypes

In free-response mode, respondents were also asked what three adjectives came to mind first when they thought about their partner's culture. This was done before they met and after the conclusion of the project. Responses were analyzed using the

constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967), where data are compared and answers grouped into categories to formulate theories.

To provide some examples of pre- and post-adjectives, one dyad consisted of a male Chinese and a female domestic student of Guyanese heritage. Before meeting her partner, the domestic student described the Chinese as "different, antisocial, disciplined." After the project, she described them as "interesting, friendly, kindhearted." Another domestic student changed her adjectives for Chinese culture from "smart and hardworking" to "family-oriented and traditional." Overall, the following themes emerged concerning pre- and post-intervention adjectives of Asian and American students (see Table 5.4).

In further analysis, adjectives were grouped according to favorableness (see Table 5.5). Adjectives counted as favorable and mentioned multiple times included *friendly*, *smart*, and *hardworking*. Adjectives counted as favorable but mentioned only once included *advanced*, *cultured*, and *healthy* (describing Asians) and *creative*, *flexible*, and *free* (describing Americans). Adjectives deemed neutral and mentioned multiple times were *traditional*, *family-oriented*, *Spanish-speaking*, *and different*. Single neutral adjectives included *international* and *fast-growing* (describing Asians) and *mixed* and *tall* (describing Americans). As to unfavorable adjectives, in addition to the frequently mentioned ones (e.g., *asocial* and *aggressive*; we also included the theme *quiet* and *reserved* in the unfavorable category), adjectives mentioned only once included *unwilling to adapt*, *not trustworthy*, and *sad* (describing Asians) and *cold-hearted*, *strange*, and *stubborn* (describing Americans). When the adjectives were grouped according to favorableness, the following picture emerged: First, the majority of responses of both American and Asian students were favorable before as well as after the project. Within this parameter, however, the responses of American and Asian students were different, in that before the project, American students exhibited greater favorableness (74% vs. 60%), less neutrality (13% vs. 31%), and greater unfavorableness (13% vs. 9%) than Asian students, while after the project, American and Asian students had similar degrees of favorableness (68% vs. 66%), neutrality (26% vs. 26%), and unfavorableness (6% vs. 8%). In other words, American students were more polarized before the project and moved toward neutral after the project, while Asian students' responses were lost on neutrality and gained on favorableness after the project. Likewise, more American than Asian students had provided adjectives before the project (166 vs. 139), while after the project, the response rates were similar (191 vs. 194).

The direction of change concerning favorableness is generally positive in that favorableness of Asian students' adjectives increases and unfavorableness of both American and Asian students' adjectives decreases. Interestingly, however, the favorableness of American students' adjectives declines from 74% before to 68% after the project. A closer look at the adjective distribution (see Table 5.3) shows that the decrease is largely due to a drop in the number of competence adjectives (smart, hardworking, disciplined).

Table 5.4 American and Asian students' adjectives for each other's cultures before and after project

American students' adjectives for Asian cultures	# of times mentioned				Asian students' adjectives for domestic cultures	# of times mentioned	
	Before		After			Before	After
	All	C/J/K[a]	All	C/J/K[a]			
Friendly	18	14/0/4	20	13/0/7	Friendly	17	24
Smart	18	16/1/1	9	7/1/1	Lively, energetic	12	12
Hardworking, disciplined	15	13/0/2	13	10/2/1	Spanish-speaking	7	2
Respectful	15	9/1/5	13	9/0/4	Beautiful	5	5
Quiet, reserved	8	7/0/1	5	3/0/2	Religious	5	9
Interesting	7	4/0/3	13	11/0/2	Interesting	4	8
Different	6	6/0/0	5	5/0/0	Smart	4	1
Traditional	6	4/0/2	21	17/1/3	Traditional	4	9
Kind, warm	5	5/0/0	8	8/0/0	Aggressive	3	–
Peaceful, serene	5	3/2/0	5	3/2/0	Fun	3	4
Asocial, cold	4	3/0/1	1	0/0/1	Hardworking, disciplined	3	5
Beautiful	4	3/0/1	4	3/0/1	Rich	3	1
Family-oriented	3	2/0/1	10	9/0/1	Romantic	3	1
Reliable	3	3/0/0	–	–	Easy-going, carefree	2	12
Powerful	2	2/0/0	–	–	Cool	2	2
Fun	–	–	9	5/0/4	Delicious [food]	2	4
Creative	–	–	2	1/0/1	Party-going	2	4
Lively, energetic	–	–	2	2/0/0	Open	2	3
Spiritual	–	–	2	2/0/0	Family-oriented	1	12
Strict	–	–	2	2/0/0	Kind, warm	1	7
					Different	–	6
					Quiet, reserved	1	3
					Respectful	–	3
					Clique-like	–	2
					Funny	–	2
					Loud	–	2
					Positive	–	2
					Proud	–	2
					Serious	–	2
Other (adjectives mentioned only once)	47	40/1/6	47	43/0/4	Other (adjectives mentioned only once)	54	45
Total	166	134/5/27	191	153/6/32		139	194

Note: While some adjectives (e.g., *friendly*) were mentioned several times verbatim, others appeared as synonyms or near-synonyms (e.g., *smart*, *intelligent*, *brilliant*, etc.). For the latter, one to two representative adjectives are provided to demarcate each theme

[a]*C* indicates Chinese, *J* indicates Japanese, *K* indicates Korean

Table 5.5 Favorableness of American and Asian students' adjectives for each other's cultures before and after project

	American students' adjectives for Asian cultures			Asian students' adjectives for domestic cultures		
	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Before	123/166 (74%)	22/166 (13%)	21/166 (13%)	83/139 (60%)	43/139 (31%)	13/139 (9%)
After	130/191 (68%)	50/191 (26%)	11/191 (6%)	127/194 (66%)	49/194 (26%)	15/194 (8%)

Post-intervention Expectation of and Interest in Contact

Research question 4 asked students how much contact they expected with members of their partner's culture beyond the end of the semester. The Likert scale choices ranged from *frequent, close contact* (= 5) to *more than average* (= 4), *average* (= 3), *less than average* (= 2), and *no contact* (= 1). The students overall expected contact was between average and more than average ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 0.95$), with Asian students' contact expectations being slightly lower ($M = 3.32$; $SD = 1.09$) than the American students' expectations ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 0.83$). Welch two-sample *t*-tests showed that the difference between Asian and American students was not significant ($t = -0.9401$, $df = 126.943$, p-value $= 0.349$). Likewise, there was no significant difference between the contact expectations of Chinese and Korean/Japanese students ($W = 377$, p-value $= 0.9937$) and between the partners of Chinese students and the partners of Japanese/Korean students ($W = 371$, p-value $= 0.562$).

Research question 5 asked how interested students were to remain in contact with their partner beyond the end of the semester. The Likert scale choices ranged from *very interested* (= 5) to *somewhat interested* (= 4), *neutral* (= 3), *somewhat uninterested* (= 2), and *very uninterested* (= 1). The students as a whole were somewhat interested ($M = 3.94$; $SD = 0.77$), with Asian students' interest being somewhat higher ($M = 4.07$; $SD = 0.82$) than the American students' interest ($M = 3.80$; $SD = 0.68$). Welch two-sample *t*-tests showed that the difference between Asian and American students was not significant, although it was close to significant ($t = 1.8511$, $df = 136.868$, p-value $= 0.0663$). The difference in Chinese versus Japanese/Korean interest in continued contact with the partner was not significant ($W = 431.5$, p-value $= 0.544$); and neither was the difference in interest of the partners of Chinese students and the partners of Japanese/Korean students ($W = 359$, p-value $= 0.6121$).

Discussion

Knowledge, Attitude, and Willingness to Marry

As hypothesized, the students' cross-cultural knowledge, attitude, and willingness to marry someone from the partner's culture improved significantly. This was true for Asian and American students alike.

Knowledge With respect to knowledge, results confirmed Pettigrew and Tropp's (2008) finding that intergroup contact enhances knowledge about out-groups. Knowledge (in conjunction with anxiety reduction and empathy) acts as a mediator for prejudice reduction.

Attitude With respect to attitude, results confirm that a college project can improve intercultural attitudes. The richly diverse environment of the institution's location in New York City likely facilitated the positive result. The students' ethnographic observations could, in most cases, take place in the partners' "natural habitat." This is true for domestic as well as Asian students, who often found a near-substitute for the home cultures in places, such as China- or Koreatown. Being able to visit cultural sites under the guidance of a partner who is familiar with the environment likely helped reduce anxiety, lower levels of perceived threat and, in turn, improve attitudes.

Although the attitudes of the domestic students toward their East Asian partners' cultures improved overall, the Chinese students' partners' attitudes did not improve as much as those of the Japanese and Korean students' partners. An explanation may be found in the special status of Chinese students. Between 2001 and 2011, the institution, in which the study took place, experienced a 12.1% increase in students with Asian background (Pérez-Peña 2012). With most of these students being of Chinese heritage, the density of Chinese students on campus increased dramatically. As Maddux et al. (2008) assert, the stereotype of Asians as a model minority can create a sense of threat and concomitant negative attitudes in domestic students, the domestic students in the study may have perceived especially Chinese students as a threat. Another explanation for the lower post-project attitude scores may lie in the negative media coverage surrounding China during the semesters in which the study was conducted. Frequent reports of human rights issues, pollution, and censorship may have affected the Chinese students' partners' attitudes.

Willingness to Marry As hypothesized, results also showed a significant increase in students' willingness to marry someone from their partners' culture. Although willingness to marry is only one of seven items in Bogardus social distance scale (1933), it ranks at the top (i.e., is the ultimate indicator of social distance). The finding therefore shows a reduction in social distance. Surprisingly, no difference was found between the Asian and American students' willingness to marry. With 71% of the American student participants being female, this finding raises questions about the validity of the image (e.g., Deo et al. 2008; Lee and Joo 2005) of Asian males as unattractive and undesirable.

Also of interest is the finding that Chinese and Japanese/Korean students and their partners differed significantly on two items related to willingness to marry. One difference was that the partners of Chinese students had lower pre-project scores in willingness to marry than partners of Japanese/Korean students. Negative attitudes and greater perceived threat due to the increasing density of Chinese on campus may be partially to blame. In addition, China is arguably further removed from the United States than Japan and Korea (e.g., it differs more in terms of government structure, development status, and level of openness to the West). This

makes China appear more foreign than Japan or Korea and suggests value incompatibility. The second significant difference was that the post-project willingness scores of Chinese students were higher than those of Japanese/Korean students. In combination, the differences in willingness to marry indicate a larger overall positive shift toward willingness to marry among the Chinese students and their partners than among their Japanese/Korean counterparts. This difference may indicate contact effect may be magnified by cultural difference.

Stereotypes

Before and after the project, students were asked to provide adjectives describing their partners' culture. Their responses allow for a number of insights.

The Asian students' list of adjective themes had a greater spread than the American students' list. An explanation may be that the Asian students' domestic partners had a relatively large variety of ethnic backgrounds. Very few of the American students are identified as plain "Americans." Most provided their heritage cultures—some with and others without hyphenation (e.g., a first-generation student indicated *Albanian*, other first- or later-generation students described themselves as *Italian-American*, *Dominican*, *or Russian Jew*).

In addition, Asian students supplied fewer adjectives (139) than American students (166) prior to the project since they may not have heard of some of the American students' ethnic and other identifications before the class. Likewise, both Asian and American students listed fewer adjectives before (139/166) than after (194/191) the project since they may not have been familiar enough with the cultures to furnish descriptions.

In examining the adjectives provided by American students, it is noticeable that the five most common themes (*friendly*, *smart*, *hardworking/disciplined*, *respectful*, and *quiet/reserved*) include stereotypical descriptions of Asians. The image of Asians as competent but lacking in warmth and sociability (e.g., Lin et al. 2005) was only partially supported. Although Asians were described as quiet and reserved (8 times)—even as asocial and cold (4 times)—contradictory, positive adjectives related to interpersonal skillfulness, such as *friendly* (18 times), *respectful* (15 times), and *kind/warm* (4 times), were mentioned more often. Also absent (at least among the adjectives mentioned more than once) were the negative stereotypes of Chinese international students as loud, intrusive, and annoying that Ruble and Zhang (2013) found in their study at a Midwestern university. An explanation for the predominantly positive adjectives in this study may be that the very diverse location of the study acted as a mediator. The institution, in which the study took place, enrolls students with family heritage linked to over 205 countries (City University of New York 2015). Parrillo and Donoghue (2005) found that spread in social distance has been steadily shrinking since Bogardus' first study at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is likely due to a growing level of acceptance of difference, especially in very diverse environments.

The numbers of adjectives in this study may be too small to infer differences between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean stereotypes. However, if one groups Japanese and Korean students together (they make up roughly 20% of the Asian study participants), a comparison of Chinese versus Japanese/Korean data can be undertaken. Focusing on the five top pre-project adjectives, the themes *smart*, *hardworking/disciplined*, and *quiet/reserved* are thus overrepresented among the Chinese, whereas occurrences of the themes *friendly* (14/4) and *respectful* are overrepresented among the Japanese/Koreans. An explanation concerning the stereotypical mention of competence and lacking sociability especially for the Chinese may be that the Chinese are frequently perceived as representative of all Asians and that Asian stereotypes are therefore attached more to Chinese than the other groups (Bonazzo and Wong 2007).

The study confirms findings of other research (e.g., Ward et al. 2009) that contact experiences can reduce stereotypes. After the project, the five most common themes (*friendly*, *hardworking/disciplined*, *interesting*, *respectful*, *traditional*) were devoid of two persistent stereotypes: *smart* and *quiet/reserved*. Although *smart* was still a theme after the project, it had only half the occurrence. That the loss was accounted for by the Chinese alone can be seen as confirmation that the Chinese are the main carriers of the model minority stereotype and also that the contact experience succeeded in reducing the perceived threat emanating from this model minority. With respect to sociability, post-project adjectives showed a further focus on some of the positive adjectives related to sociability (*friendly, kind/warm*) and the addition of new, similarly positive adjectives, such as *fun* and *lively/energetic* to describe Asians.

Due to the diversity among the domestic students, the Asian students' adjectives for American culture should be viewed with caution. Two observations may be worth mentioning. The Asian students overwhelmingly chose adjectives that paint their partner's cultures as *friendly* (17 times before and 24 times after the project), *lively/energetic* (12 before and 12 after), and *easy-going/carefree* (2 before and 12 after). It is interesting to note that, whereas the perceptions of Asian versus American students still contrast somewhat after the project (e.g., fewer Asians describe Americans as *smart* and *hardworking/disciplined* than vice versa), the two groups approach each other after the project in the perception of friendliness, sociability, energy, and fun. The result gives the impression of a group of students who are open and welcoming. It is also interesting, however, that both Asians and Americans describe each other's cultures as significantly more traditional and family-oriented after the project. This change may be due to the nature of the ethnographic investigation. Some students focused on cultural traditions (including religious practices) during parts of the assignment; and some students also introduced their families to each other in the course of the semester. This may have put more weight on tradition and family than under other circumstances.

A final interesting finding is the convergence of the two groups with respect to favorableness, neutrality, and unfavorableness of adjectives after the project. While the American evaluations differed in that domestic students had both more favorable adjectives for Asian cultures (74% vs. 60%) and more unfavorable adjectives (13% vs. 9%) than vice versa before the project, following the project, the evaluations were nearly identical (favorable, 68% vs. 66%; neutral, 26% vs. 26%; unfavorable, 6% vs.

8%). The tendency for American students' evaluations toward neutrality can thereby be seen as a movement away from positive stereotypes related to competence (e.g., smart, hardworking, disciplined) as well as away from negative stereotypes related to sociability (e.g., quiet, reserved, asocial, cold) to a more differentiated and, considering the threat that may emanate from competence, more benevolent view of Asian cultures. Concerning the changes within the Asian students' distribution of adjectives, studies have found patterns of Asian students constructing racial hierarchies that place Caucasians ahead of Latinos and African-Americans, which affected with whom the Asian students roomed and whom they befriended and dated (Hurtado et al. 2003; Ritter 2013). Given the relatively large number of Latinos among the American participants in this study (38%), the movement of the Asian students toward less neutrality and more positive adjectives may therefore also represent a dismantling of stereotypes (in this case of negative stereotypes held toward Latinos).

Contact Expectation and Interest

The final research questions concerned future contact with the partner's culture. The students' expectations of contact with members of the partners' cultures after the project were 0.40 points above average, and their interest in maintaining contact with the partner was 0.94 points above neutral (both on a scale from 1 to 5). Comments that some students added on the final survey of the study also indicated that they considered their partner a friend.

The mean interest score ($M = 3.94$) indicates that the students on average were *somewhat interested* in continued contact with their partner after the semester. Although this result is on the positive side of the scale, it is not known how it compares to the effect of regular classroom contact without the benefit of paired projects. Likewise, it is not clear whether interest in contact would be higher in intercultural pairings that did not involve Asian or international students. Finally, although the students expressed interest, no follow-up study was conducted to check whether the expected continued contact actually materialized.

Social penetration theory posits that close friendship occurs when the orientation and exploratory stages of relationship development have been crossed and the interactants have reached the affective and stable exchange stages (Gudykunst et al. 1987). It is during the orientation and exploratory stages that cultural differences have the biggest impact. The students' expression of interest in continued contact seems to indicate that the opportunities provided by the project to cross-cultural boundaries (in particular, to process cultural differences, lower intergroup anxiety, increase empathy, and reduce stereotypes) did open the door for potential friendship and helped some students enter at least the beginning stages.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. For one, the pair project was part of a class on intercultural communication. Although the curriculum itself was largely culture general (i.e., did not explore specific cultures in depth), the learning outcomes of the class may have transferred and affected some variables under study. Further research on class activities should include control groups to gauge the effect of course content. In addition, the project itself focused on culture. Future research should study the effect of pair assignments in classes with a different subject matter.

Due to the nature of the ethnographic project, the ethnic and religious backgrounds of some domestic partners became more salient than they likely would have been under other circumstances. Also, since students were matched for maximum cultural difference, Asian Americans were eliminated as potential partners for the Asian international students. This left the rest of the pool skewed toward non-Asian groups. As a result, the domestic partners' cultures were not evenly distributed (e.g., 38% of the Asian students' partners were Latino). The results (especially the adjectives listed by Asian students) may reflect this skewed distribution.

No comparison was made between Asian/American and non-Asian/American pairs. Future research should include such comparisons to measure the extent of the contact effect and impact of stereotypes on different pair constellations.

Finally, no follow-up data on continued contact were collected. Although the students' expressed expectation of and interest in contact provides some indication of the potential for friendship, it is not certain that friendships in fact developed or—in the case of some partner pairs who commented that they had already become friends—were maintained. Further research should extend beyond the semester at hand to provide longitudinal data on contact and friendship duration, as well as on the permanence of the other effects (knowledge, attitudes, social distance, stereotypes).

Conclusion

Meaningful interaction and friendship between domestic and international students have countless benefits. Yet, interactions don't occur often enough, leading to balkanization of domestic and international students and to missed opportunities for hosts and sojourners alike.

Results show that semester-long pair assignments can have positive effects on intergroup knowledge, attitudes, social distance, and stereotypes and can enhance the potential for friendship development. Significantly more research is needed, however, to test pair assignments in a variety of contexts and to determine which other measures work to foster intercultural friendship. This knowledge is needed for institutions to create programs and policies that maximize domestic and international student interaction.

In support of this notion, the European Association for International Education (2012) has created a charter that calls on governments and education institutions to endorse, support, and promote 11 principles, including intercultural competence of faculty and staff, intercultural competence of students, and the integration of international students. Without these principles, student exchange and internationalization cannot fulfill their promise.

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