**An investigation of microaggression frequency and stress among Chinese
international university students and the impacts**

by

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The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the
program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this dissertation. The
Graduate College will ensure this dissertation is globally accessible and will not permit
alterations after a degree is conferred.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all Chinese international students who are studying in

the U.S.

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NOMENCLATURE

CEA   Chinese Exclusion Act

CSC   China Scholarship Council

CIS   Chinese international students

HEI   Higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the microaggression experience of Chinese international college students during their stay in the U.S. The goals of the present study were: First, to explore the types of microaggressions that Chinese international students frequently experience both on and off campus; second, to analyze the stress scales of microaggressions pertaining to Chinese international students; third, to explore how Chinese international students navigate the process of dealing with microaggressions; fourth, to examine how microaggression stress and perceived institutional social support may impact the satisfaction of Chinese international students with their host institutions and their overall academic journey in the U.S.; fifth, to explore the support services Chinese international students expect to receive when dealing with microaggressions; finally, to provide both higher education institutions including faculty and staff members as well as Chinese international students practical implications on how to reduce microaggressions.

To address the research questions, an international student minority microaggression process model was adopted as the conceptual framework. This model was developed based on Meyer's (2003) minority stress model, Sue's (2010b) microaggression process model and the model minority myth (S. Lee, 2007). An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was utilized to investigate the perceived microaggressions at a large public Mid-Western research university (MU) with over 4,100 international students, among which nearly 1600 are Chinese international students.

An online survey was first conducted to gain an overall understanding of the salient types of microaggressions pertaining to Chinese international students, stress caused by microaggressions, students' perceived institutional social support from family, friends, and the university, and their level of satisfaction with the host institution and overall academic journey in the U.S. Twelve follow-up individual interviews were conducted to further understand the ways in which Chinese international students navigate the process when microaggression incidents occurred.

Results of the survey revealed that no statistical significant differences in the frequency of microaggression experience were found between undergraduate and graduate students as well as female and male students. Follow-up interviews indicated further evidence that Chinese international students who have been in the U.S. for a longer time perceived more microaggressions comparing to those who just arrived in the U.S. Interviews revealed nine types of microaggressions frequently reported by Chinese international students: Assumption of intelligence, lack of trust from professor, disrespect from students, being ignored, difficulty in building friendships, inconsistent grading practices and expectations, being ridiculed for accent, denied opportunities and insulting racial slurs and gestures. The results indicated that Chinese international students felt higher levels of stresses when the microaggression incidents were related to fewer opportunities and unfair treatment. Overall, Chinese international students showed a high level of satisfaction with their academic study with the host institution.

Findings of this study contributed to the existing literature in regard to the experience of Chinese international students, which is crucial to the overall process of internationalization of higher education institutions. This study not only provides

practical insights for researchers and practitioners working with international students but also proposes implications to Chinese international students. Future research is recommended to adopt a longitudinal approach to track the process of how Chinese international students navigate the microaggressions.

CHAPTER 1.   INTRODUCTION

He prayed-it wasn't my religion;

She ate-it wasn't what I ate;

He spoke-it wasn't my language;

She dressed-it wasn't what I wore;

He took my hand-it wasn't the color of mine.

But when she laughed-it was how I laughed,

And when he cried-it was how I cried.

------Amy Mahlox

Background

Chinese international students (CIS) function as a bridging source for the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. When Yung Wing (容 róng 闳 hóng in simplified Chinese), the first Chinese international student (also considered as the "father of Chinese Oversea students") came to the U.S. in 1850 (Yale University, 2017; Yao, 2014), he never would have imagined that 167 years later, the total number of CIS would amount to 350,755, representing 32.5% of all the international students in the U.S. (International Institute of Education [IIE], 2017b). According to the Open Doors report (IIE, 2017b), the number of CIS has been growing at a steady rate of 6.8% annually over the past eight years (2008-2016), making China the largest source country of international students in the U.S. Among those CIS in the U.S., 40.2% are enrolled in undergraduate programs, while 36.6% are enrolled in graduate programs (IIE, 2017b). International students have also become a major revenue gain for public institutions in the U.S. (Cantwell, 2015, Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2006). Further, international students are required to pay a differential tuition, which is an additional fee

charged over and above the regular tuition, determined either by residential status, majors, fields of study, years of study in the program, or a combination of the above categories (Pei & Friedel, 2017). For example, over 60% of all international students pay their tuition with personal or family funding, contributing $35.8 billion to the U.S. economy in 2016, and CIS contributed $12.55 billion of this amount (IIE, 2017b).

Benefits of Chinese International Student Enrollment

In addition to substantial financial contributions, CIS have also become an important resource for the internationalization process of American higher education institutions (HEI). CIS provide American classrooms and campuses with a global perspective, promoting domestic students' cultural awareness and understanding (Hagedorn & Lee, 2005; Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013; Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher, & Haslam, 2016; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). A recent Kauffman Foundation report indicates that 48% of international students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields would prefer to stay and work in the U.S. after graduation (Han & Appelbaum, 2016). Many CIS who are determined to stay in the U.S. also fulfill their ambitions in various professions. Such talent circulation will ultimately enhance the competitiveness of the U.S. in the global market (Yu, 2013).

The Open Doors international enrollment survey (IIE, 2017a) indicated a slight 3% decline in new international student enrollment in 2016 at most U.S. institutions for the first time in over 11 years. Such enrollment drops are even sharper in the middle portion of the U.S. which includes the Central Southwest, and this has led to budget cuts in several Mid-West institutions (Redden, 2017). Given both the financial and internationalization that CIS's provide to the U.S., such a decline in enrollment offers reason for concern of maintaining current international students with satisfying support services during their stay in the U.S.

Challenges Faced by Chinese International Students

CIS also confront various types of challenges in their journeys to achieve academic success in the U.S. A plethora of research has documented international students' academic and cultural struggles during their transitions to college life in the U.S. Frequent problems include English language barriers (accent, presentation skills, writing skills), different teaching styles, and the mismatches between their expectations and reality for both class and host institutions (which breeds stress for international students) (Burt, Knight & Roberson, 2017) Hagedorn, Pei, & Yan, 2016; Lee & Rice, 2007). CIS bear an even larger degree of academic pressure than their American counterparts due to a higher family value and costs affiliated with the opportunity to study abroad. For example, a lower grade will not only put their legal status in uncertainty, but it will also cause the losing of "family face" (Hagedorn, Pei, & Yan, 2016; Yan & Berliner, 2009). In addition to academic challenges, international students also suffer from difficulties in socializing with their American peers while also having difficulty in communicating with their professors. Notable discrimination against CIS has been documented as well (Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007).

Being far away from home and family, international students tend to deal with their frustration and stress caused by perceived discriminations by keeping to themselves or by talking to their Chinese friends. Very few would seek professional counselling services (J. Lee, 2007; Yi, Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). Previous studies (Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008; Wei, et al., 2007; Zhang, 2010) have shown that CIS often tolerate perceived discrimination by merely employing personal emotional control.

Despite the fact that CIS are the largest group among the entire international student population in the U.S, they are by no means a majority group, considering their overall ratio of 1.6% among the total U.S. college student population (IIE, 2017a). Minorities, whether of

domestic or international origin, reported being significantly less likely than their Caucasian domestic peers to be satisfied with their respective college environments and overall college experiences (Lee & Rice, 2007; Museus, Ledesma, & Parker, 2015; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Perceived discrimination and acculturalization degrades the in-class satisfaction of international students (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Wadsworth et al., 2008). According to the International Student Satisfaction Survey conducted by International Graduate (i-graduate) Insight group in 2013, overall, international students were generally satisfied with their study experience while Asian international students were reported as being less satisfied with their study experience when compared to European international students. Among the top 30 sending countries, China was placed as 26th in overall satisfaction and 21st in willingness to recommend their host institutions (Tucker, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

As Hudzik and Briggs (2012) proposed, the number of full-fee-paying enrolled international students in the U.S. does not indicate the success of international education. Rather, institutions in the U.S. need to pay more attention to international students' needs and overall experiences during their stay in the U.S. Providing quality programs and welcoming environments thus becomes an important "cornerstone" to boost international student enrollment (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, & Nelson, 1999). Among the many challenges faced by international students, perceived discrimination, which refers to the "negative attitude, judgement, or unfair treatment toward members of a group" (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009, p.533) has been commonly reported, yet has been greatly under-studied (Kim & Kim, 2010; J. Lee, 2007). Previous studies (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009) show proof that perceived discrimination has a high tendency of leading to mental and physical problems among international students. Social support and positive coping strategies

may ease the aftermath of discrimination, which is one of the topics of this study.

CIS are not immune to perceived discrimination, whether it be overt (direct forms) or covert (indirect forms). In this study, I focus on microaggressions, which is similar to perceived discrimination in the sense of being treated differently with negative attitudes based on one's identity. As opposed to perceived discrimination, microaggressions refer to more covert forms of negative treatment or attitudes. Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues (2007) defined microaggressions as verbal or nonverbal brief communications, whether intentional or unintentional, that convey hostile or negative messages toward the recipients. Microaggressions exist in a variety of contexts (e.g., academic and non-academic), which indicate that no matter where people of color go, they may be subjected to messages that they are different than the dominant white group. Besides the negative impact on people's physical and mental health (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, Sriken, 2014; Torres-Harding & Turner, 2015), microaggressions also hinder international students' academic progress (Houshmand, Spanierman, & Tafarodi, 2014).

Previous studies related to microaggressions have generally focused on African American and Latino populations. We therefore know very little about the state of international students, especially CIS. To date, there have been only a few scholarly articles that address this commonly seen form of discrimination. Studies of how microaggressions target Chinese international students is lacking (Houshmand et al., 2014; Ee, 2013; Wadsworth et al., 2008). Fortunately, most public universities and colleges have begun to provide supplemental services (such as microaggression workshops) for both domestic students and international students with the revenue gained from international students. However, most CIS may not be prepared for the unexpected difficulties such as

microaggressions which are invisible to outsiders most of the time. Accordingly, the academic achievements of CIS may also overshadow the challenges they encounter. Therefore, in this study, we aim to explore the microaggressions pertaining to CIS, how they navigate microaggressions, and the expected supported CIS would like to receive from the American host institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is: First, this study intends to investigate the salient types of microaggressions that CIS experience in everyday practice (such as on campus interaction with domestic peers, professors, and off campus such as at supermarkets and shopping centers) during their stay in the U.S. Second, the current study identifies the frequency of microaggression occurrences and stress scales pertaining to CIS in the U.S. The microaggression scale in this study was modified based on the Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS) developed by Torres-Harding and colleagues (2012). Third, this study examines how microaggression stress may impact CIS' satisfaction with their overall experience in the U.S. and with the host institutions. Fourth, this study further investigates how CIS respond to microaggressions during their stay in the U.S. Fifth, this study further explores the supporting services that CIS expect to receive when dealing with microaggression occurrences.

Research Questions

Eight research questions (see Table 1.1) were developed to guide the current study. The first set of four quantitative questions intend to: 1) identify the background characteristics, frequency and stress scales of microaggressions experienced by CIS; 2) the group differences (if any) in frequency of microaggression occurrences and stress scales based on background characteristics; 3) factors mitigate microaggressions pertaining to CIS; 4) the impact of demographic factors, microaggression and social support on CIS'

satisfaction with host institutions. The four qualitative questions (questions 5 through 8) intend to further explore: 1) general stresses experienced by CIS, 2) microaggressions frequently reported by CIS, 3) the process how CIS deal with microaggressions, 4) the supportive services they expect to receive when coping with microaggressions and suggestions they would provide to both current and future peer CIS in order for them to have a more satisfying academic journey in the U.S.

Table 1.1
Research Questions

Question Type	Research Questions
Quantitative	1) How frequent and stressful are microaggressions experienced by CIS?
	2) Are there any statistically significant differences in the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions between CIS groups based on factors such as gender, age, academic level, GPA and length of stay in the U.S.?
	3) What factors mitigate the microaggression experiences among CIS?
	4) How do demographic factors, microaggression stress and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their host institution and the overall academic experience in the U.S.?
Qualitative	5) What kinds of general stress is experienced by CIS?
	6) What are the microaggressions frequently reported by CIS?
	7) How do CIS process microaggressions?
	8) What type of support do CIS expect to receive from the host institution in response to microaggressions?

Overview of the Methodology

The rationale for using the current design was twofold. First, the combination of qualitative findings with quantitative findings provides a better comprehension of the microaggression experiences of CIS while offsetting the limitation of using only one type of data source (Creswell, 2015). Second, the use of mixed-methods allows for a more comprehensive understanding regarding the way CIS deal with microaggression experiences.

In an explanatory sequential design, the study begins with quantitative method to collect and analyze data, then follows up with qualitative data collection and analysis to, "explain the quantitative results" (Creswell, 2015, p.38). A visual mapping of the design is illustrated in Figure 1.1. Data collection procedures, such as instrument design, sampling, research sites and data analysis are described in Chapter three.

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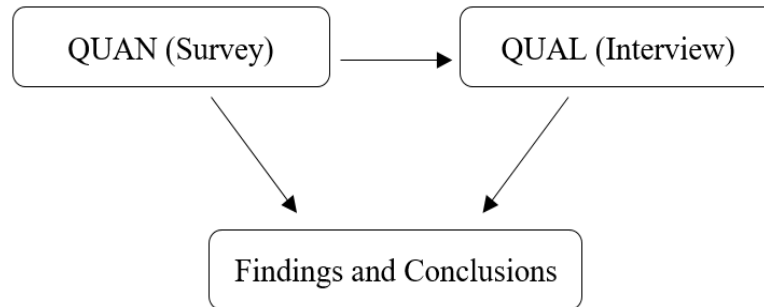
Figure 1.1 Visual Mapping of the Design

Overview of Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study consists of three elements. The first element refers to the concept of microaggression. In this study, we adopt the definition proposed by Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues (2007b), "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (p.273). Microaggressions may be brief; however, the impact of microaggressions remain quite invalidating and degrading (Houshmand et al., 2014; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007). Perceptions of microaggressions vary based on the understanding of the interactions among different ethnic groups. CIS, as a minority group, may experience different types of microaggressions than their peers or domestic American students and other groups of international students (such as international students from

European countries).

The second element in the conceptual framework of this study refers to the microaggression process model. According to Sue (2010b), a complete microaggression process comprises the following five steps:

1) Incident: The occurrence of an event or situation experienced by the participant.

2) Perception: Participant's belief of whether or not the incident was racially motivated.

3) Reaction: Participant's immediate response to the incident.

4) Interpretation: The meaning the participant forms of the incident.

5) Consequence for individual: Behavioral, emotive, or thought processes which develop over time because of said incident. (pp. 68-69).

Among the five steps, the second one is the most important because perception dictates whether or not the incident was an act of microaggression. The process model has been applied to the racial microaggression scale among different racial groups (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). As Sue (2010b) suggested, the process model could also be applicable to different marginalized groups. The current study thus utilizes the microaggression process model to demystify how CIS deal with microaggression incidents.

Aligned with microaggression experiences, another frequently reported phenomenon that pertains to the Asian population is the model minority myth. The model minority myth refers to the stereotyping of Asians and Asian Americans. For example, Asian and Asian American students are often overgeneralized by Americans as always having higher achievements in math and science related subjects (Lee, 2016; Yi & Museus, 2015). Previous

studies (Museus, 2013; Suzuki, 2002) showed that Asian Americans are stereotyped as achieving greater success in academia and various occupations. The model minority myth coincides with the marginalized stereotype of microaggression and may also bring about unexpected pressure to bear on the message receiver (Yi & Museus, 2015). The model minority myth asserts that Asians are quiet, submissive and do not complain. CIS, although holding different types of residential status than Asian Americans, do share one commonality of Asian culture, which is a high aspiration in study and work. In that regard, Asian (especially Chinese) international students are not immune to the negative stresses or impacts of the assumptions that all Asians are hard-working and good at math, which further leads to differential admission criteria (typically higher and stricter) for CIS (Zhang, 2012). As CIS may be ascribed similar types of stereotypes or prejudices as with Asian Americans, this study thus utilizes the model minority myth in understanding the stereotypes related to microaggressions experienced by CIS.

Significance of the Study

The current study enriches the literature pertaining to the microaggression experiences of CIS. The microaggression stress model proposed in the study provides a framework for future research pertaining to stress processing and its impact on international students. Analysis and results pertaining to the impact of microaggression stress and satisfaction will allow admission officers to employ useful tools for future marketing when recruiting international students. Findings pertaining to expectations of supportive services may provide practical implications for administrators working with international students.

Definition of Key Terms

Chinese international university student, refers to a Chinese individual who is enrolled at an accredited higher education institution in the U.S. on a temporary visa (F-1, M-

1, or J-1 visa), and who is not an immigrant (permanent resident with an I-51 or Green Card), or an undocumented immigrant, or a refugee. In this study, we use CIS for short. Since there were no international students from MaCau, CIS in this study includes students from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Microaggression, refers to any type of verbal or nonverbal communication, whether intentional or unintentional, that carries out negative or hostile messages to a target marginalized group. In this study, we focus on the microaggressions targeting at CIS.

Microaggerssion stress, refers to "race-related, gender-related, or sexual-orientation-related events or situations that are experienced as a perceived threat to one's biological, cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social well-being, or position in life" (Sue, 2010a, p.96).

<div align="center">**Delimitations and Limitations**</div>

Delimitations

This study is delimited to CIS attending U.S. universities. Asian students experience different types of microaggression than African Americans and Latino Americans (Museus, 2013). The experience of CIS may also shed light on other groups of Asian international students. The results and findings of the study will be of interest to higher education researchers, international education practitioners, academic advisors, student affairs professionals, and higher education policy makers by providing more awareness of CIS' experiences in the U.S. It may also provide better support mechanisms to be formulated for CIS. In addition, the analysis of current CIS' experiences of microaggression will provide useful guidance and suggestions for prospective and potential international students.

Limitations

Two limitations of this study should be noted. First, the current study is conducted in one mid-western public research institution. The interview data only includes those students who agreed to be interviewed. The relatively small sample size and breadth of data may be an immediate constraint in generalizing the findings from the study when all CIS are taken into consideration. However, the selected institution is an excellent representation of American universities with large numbers of CIS. Second, the impartiality of the author as a Chinese international student may be a limitation. However, the positionality of the author as an insider provides deeper understanding of her fellow CIS' experiences of microaggression. Thus, the findings will still allow for theoretical and practical implications for researchers and administrators in the area of international higher education.

<div align="center">

Organization of the Dissertation

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This study is organized to analyze various types and categories of microaggression experiences of CIS studying at U.S. universities. Specifically, this study explores the types and categories of microaggression that CIS experiences both on and off campus. It then examines the stress scale of different types of microaggression experienced by CIS. The study also analyzes responses to various types of microaggression. The expectations of services for support provided by the university to deal with microaggression are also discussed. These goals are fulfilled by a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, with quantitative analysis of a survey instrument, followed by qualitative data from 12 semi-structured interviews in order to gain deeper levels of understanding of microaggression experienced by CIS.

The dissertation consists of six chapters. Following this introduction chapter, chapter two begins with a comprehensive review of previous literature pertaining to the historical

context and current trends of CIS, including the motivation and challenges faced by CIS. It then reviews previous studies on microaggression and model minority stereotypes of Asians. As a summary of chapter two, a conclusion with major findings and literature gaps are discussed.

Chapter three presents the methodology adopted in the study. Specifically, this chapter describes the research design: First, quantitative survey instrument including samples, research settings, instruments and variables used and data analysis are explained. Second, individual face to face interviews were conducted. The interview protocol, participant demographics and ethical considerations are included in this section.

Chapter four analyzes data collected from the survey instrument. Chapter five presents the findings of individual interviews with participants. Chapter six discusses the findings of both quantitative data and qualitative findings. Implications for both institution and international students are presented. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter first reviews the historical context and current trend of Chinese overseas students in the U.S., including the motivations, challenges, and expectations of CIS. It then provides an overview of previous studies pertaining to the general and minority stresses encountered by CIS. Studies on the role of social support perceived by international students are also reviewed. The second section focuses on microaggression, including the evolution of the concept, taxonomy and types of microaggression, microaggression process models, and potential impact of microaggression stress. The third section provides a conceptual framework based on the summary of previous studies.

Chinese International Students in the U.S.

According to the 2015 American Community Survey conducted by U.S. Census Bureau (2016), Chinese Americans are the largest Asian immigrant group with 4.7 million people in the U.S. Among Chinese Americans, nearly half have obtained permanent residential status (green card) for employment after studying in the U.S. as international students or scholars (Zong & Batalova, 2017; Pang & Appleton, 2004). In order to understand the commonly documented stereotypes and to demystify the hidden assumptions and problems CIS encounter, this section will first present a historical overview of CIS in the U.S. followed by a literature summary of current trends. It will then analyze challenges and problems CIS encounter.

Overview of History: Waves of Chinese International Students

The important role of CIS and higher education institutions (HEI) in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship has been well addressed by government documents and academic

articles on both sides. For example, Chinese vice Premier Liu Yandong (2015) highlights the pioneering role of universities in "mapping out development blueprints and enhancing strategic, mutual trust between countries… universities are also the binding force for China-U.S. relations" (as Cited in Williams, 2015). However, very few academic articles in the field of higher education have provided an updated history of CIS. Bevis and Lucas (2007) is one of the few history-oriented books that reflect the international students in the U.S. from the 18th century to the post September 11 stage. While tracing the story of CIS, Bevis and Lucas (2007) associated the political and economic situation in China and the U.S. from a historic perspective. Such a connection is very helpful in understanding the assumptions held by CIS and their motivations and expectations of studying abroad.

First Wave: The Pioneers

Before the first CIS, Yung Wing, arrived in the U.S. in 1847, the first wave of Chinese immigrants, mostly of whom were from Guangdong province in the southwest part of China, had already come to the U.S. (Connecticut History, 2017). With very limited education, early Chinese immigrants led very hard lives in gold mining, working on railroads, and other back-breaking labors. In order to support their families in China, the early immigrants worked day and night for whatever level of wages they could find. However, the diligence and hardship of the early immigrants did not protect them from hatred by other racial groups. In 1882, the American government issued the Chinese Exclusion Act which suspended the immigration process for Chinese individuals for ten years (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; Connecticut History, 2017).

In 1870, Yung Wing initiated the Chinese Educational Mission program with the Chinese government (*Qing* Imperial government, 1644-1911) with the goal of learning about Western technology and engineering. The program was completely funded by the Chinese

government; however, it took great effort for Yung Wing to recruit enough students given the uncertainty of the world across its border (Yung, 1909). With the consideration of the language barrier for adult learners, the Chinese government sent 120 Chinese young students, to the U.S. over a four-year (1872-1875) period. A majority of this group of students came from Yung Wing's hometown Guangdong province and a few were from Hong Kong (Bevis & Lucus, 2007; Connecticut History, 2017; Yale University, 2017; Yung, 1909). Evidence from Yung (1909) indicates that these young CIS had many challenges such as language difficulty, different eating habits, clothing, and hair styles during the first three years of their study. For example, all Chinese males were supposed to wear long gowns and long braids at that time. Because of the implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act (CEA), young CIS were required to return to China in 1881 despite their assimilation (some boys cut their long braids and started wearing suits instead of long gowns) to the American culture (Connecticut History, 2017; Yung, 1909). Although the 100-year initiative of the Chinese Educational Mission program was halted, the advanced technology and engineering skills learned in the U.S. enabled the first group of CIS to excel in Chinese society. Some worked as railroad managers and senior engineers, and some others worked as diplomats or university presidents after returning to China (Lin, 2016; Shu, 2011).

Second Wave: The Explorers

The 10-year CEA was extended in 1892 for another ten years and it was later made permanent in 1902 (National Archives, 2016). However, the Exclusion Act did not completely stop the flow of incoming CIS. The second wave of CIS occurred after 1908, when the U.S. government decided to return "Gengzi compensation" ($10,785 million) to China ("Gengzi Compensation" refers to one of the unequal treaties signed in 1900, when the *Qing* government was forced to pay 22.5 million kilograms of silver in 39 years as

compensation to Eight Allied Nations that invaded Beijing. The total amount of compensation amounted to 49 million kilograms of silver after interests). The U.S. government returned the compensation year by year from January 1909 to 1940 under the condition that all the money could only be used for sending Chinese youth to study in the U.S. Nearly 1300 young Chinese were sponsored to study in the U.S. with the money from "Gengzi Compensation" from 1909 to 1929 (Zhang, 2005).

Meanwhile, the May Fourth New Culture Movement in 1919, which was a nationwide student-led anti-imperialist movement, brought up heated debates between traditional Confucian ideas and Western ideas in science and democracy. The movement inspired many young Chinese to explore the new world across the Pacific Ocean and many of them chose to come to the U.S. (Hu, 1991).

The legal documentation process requirement for CIS at that time was much different than it is today. Students did not need a visa to travel abroad. The only required document was a valid passport. Similar to the present time, financial cost was the primary concern for CIS at that time. Students were supported by three main types of financial sources: First, government sponsorship, mostly for students from Peking University, which was the most prestigious public university in China; second, personal and family support, which only applied to students from better-off families; third, work and study programs (more for students who studied abroad in France).

Third Wave: The Selected Elites

The restrictions of the CEA in 1943 did not bring a large wave of international students or immigrants to the U.S. due to the Second World War and the political situation in China. After the gap stage during the 1950s and 1975, the third wave of international students surged to the U.S. when the Chinese government opened up to the outside world in

1978. The establishment of a normal bilateral relationship between the U.S. and China in 1979 further opened a welcoming window for CIS. Large groups of Chinese students and scholars were funded by the government to study abroad in order to achieve China's modernization goals (Pang & Appleton, 2004). During a ten-year span (1978-1988), approximately 60,000 Chinese students and scholars were funded to obtain further education in science, technology, and engineering related fields in 76 countries and regions. In addition to government funding, over 20,000 CIS studied overseas through personal or family funding. The number of mainland Chinese students entering the United States reached more than 10,000 per year after 1986 (Pang, & Appleton, 2004; Yan & Berliner, 2011). The national college entrance exam (Gaokao) in China was suspended for ten years until the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976. Gaokao test takers at time were recommended from factory workers, peasants, soldiers, or other workers (Yan, 2017). Therefore, government-funded CIS in the 1980s were more likely to be middle-aged and from elite Chinese universities.

Fourth Wave: The Other Option-ers

When the immigrant policy became more open after the 1990s, more Chinese students from various levels of educational backgrounds started to study overseas (Pang, & Appleton, 2004). Overseas study experiences opened a new window for many Chinese and attracted many Chinese students and scholars, some of whom had decided to work and live in the U.S. after graduation, making them an integral part of the Chinese immigrants. Open Doors data (IIE, 2017) (see Table 2.1) presents the upward trend of CIS studying in the U.S. This is aligned with China's higher education expansion policy, the core of which lies in transforming higher education recruitment from elite education to mass education starting in 1999 (Wang & Liu, 2011). Such expansion in recruitment highly increased the gross enrollment rate to 42.7% in 2016 from 9.8% in 1999 (MOE, 2017).

During the fourth wave, studying abroad became an option for many Chinese families. After a slight decline of 4.6% during 2003-2004 due to the September 11 terrorist attacks, the number of CIS in the U.S. steadily increased over the past 10 years and reached a historical high at 328,547 in 2016 (IIE 2016a). CIS in this wave tended to be younger with a large portion enrolled in high schools. Ivy League schools were no longer their sole target, as some CIS attended community colleges and transferred to four-year institutions. When compared to the third wave, the number of CIS who choose to go back to China after graduation has increased.

Table 2.1

Chinese International Students Studying in the U.S.: 2006-2016 (IIE, 2017)

Academic Year	Chinese Students in the U.S.	Change (%) from Previous year
2015/16	328,547	8.1
2014/15	304,040	10.8
2013/14	274,439	16.5
2012/13	235,597	21.4
2011/12	194,029	23.1
2010/11	157,558	23.5
2009/10	127,628	29.9
2008/09	98,235	21.1
2007/08	81,127	19.8
2006/07	67,723	8.2
2005/06	62,582	0.1

Looking Forward: The Current Trend

Compared to the early Chinese immigrants of the 1850s, the current population of Chinese Americans tends to hold higher education degrees, have higher family incomes, and is more likely to achieve greater success in the professional world (Pang & Appleton, 2004).

In line with the historical trends of major selection in universities, CIS are mostly enrolled in business and management, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields (IIE, 2016c).

In addition to personal funding, more diverse funding sources have become available for CIS. Along with the foundation of the China Scholarship Council in 1996 as a non-profit institution affiliated with the Ministry of Education (MOE), many excellent students and scholars have been able to study abroad. China Scholarship Council provides financial assistance to CIS to develop their educational, scientific, technological, and cultural exchanges and economic and trade cooperation between China and other countries. As indicated by MOE (2017), China Scholarship Council has provided funding for 30,014 Chinese students and scholars studying abroad in the year 2016. The MOE (2017) also provides various types of sponsorships including short term language learning exchange programs for eligible Chinese students who wish to study abroad.

Motivations

Most CIS who choose to study in the U.S. are attracted by the higher quality of education, fear of the Chinese National Entrance Exam (Gao Kao), future career opportunities, and a desire to experience a different culture (Hagedorn, 2015; Han & Appelbaum, 2016). The rise in Chinese international student enrollment at community colleges shows the increased recruitment engagement of community colleges in the U.S. as well. For example, during the 2016/2017 academic year, there were larger numbers of students and parents who began to show favor for the transfer pathway from community colleges to four-year institutions. This was partly due to the rise of education agencies in China, which helped prospective students select institutions and prepare materials for the application process. With the official approval of MOE for education agencies, over 4000

education agencies in China now actively provide study abroad consultation services (Chua, 2017).

Challenges and Problems

The growth in international student enrollment does not necessarily indicate whether current international students feel supported or are more satisfied with their study experience in the U.S. (Lee, 2017). International students tend to experience various types of difficulties (such as financial burdens, language barriers, culture, and academic pressure) after the initial "honeymoon" stage of their American college life (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). On the one hand, international students experience general difficulties while interacting with their domestic peers from different cultural backgrounds (Arkoudis et al., 2013; Eisenchlas & Trevaskes, 2007; Schreiber, 2011; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Ye, 2006). On the other hand, international students suffer stereotype-related discriminations (Bonazzo & Wong, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007; Ruble & Zhang, 2013). Similarly, CIS may experience various types of stress while studying in a foreign land (Yan & Berliner, 2013).

General Stress

Overall, international students experience more problems and stress in general when compared to their domestic peers (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). Various types of challenges exist, such as social isolation, culture shock, financial burdens, and homesickness. The most salient stressor for CIS are academic challenges (Han, Han, Luo, Jacobs, & Jean-Baptiste, 2012). It has been well documented that most international students encounter English language barriers, preventing them from interacting with other students and faculty (Mori, 2000). Although most international students possess a strong understanding of English grammar because of the training in their home country, they tend to face communication difficulties with native speakers due to the unfamiliarity of colloquial expressions (Li, Fox, &

Almarza, 2007). Pre-college English classes in China are more reading and writing oriented, which leaves the challenge of speaking and listening for many CIS. Limited English proficiency may largely impact international students' sense of belonging and homesickness, while better language skills, on the other hand, could better facilitate the transition process (Kwon, 2009; Schreiber, 2011). Consistent with this, Zhang (2012) argues that students who are more comfortable in using English experience less stress.

Different class styles and expectations may also cause many CIS to become frustrated. For example, Chinese students were reluctant to critique others' work or show disagreement directly due to a belief in harmonious relationships (Carson & Nelson, 1996). Meanwhile, CIS are required to maintain good academic standing in order to maintain their legal status as required by the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) (Hagedorn, Pei, & Yan, 2016). This is particularly true for CIS. Most CIS are the only child of the family and are also regarded as the hope of the family. Many families invest their entire life savings for the only-child's study abroad experience, thus doubling the pressure placed on CIS (Hagedorn, Pei, & Yan, 2016). Due to high academic stress, many international students have limited time or opportunity to develop social skills while attending American universities which further eliminates the possibility for them to better adapt to American culture (Yan & Berliner, 2013). Most international students (including Chinese students) prefer to interact with fellow students from the same culture, which also leads to the problem of being isolated from the host culture accordingly (Redden, 2013; Zhao, Kuh & Carini, 2005).

Minority Stress

In addition to the general stress caused by academic and cultural problems, international students, as a minority group, also encounter stereotypes and discrimination as

reported in previous literature (Bonnazo & Wong, 2007; Hanassab, 2006; J. Lee, 2007; Olivas & Li, 2006; Poyrazli & Grahama, 2007). The term stereotype refers to generalizations about a certain group of people, usually consisting of a set of fixed assumptions, both positive and negative (Operio & Fiske, 2003; Ruble & Zhang, 2013). One commonly reported stereotype targeted at Asians and Asian Americans is the model minority myth. CIS do however share one commonality of the Asian culture which is the high expectations placed on them in study and work. In that regard, Asian (especially Chinese) international students are not immune to negative stress and the impact of the assumptions that all Asians are hard-working and good at math, which further leads to differential admission criteria (typically higher and stricter) for CIS (Zhang, 2012). CIS may encounter more stereotype-related discrimination or other difficulties when compared to Chinese Americans (Lee, 2017, Ruble & Zhang, 2013). For example, CIS have been judged as "being friendly, smart and hardworking, not social, bad English, quiet, and oblivious" in the eyes of their American peers (Ruble & Zhang, 2013).

Excessive stress may be harmful to international students both physically and psychologically, especially when such stress is beyond one's ability to manage (Lazarua & Folkman, 1984; Zhang, 2012). International students may even be discouraged from getting involved in social networks (Yeh & Inose, 2003). The stress caused by discrimination and general challenges together with social constraints may also influence students' satisfaction with their overall academic life (Diener, Lucas, Oishi, & Suh, 2002; Karaman & Watson, 2017).

Social Support and Satisfaction

Therefore, it is crucial to provide sufficient and effective support for international students so that they may successfully cope with stress, especially minority stress. Previous

studies showed evidence that perceived social support protects individuals' psychological health during stressful times (Thoits, 1995, Zhang, 2012). Perceived social support refers to an individual's perception of available supportive resources (Hobfoll & Vaux, 1993). Cohen and Wills (1985) argued that social support is strongly correlated with the psychological health of people under high stress and has no significant impact for people under low levels of stress. In a study on acculturative stress of CIS, Zhang (2012) indicated that a lower level of perceived social support is associated with a higher level of depression. Students in Zhang's study expressed that they had received higher social support from family and friends than support from their institutions.

Microaggression

Racism in the 21st century involves hidden or subtle forms of discrimination such as microaggressions (Museus, Ledesma, & Paker, 2015). International students also encounter diverse types of microaggressions along with stereotypes and discrimination. Microaggression is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has been in existence along with the diversified history of human civilization. A Google search using "microaggression" as a key word turned out 665,000 links within 0.36 seconds. The term "microaggression" was also selected as the Top Word of the Year in 2015 by the 16th Annual survey of the English language conducted by the *Global Language Monitor*.

Concept Evolution

Early research on microaggressions can be traced back to the 1970s, when Harvard University psychiatrist Pierce and colleagues first used the term to explain subtle insults experienced by African Americans. Pierce and colleagues (1977) defined microaggression as the daily "race-related slights and indignities" experienced by African Americans (as Cited in Wong, et al., 2014, p.182). In their study of racism and television commercials, Pierce and

colleagues (1977) revealed that African Americans were severely underrepresented as well as misrepresented in the media. In 1995, Pierce revised the definition of microaggression as: "… The subtle, innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often kinetic but capable of being verbal or kinetic…" (p.281). Pierce argued that microaggression the cumulative microaggressive stress may lead to the loss of self-confidence of the recipients.

The concept of microaggression has been broadened along with the more frequently reported microaggression incidents accordingly. In the iconic work published by Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues (2007), microaggression was defined as "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (p.273). When compared to the previous definition, microaggression is extended to the experience of multiple racial groups as well as other marginalized groups based on different categories of a person's identity, such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability etc. In the current study, Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues' (2007) definition will be adopted to ground the analysis of CIS' experiences of microaggressions.

Types and Categories of Microaggressions

Sue (2010a) proposed the taxonomy of microaggressions, including "microassults, microinsults, and microinvalidations" based on the severity of the consequences of the microaggression incident (see Figure 2.1). Microassault is the most severe among the three types based on the level of consciousness and directness of the aggression. Microassult refers to purposeful and explicit behaviors, whether verbal or nonverbal that intend to send insulting messages to a marginalized group. Examples of microassult include calling Chinese

Americans "chinks" and laughing at specific jokes in front of a group of certain racial, gender, or ability limited individuals. The goal of microassult is to "threaten, intimidate, and make the individuals or groups feel that they are inferior or do not belong" (p.28). Microinsults are typically unconscious behaviors (verbal or nonverbal) that degrade a person's racial heritage, such as ascribing a certain degree of intelligence to a person's race. A typical example of microinsult is the assumption that all Asians should be good at math or statistics. Microinvalidations refer to environmental or interpersonal cues or behaviors (verbal or nonverbal) that exclude or minimize the feelings of marginalized ethnic groups. Similar to microinsults, microinvalidations are usually unintentional. For example, asking Asian Americans who were born and raised in the U.S. where they really come from is considered a microinvalidation due to the implied meaning that Asian American people do not belong.

Acknowledging the existence of and the main types of microaggressions may be an important beginning point of raising awareness of the potential harm caused by them, and it may be a way to reduce microaggression in general. Some institutions such as the New School Medical Center at the University of Nebraska have listed the three main types of microoagressions with examples on the university's website to serve as faculty and student training resources.
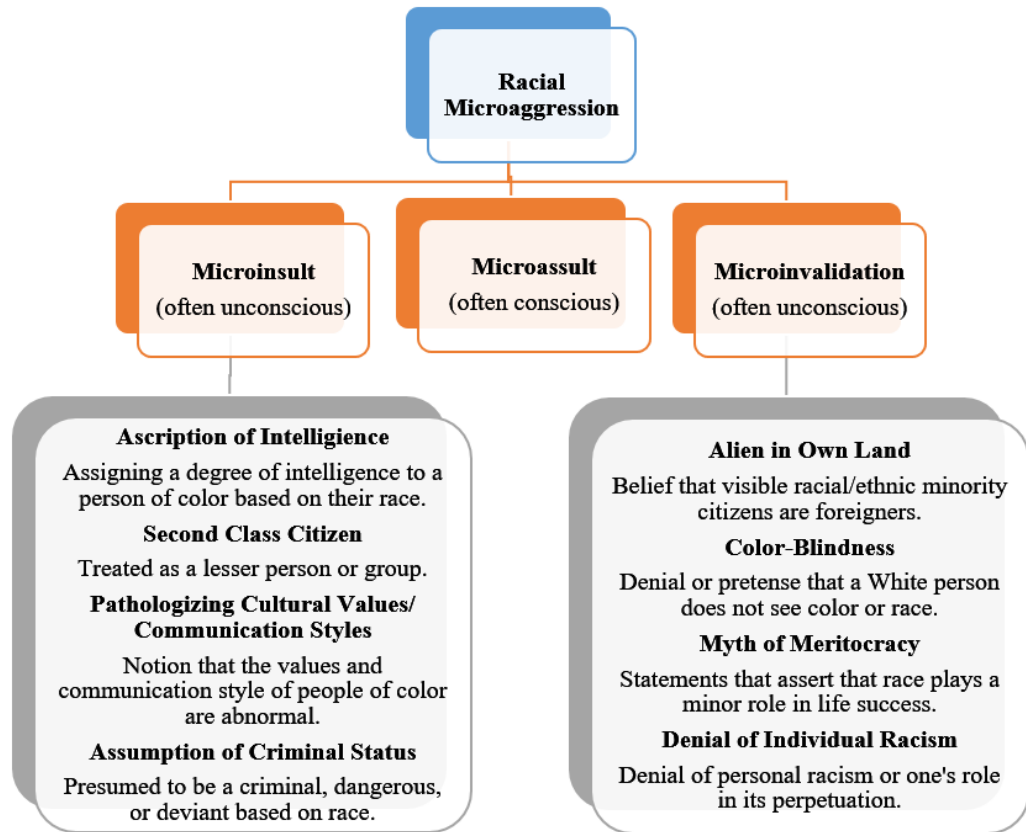
Figure 2.1 Categories and Relationship of Racial Microaggressions (Sue 2010a, p.29)

Following Sue's (2010a) framework, researchers have conducted substantive studies on microaggressions pertaining to various ethnic groups in different settings, such as universities, communities, and clinical practices. According to Sue, the taxonomy is as appropriate for Asian Americans as for other groups of people of color. Sue (2010a) also proposed several specific microaggression themes targeting Asian Americans, "ascription of intelligence, denial of racial reality, second-class citizenship, alien in own land, invalidation of interethnic differences, invisibility, exoticization of Asian women" (p.75). Some of the themes (such as ascription of intelligence, and denial of racial reality) have been explained as being closely related to the stereotypes (such as model minority) held against Asians (Lin, 2011). Although the salient microaggression examples for the same minority group may be

slightly different in various contexts, the two common categories are microinsult and

micorinvalidations (Wong, et al., 2014). Researchers (Kim & Kim, 2010; Houshmand et al.,

2014) in this area have begun started to explain the microaggression experiences of

international students by using this taxonomy.

The Intersectionality of Microaggressions

Following the broad concept of microaggression, researchers have investigated racial

microaggressions targeted at multiple marginalized groups, such as Latina/o Americans

(Sauceda, 2009; Yasso, et al., 2009), Asian Americans (Lin, 2011; Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004;

Sue, et al., 2009), LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer or questioning)

(Nadal et al., 2015), females of color (Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Huntt, 2013; Owen,

Tao & Rodolfa, 2010) and African Americans (Allen, 2010; Burt et al, 2017, Cartwright,

Washington, & McConnell, 2009; Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007). When

situated in society, each individual holds multiple types of identities. For example, an

international graduate student could be a teaching assistant, a parent, a person of color and

Christian, all at the same time. Such an interconnected nature of social categorization may

also create multiple types of disadvantages, such as the intersectionality of discrimination.

Intersectionality was first proposed by Kimberle Crenshaw in a study on the oppression of

African-American females in 1989 in order to challenge the assumption that women are a

homogeneous group.

Regarding microaggressions, such intersectionality refers to the intersection of

microaggression based on race, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, nationality, social

class, and religious belief of the individual or group. Some studies concerning

microaggressions have been conducted from an intersectionality lens. For example, Gomez,

Khurshid, Freitag, and Lachuk (2011) studied the microaggressions experienced by graduate

teaching assistants with low social and economic backgrounds. They suggested that these graduate teaching assistants experienced continuous questioning pertaining to their performance and garnered less respect from white students, which deeply discouraged these graduate assistants from pursuing their teaching careers after graduation. This was due to the microaggressions that they experienced. McCabe (2009) examined the racial and gender microaggressions targeted at African American, Latina/o, and white undergraduate students at a predominantly white campus in the U.S. In addition to racial and sexual microaggression reported by black and Latina/o men and women, McCabe's study also indicated that white female students experienced gendered microaggressions. For example, white female students were made to feel inferior or not fit to compete in male-dominant majors such as business management. Microaggressions do not necessarily occur in binary categories, exclusively between Caucasians and people of color. White people may also experience intersectional microaggressions. Nadal and colleagues (2015) also argued that given the complexity of intersectional microaggressions based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion, it may have negative impacts on recipients' educational attainment as well as on their psychological health.

Microaggressions Targeting International Students

International students have reported feeling invisible in their classrooms and in their interactions with American students (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). Overall, international students face difficulties from three domains, namely, social interactions, classrooms, and campus institutions in general (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Social interactions include communication between international students and American students and faculty. Classroom experience includes course curricula and class dynamics, and campus institutions include university policies and organizations that govern or serve the student body. A

common challenging thread across each of these domains for international students in the

U.S. is the language barrier. Attaining English proficiency, in itself, is a significant stressor

for those foreign students studying in the U.S., which may also lead to perceived

discrimination.

Kim and Kim (2010) argued that international students may understate the subtle

slights they experience due to their unique status as "internalized outsiders" (p.172). In their

study, seven themes were generated from situations by students' social interactions.

Classrooms and campus experiences showed consistency with the taxonomy proposed by

Sue (2010a). The only two themes that were not applicable for international students were

the assumption of criminality and their status as second-class citizens. Houshmand and

colleagues' (2014) study showed further evidence that the taxonomy proposed by Sue

(2010a) also applies to the international student population. Although phrased slightly

differently, the six themes identified by Houshmand and colleagues (2014) share substantial

similarity with Kim and Kim's (2010) study. A summary of major microaggression themes

targeting international students based on Kim and Kim (2010) and Houshmand and

colleagues' study is presented in Table 2.2.

Processing Microaggressions

According to Sue (2010a), microaggressions may have long-lasting consequences for

recipients. Most of the impacts are referred to as microaggression stressors, the "race-related,

gender-related, or sexual-orientation-related events or situations that are experience as a

perceived threat to one's biological, cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social well-

being, or position in life" (p.96). The severity of microaggression stressors is largely

dependent on the nature of the experience and perceived available resources on the receiver's

end. A clearer picture of the functioning of microaggression impacts are presented in the

microaggression process model (Figure 2.2) proposed by Sue (2010a).

Table 2.2

Examples of Microaggression Experienced by International Students in the U.S. (Sue, 2010a)

Theme	Microaggression Incidents	Message
Ascription of intelligence	Asking Chinese students to help with math and statistics homework.	All Asians are good at math
Exclusion and social avoidance	International students are not included in social gatherings with domestic peers.	You do not belong to our group.
Invisibility	International students' ideas are ignored in group projects.	Your idea is not important.
Invalidating international issues and perspectives	Professors do not seek or validate input of international students.	Your perspective is irrelevant.
Environmental microaggressions	International students are not allowed to work off campus or enrolled as part-time students.	You may study here because you are economic boon to our country. Do not take away our jobs or other resources.

According to Sue and colleagues (2010b), The processing of microaggressions

involves five steps: First, the occurrence of the incident, which is also referred to as a

potential microaggression. The second step involves perception, which refers to recipients'

judgment about whether the incident was racially motivated. The complicated nature of

microaggression incidents usually directs participants to question the uncertainty of the incident. The third step includes recipients' reaction to the incident. This reaction usually refers to the internal struggle of the recipient in processing the meaning of the incidents from a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspective. Recipients may respond to microaggression with different coping strategies, such as spirituality (Granger, 2011; Robinson, 2011), avoidance (Bonazzo & Wong, 2009), speaking out and directly confronting the perpetrator (McCabe, 2009). They may also seek social support from groups of shared identity (McCabe, 2009; Ye, 2006). The fourth step is interpretation, which refers to the meaning-making process of participants involved about the incident. At this stage, the recipient may dig deeper into the intention of the perpetrator or any social patterns indicated by the incidents. The fifth and final step includes consequences, which refers to behavioral, emotive, or thought processes induced by the incident. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, the perception and questioning process involves recipients' internal struggle about the ambiguity of the message carried out (Sue, 2010a; Sue et al., 2008).
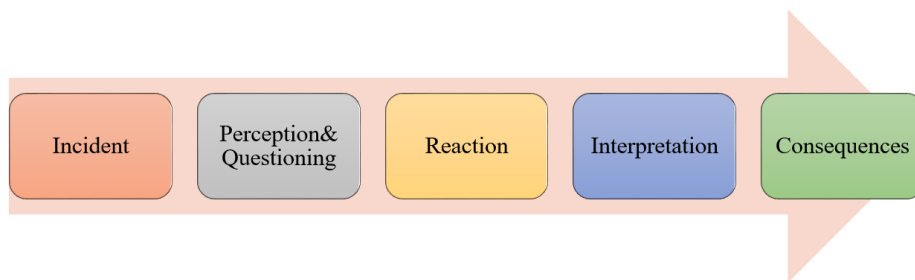
Figure 2.2 Microaggression Process Model (Sue 2010a, p65)

The consequences and impacts of microaggressions may be long-lasting. It has been well documented that microaggression stressors have negative impact on the psychological well-being of the recipient, evidenced by factors such as self-doubt, frustration, distressful, and depression (Ee, 2013; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, et al., 2009). Further, direct

physiological reactions (blood pressure, heart rate) and other cardiovascular conditions have been reported among African American men (Clark, 2006; Sue, 2010a; Utsey & Hook, 2007).

Conceptual Framework

As Lee (2017) argued, international students have been suffering from multiple types of racial based discrimination, which have been greatly under-studied. Several studies have investigated stress processing and its impacts among minority groups. Most researchers have focused on academic stress, cultural stress and the relationship between stress and mental health among CIS (Yan & Berliner, 2009; Zhang, 2012). Meyer (2003) developed a minority stress process model (Figure 2.3) to explain the minority stress experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or gender queer groups (LGBTQ). He suggested that the stress processing for LQBTQ groups is comprised of responses to stress from the general environment and the minority identity. Minority stresses could rise from prejudice or rejection, which may lead to mental health issues. Meanwhile, external support from both individual and community during the process may be positive or negative to the recipients' mental health.

This study focuses on the microaggressions experienced by CIS. CIS encounter various general academic and cultural challenges based on their identity as international students. In addition to the general stressors, CIS also face multiple types of microaggressions based on other identity categories such as race and ethnicity. A revised microaggression stress model (as illustrated in Figure 2.4) was developed as the conceptual framework for this study.
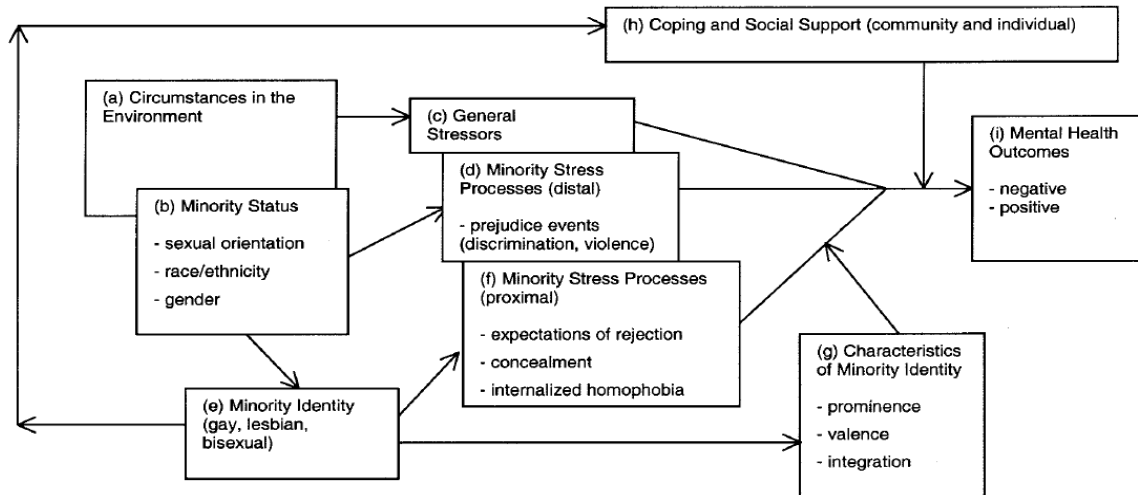
Figure 2.3 Minority Stress Processes (Meyer, 2003)

As illustrated in Figure 2.4, the left column of the diagram shows stresses experienced by CIS, including general challenges and minority difficulties. General challenges or stresses refer to the overall difficulties such as financial burdens and English language difficulties experienced by most international students during their stay in the foreign land of U.S. We propose that CIS may also encounter microaggression stressors ascribed to them for being as minorities. The accumulation of general difficulties and minority challenges may further lead to stresses, in this study we primarily focus on the minority stress caused by microaggression. The middle part of the diagram was adapted from the microaggression process model proposed by Sue and colleagues (2010b). While processing microaggression stressors, institutional social support from family, friends and institutions may help to relieve the severity of students' anxiety. Meanwhile, institutional social support may further influence CIS' satisfaction with their overall study experience in the U.S. and with their host institutions.
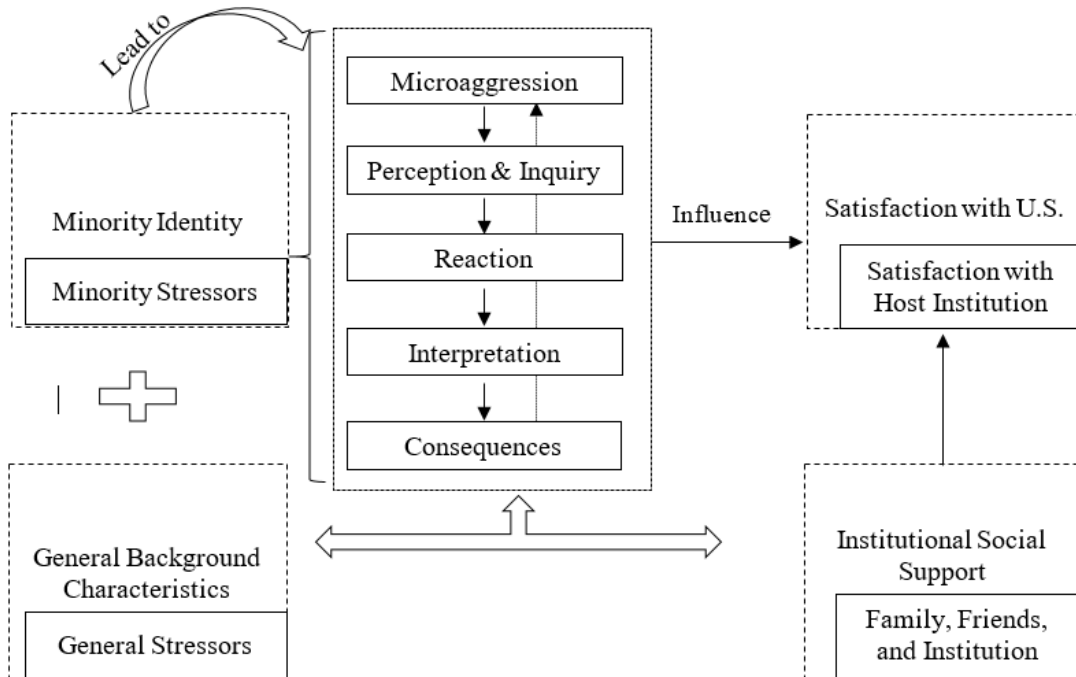
Figure 2.4 International Students Minority Microaggression Process Model

Summary of the Chapter

Previous studies on microaggression address the invisible, important, and prevalent issue for marginalized groups. The limitations of the reviewed literature are: First, very little is known about the unique microaggressions targeted at international students, and CIS in the U.S. The current study will enrich the existing literature by examining the salient types of microaggressions that CIS are confronted with, which will enhance the microaggression awareness of higher education administrators, domestic students, and international students. Academic satisfaction is crucial to sustain the increasing number of international students' enrolling in the U.S. (J. Lee, 2007). Perceived discrimination is significantly related to the education satisfaction of international students (Wadsworth et al., 2008).

Most of the studies thus far rely solely on qualitative methodologies, with the researcher as the sole individual involved in data analysis and transcription (Constantine &

Sue, 2007; Lau & Williams, 2010). However, the microaggression process involves multiple parties, from the moment when an incident of microaggression occurs to the potential long-term consequences of the microaggression stress.

Therefore, the current study has adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014) to achieve the following goals: First, to identify the frequency and stress scale of microaggressions experienced by CIS; second, to determine how CIS process microaggression stress; third, to identify the types of perceived social support CIS receive; fourth, to examine how microaggression stress and perceived social supports impact CIS' overall satisfaction with their study in the U.S. and with the host institution.

CHAPTER 3.   METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study is to investigate the frequency and stress scales of mciroaggression occurrences pertaining to CIS and how microaggressions may impact students' satisfaction with their host institutions. This study also identifies whether there are any group differences on the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions between student groups based on demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, academic level, length of stay in the U.S, and Grade Point Average (GPA). This study utilized a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand how CIS experience microaggressions. Data were collected from CIS at a public mid-western research institution using an online survey and face to face interviews, both of which were designed to examine microaggressions targeting CIS. This chapter provides detailed descriptions of the methodological approach utilized in the study. Research questions and research design, including rationale for using the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, are explained. Data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, and author positionality are also outlined in this chapter.

The procedural design diagram in Figure 3.1 provides a visual mapping of the research design of the current study in three ways: First, it presents how research questions match with the specific research goals; second, it illustrates the data collection procedure (including data source, participants, analysis methods and products of each step) in alignment with research goals and research questions; third, it shows how the quantitative methods are connected with the qualitative methods.
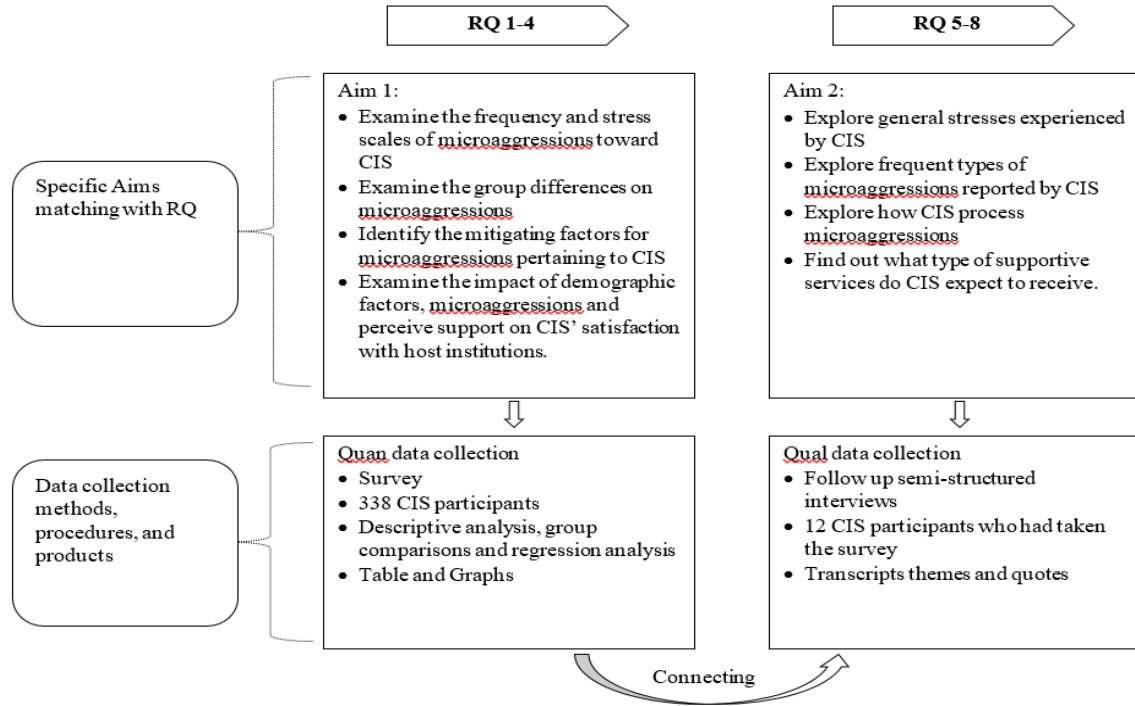
Figure 3.1 Procedural Design Diagram

Design Rationale

In order to provide comprehensive and sufficient understanding of microaggressions toward CIS, this study employed a mixed methods design, which enables researchers to incorporate the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approach and contributes more, as opposed to using a single method to understand the research problems (Creswell, 2014).

The rationale for using the current design is threefold. First, the researcher wanted to investigate the microaggression experience of CIS via multiple approaches, using quantitative and qualitative data, to offset the limitations of using only one medium in analyzing students' experiences. Second, the complex nature of microaggressions called for the follow up interviews to provide a deeper understanding of how CIS cope with microaggressions. Finally, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a more comprehensive understanding regarding the underlying reasons of how microaggressions may impact CIS' satisfaction with the U.S. and with the host institution.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to gain a better understanding of CIS' microaggression experience, an online survey was conducted based on the summary of previous literature. Follow-up interviews of survey respondents were conducted in order to deepen the understanding of the survey findings. The data collection within each type is presented respectively in the following sections.

Population, Sample and Research Setting

This study aims to understand the overall experience of microaggressions toward CIS. The current research was conducted at a large mid-western public research institution with a large number of international students. During the fall semester of 2017, 4,115 international students were enrolled at the institution where the present study was conducted (The Office of the Registrar, 2017), of which, nearly 1,600 were Chinese students, including both undergraduates and graduate stuents (Student Profile, 2017). To maintain the anonymity of the participants in this study, the institution is assigned the pseudonym of "Midwestern University" (MU here after). Therefore, the study population includes all the CIS (including students from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong) enrolled at MU.

All the CIS enrolled at MU were invited to participate in the study via email. The email list was provided by the Registrar Office at MU. The invitation emails, written in English and Chinese, were sent out to all of these CIS. The email explained the purpose, goals and procedures of the study and asked students of their willingness to participate. A hyperlink and QR code to the survey were also included in the email. The screening question for CIS asked if the student was 18 years of age or above and students who answered "yes" were directed to the rest of the survey. If the answer was "no", they were directed to a thank you page at the end of the survey. Considering that CIS may prefer to answer questions in

Chinese, the survey was drafted in both English and Chinese. After two reminder emails, a total of 396 students responded to the survey, and 338 valid surveys were collected. At the end of the survey, participants were asked about their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. Creswell (2007) recommends ten participants for a phenomenological study (p.231), and in this study, the researcher was able to recruit 12 participants. Therefore, the sample for the current study includes 338 CIS enrolled at MU.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

An online survey (see Appendix C & D) was developed based on an extensive review of previous literature. The author designed the questionnaire based on the findings of previous studies (Jung, Hecht & Wadworth, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2010; Torres-Harding, Andrade & Romero Diaz, 2012).2012; Wadsworth et al., 2008; Yan & Berliner, 2013; Zhang, 2012).

Survey Instrument

The survey consists of four sections: Background information (Q1-Q8, Q stands for question), microaggression scales, perceived social support, and satisfaction. In order to gain an overall picture of the background information for all participants, eight questions were created in the first section of the survey which included gender, age, academic level, length of stay in the U.S., academic field and GPA. The definitions and scales for demographic variables are presented in

Table 3.1. For example, academic level was assessed by asking participants about their year of study and their academic levels. The length of stay in the United States was assessed by directly asking the participants "How long have you been in the U.S.?" Participants responded by indicating the number of years that they have been in the U.S.

Table 3.1

Definitions of Demographic Variables

Survey Question No.	Variable Name	Scale
Q2	Age	Continuous
Q3	Gender	0 = Male, 1=Female, 3= Transgender, 4 = Gender queer, 5 = Other (please specify), 6= Prefer not to disclose
Q4	Origin	1=Mainland China, 2=Hong Kong, 3=Taiwan
Q5	Length of Stay	Continuous
Q6	Academic Field	1=Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2=Business, 3=Design, 4=Engineering, 5=Human Sciences, 6=Liberal Arts and Sciences, 7=Veterinary Medicine
Q7	Academic Level	1= Freshman, 2=Sophomore, 3=Junior, 4=Senior, 5=5th or 6th year senior, 6=Master graduate student, 7=Doctorate graduate Student, 8= Exchange student, 9=IEOP (Intensive English orientation program
Q8	GPA	1=A (3.67-4.0), 2=A- to B+ (3.33-3.67), 3=B (2.67-3.0), 4= B- to C+(2.33-2.67), 5= C (2.0-2.33), 6=Pass or Fail classes only, 7=Prefer not to answer

Section one of the survey includes seven demographic questions, including age, gender, origin, length of stay in the U.S., academic field, academic level and GPA. Gender was recoded according to applied categories of participants' responses. Gender identity was labeled as six categories in the survey (male, female, transgender, gender queer, and other please specify) besides the option of "do not want to disclose", frequency analysis of the responses showed that only two categories of male and female were selected. Hence, gender was reported as two categories for the data analysis part in chapter 4. The variable "origin" was derived from the survey question "where are you from".

The second section (Q9A and 9B) asks participants' frequency and stress levels of microaggressions respectively. This part includes 12 questions, which were revised based on

the Racial Microaggression Survey (RMAS) (Torres-Harding et al., 2012).). RMAS was

originally designed to study the racial microaggressions experienced by people of color

including African American, Latino, multiracial, Asian American, South Asian, and Middle

Eastern students. Items in RMAS were developed based on the following 11 themes

generated from the Sue, Bucceri and colleagues' (2007) and Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder's

(2008) studies about microaggressions among people of color: 1) "Alien in own land". For

example, treat an Asian American as a foreigner. 2) Assumption of intelligence. A typical

example of this is to question an African American's qualifications for a position over and

above what would be questioned for a Caucasion. 3) Colorblindness and denial of individual

racism" refers to the unwillingness to acknowledge race. 4) "Criminality or assumption of

criminal status" refers to the assumption that people of color are dangerous or criminal, based

on their racial status. 5) "Invalidation of interethnic differences" refers to the assumption that

people from the same racial group or background are the same. 6) "Exotized". This theme

was originally reported by Asian American women for being treated in line with sexual

stereotypes. 7) "Myth of meritocracy" refers to the assumption of treating others as being

"incompetent" or unqualified based on their racial status. 8) "Pathologizing cultural values

and communication styles". A typical example of this is the assumption that people of color

should all assimilate to the dominant white culture. 9) "Second-class citizen". This refers to

the assumption that people of color should be treated with a "lower status" merely due to

their racial background. 10) "Environmental invalidations", refers to the assumption that

people of color should not be included in visible or powerful roles due to their lack of

representation in a group. 11) "Invisibility", refers to being ignored because of one's racial

background. Six themes were generated from RMAS to assess the microaggression

experience and stress scales of people of color: "Invisibility, criminality, low-achieving, sexualization, not belonging and environmental invalidation" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Consistent with Sue and colleague's study about microaggressions on Asian Americans, "not belonging, criminality, and low-achieving" applied to the sub-group of Asian Americans in Torres-Harding and colleague's study.

In this study, we adopted the format of RMAS in measuring first the frequency of occurrence for each type of microaggressions for CIS, and the stress level provoked by each microaggression incidents for CIS. Twelve items of microaggression occurrences (see Table 3.2 were developed based on a review of previous studies about general and stereotype-based challenges and microaggressions confronted by international students and CIS (Cho, 2009; Chou, 2015; Hagedorn, Pei & Yan, 2016; Hanassab, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Sue et al., 2010; Zhang, 2010).

Q9A1-A12 asked participants how frequently they experience the listed microaggression incidents, and such frequency of experience were assessed from a five-point Likert scale (0= never, 1=rarely, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=always). Q9B1-B12 measures the stress provoked by each microaggression situation. Participants were asked to report the level of stress for each microaggression situation from a six-point Likert scale (0=Not applicable, 1=Not at all, 2=Low level, 3=Moderate level, 4=High level, 5= Very High level). Cronbach's alpha (also referred to as alpha) was utilized to test the reliability of the 12 items in Q9A and Q9B. Alpha measures the internal consistency for a group of items and an alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered as acceptable in social sciences (Urdan, 2010). The alpha value for the 12 items in Q9A is 0.868, suggesting that the items have a high consistency. The alpha value for the 12 items in Q9B is 0.905, indicating that the items are strongly consistent.

Table 3.2

Microaggression Variables and Scales in the Survey

Frequency Scales (Q9A)	Microaggressions	Stress Scales (Q9B)
0=Never	Other people act as if all the people of my race are alike.	0 = Not applicable
1=Rarely	Others suggest that people of my racial background get unfair benefits.	1= Not at all
2=Sometimes	Others assume that people of my racial background would succeed in life if they simply work harder.	2= Low level
3=often		3= Moderate level
4= always	I receive poorer treatment in restaurants and stores because of my race.	4= High level
	Sometimes I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.	5= Very high level
	I notice that there are few role models of my racial background on TV, in books and magazines.	
	I have been made to feel inferior in the classroom because I have an accent.	
	People think I am good at math because of my race.	
	I am ignored in group projects because of my race.	
	I feel that I am excluded in social gatherings because of my race.	
	Opportunities are denied to me because of my race.	
	I feel that my status in this society is low due to my race.	

The third section (Q10-Q12) asks participants the level of perceived social support from family, friends and their university. Eleven sub-questions modified from the Perceived Social Support (PSS) questionnaire (Zhang, 2010) of CIS were used to assess the perceived social support in this study. In Zhang's study, PSS questions were utilized to examine the relationship between acculturative stress, perceived social support and depression among CIS. Participants were asked to report the support that they receive from family, friends and their institutions on a five-point Likert scale (0=Strongly disagree, 1= Somewhat disagree, 2=Neither agree nor disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Strongly agree). The wordings of some items were rephrased based on an initial personal discussion with an administrator of the international students and scholars office at MU who has worked with CIS for over 10 years. For example, Q12_1 to Q12_3 ask participants about their level of agreement in the support received from the universities. The original item "I can talk about my problems with members of the international students organizations" from PSS was replaced with "I can talk about my problems with my academic advisor or major professor" in the current study. A reliability test for the 11 items indicates an alpha of 0.86, suggesting a high consistency between the items.

The fourth section asks students about their satisfaction with their overall study in the U.S. (Q13) and with their host institution (Q14). Satisfaction was assessed based on students' willingness to re-attend and recommend. Q13 asks students "If you could do it all over again, would you come to study in the U.S.?" Students who answered "No" were asked to provide text explanations about the reasons. Satisfaction with the host institution (Q14) was assessed based on directly asking students "Would you recommend MU to your family, friends, relatives or others in China?" The answer was based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=extremely

likely, 2=somewhat likely, 3=neither likely or nor unlikely, 4= somewhat unlikely, 5= very unlikely).

Since Chinese is the native language for all participants, the survey was provided both in Chinese and English versions. The first page of the survey is a digital copy of the consent form explaining the research process and asking about participants' willingness to take the survey. The first question of the survey serves as a screening question about age. Only students that were 18 and above were directed to the rest of the survey, while students under 18 were directed to a thank you page as the end of the survey.

Data Collection Procedure

Email lists of all enrolled CIS at MU were provided by the Registrars' Office after receiving IRB approval the Office of Institutional Research. An invitation email was sent to all of the CIS at MU to recruit participants. At the end of the survey, a question asks whether the participants would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

The online survey was built by using Qualtrics, an online questionnaire platform. Before sending out the survey to participants, eight CIS who have studied in the U.S. from 1 to 7 years were invited to pilot the questionnaire. The main purpose of the pilot study was to check the clarity, wording consistency, and order of the survey questions in both the English and Chinese versions.

1,598 CIS enrolled at MU were invited to participate in the research via email with a link to the online survey and consent elements (see Appendix C & D). Consent elements including the purpose of the study, the time needed for completing the survey, confidential and voluntary policies, and researchers' contact information were provided on the first page of the survey. Students were also informed that participation was completely voluntary. If they chose not to participate, they could either not click the survey link or click the "no"

option on the consent form page that leads to a thank you page at the end of the survey to exit

the survey website. Besides the initial email, two reminder emails were sent to the students in

order to increase the response rate after one week and two weeks of the first invitation.

Through Qualtrics, the researcher was able to send reminder emails only to those who had

not responded or completed the survey.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the survey was analyzed using descriptive, comparative, and

inferential statistical analyses in order to gain a better understanding about microaggressions

and microaggression stress experienced by CIS. To prepare for data analysis, all responses

were recorded and exported to SPSS from Qualtrics. Data from the English and Chinese

version were then merged as one file for analysis. Table 3.3 presents each quantitative

research question with the aligned statistical analysis methods. SPSS software (version 24)

was utilized to conduct the data analysis.

Research Question 1

Descriptive statistics were employed to gain an overall understanding of the

background characteristics of CIS. A descriptive report on the demographic characteristics

(including gender, age, length of stay in the U.S., GPA, academic level, and academic field),

microaggression frequency and stress levels, perceived social support and overall satisfaction

provide an overall picture of the samples. Frequency, means and standard deviation of the

microaggression occurrences and stress scales were also reported.

Research Question 2

The dependent variables for this research question refer to the microaggression sum-

score computed from the frequency and stress scales on 12 microaggression items.

Microaggression sum-score was calculated (the computation process is explained in chapter

4) in order to conduct comparative analysis by using *t*-tests and one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVAs) to check the group differences of microaggression frequency and stress scales based on demographic factors such as gender, age, GPA, academic level and length of stay in the U.S.

Independent samples t test is appropriate to use when the independent variable(s) have 2 categories, while One-way ANOVA is more appropriate to use when the independent variable(s) have more than two groups. Independent samples t tests were used to compare the microaggression score between males and females as well as between CIS with low and high GPAs. One -way ANOVA tests are conducted to test the mean differences in microaggressions between different student groups based on age, academic level and length of stay in the U.S.

According to Morgan and colleagues (2013), three major assumptions must be checked before conducting t test and ANOVA: 1) Random sampling; 2) equal variances on the dependent variable across groups (homogeneity); normal distribution. The sample used in this study comprises all the CIS who responded to the survey in Fall 2017 at MU. One student's response did not affect other students' responses; thus, the student population can be considered as representing CIS at other HEIs in the U.S. as well, especially institutions that are public and research focused. The assumption of homogeneity was checked using Levene's test.

Table 3.3

Quantitative Research Questions and Method of Analysis

Research Questions	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Method of Analysis
1) What types of microaggression are CIS experiencing most frequently? How stressful are the microaggressions pertaining to CIS?			Descriptive analysis
2) Are there any statistically significant differences in microaggression experiences and microaggression stress scales between groups based on factors such as gender, age, academic level, GPA and length of stay in the U.S.?	Demographic factors such as age, gender, length of stay, academic level and GPA	Microaggressions (Computed microaggression sum-score)	Comparative analysis (t-test, One-way ANOVA)
3) What factors mitigate the microaggression experience among CIS?	Demographic factors, perceived social support	Computed microaggression sum-score	Multiple regression
4) How does demographic factors, microaggressions, and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their host institutions and with their overall academic experience in the U.S.?	Demographic factors, computed microaggression sum-score, perceived social support	Satisfaction with host institution Satisfaction with U.S.	Multiple regression Logistic regression

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Research Question 3

The third research question asks about factors that mitigate microaggressions experienced by CIS. The computed microaggression sum-score is the dependent variable, which is a continuous variable. Multiple regression is appropriate to predict a dependent variable from a combination of several independent variables. Therefore, a multiple regression was conducted to assess the mitigating factors of microaggressions pertaining to CIS based on demographic factors and perceived social support as reported by the participants.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question involves two sub-questions: First, how do demographic factors, microaggressions and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with the host institution? The dependent variable here is the satisfaction with host institutions, this variable was derived from Q14 in the survey, "How likely would you recommend MU to other people (like your friends or relatives in China)?" Participants were asked to report their answers on a five-point Likert scale (1=extremely likely, 2=somewhat likely, 3=neither likely or nor unlikely, 4= somewhat unlikely, 5= very unlikely). The satisfaction variable was reverse coded for the regression analyses part. The dependent variable here is continuous; therefore, a multiple regression analysis was utilized.

Second, how do demographic factors, microaggressions and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their overall academic experience in the U.S.? The dependent variable here is the satisfaction with the U.S., which was derived from Q13 in the survey, "If you had to do it over again, would you come to study in the U.S.?" Participants were asked to select "Yes" or "No" based on their own experience. The dependent variable here is

dichotomous, thus logistic regression was conducted for the second sub-question. The satisfaction variable was reverse coded for the regression analyses part in order to better interpret the results.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The primary goal for the interviews is to provide an in-depth explanation regarding CIS' satisfaction with their overall study in the U.S. and with their host institutions. Research question 5 asks how CIS deal with microaggressions. Research question 6 asks about the types of support CIS expect to receive when dealing with microaggressions.

Interview Protocol

Interview questions (see Appendix E) were drafted based on the existing literature in the field and relied on peer reviews to test their face validity. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled on different days and in different places based on the interviewees' preferences. Informed consent forms (in both Chinese and English versions) were presented to the interviewees before each interview started via email, and in paper form before each interview began. All the participants could read the consent forms carefully and were made aware of their rights in the study before they signed it.

Validity in qualitative studies is used to provide evidence of whether the findings are accurate from the perspectives of the researchers, the participants, and the readers (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, two approaches were utilized to validate the interview protocol. First, an expert panel review was used. Two faculty members with extensive research experience and relevant knowledge of Chinese international student and a Chinese doctoral student who has studied in the U.S. for three years were invited to review the interview protocol. The interview protocol was revised based on their recommendations. Second, a pilot test was employed. The interview protocol was conducted before delivering it

to the participants. Two CIS (a doctoral student and an undergraduate student from different majors) participated in the pilot interview. They were invited via email, which included information regarding meeting times, location, and interview procedures. After the interview, they were asked to provide feedback in terms of the clarity and order of the questions. They were also encouraged to report any potential problems regarding the interview.

Data Collection Procedure

The last question of the survey asks about participants' willingness to take part in a follow-up interview. Those who answered "yes" were directed to a separated link where students were allowed to input their preferred method of contact. Separate links for the surveys and interviewee information were used to ensure the anonymity of the survey. Only students who provided contact information were contacted. Out of the 398 survey respondents, 14 answered yes, 13 provided contact information, and 12 face-to-face semi-structured individual interviews were conducted since one student could not participate due to schedule conflicts.

Before the interview, the researcher presented the informed consent document and provided opportunities for participants to ask questions regarding the research. At the beginning of the interview, participants were given opportunities to ask questions regarding the research and to decide whether or not to participate in the study. At the end of the interview, participants were also given opportunities to add any information that they wanted to share with the researcher.

The interview questions were semi-structured, which allowed the interview to progress naturally (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Probing questions were used as needed to collect in-depth data regarding students' experiences with microaggressions. Before the start of each interview, the researcher asked interviewees which language they preferred to use. The

researcher also told the interviewees that they could switch to either the language (either English or Chinese) if they felt more comfortable expressing their feelings. Seven interviews were conducted in English, and five were in Chinese. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. All of the interviews were first transcribed into the original interview language. The researcher transcribed the interviews and checked with the participants to ensure the truthfulness of the transcripts. Participants were invited to check the data recordings and interpretations in order to minimize the bias, as well as deepen the voice of the participants (Lau & Williams, 2010; Morrow, 2005).

Data Analysis

This phenomenological study aimed to understand the microaggressions from the perspectives of CIS who have experienced the microaggressions. The researcher started with open coding (Merriam, 2009) which enables the theory to emerge by itself. Following data analysis steps for phenomenological study proposed by Creswell (2013), the researcher first read through the transcriptions, took margin notes and initial codes, and then developed themes representing essential meaning of how participants experienced microaggressions. After the themes emerged, descriptions of the coding and supporting quotations were reported in the study. The translation was conducted after the above procedures were completed. For the Chinese transcriptions, only the quotations were translated to English by the researcher. The researcher has over 10 years of professional translation experience in China. Translated quotations were sent to participants to verify if the translations accurately captured what they intended to express. The translation was also reviewed by a native Chinese doctoral student who had studied in the U.S. for over seven years.

Researcher Positionality

The identities of researcher and participants has potential influences on the research process (Bourke, 2014). When I first came to the U.S. as a female CIS, I encountered multiple types of difficulties in the process of reshaping my identity as a foreign student. More emphasis on English presentation and academic writing dragged me backward from actively interacting with other domestic students due to the lack of confidence in English language and unfamiliarity of the communication styles. I hope findings from the study will shed light on the reduction of microaggressions for CIS, and further benefit the overall educational satisfaction for CIS. As the data collector and analyst, I keep aware that the data should represent participants' perspectives rather than my personal viewpoints.

Ethical Considerations

Given the fact that the current study involves human participants, the researcher obtained the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the site university in August 2017 before beginning the data collection process. For the online surveys, participants were directed to a digital version of the consent form with explanations of the research purpose, and procedure. Participants were allowed to skip any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. Each participant was randomly assigned an ID number before data analysis and the invitation for follow-up interviews was set up in a separate link to ensure that the email address of the participants, containing their personal information, was not connected to the survey responses. Interview respondents were assigned pseudonyms with alternative personal information during the data analysis.

Electronic copies of the audio files were stored on Box, a password protected secure online storage platform provided by MU. The researcher also developed a master list of

information regarding the participants, such as the pseudonyms, times, and locations of the interviews. Electronic copies of this information allowed the researcher to keep track of data.

Summary of the Chapter

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology were first presented, including a discussion of the purpose of the study, research questions, description of the research methodology, a description of the participants, and an explanation of the quantitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Chapter 3 concludes with researcher positionality and ethical considerations of the study.

CHAPTER 4.   QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the results of the surveys using tables and figures. First, results of the descriptive analyses of the demographic characteristics were presented in order to gain a general understanding of the background information of CIS studying in the U.S. The results of *t*-tests and ANOVAs were reported in order to explain whether there are any group differences in microaggression frequency and stress scales, based on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, GPA, length of stay and academic level. Third, logistic regression analysis provided findings on the impact of demographic factors and perceived social support on CIS' microaggression experience. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict the impact of demographic factors, microaggressions and perceived social support on CIS' satisfaction with their host institution.

Descriptive Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted for all the variables to gain an overall understanding of the background characteristics of the CIS who participated in the study. Demographic characteristics, frequency and stress scales of microaggressions, perceived social support, and satisfaction with overall study experience in the U.S. and with the host institution are presented in the following four sections with tables.

Demographic Characteristics

The names and scales of the demographic variables are presented in

Table 3.1 (chapter 3). Descriptive analyses of demographic variables are presented in Table 4.1 (Frequency) and Table 4.2 (Means and Standard Deviation).

Table 4.1

Frequency for Demographic Variables of Survey Participants (N=338)

Variable	CIS	
	N	%
Gender		
Male	182	53.8
Female	153	45.3
Prefer not to disclose	2	0.6
Missing (nonresponse)	1	0.3
Origin		
Mainland China	304	89.9
Hong Kong	5	1.5
Taiwan	12	3.6
Missing (nonresponse)	17	5
Length of Stay		
1 year (or less)	88	26
2 years	57	16.9
3 years	44	13
4 years	49	14.5
5 years	26	7.7
6 years	25	7.4
7 years	17	5
8 years	4	1.2
9 years	1	0.3
10 years or above	4	1.2
Missing (nonresponse)	23	6.8

Table 4.1 (continued)

Variable	CIS	
	n	%
Academic Field		
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	21	6.2
College of Business	43	12.7
College of Design	20	5.9
College of Engineering	121	35.8
College of Human Sciences	37	10.9
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	72	21.3
College of Veterinary Medicine	1	0.3
Other	8	2.4
Missing (nonresponse)	15	4.4
Academic Level		
Freshman	32	10.7
Sophomore	38	12.1
Junior	32	10.9
Senior	35	10.4
5th or 6th Year Senior	3	1.2
Master Graduate Student	56	17.5
Doctoral Graduate Student	115	33.7
Exchange student	3	0.9
Intensive English Orientation Program (IEOP)	9	2.7
Missing (nonresponse)	15	4.1
GPA		
A (3.67-4.0)	125	37
A- to B+ (3.33-3.67)	90	26.6
B (2.67-3.0)	63	18.6
B- to C+(2.33-2.67)	8	2.4
C(2.0-2.33)	3	0.9
Pass or Fail Grade Only	1	0.3
Prefer not to answer	33	9.8
Missing	15	4.4

Table 4.2

Mean and Standardized Deviation for Demographic Variables (N=312)

Variable	Mean	SD
Age	24.03	4.27
Gender (1=female)	0.45	0.50
Origin [a]	1.09	0.40
Length of Stay	3.21	2.10
Academic Field [b]	4.15	1.61
Academic Level [c]	4.97	2.30
GPA [d]	2.49	2.07

Note: [a]Scale: 1= Mainland China, 2 = Hong Kong, 3 = Taiwan

[b]Scale: 1= Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2=Business, 3=Design, 4=Engineering, 5=Human

Sciences, 6=Liberal Arts and Sciences, 7=Veterinary Medicine

[c]Scale: 1= 1= Freshman, 2=Sophomore, 3=Junior, 4=Senior, 5=5th or 6th year senior,

6=Master graduate student, 7=Doctorate graduate Student, 8= Exchange student, 9=IEOP

[d]Scale: 1=A (3.67-4.0), 2=A- to B+ (3.33-3.67), 3=B (2.67-3.0), 4= B- to C+(2.33-2.67), 5=

C (2.0-2.33), 6=Pass or Fail classes only, 7=Prefer not to answer

Age, Gender and Origin

Students surveyed were among the age range of between 18 and 45. The average age

for all participants was 24. Figure 4.1 illustrates the percentage of age for all the CIS

respondents in the survey. Slightly over half (50.9%) of the participants were between 18 and

23 years old and 43.8% were between 24 and 30 years old. Very few (4.7%) were between

31 and 45 years of age. As for the gender identity, slightly more male respondents (54.4%)

participated than female students (45.6 %). Almost all the participants (95%) came from

mainland China, 12 students from Taiwan and 3 students were from Hong Kong accounted

for the remaining 5% of the participants.
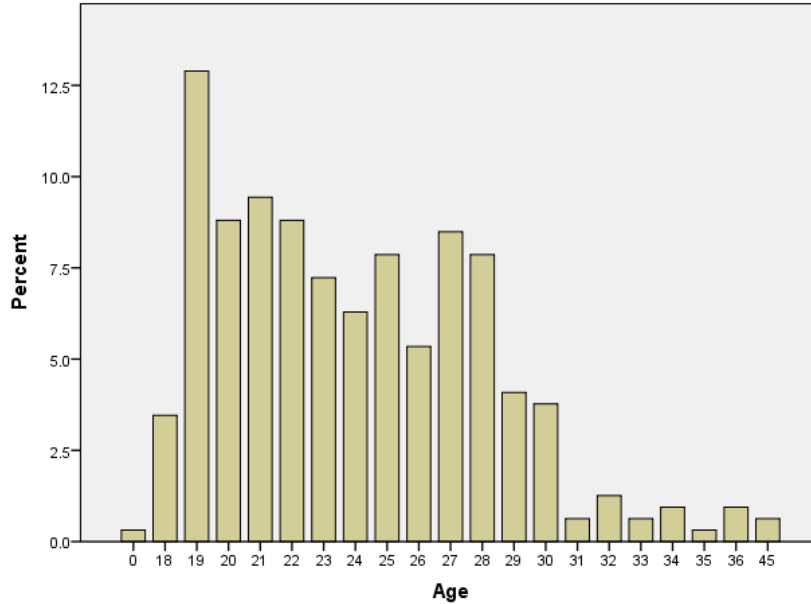
Figure 4.1 Age Distribution of Participants (N=318)

Length of Stay and Academic Level

Over half of the students (60%) have been in the U.S. for one to three years, among

which 26 % have been in the U.S. for one year or less. 34.6% of the students have stayed in

the U.S. for between four and seven years, while only 2.7% have been in the U.S. between

eight and ten years. Slightly over half of the students (50.6%) were graduate students, either

enrolled in Masters or Doctoral degree programs, and 45% of the students were

undergraduates, and only 3.6% were enrolled in IEOP and exchange programs. Since most of

the IEOP students and exchange students at MU were also undergraduate students, the ratio

between graduate students and undergraduate students in this study was almost equally

distributed.

Academic Field and GPA

Descriptive analysis revealed that the largest group of CIS were engineering majors,

representing 35.8% of the survey participants, followed by liberal arts and sciences majors,

which accounted for 21.3 % of the participants. 46 participants (12.7%) were studying in business fields. Veterinary medicine was the least studied field reported by the survey participants. Descriptive analyses of the self-reported GPAs indicated that CIS, on average, maintained high GPAs between B and A-. A large portion of CIS (66.6%) reported that their GPAs were between B+ and A. Very few (3.4%) students responded that their GPAs were below B-.

Summary of Demographic Characteristics

Descriptive analysis of age, gender, place of origin, length of stay in the U.S., academic field, academic level, and GPA revealed the following characteristics of the CIS who participated in the survey.

1. A majority of the CIS participants were around 24 years of age or younger, and very few were older than 30.

2. There was a slightly higher percentage (54%) of male CIS than female CIS (45%) who participated in the study. This corresponds with the gender ratio of CIS and all international students at MU. According to data provided by the MU registrar office, male students accounted for 63% and 65% among CIS and all international students respectively.

3. Most CIS who participated in the survey were from mainland China, with very few segments from Hong Kong and Taiwan. This is consistent with data provided by the MU registrar office. Among all the Chinese international students, only 13 were from Hong Kong, and 46 were from Taiwan.

4. A majority of the CIS had been in the U.S. for three or fewer years, and very few students had been in the U.S. for over 7 years.

5. Engineering, liberal arts and sciences, and business were the three most selected academic fields reported by CIS.

6. In regard to academic level, doctoral graduate students were the largest group of participants.

7. A majority of CIS held a high GPA.

Frequency and Stress Scale of Microaggression Occurrences

CIS may experience various types of microaggressions during their study in the U.S. Descriptive analysis was conducted in order to gain an overall picture of the frequency and stress scale of microaggressions experienced by CIS. All the 12 items used to assess the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions toward CIS were presented in Table 3.2 in chapter 3. Most of the items end with "because of my racial background." For example, item 8 was, "People think I am good at math because of my race."

Participants were asked to report the frequency for each microaggression situation that they have experienced on a 5-point Likert scale from "never" to "always" (0=never, 1= rarely, 2=sometimes, 3= often, 4=always). Selection from 2 to 4 indicates that the participants had at least sometimes experienced microaggression situations listed on the survey. In order to present the percentage of frequently experienced microaggressions targeting CIS, the author filtered out all the "0" and "1" responses, and summarized the frequency of experience for each microaggression occurrence by adding up responses between "sometimes", "often" and "always".

Microaggression stress was assessed on a six-point Likert scale (0= not applicable, 1=not at all, 2=low level, 3= moderate level, 4= high level, 5=very high level) based on CIS' responses to the extent of how bothersome or stressful each microaggression might have been. Students who had never experienced microaggressions could select "0" for, "not

applicable." After frequency analysis of the 12 microaggression situations, the author filtered the "not applicable" and "not at all" responses, and summarized the percentage of stress scales for each microaggression item based on students' responses. Table 4.3 presents the overall percentage of frequently experienced and stressful microaggression occurrences, as well as the mean, standard deviation, percentage and ranking of microaggression frequency and stress scales.

The left part of the table indicates how frequently a student experienced each type of microaggression occurrence, whereas the right part of the table reveals how stressful (or bothersome) each type of microaggressions was for CIS. The means of microaggression occurrence and stress were ranked in descending order. Such ranking offers a visual representation of the most frequent and stressful microaggressions targeting CIS. The most frequently experienced item was "people think I am good at math because of my race." Slightly over half of the CIS (67.3%) reported that they had been sometimes, often or always assumed to "be good at math for being a Chinese." However, the stress level from the assumption of being good at math was much lower ranked (No.11 out of the 12 items) with a mean of 1.59, indicating a stress level of low or none reported by 47.4% of the participants. The least frequently experienced (25.1%) microaggression situation reported by CIS participants was "getting unfair benefits." The mean for "get unfair benefits" (0.93) indicates that most CIS who participated in the survey had rarely been treated unfairly due to their Chinese racial background. On the contrary, the stress level caused by "get unfair benefits" was ranked much higher (No. 5 out of the 12 items) with a mean of 1.91, indicating that CIS respondents, on average, reported low levels of stress from microaggression of being treated unfairly.

"Being denied of opportunities" was the most stressful type of microaggression reported by CIS participants, the mean of which is 2.53, indicating an average stress level between low and moderate. The ranking for "being denied of opportunities was No. 4 among the 12 items, the mean value of 1.88 indicates that CIS, on average, have sometimes suffered from unfair opportunities. The second most stressful microaggression reported by CIS was, "feeling inferior because of accent" with a mean of 2.12, representing a low to moderate stress level. The ranking in frequency for "feeling inferior because of accent" was also high as No. 5, indicating that CIS on average have experienced accent-related microaggressions, which have also led to low stress to over half of the CIS. The other two highly ranked microaggressions in stress levels are related to "being excluded from social activities" and "being ignored in group work" as reported by CIS participants. As shown in Table 4.3, the frequency of occurrence from being excluded or ignored were much lower ranked.

Computed Microaggression Score

Computed microaggression scores were calculated in order to gain a better understanding of both the frequency and stress levels of each microaggression situation as reported by CIS participants. First, a set of 12 weighted microaggression sub-scores for each respondent was computed by multiplying the reported frequency of the occurrence of the micoraggression by the reported stress level. In regards to the frequency of occurrence, a selection of "never" was given a weight of "0", and "rarely" was given a weight of "1", "sometimes" was given a weight of "2", "always" was given a weight of "3".

Table 4.3

Summary of Central Tendency for Microaggression Frequency and Stress (N=220)

Frequency reported by CIS			Microaggression Occurrences	Stress reported by CIS		
Mean (SD)	%	Ranking		Mean (SD)	%	Ranking
2.19 (1.34)	67.3	1	Good at math.	1.59 (1.21)	47.4	11
2.13 (1.21)	67.2	2	Few Chinese role models on TV, in books and magazines.	1.76 (1.10)	56.2	8
1.98 (1.20)	65.8	3	All Chinese are alike.	1.81 (1.11)	58.5	7
1.88 (1.30)	61.8	4	Denied of opportunities.	2.53 (1.59)	71.8	1
1.79 (1.32)	56.8	5	Feel inferior in class because of accent.	2.12 (1.46)	64.8	2
1.74 (1.27)	56.3	6	Be the only Chinese in class or workplace.	1.61 (1.25)	47.2	10
1.50 (1.16)	48	7	Excluded from social gatherings.	2.03 (1.38)	62.7	3
1.47 (1.20)	43.6	8	Ignored in group projects.	2.01 (1.46)	59	4
1.40 (1.23)	40.6	9	Succeed in life if simply work harder.	1.57 (1.31)	45.1	12
1.11 (1.11)	35.8	10	Low social status.	1.86 (1.59)	53.7	6
1.00 (1.02)	26.5	11	Poor treatment in restaurants and stores.	1.77 (1.45)	51.9	9
0.93 (0.96)	25.1	12	Get unfair benefits.	1.91 (1.59)	51.5	5

Second, the final computed microaggression sum-score was calculated by adding up the 12 weighted microaggression sub-scores. The final computed microagggression sum-score was used for comparative and regression analyses in response to research question 3, 4 and 5. As presented in Table 4.4, the average computed microaggression sub-score is 45.59.

Table 4.4
Descriptive Analysis of Computed Microaggression Sum-Score (N =232)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
Computed Microaggression Sum-Score	0	183	45.59 (36.72)	1.038	1.009

Summary of Frequency and Stress Scales of Microaggressions

Descriptive analyses revealed that the top three most frequently experienced microaggression items were: "Assumption of being good at math for being Chinese", "having few Chinese role models on TV, books and magazines" and "the assumption that all Chinese are alike." However, all of these three microaggression items were reported to have low stress levels or below, on average. The most stressful microaggression item reported by CIS in the survey was, "being denied of opportunities," which was also frequently experienced by CIS.

Perceived Social Support

Perceived social support was assessed based on 11 questions from three categories in the survey: Family support, friend support and institution support. Students were asked to report their perceived level of support from a five-point Likert scales in which 1 refers to "strongly disagree" and 5 refers to "strongly agree." The means and standard deviations for the social support questions are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Mean and Standard Deviation for Perceived Social Support (N = 230)

Variables	Mean (SD)
Family Support	
My family really tries to help me.	4.58 (0.78)
I can get the emotional help and support from my family.	4.40 (0.99)
I can talk about my problems with my family.	4.06 (1.25)
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	3.87 (1.17)
Friend Support	
I can talk about my problems with friends.	4.26 (0.91)
My friends really try to help me.	4.23 (0.86)
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	4.18 (0.94)
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	3.99 (1.02)
Institution Support	
I can talk about my problems with my academic advisor or major professor.	3.72 (1.12)
I trust university will offer help when I need it.	3.55 (1.13)
International students and scholars office on campus is available for help.	3.40 (1.13)

Overall, participants indicated that they received the strongest level of support from family, followed by friends, and institutions. A majority of the students (87%) expressed that their "families have always tried to help them," while 62% agreed that their "families were willing to help them make decisions in life and study." Slightly over half (55 %) of the participants agreed that they "could openly talk with friends about their problems." When asked about institutional support, 42% of the participants indicated that they "could discuss problems with their academic advisors and major professors". The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) was reported with the lowest level of support by CIS participants, with only 33% "feeling that they could seek help from the ISSO." Among all the CIS respondents, less than half (38.5%) believed that "the university would provide supportive assistance to them," indicating that more institutional supports are needed.

Satisfaction with Host Institutions

As shown in Figure 4.2, among all the CIS respondents, a majority (87.7%) of the participants indicated their willingness to "come back to the U.S." if they had to make the choice again. A small portion12.3% of the participants expressed their concerns about the increased tuition, academic stress, depression and loneliness, safety issues, and missing opportunities in China. Overall, CIS who participated in the survey were satisfied with their educational journey in the U.S.
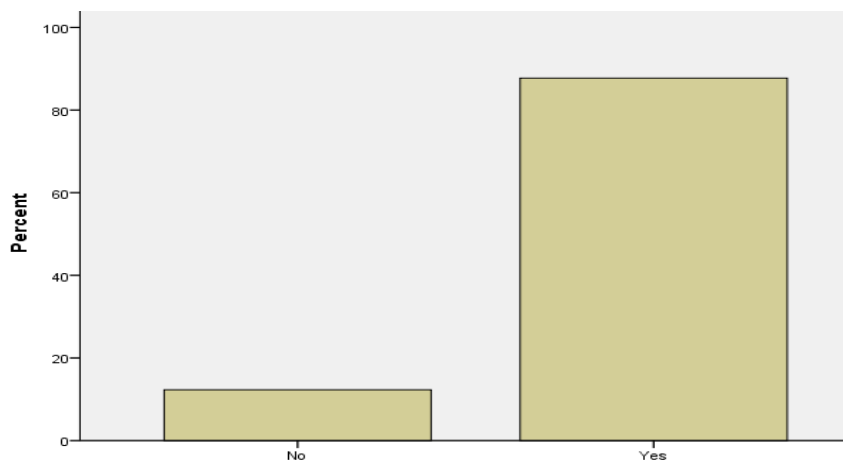
Figure 4.2 Satisfaction with Overall Study in the U.S.
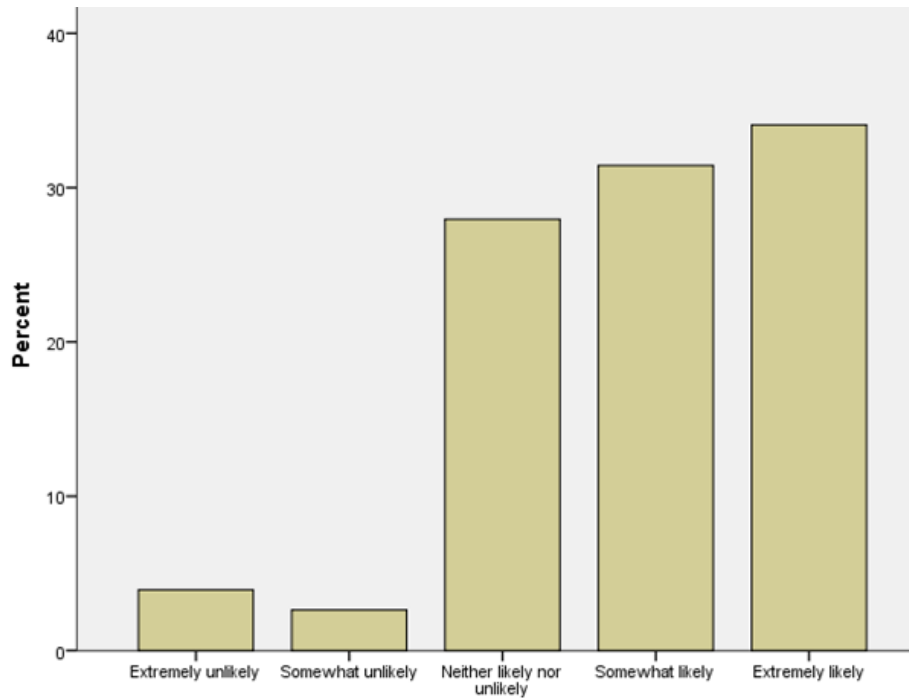
Figure 4.3 Satisfaction with Host Institutions

Satisfaction with host institutions is based on the question pertaining to students'

willingness to recommend MU to friends, relatives or others in China on a 5-point Likert

scale. Figure 4.3 displays the satisfaction level with host institutions based on the frequency

reported by CIS participants. More than half (65.5%) of the participants indicated that they

would recommend MU to others.

<center>**Comparative Analyses**</center>

The second research question asks whether or not there are statistically significant

differences in the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions between CIS groups based

on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, academic level, GPA and length of stay

in the U.S. The computed microaggression sum-score of frequency and stress was utilized as

a dependent variable in these comparisons because it provides an overall rating of both the

frequency and the stress levels that microaggressions may cause to CIS. Five independent

variables were of interest for these comparisons based on descriptive results from research question one and previous literature: Age, gender, academic level, length of stay and GPA.

The first step for comparison was to recode and define the comparing groups. Gender was recoded into two categories of males and females since no other categories were selected by the respondents. Age was recoded to three categories (1 = 18 to 21 years old, 2 = 22 to 25 years old, 3 = 26 or above) based on the average age of undergraduate and graduate students. In China, students may begin school at a minimum age of 6.5, thus most freshmen students are about 18 to 19 years old. Students normally begin their Master's degree programs as early as they are 22. As for the academic level variable, freshmen and sophomores were recoded as group 1 (lower level undergraduate), while juniors, seniors and 5th or 6th year seniors were recoded as group 2 (higher level undergraduate), master's graduate students were recoded as group 3 and doctoral graduate students were recoded as group 4. IEOP and exchange students were filtered since students from those two programs could be either undergraduates or graduate students. GPAs were recoded into two categories, in which average grades of B+ to A indicate high GPAs, while B and below were labeled as low GPAs, "pass and fail" and "prefer not to answer" were filtered out for comparison. The criteria for dividing high GPA from low GPA was based on CIS' responses to the survey. As indicated by the descriptive analyses results, CIS participants reported an average GPA of B+. Additionally, all international students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5, which is approximately a B- letter grade. Therefore, the comparative analyses were conducted between the following groups: 1) Gender: Males and females, 2) age: 18-21, 22-25, 26 or above; 3) academic levels: Freshman or sophomore, junior or senior, master's student,

doctoral student; 4) length of stay: 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years or longer; 5) GPA: Low

GPAs (B or lower) and high GPAs (B+ to A).

Independent sample *t* tests were conducted to compare male and female students on

the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions. Summary of *t* test results based on

gender and GPA were reported in Table 4.6 and **Error! Reference source not found.**

respectively. As shown in Table 4.6 male students did not differ from female students on the

microaggression sum-scores. Students with low GPAs did not have significant differences

from those with high GPAs regarding the frequency and stress scales of microaggressions

($p > 0.05$).

Table 4.6
*Summary of t test Results Comparing Microaggression Frequency and Stress between Male
and Female Students (N = 122 males and 109 females)*

Variable	Mean	SD	*T*	df	*p*
Microaggression Sum-Score			-0.45	225.30	0.65
Males	44.75	36.48			
Females	46.95	37.03			

Table 4.7
*Summary of t test Results Comparing Microaggression Frequency and Stress between Low
GPA and High GPA Students (N= 57 low GPAs and 149 high GPAs)*

Variable	Mean	SD	*T*	df	*p*
Microaggression Sum-score			0.126	195	0.9
Low GPA	3.528	4.509			
High GPA	3.438	4.476			

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the mean microaggression frequency

and stress between CIS groups based on age, academic level and length of stay in the U.S.

Summary of one-way ANOVA analyses were displayed from Table 4.8 to Table 4.10.

Comparisons on the microaggressions between three age groups were not significant.

Table 4.8
ANOVA Results Comparing Microaggression between Different Age Groups (N=221)

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	*p*
Microaggression Sum-score					
Between Groups	266.06	2	133.03	0.099	0.906
Within Groups	293445.25	218	1346.08		
Total	293711.31	220			

Results from the one-way ANOVA comparing microaggressions between four groups of academic levels are presented in Table 4.9. No statistically significant differences were found between students who were enrolled as freshmen or sophomore, junior, senior and graduate students.

Table 4.9
ANOVA Results Comparing Microaggression between Different Academic Level Groups (N=231)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Microaggression Sum-score					
Between Groups	2245.25	3	748.42	0.553	0.647
Within Groups	307220.78	227	1353.40		
Total	309466.04	230			

Table 4.10
*ANOVA Results Comparing Microaggressions between Student Groups with Different
Length of Stay in the U.S.*
(N=231)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Microaggression Sum-score					
Between Groups	4584.71	2	2292.36	1.71	0.183
Within Groups	306969.2	229	1340.48		
Total	311553.91	231			

ANOVA results comparing microaggressions between students who had stayed in the

U.S. for 1 year, 2 and 3 years, and more than 3 years are presented in Table 4.10. No

statistical significant differences were found among the three groups on microaggressions.

Regression Analyses

Research question 3 asks the mitigating factors for microaggressions toward CIS.

The computed sum-score for microaggressions was used as the dependent variable for

research question 3. A multiple linear regression was conducted to investigate the best

prediction of CIS' microaggression. The combination of variables to predict students'

satisfaction with host institutions from demographic factors and perceived social support was

statistically significant, F (8, 183) = 4.025, p <0.001. The Beta coefficients are presented in

Table 4.11. Note that institutional support significantly predicts students' satisfaction level

when all variables are included. The R^2 value was 0.15, indicating that 15% of the variance

in microaggressions can be predicted from the combination of the independent variables. A

summary of the regression model is presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11
Multiple Regression Results Predicting Microaggression (N = 192)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β	*t*	*p*
Demographics					
Academic level	-1.410	2.881	-0.045	-0.489	0.625
Age	0.895	0.699	0.114	1.28	0.202
GPA	-5.333	3.198	-0.136	-1.668	0.097
Gender	1.768	5.294	0.024	0.334	0.739
Length of stay	1.275	3.568	0.027	0.357	0.721
Perceived social support					
Family support	-0.823	3.584	-0.018	-0.229	0.819
Friends support	-5.729	4.055	-0.124	-1.413	0.159
Institution support	-10.803	3.132	-0.279**	-3.449	0.001
Constant	120.675***	25.14		4.8	0.000

Note: $R^2 = 0.15$, $F(8, 183) = 4.025$, $p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

As presented in Chapter 3, research question 4 involves two sub-questions. RQ4_1 asks, "how do demographic factors, microaggression stress and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their host institution?" The dependent variable for RQ4_1 was derived from Q14 of the survey on a 5-point Likert scale. In survey Q14, CIS were asked "how likely would you recommend MU to other people, like your friends or relatives in China?" A multiple linear regression was conducted to investigate the best prediction of CIS' satisfaction level with host institutions. The computed microaggression sum score was used in the regression analysis. The Beta coefficients are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Multiple Regression Analysis Summary Predicting Satisfaction Level with Host Institutions (N=188)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β	*t*	*p*
Demographics					
Academic level	0.024	0.081	0.028	0.301	0.764
Age	0.071	0.081	0.29**	3.126	0.002
GPA	-0.109	0.023	-0.098	-1.265	0.208
Gender	0.309	0.086	0.148*	2.185	0.03
Length of stay	-0.248	0.141	-0.186*	-2.567	0.011
Perceived social support					
Family support	-0.307	0.097	-0.24**	-3.225	0.002
Friends support	0.165	0.095	0.126	1.521	0.13
Institution support	0.361	0.109	0.326***	4.159	0.000
Microaggressions					
Microaggression sum score	-0.03	0.087	-0.111	-1.588	0.114
Constant	2.18**	0.736			

Note: $R^2 = 0.27$; $F (9, 178) = 7.30$, $p < 0.001$. *p< 0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

The combination of variables to predict students' satisfaction with host institutions from demographic factors, perceived social support and microaggression score was statistically significant, F (9, 178) = 7.30, p <0.001. Note that age, gender, length of stay, family support and institutional support significantly predict students' satisfaction level when all variables are included. The R^2 value was 0.27, indicating that 27% of the variance in CIS' satisfaction with host institutions can be predicted from the combination of the independent variables.

The second sub-question RQ 4_2 is, "how do demographic factors, microaggression stress and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their overall stay in the U.S?" This question aimed to identify the predictability of demographic factors, perceived social support and microaggressions on CIS' satisfaction with their overall academic life in the U.S, which was evaluated based on Q13 in the survey. Q13 asked CIS participants "if you had to do it over again, would you come to study in the U.S.?" Logistic regression analysis is appropriate to use because the dependent variable is dichotomous (Urdan, 2010). The satisfaction variable was reverse coded (the new scales are: 0 = No, 1= Yes) before logistic regression analysis. Three blocks were entered for regression analysis. Block one consists of demographic factors (age, gender, GPA, length of stay in the U.S. and academic level), block two consists of three types of social support (family support, friend support and institutional support) and block three consists of computed microaggression sum- score.

Table 4.13 presents the results from the logistic regression analysis. The overall logistic regression model with the perceived social support constructs and demographic variables is statistically significant in predicting whether the students report being satisfied with their study in the U.S., [X^2 = 9.398 at p < .05]. Institutional support statistically predicts CIS' satisfaction level with their overall academic life in the U.S. (-2 Log likelihood = 106.253). The model correctly classified 90.8 % of the respondents that were satisfied with the overall study in the U.S.

Table 4.13

Logistic Regression Results Predicting CIS' Satisfaction with U.S. Study

Variable	Odds Ratio			95% CI	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model3	LL	UL
Demographics (block1)					
Age	0.911	0.902	0.907	[0.802, 1.034]	
Gender	0.455	0.410	0.423	[0.157, 1.317]	
GPA	0.711	0.871	0.847	[0.366, 1.384]	
Length of stay	0.960	1.055	1.052	[0.761, 1.213]	
Academic level	2.622	1.918	1.841	[0.683, 10.06]	
Perceived social support (block 2)					
Family support		1.102	1.078	[0.590, 2.058]	
Friend support		0.759	0.743	[0.371, 1.554]	
Institution support		2.621*	2.509*	[1.378, 4.986]	
Microaggressions (block 3)					
Microaggression score			0.996	[0.979, 1.002]	
Nagelkerke *R* Square	0.096	0.191	0.194		

*p<.05

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented results from quantitative data analyses. Descriptive analysis of the survey provides a clear picture of CIS regarding their demographic information, microaggression experience, stress scales, and perceive social support from family, friends and their institution. This chapter also presented comparisons of microaggression experience and stress scales between different student groups based on demographic characteristics. The last part of this chapter presented the results from regression analyses on how demographic

factors, microaggressions, and perceived institutional social support may impact CIS'

satisfaction with the host institution and with their overall study experience in the U.S.

CHAPTER 5.   QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Overview

Findings from the survey of this study provide a general picture of the frequent incidences of microaggressions experienced by CIS. In response to research question 5 to question 8, twelve follow-up interviews were conducted to provide more in-depth analysis of CIS' microaggression experiences. The interviews allowed CIS participants to take their time and reflect on previous experiences and their perceptions of the microaggressions. Hence, the interview delves deeper into the salient types of microaggressions experienced by CIS by utilizing the microaggression taxonomy proposed by Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues (2007). Further, the interviews focused on how CIS process microaggressions and the stress caused by microaggressions. In addition, the qualitative interviews also identified expectations of support from both the institution and peer students. The findings were based on data collected from 12 individual interviews.

Quantitative analysis derived from research question two indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between female and male students, undergraduate and graduate students, and students who have high and low GPAs. Students who have been in the U.S. between one year, two years and three or more years did not show significant difference in the microaggression frequency and stress scales. Thus, when selecting the samples for the interviews, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, academic level, and GPA were not taken into consideration.

Interview Participants Profile

As shown in Table 5.1, over half of the interviewees were graduate students and this is consistent with the survey participants' academic level: In the survey, 30% were doctoral

students, and half were graduate students. Participants have all been at host institution

anywhere from one semester to nine years. Each individual was randomly assigned a

pseudonym at the beginning of the interview in order to protect participants' privacy

(Spradley, 2016).

Table 5.1
Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Major	Academic level	Length of stay
Kai	Male	Education	Doctoral student	3 years
Ming	Male	Industrial Engineering	Junior	4 years
Dai	Female	Psychology	Doctoral student	7 years
Ann	Female	Education	Master student	2 years
Lee	Male	Kinesiology	Doctoral student	7 years
Rain	Male	Material Engineering	Doctoral student	8 years
Dong	Male	Hospitality	Doctoral student	9 years
Xin	Female	Statistics	Doctoral student	3 years
Baoyu	Female	Apparel Design	Doctoral student	1 semester
Yang	Male	Computer Science	Sophomore	1 year
Ellen	Female	Electrical Engineering	Master student	2 years
Yu	Female	Business	Senior	4 years

Interview Questions

In the survey, the 12 microaggression items were related to both on- and off- campus experiences. One example of an off-campus item was being treated poorly at restaurants and stores. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked about their preferred language and they were also informed that they could switch between Chinese and English during the interview process. Five interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, and the remaining were conducted in English. Participants were also given opportunities to ask questions about the research topic before the interview began.

The interview protocol consisted of five sections: The first section was a brief introduction of the participants (including major, length of stay in the U.S.), and their general experience in the community. For example: "How is your overall experience in the community?" This was followed by questions regarding general and specific microaggression experience (if any) based on participants' responses in the second section. An example question was: "Have you experienced any type of microaggressions on campus?" The third section asked participants to identify some specific examples of how they deal with the microaggression incidents and whether their way of dealing with microaggressions related experience had changed over time. For example, "How do you feel about that?" The fourth section asked about their overall satisfaction with and suggestions to the institution and other peer students. In addition to the 12 microaggression items listed on the survey, students also expressed other explicit forms of microaggressions, such as being targeted as an inferior member in a group project due to their Chinese accents.

General Stress of Chinese International Students

Research question 5 asks, "what kinds of general stress is experienced by CIS?" As international students, CIS may encounter various types of general stress pertaining to

international students during their stay in the U.S., no matter where they are; on or off-campus. In addition, CIS also experience the stress of simply being Chinese in a foreign land. Participants of the interview expressed three types of major difficulties that they have encountered: Different classroom environment, language barriers, and time management.

Different Classroom Environment

When CIS attended the first class of their first semesters, the most surprising thing for them was how the teaching and learning styles differed from what they were accustomed to. In China, a typical college class consists of the professor giving lectures with separate time slots assigned for discussions and questions. Whereas in most American classes, students are expected to participate in extensive group discussions throughout the class (Wong, 2004). Min, a junior in engineering indicated:

“Challenges are a lot like homework and course work. The teaching style of the teachers here are very different from the teaching style in China. In China, we try to work on solving the problem, but here it is more focused on hands-on experience and group work. The higher education system works differently, and that is really a big challenge.”

Meanwhile, different learning styles of peers may also be challenging for some CIS. Xin, a graduate student from statistics mentioned that in a psychology class where she was the only Chinese student, she felt very frustrated since, “there were always students interrupting the professor’s lecture with basic questions which they could ask during the break or after class” (quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

On the other hand, when CIS become more accustomed to the new teaching styles, such challenges could be turned into positive drives to help students better adapt to higher level learning processes. For example, Baoyu was a first semester graduate student at MU,

but she had her first degree from another Midwestern university. For her the transition to MU was much less stressful. As she mentioned,

> "Kind of familiar from my previous institution, which is also a college town. So I catch up with the culture on the campus very quickly, and the department, the classes, and the set-up in the department are also very similar."

Language Barriers

Although CIS come to the U.S. with a certain level of English proficiency, as required by the admissions department, English presentation and academic writing are among the most frequently reported challenges for CIS (Hagedorn, Pei, & Yan, 2016, Yan & Berliner, 2009; Zhang, 2010). When reflecting on the challenges they have encountered, all 12 students interviewed expressed language difficulty, mostly at an earlier stage of their academic journey in the U.S. For example, Min indicated，

> "Language is a big challenge for me, especially when I go out with the natives and sometimes I have a hard time to get their jokes. They look different from us, and my English was not as good. I was afraid they may misunderstand me. So, I was nervous when interacting with them."

The language barrier may hinder some CIS from interacting with their domestic peer students or international students from English-speaking countries. Rain, a male student who had studied at MU for over 7 years, expressed that he prefers to interact more with peer Chinese students or other Asian international students.

> "Sometimes, I need to change the way how I express my idea, otherwise they may misunderstand me. So, I tend to group with Asian students more. We really have similar cultural background, views and ideas toward some questions."

Time Management

Balancing life, study, and work is another major challenge for CIS. Some students, such as the graduate participants in this study, usually work on research assistantship or teaching assistantship jobs. Since most classes involve multiple written assignments, in addition to extensive reading lists, students indicated that they have to spend much longer periods of time studying, which makes it even more difficult for them to balance studying and life.

> "It is also hard to explain some of my ideas or thoughts to them. It takes me way longer. Also like reading books takes way longer. The only thing I hope I can improve is to have more time to balance my life better. In the first two weeks, I feel a little bit hard to organize. Because when I was teaching, I spent long time preparing, because my language is it not that perfect, I was afraid my student cannot really understand what I am talking about. I kind of feeling afraid that they might complain to our chair and my advisor. So, the first two weeks I felt a little bit of depressed or just over struggling to manage my time."

Due to English language difficulties, most CIS have to spend longer time in preparing the class reading and completing the written assignment. Half participants mentioned that they had less than six hours of sleep on average. Three graduate participants complained that they had to stay up at least two days during finals week.

Microaggressions against Chinese International Students

Research question 6 asks, "what are the microaggressions frequently reported by CIS?" Participants in the interview were asked to reflect on various on- and off-campus experiences that made them feel uncomfortable based on their identity as CIS. Aligned with the most frequently experienced microaggressions from the survey, nine types of

microaggressions emerged from the interviews. In the following section, each theme is presented with quotes from the interview participants.

Assumption of Intelligence: "*They all look at me for math questions.*"

More than half of the interviewees mentioned that they had been automatically counted on or assigned as the "math person" in class, especially for courses where there were very few Chinese students. For example, Rain took a marketing class. He said,

"There was a group project about consumer perception, we had three American students and I am the only international student…I'm not sure but they usually rely on me on those analysis part, like statistics. I guess probably they think, I'm good at those data analyses."

Lee also stated similar experiences pertaining to the assumption that Chinese students are good at math and coding, "When the professor asked any questions, if no one knows it, then everyone was looking at me Lee, grab it! Or maybe Lee just get it. I was just like I can try my best, but there's no guarantee." The high expectation of math related problems may breed more pressure to CIS like Lee, especially for CIS who are actually weak in math problems.

Yang, a sophomore in computer science who had been in the U.S. for one year mentioned a similar class experience. He was assigned to a group with two other American students, one from hospitality management and another one from economics, who did not feel as strong in coding. Hence, for each assignment, their strategy was,

"They would just try it first, well looks like it is too hard for everyone to do it. Then they would ask me, Yang, can you do it? And I tried it and if I could do it, they would say 'all right we together can do it'. If I cannot do it, they would say 'let's talk to the professor', or something like that."

As indicated from the above quotations from the participants, such assumption of all Chinese students should achieve high in math and statistics related questions are relatively prevalent among all CIS. Expectations of advanced grades in the math related course may cause stress to CIS who are actually struggling in these subjects at meantime.

Lack of Trust from Professors: "*This is not your writing.*"

The participants expressed some frustrating experiences in the lack of trust that they received from professors. Baoyu shared that one of her professors required her to go to the writing center, and have her assignments reviewed for grammar mistakes. Her initial thought was that the professor might have asked every student to have his/ her assignment reviewed by the writing center first. She later realized that it was only her, and she felt very unconfident in herself. But her frustration was doubled after she received additional comments from her professors:

> "I went to the writing center and then revised hard by myself, I did all I could to improve my paper. But she asked, 'did someone write it for you?' She did not believe that I wrote myself. It was so painful for me since I had put so much effort on it. Some students expressed their concerns that the instructors suspect they would cheat".

Min was confused by an experience he had with a Malaysian Teaching Assistant (TA). On exam day, he initially sat with one of his Japanese friends who did not speak Chinese. But Min was later asked to switch seats with another student by the TA,

> "That was a pretty full room so everybody sits next to each other. When the exam began, the TA walked to my seat and asked me to move, what I would believe he's thinking we are going to cheat. While we sat together simply because we knew each other."

When CIS come to the U.S., they hope to be treated with trust from the professors. The traditional Confucius culture in China has shaped the perception for CIS to listen to the professors with less inquiries. Accordingly, any questioning of the authority or correctness may be considered as inappropriate in the dominant Chinese society. The higher power position of the professor over students may also lead to hesitation of the CIS to seek for solution on occasions when they encounter micraggressions from the lack of trust from professors.

Disrespect from Students: "*They do not care about me.*"

Most graduate students also work as TAs to assist instructors in teaching lower level courses, developing teaching materials, and grading examinations or papers. Several CIS graduate TA participants in this study also expressed that they had been treated with little to no respect. Baoyu works as an instructor in a course with two male American TAs. During a lab session, a male domestic student had a software question. One of the male TAs directed that student to Baoyu, who was an expert in software. When Baoyu walked closer to the student, he just ignored her presence.

Dai expressed the difficulty of turning down students' requests beyond office hours. She mentioned that in the class, some students just attend the class for participation points and they, "Just care about grades, they do not care about me." She said,

> "I had put so much efforts in that class. I even made some videos to demonstrate how to use the software. There was a girl in the class, she does not come to the class. But she emailed and asked for extra help before the exam. She did not work hard, it is her fault. But it is not fair to keep asking me to work extra time. It kind of hurts me that she did not even know my name."

The unclear boundary between how much time one should commit on the job causes the CIS TAs to struggle. For example, Baoyu mentioned, "sometimes I am not sure whether I am doing the right thing or not. I just want to do my part to make the stuff clearer. But it takes way too much time from my study."

Being Ignored: "*She just skipped us.*"

The expectation to be treated equally may be challenging for CIS. Four participants expressed that they had been ignored or neglected on multiple occasions, which made them feel that they did not belong. Yu shared an upsetting experience during a cultural history class, when all of the students in the group were asked to share their culture. However, when it was her turn, the other two American group members just showed no interest. They even started their own conversation before she finished. Dong also mentioned a similar experience of being neglected when he was traveling with his parents in Las Vegas,

> "The lady who was in charge of the elevator asked each one where they were from. Some came from Germany, and some from France. She just skipped my parents and I." (Quote translated by the author from Chinese)

Although most CIS have the expectation that they are different before coming to the foreign land of U.S., when they are actually here, they hope to receive the equal respect and attention from Americans. As Lee mentioned, many of his fellow CIS wished to make more American friends. However, such optimistic hopes usually diminished after experiences of being neglected with indifference.

Difficulty in Building Friendships: "*I feel like I am isolated.*"

Many CIS in the U.S. expect to make more American friends. However, building international friendships may be challenging, especially in areas where there are not many other Chinese students. With limited English language proficiency and cultural

understanding, some CIS felt that they are not ready enough to share their viewpoints with larger groups in the calss; therefore, they tend to keep quiet rather than breaking the ice in a new environment. As Ann indicated,

"I was the only Chinese student in the class, I could barely get involved in other American classmates' discussion. When they talk, they are just chatting like close friends, while I am just like someone taking the same class with them, nothing more…They have good English skills, while I still had difficulty understanding the course materials". (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Such feelings of being isolated on the other hand made many CIS group together. With shared cultural backgrounds and ease of communication in Chinese, some CIS would prefer to stay within the circle of their peer Chinese students. For example, Ellen indicated that she felt much more comfortable to taking classes with other Chinese students, "It is much easier for me to find the right words to express my exact feelings with my peers."

Inconsistent Grading Practices and Expectations

International students need to maintain good academic standing in order to maintain their visa status. CIS usually have higher academic expectations placed upon them by their families, thus, most students work hard to achieve high GPAs. Three participants shared their experiences of getting lower and unfair grades in some classes, especially required courses or sections for international students. Min provided his perception on grades,

"It was a required course for all freshmen, there were two different sections with the same content taught by an Asian instructor. For the sections with American students, it was way easier to get A's. While in the international section, we could only get B+ at the most."

Yu, a senior, also stated that during a methodology course, the instructor gave a D grade to him for a 10-page course paper on methodology. The instructor's comment was, "I cannot understand what you wrote." The D grade was a disaster for him, as Yu said, "If grammar is the issue, he could just take off some grammar points, or ask me to revise and resubmit."

Being Ridiculed for Accent: "*I repeated the exact words three times.*"

Although students learn English during elementary schools in China, the focus is on vocabulary, grammar, and reading skills. When it comes to speaking, most CIS do not feel confident speaking English. Two participants shared their experiences of being laughed at because of their Chinese accent. As Baoyu stated,

> "I asked the front desk assistant (whom I believed was an undergraduate student staff member) whether I could leave my books in the library and pick them up later. Before I finished my words, he said, 'I don't understand you.' I repeated exactly the same words slowly. He replied, 'I still don't get you.' Then I repeated the third time, I didn't know why I repeated it the third time. Since I could feel that he was just ridiculing my English." (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author)

Baoyu felt that the staff member was not sincere in trying to understand but rather preferred to ridicule. Baoyu indicated she was very upset for several weeks after that experience. After that she was not confident when interacting with others in English. As the negative feedback accumulated over time, the desire to go back home immediately after graduation grew during the first two years of her stay in the U.S.

Denied Opportunities: "*It's harder for me to find a job in America.*"

Legal requirements also restrict CIS from working off campus. In some cases, CIS believed they were given fewer opportunities when compared to domestic students in the job

seeking process. For example, Min noted that at career fairs, he was consistently asked whether he would need visa sponsorship in the near future, he said,

> "They always say, 'we are not considering sponsoring you'. So, I am struggling about how to reach a job compared to American students who have similar major qualifications with me. It is way easier for them to find a job."

Although CIS were only accepted for a degree program in the U.S., some would prefer to stay and work temporarily or permanently. Some students like Min may perceive a discrimination in the world of work.

Poorer Treatment: *"They serve American guests more frequently."*

Although most participants indicated that the community had been friendly, in general, they did have some unpleasant encounters when they were treated differently from American guests. As noted by Ann,

> "The waiter came to our table for drinks and our orders. While with other tables with American guests, he was more attentive. He also chatted with them in a friendly manner" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Lee noted an experience at the airport when a Chinese guest was asked to move his suitcase by an airport personnel (which he felt was not in the way) while the personnel did not ask any White or African American guests to move their baggage located in the same place. Kai also shared that his manager would ask him direct and rude questions with the assumption that he could not retaliate in any way. However, when he speaks to other Americans, he would always say "please" and "thank you". Such expectations of being treated equally with friendliness and politeness was disappointing to Dong as well, as he stated,

"When it was my turn to use the strength training equipment in the gym, several

students would stand by and ask me how many minutes until I finish. While there

were other people using same type of equipment too, they were not asked. Since our

body shapes looked similar and strong, why did they just come to me? So, it could

only be related to the color of my skin" (Quotes translated from the author).

Insulting Racial Slurs and Gestures

Microaggression may occur between any categories of human beings, no matter

where they are from. In fact, microaggressions on CIS can be administered from other CIS.

Some microaggressions are more subtle or implicit, while others are blatant and explicit.

Some students reported being bothered by racial slurs or gestures. As Xin stated,

"When my boyfriend and I were backing up and parking, there was another car that

drove in from the wrong way that almost hit us. While getting closer, we noticed that

the person in the other car extended his middle finger to us and shouted racially

charged term to us! We could tell from the license plate number and decoration that

the driver was Chinese. My boyfriend was very angry and shouted back to them in

English" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

On another occasion, Kai discussed two children (elementary aged) who knocked on

his door for fundraising. Since he did not have cash, he did not buy the items. The two

children then shouted "chink" to Kai before he shut the door.

Processing of Microaggressions

Research question 7 in this study asks, "how do CIS deal with microaggressions?"

After reflecting back on their microaggression experiences, participants were asked about

their coping process when it comes to dealing with the microaggression incidents. In the

previous section, frequent microaggression incidents were presented in nine themes. There

were five stages of the microaggression process proposed by Sue (2010a): Incident, perception and questioning, reaction, interpretation, and consequences. Depending on the specific situation and the severity of the incidents, students' reactions to microaggression incidents mainly fell into four categories: Ignore and no response, tolerate with internalized oppression, seeking support from others, and direct verbal or nonverbal response.

Microaggression Incidents

Microaggression incidents are known to have occurred when stereotype-based messages, whether intentional or unintentional, are delivered to the recipients and leaving them with uncomfortable feelings. Microaggression may occur in any place, both on and off-campus. Rather than being a binary category between the white and non-white population, it may also occur within the Chinese community. For example, two participants complained that Chinese car dealers had the reputation of overcharging Chinese students with the assumption that all Chinese students were from wealthy families. Another example was when Min was asked to change seats by an Asian TA with the assumption that Chinese students would cheat on the exam.

Perception and Questioning

After receiving negative microaggression messages, the recipients may enter into a quick process of questioning and deciding whether the messages were targeted at them solely based on their identities. When Dong and his parents were ignored by the lady who was in charge of the elevator during their trip in Las Vegas, he indicated,

> "She skipped my parents and me. Obviously she did not know that we were from
> China since we did not have any type of communication before. So I could just
> assume that she skipped us simply because the color of our skin" (Quotes translated
> by the author from Chinese).

In the process of internal questioning as to whether the incident was microaggression, Dong related his specific situation: He first thought about whether they had any prior communication. Such background knowledge of the specific situation, together with the relationship between the perpetrators and the recipients, are also important factors in the questioning process. When Lee was assumed to be the only one to solve difficult coding problems by his classmates, he did not take it as microaggression, rather, he mentioned, "Other students did not have coding background, so they trust me." His response in the situation was, "If I make it, just cheer with me, if I cannot make it, do not laugh at me, that's enough."

Reaction

After students determine the nature of the incidents as microaggression, the third phase begins. Students may have different types of reactions depending on the severity of the incidents, the length of their stay in the U.S., the specific situation and the relationship between the two sides. The reaction style for each individual may also shift with time.

Ignore and No Response

Often times, CIS place academic study as their main priority. When the microaggression incident is study related, students usually choose to switch their focus to their studies. As Min indicated, he was not happy when a TA asked him to switch seats with another student. He said,

> "I have more things I need to worry about in the exam. I do not really have any
>
> reaction to it. It was a very important course, and I spent so much time on it. So I kept
>
> working on the exam."

When Dong and his parents were ignored and skipped by the lady in the elevator conversation, he and his parents also chose to ignore it since, "We were just traveling there,

and that might be the last time we meet that lady" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

No reaction or ignoring does not mean that the microaggressions do not hurt. CIS may choose to not complain, which may intensify the invisibility of microaggressions for the penetrators. The hidden nature of microaggressions and no reaction from the recipient may also mask potential microaggressive stress.

Tolerate with Internalized Oppression

CIS have to maintain good academic standing to keep their legal status, thus they usually endure even severe academic stress and discrimination. Their main purpose of studying in the U.S. is to attain American degrees and when anything negative occurs, most CIS opt to simply tolerate the situation by themselves, rather than speaking out or seeking help. Participants also expressed that their limited English language proficiency in the early stages of their study caused them to tolerate microaggression situations with internalized oppression. For example, when Dong was targeted by his colleagues who were asking rude questions,

> "I felt pain, but I decided to let it go. My English was very limited at that time, I did
> not know how to communicate with them. I just did not want to get into trouble. So, I
> just tolerated it by myself" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Xin mentioned similar concerns when she felt as being offended at the library for her English accent. She indicated that she was not very confident in her English, and she did not know how to respond. She also expressed her expectation for the library staff member to ask sincere further questions.

Seeking Support

When students become familiarized with the available support services, some of them may seek help from professors or peer friends to deal with microaggressions. For example, when Ann noticed that she was ignored in her class discussion, she turned to the professor for help. The professor offered some pre-class discussion sessions which helped her better understand the class materials and enabled her to engage in class discussions. Baoyu indicated that she also sought for external help to improve her English. When she felt that she was being treated with little respect by students, she blamed herself for not being able to speak perfect English. She indicated,

> "I purchased a program online, and the teacher showed me how to pronounce some
> specific words in the right ways. The program actually was run by a Chinese teacher,
> but it worked very well for me."

Direct Response

In some situations, especially when the recipient feels severely offended, direct response, either verbal or nonverbal may be taken. As Xin mentioned, when she and her boyfriend saw the Chinese driver extend his middle finger to them, they felt very offended. As a result, her boyfriend shouted directly back at him. Direct responses are often used by CIS who have been in the U.S. for longer periods of time and have higher levels of English proficiency. For example, when Dong was reflecting back on his experiences of being offended by his colleagues, he said,

> "During the first two years, my English was very limited. And I did not want to get
> into any trouble, so I tolerated with it. But now, they know that I understand what my
> American colleagues at the dining center are talking about, and so they would not use

such explicit words. Like in the gym, if any American students still stand by me and ask me, I would just let them wait" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Interpretation

After the reaction step, the recipient may (or may not) interpret the intention of the perpetrator. The interpretation may consist of identifying the hidden or underlying message or intention of the microaggression occurrence. For example, when Min was asked to exchange seats with another student, his interpretation was that the TA held the assumption that all Chinese students cheat. Similarly, when Kai was offended by the racial slurs of the two children, he did not respond. However, he indicated that,

> "Children are mirrors for the future of our society. What they say and what they do are also reflections of the environment from which they grow up. Especially, parents and schools should take the responsibility to educate the children about what is appropriate to say and what is not" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Consequences

The consequences of the microaggressions may begin at the moment when the microaggression incident occurs and the consequences may be long-lasting. For example, when Yu was ignored in the group discussion, she indicated, "It is a very disappointing experience for me. I think it is the very first time that I feel uncomfortable here, because they see me differently. And they did not care about my culture in a cultural history class." Proper reactions to microaggressions also build CIS' confidence in their interaction with domestic students. As Ann got the professor's help in class, she felt, "More comfortable to get involved."

Satisfaction and Expectations

As presented in Chapter 4, research question 4 asks, "How do demographic factors, microaggression stress and perceived social support impact CIS' satisfaction with their host institution and the overall academic experience in the U.S.?" In this study's survey, a majority (92%) of the students indicated that they were satisfied with their study experience in the U.S. Findings of the follow-up interviews also support the high degree of satisfaction, despite the number of microaggression incidents reported. In addition to questions about their willingness to recommend the host institution to others, participants were asked about whether their expectations of studying in the U.S. had been met. Research question 8 in this study aimed to find out the support services CIS expect to receive. In response to this question, interviewees were asked about the support services that they would like to receive in dealing with microaggressions. Students' perceptions about their satisfactions and expectations are presented in the following sections.

Satisfaction

When CIS make the decision to study abroad, they first select the country and then narrow it down to the state and the university. Both in the initial survey and follow up interviews, students were asked about their overall study experience in the U.S. and the host institution. The following section first presents the findings of students' general impression of the local community and then provides results pertaining to their satisfaction with the host institution.

Satisfaction with the Local Community

Consistent with the high levels of satisfaction indicated by the survey, students expressed positive overall impressions of the *Dream* city (pseudonym used here referring to the name of the town where this study is conducted).

Five participants used the words, "nice", "kindness" and "friendly" when reflecting

on the general impression of the city. Meanwhile, unfriendliness was also mentioned when

talking about areas that were not quite satisfactory in the city, such as when Lee mentioned

that the local Department of Transportation personnel were not very nice to almost everyone.

Students commented that overall, they have had quite positive experiences living in the local

community. For example, Dong, a Ph.D. student who had studied at MU for nine years

indicated:

"People are nice here. When I first came here, I did not know how to open the door of

the bus, the person next to me just kindly showed me how to wave and activate the

door… Sometimes local people are just curious about the Chinese culture and the

language, I got to know a friend by teaching him how to say hello and goodbye in

Chinese" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

International students in the U.S. tend to stay for at least one year, hence, many

students consider the college city as a second home. In addition to the friendliness of people

from the local community, CIS also indicated an appreciation of the convenience of the

transportation system. Xin, a female student from statistics commented that:

"Overall it is pretty good. It is not that crowded compared to many big cities I have

travelled, I really like this place and the major part I like is that there is no traffic jam

here. Making life easier and convenient. The public transportation is also very

convenient" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Satisfaction with the Host Institution

Most students expressed that they have achieved more than they had expected. This is

also consistent with the survey findings. The primary goal of CIS studying in the U.S. is to

get a degree. Participants often commented on their satisfaction in their major fields of study

and with the English language, in general. As Xin indicated,

"When I first came here three years ago, my goal was to get a Master's degree and

find a job in China. And now I am working on my Doctoral degree, and I have found

the person I love here. My English has improved a lot. So, I kind of feel like I

unintentionally won the 'lottery' by studying here" (Quotes translated from Chinese

by the author).

Participants expressed their willingness to recommend others to come and study at

MU. In addition, they provided thoughtful suggestions to prospective students. As Dai

indicated,

"I will first ask the goal of studying abroad. Some people like me, may not have a

clear goal or purpose at the very beginning. Others may simply want to find a good

job in China after graduation. I will suggest to them to come and broaden their vision

as long as they have sufficient financial support" (Quotes translated from Chinese by

the author).

Occasional microaggressions may not impact the students' overall satisfaction with

the host institution. As Baoyu indicated,

"I feel that I do not belong here, but that does not make me feel unhappy about my

job. That is just a small part of my life. And it does not influence my satisfaction with

my job. Because I really like teaching so I feel okay with that."

Participants also commented that the university, overall, had been supportive to

international students in organizing various activities, which is consistent with the findings of

the survey. MU is a research focused institution where faculty members are usually involved in multiple types of research projects. As Min commented,

> "From the part of working and studying, I think the university has done a pretty good job, because there are workshops and all different activities we can participate in. I think that part is good, and for the interactions with people from diverse cultures or countries, I think the International Students and Scholars Office also has different activities. I have only participated once, but I think it was good as well. I do not think it is a great teaching school, I would like smaller size classes where communication between the instructor and students could be easier."

Safety is another factor mentioned by many participants, both in the survey and interviews. Among the 28 students who said that they would not make the same decision again to study in the U.S., four mentioned safety as the primary reason. On the other hand, the local community where MU is located has been rated as one of the safest places to study. As Ann mentioned,

> "The city is small, so it has less distractions and that is good for study. It is very safe here comparing to other big cities. The supports provided to international students are really great. And there are not that many international students here, so we still get a lot of opportunities to practice our English" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

Expectations for Support

CIS come to the U.S. with the high expectation of becoming academically successful. International students are charged a higher differential tuition, which is an additional cost to the general tuition and fees. Many Chinese families have invested their entire savings to send

their children to study in the U.S. Therefore, CIS are always mindful of the financial costs when anything negative happens. As Dong indicated,

"My parents have spent so much money for me to study in the U.S., I have to remind myself that my main goal is to study…So that I could switch my attention back to my study and avoid getting involved in any unnecessary conflicts with others" (Quotes translated from Chinese by the author).

There exists a small portion of CIS who come to the U.S. without clear goals. They are thought of as the spoiled only-child of the family. For example, as Dong reflected,

"When I first came here in 2009, CIS were not prepared to work hard. They would just chat with other CIS through the class. In one course, at the end of the semester, in the front rows were Americans, while Chinese were all clustered at the back playing with their phones. These CIS went to the class just for the participation points. Sometimes the professor's teaching was even interrupted by them. It made me feel very ashamed as a Chinese. And it had left some negative feelings on me for a long time about having class with CIS fellows" (Quotes translated from Chinses by the author).

In addition to the expectations for fellow CIS to be mindful of their behaviors, participants also shared some suggestions for future international students. For example, Xin mentioned that CIS students should take the brave step of improving their English and they should also be confident in communicating with their domestic peer students and faculty members.

When speaking of the expectations of institutions, half of the participants stated that they would like to have access to major-specific English as Second Language (ESL) programs and more outreach opportunities. As Min stated,

"Another suggestion I would like to make for the university is to provide more chances for experiential learning from the real life. Especially for engineering majors, I have never been to any factory tours organized by the school or the program. I believe other colleges like psychology majors should be able to have some chances to talk to real psychologists like in some hospitals or in the society. These real-world experiences are really important."

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented findings derived from the qualitative interviews conducted in order to provide in-depth explanations of the microaggressions pertaining to CIS. Specifically, this chapter first explained the interviewee profiles and interview questions. Nine themes derived from the interviews were presented with quotes from participants. The processing of microaggression incidents was also explained. The chapter concluded with findings regarding CIS' expectations of and satisfaction with their academic journeys in the U.S.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.

Confucius, 557 BC, Analects, 15:23 (as Cited from Eno, 2015)

Overview

This first part of this chapter begins with a summary of the study. The second part

presents discussions of both the quantitative and qualitative findings of microaggression

incidents as they pertain to CIS. It then provides practical implications for both institutions

and CIS (including current and prospective students). This chapter concludes with

recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the increasing trend of CIS enrollment in the U.S.

It then brought up the general challenges encountered by international students, followed by

some specific challenges and stresses experienced by CIS. The research topic, research

questions, purpose, overview of methodology, conceptual framework, significance, and

organization of the study were also previewed.

Chapter 2 reviewed previous literature regarding CIS. The overview of the historical

waves of CIS in the U.S. set up the context to better understand the motivations and

challenges faced by CIS. Following a synthesis of general and minority stress experienced by

CIS, the concept of microaggressions and its types, categories, impacts and stresses were also

reviewed. The minority process model generated from the model minority myth and the

microaggression process model guided the study's design as conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 explained the research methods adopted for the study. Following the

research questions, the research design rationale was provided. The data collection

procedures, including participants and research sites were introduced. Survey instruments and interview protocol were also presented.

Chapter 4 reported the findings of the quantitative data analysis. Descriptive analyses provided a general picture of the CIS who participated in the study, the types and stress scales of frequently experienced microaggression incidents pertaining to CIS, and their perceived social support from family, friends and the institution, students' satisfaction with their study in the U.S. and with the host institution were also addressed. The frequency of experiences and the stress scales of microaggressions between different groups of students were analyzed through comparative analysis. Regression analysis presented the predictability of microaggression stress, perceived support and the satisfaction with their study in the U.S. and the host institution.

Chapter 5 presented the findings of follow-up interviews. In-depth exploration of the microaggressions experienced by CIS and how they processed microaggressions were analyzed based on themes generated by the interviews. Consistent with the findings of the quantitative results, CIS indicated a high level of satisfaction with the host institution. However, more types of microaggression experiences were identified from in-depth interviews. Expectations for host institutions and suggestions for international students were also provided.

Chapter 6 summarizes the research and discusses findings from both the quantitative data and the qualitative findings. In conclusion, this chapter provides practical implications for both the institution and international students, and it provides theoretical recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Findings

Evaluation of the success of higher education internationalization should not solely focus on the headcount of the "full-fee-paying international students enrolled" (Hdzik & Briggs, 2012). International students encounter multiple layers of challenges, such as financial burdens, language barriers, cultural differences, homesickness, stereotypes and discrimination (Hagedorn, 2015; Lee, 2017, Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Sherry, Thomas & Chui 2010; Wan, 1999). CIS tend to experience more specific forms of stress in addition to the general stress pertaining to international students (Wei et al., 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Ye, 2006). For example, CIS suffer from higher academic stress, such as the extreme anxiety caused by concerns about the future and potential careers after graduation (Yan & Berliner, 2009). In this study, the focus was on the minority stress caused by microaggressions targeted at CIS. The following section highlights the findings pertaining to the sub-cultures among CIS, the process involved in navigating the microaggression experiences and the potential impact of microaggression experiences on CIS'satisfaction with their academic journey in the U.S.

The study was designed to investigate the microaggression experiences of CIS. The two categories of microaggressions in the survey findings correspond with the themes developed by conducting interviews. In the interviews, CIS related a higher level of stress when their experiences of microaggressions were related to opportunities ("being denied of opportunities" in the survey, and "much harder to find jobs when compared to domestic students") and academic achievement. This further confirms previous studies pertaining to the excessive academic stress experienced by CIS (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). CIS came to the U.S. with the motivation of gaining better chances of finding jobs with a higher valued degree (Hagedorn, 2015). Such high expectations placed on academics may led to the

consequence of losing confidence when students experienced academic related microaggressions such as "being ridiculed for their accent" and "being ignored in group projects".

The perception of microaggressions varies among individuals. Survey results revealed that the most common cases of microaggressions experienced by CIS was the assumption of being good at math and statistics related fields. Interview findings further supported this. However, students who were actually good at math did not express uncomfortable feelings, other than being pre-judged by stereotypes and being taken advantage of. On the contrary, participants who were weak in math felt a great deal of stress due to the mismatch of the expectations of others and their own actual math skills. This coincides with findings of a previous study on microaggressions targeting international students (Kim & Kim, 2010; Sue, 2010). The assumption underlying such incidents is that, all Asians, especially Chinese are good at math or science. The concept related to such assumptions is the model minority myth (Lee, 2016; Museus, 2013; Suzuki, 2002; Yi & Museus, 2015). The model minority myth generalizes that Asians and Asian Americans are high achievers in math fields, while at the same time being quiet and reluctant to complain (Chen, 1995; Jacobsen, 2014; Yi & Museus, 2015). Such stereotypes against Chinese students were shaped by historical factors as well as media imagery. The U.S. government released the Immigration Act in 1965, which reset the baseline of admissions to skills, rather than nationality. Large groups of Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. during the 1960s and 1980s; nearly half of them had some form of college education during 1965 and 1979 (Lee, 1994). Such model minority assumption is also a result of the media image of CIS on TV. For example, in the movie *Mean Girls*, Asians (especially Chinese) were depicted as unable to speak good English.

Microaggressions can happen anytime and anywhere among human beings of any races. As stated by participants in the follow up interviews, students have also encountered microaggressions perpetrated by their peer CIS. Depending on the time and the specific context in which the incidents occurred, the stress from same situation might be understood differently. CIS showed various coping strategies when dealing with microaggression incidents. Students indicated that they felt a lower level of stress in dealing with microaggressions when they had stayed longer at the host institution and had a higher level of English proficiency. Consistent with Wei and colleague's (2008) study, students who lack of self-confidence tend to adopt the strategy of internalized suppression when facing with stereotyped discrimination.

The reduction of microaggressions is a continuous undertaking which involves the joint efforts of multiple actors, including the institutions, faculty members and staff members, and international students themselves. Class settings should take the ratio of domestic students to international students into consideration. As indicated by the interview findings, students felt more confidents and more comfortable in interacting with others when they were not the only CIS in the class. Meanwhile, Chinese students should also be mindful of creating a positive group image by making proper decisions, and by showing mutual respect to other peer students and faculty members.

Despite multiple forms of microaggressions and the stress scale that students encountered, CIS showed high satisfaction levels with their academic journeys in the U.S. Specifically, students showed high satisfaction with their academic achievement in the U.S., and they also expressed concerns about the increasing cost of studying in the U.S. as well as a more competitive job market after graduation. Some even have paradoxical feelings of

missing great job opportunities in China. A gradual accumulation of negative impressions caused by microaggression experiences may cause dissatisfaction with the host institution.

Implications

This study has several important practical implications for both the institutions, faculty members working with international students, and Chinese students (including current and prospective students). Findings of the current study may provide CIS insightful knowledge about the general stress involved with microaggressions that they may experience. Understanding their peer CIS' microaggression experiences may help current and prospective students to be better prepared when confronted with unexpected discrimination or microaggressions.

Implications for Institutions

The survey findings indicate that most CIS received high levels of social support from family and friends. Institutional support showed significance in predicting students' satisfaction with the host institution. The interviews of the participants showed further proof that CIS expected to receive more specific and effective support from the institution. Considering that the implications also apply to other groups of international students, each suggestion is phrased to support both CIS and other groups of international students.

First, we propose a campus-wide shared cultural learning program at MU and peer institutions to be conducted among all the students, regardless of their origin. In the interviews, participants stated that they sometimes simply ignored the incidents of microaggressions, not because they did not care or did not want to seek help, but because they did not know how to properly seek help and did not realize the real connotation of the incidents.

Programs similar to the one proposed here have proven to be significantly effective to improve the mutual understanding between health professionals and social workers in the UK (Carpenter & Hewstone, 1996). The shared-learning program consisted of a series of workshops conducted among doctors and social workers. The program implemented by Carpenter and Hewstone (1996) highlighted discussions pertaining to the similarities and differences between the social workers' and doctors' approach to clients, including the roles, duties, and requirements of both groups. Findings of the present study suggests implementing shared cultural learning programs to promote students' mutual understanding of their differences and similarities. Similar to the goal of Carpenter and Hewstone's program, the goal of the proposed program from the current study is to recognize the commonalities as well as diversities among groups and to further reduce individual and group stereotypes. The staffing of the proposed shared cultural program should involve both international students and domestic students, staff members and administrators working with international students. The proposed shared cultural learning program could take the workshop format with interactive activities focusing on expectations and understandings from different cultures.

Second, orientation programs should be implemented both before and after international students come to study at the host institutions. Findings of the interviews suggest that the current one-for-all orientation is not more beneficial than a simple campus tour. The purpose of orientation programs is to assist international students in navigating the campus resources so that they may better adapt to their new environment. While the orientation resources may be introduced to students by using online workshops, understanding of the most appropriate way to interact with other students and faculty members may take a longer period of time.

CIS (or all international students) should be provided a pre-arrival orientation after they receive their admission letters. Most CIS apply to the universities with the assistance of education agents (Zhang, 2011) because of the lack of available resources. The pre-arrival orientations may be conducted by admission officers and previous alumni from China. Both parents and students who attend the pre-arrival orientation may gain a better general understanding of the host institutions as well as gaining proper expectations due to the different teaching, learning, and living style. Currently, parents of international students receive virtually no engagement with the university activities, except for the graduation ceremony. However, a majority of CIS are financially supported by their parents. Increased family involvement also prepares parents and allows for better understanding of the education system in the U.S. For one thing, parents may be able to provide more useful suggestions to their children when necessary. For another, parents may be put in the position of being an important resource to promote the future enrollment for the host institution. As indicated by several interviewees, their relatives and family friends in China frequently asked them about suggestions of selecting institutions in the U.S. More involvement and better understanding of the host institutions thus prepares both parents and current CIS to be potential recruitment sources for the host institutions.

The arrival orientation may be jointly conducted by university and department staff members or faculty members after the students arrive on campus. The second orientation could focus on specific expectations and guidance on strategies for leading a successful life at the host institution and in the U.S. in general. International students could be paired up with domestic students at the initial arrival orientation, based on their mutual interests. As indicated by the interviews, most CIS felt lonely and found it difficult to build friendships

with domestic students. Thus, the arrival orientation would not only prepare CIS to be ready academically, but it would also prepare them in how to properly build friendships and how to share their cultural experience. This will also enhance the cultural awareness of domestic student participants in the program, which is very important due to the fact that some domestic students have never travelled abroad and may not know how to interact with other cultures as well.

Third, the findings of this study further suggest the development of microaggression training workshops and documentary videos illustrating students' perceptions of different types of interactions and their expectations of fair treatments. The training should be open to both domestic and international students. As indicated by the interviews, microaggressions may happen to different racial groups as well as to people from the same racial background. Acknowledging the different categories of one's identity could serve as the first step in reducing microaggressions. Due to the fact that microaggressions are mostly invisible, workshops on microaggresions should also include discussions on participants' understandings about the concepts of micoraggressions.

Fourth, the interview findings suggest more major-specific English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as an alternate for the current generic ones. This is true particularly for graduate students who have more academic writing assignments. More major-specific ESL classes would substantially ease students' stress caused by language barriers. As indicated by most of the interviewees, CIS often prefer to interact with peer international students and are reluctant to express their own opinions due to the lack of confidence in their English language proficiency.

Implications for International Students

The reduction of microaggression and other associated negative occurrences should involve the joint efforts of multiple groups. First, CIS should also take active roles in creating a positive group image for all Chinese students, simultaneously, due to the fact that any negative behavior could lead to the stereotyping of all CIS, as a group. The reduction of stereotypes is a long process. The first step for CIS should be to remain mindful of the language used, and to treat others with respect.

Second, CIS should keep an open mind and embrace the differences between cultures. The interview findings suggest that CIS should interact with students from diverse backgrounds rather than just staying within one's comfort zone. More appropriate interactions between CIS and Americans, including domestic students, faculty and staff members as well as people from the community will promote the cultural understanding and confidence of CIS.

Third, students are not isolated from help when they face microaggressions. As the interview indicates, most CIS tend to ignore or bear with internalized oppression when faced with microaggressions. CIS should also seek external assistance in the case of unexpected happenings. External support from the university, peer friends or even resources available from the community may be helpful when the microaggression stress is beyond one's control.

Conclusion

The goals of the present study were: first, to explore microaggressions pertaining to CIS; second, to examine the frequency and stress scales microaggressions toward CIS; third, to explore the process of how CIS navigate microaggression incidents; fourth, to identify the support services CIS expect to receive when dealing with microaggressions and general

stresses; fifth, to explore the potential impacts that microaggressions have on CIS, and their overall satisfaction with the U.S. and the host institution. Consistent with Sue (2010a), the microaggression incidents occur more on campus, than off campus and in the community.

CIS indicated that they feel more stress when the microaggression incident is related to academic study or work opportunities. The way in which CIS react to microaggressions depends on the specific situation. The same individual may react differently if the incident happens at a different time. The reduction of microaggressions calls for the mutual efforts of both institutions and CIS. Overall, CIS indicated a high level of satisfaction with their studies in the U.S.; however, when microaggressions accumulate over time, it may leave them with negative impressions of the host institution.

Recommendations for Future Research

International students' overall experience is crucial to the smooth process of higher education internationalization. Consistent with previous studies on the new challenges faced by international students, the present research indicates that CIS experience various types of microaggressions. Findings suggest more in-depth investigations into the process how CIS perceive an incident to be one of microaggressions.

First, a longitudinal approach may be utilized to investigate how CIS react to microaggressions during various phases of their study. Students may react differently depending how long they have been in the U.S. Future studies should track the process of how CIS navigate the microaggression incidents during their study in the U.S. For example, researchers could track a group of students with different levels of English proficiency to shed light on how they perceive microaggressions at different times and in different situations.

Second, the current study was conducted at one large public research institution. Future inquiries should seek to examine whether the microaggression incidents of CIS change in different environments. For example, researchers may analyze whether the salient types of microaggressions vary when students are on different campuses, such as private institutions and community colleges in bigger cities.

Third, future studies could utilize multimodal analysis such as tracking the nonverbal and verbal expression of participants from the moment when the microaggression incident first occurs. The current study collected data based on students' reflections on their previous experiences and memory could be a factor if it becomes faded over time. Microaggressions may occur verbally or nonverbally, as do people's reactions. Video and journals could be utilized for future investigations.

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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL LETTER

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202
Ames, Iowa 50014
515 294-4566

Date:	10/4/2017			
To:	Shaohua Pei E0045 Lagomarcino		**CC:**	Dr. Linda Serra Hagedorn E262 Lagomarcino Hall
From:	Office for Responsible Research			
Title:	Chinese International Students" Experience of Microaggression			
IRB ID:	17-425			
Approval Date:	10/4/2017		**Date for Continuing Review:**	10/3/2019
Submission Type:	New		**Review Type:**	Expedited

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials** in your research, **including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.**

- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study,** when documented consent is required.

- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing** <u>any</u> **changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.

- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.

- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses,** unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.

- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 202 Kingland, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

亲爱的同学，您好！非常感谢您愿意在百忙之中抽空参与本项研究。要参与本项研究，你必须是年满 18 岁来自中国的留学生。请阅读以下知情同意书，如果你自愿决定参与，请点击页面下方的箭头继续。

知情同意书

研究主题：中国留学生微歧视经历研究

研究人员：裴少华 (主要研究员)，Linda Hagedorn 教授 （督导教授)

这项研究的目的是为了进一步了解在微歧视经历。参与完全自愿，大约需要 10-15 分钟。目前正在进行一项关于中国留学生在美国期间微歧视经历的研究，特此进行问卷调查。这项研究有助于国际学生管理者们了解中国留学生在美国的学习、生活经历，为广大中国留学生提供更愉快的留学体验。若有研究相关问题，您可以发邮件或致电主要研究员 裴少华（lindapei@iastate.edu; 515-294-2673）。若您对参与研究之相关权利有疑问，您也可以联络爱荷华州立大学的研究保护办公室（IRB@iastate.edu; 515-294-4566）。

为了确保您的隐私，您所提供的资料将会完全匿名。您的 email 不会与您的问卷答案有任何连结。您的参与是完全自愿性的，在任何时刻您都有权利终止。参与这个研究几乎没有任何风险。在回答某些有关微歧视的问题时，可能会因为回忆过去的经历造成您的不适。我们建议您打印本页或是将本页另存副本。

非常感谢您的参与！请点击页面下方的箭头继续

Title of Study: Chinese International Students' Experience of Microaggression

Investigators: Shaohua Pei, Dr. Linda Serra Hagedorn

This is a research study. Please take your time to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part--your participation is completely voluntary. If you wish to retain a copy of this informed consent form for your information and record, please print this page.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is: First, to explore how Chinese international students experience microaggression (verbal or nonverbal communication that conveys hostile or negative messages to the targeted person), both in academic and social settings. Second, to examine how Chinese international college students' microaggression experience may influence their satisfaction level with American host institutions. Third, to find out what type of supportive service Chinese international college students expect to receive in response to microaggression experiences. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a Chinese international student. If you are under 18 years of age, we ask that you not participate in this survey.

Description of Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a survey, it will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You will need to click the "accept" button on the bottom of the first screen, which indicates your consent to participate. You will be asked questions regarding your experience of microaggression in the U.S. as a Chinese international students. You can skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable. For the information to be useful to us, please complete as many items as you can. You will be

asked the willingness of taking a follow-up interview at the end of the survey, if you do not want to, then that's the end of your participation. If you agree to participate the interview, you will provide your email or telephone contact information in a separate link. Your contact information will not be linked with the survey responses, and contact info will be removed after interviews are scheduled.

Risks or Discomforts

There are minimal risks or discomforts associated with this project. You may experience some minimal psychological discomfort (e.g., upset or nervousness upon reflecting on micro aggressions), social discomfort (e.g., embarrassment in sharing these micro-aggression experiences), and informational concern (e.g., if you are willing to participate a follow up interview, you may need to provide your phone number or email information). To minimize such potential risks, all your responses will be kept anonymous with the use of pseudonyms, your contact information will only be used for scheduling the follow up interview, and the contact information will be removed as soon as the interview is scheduled, it will not be linked with the responses to the survey or interview. There is no right or wrong answer. You are free to skip any question or terminate the survey in the event that the reflection becomes too emotionally uncomfortable.

Benefits

If you decide to participate in this study there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will provide a better understanding for Chinese international students' education experience in the U.S.

Costs and Compensation

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Participant Rights

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Your choice of whether or not to participate will have no impact on you as an international student in any way at ISU. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality

Records identifying participants will be kept strictly confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: All electronic files will be stored in Cybox file with password protection. Only the principal investigators Shaohua Pei and Dr. Linda Hagedorn have the password access to the data in Cybox file. All of your responses will be kept confidential. The researchers will not

share your individual responses with anyone other than the research major

advisor/supervisor.

Questions or Problems

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information

about the study, please contact Shaohua Pei at 515-294-2673, lindapei@iastate.edu, or Dr.

Linda Hagedorn at 515-294-5476, lindah@iastate.edu.

Consent and Authorization Provisions

Clicking on the "Next" button below will bring you to the survey and indicates that you have

read the information contained in this form and that you voluntarily agree to participate in

this study.

APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMENT (CHINESE VERSION)

Q1. 您是否年满 18 岁？

- o 是

- o 不是

Q2.您的年龄是？

_____

Q3 您的性别是？

- o 男

- o 女

- o 跨性别

- o 性别酷儿

- o 其他 _____

- o 不愿回答

Q4 您来自哪里？

- o 中国大陆

- o 香港

- o 台湾

Q5 您在美国几年了？ （不足一年请选择 1）

_____

Q6. 您来自哪个院系？

- o College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- o College of Design
- o College of Human Sciences
- o College of Veterinary Medicine

- o College of Business
- o College of Engineering
- o College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- o 其他 _____

Q7 您目前就读大学几年级？

- o 本科一年级
- o 本科三年级
- o 本科五年级 （或六年级）
- o 博士研究生
- o IEOP 项目

- o 本科二年级
- o 本科四年级
- o 硕士研究生
- o 交换生

Q8 您的 GPA （平均分是多少）？

- o A (3.67- 4.0)
- o B （2.67-3.0）
- o C （2.0-2.33）
- o 合格或不合格

- o A-与 B+之间 （3.33—3.67）
- o B-与 C+之间 （2.33-2.67）
- o C- (低于 2.0)
- o 不愿回答

引导语：这一部分主要关于是否因为中国留学生的身份而经历（或感受）不同的待遇。 请尽可能做到准确、诚实，选出每种情况对你发生的频率，以及每一种场景是否使你感到压抑、困惑、烦恼。

| A. 请选出这样的情况发生的频率？ | | | | | 情景 | B. 如果这样的情况发生过，请选出这些情况对你造成的压力、困惑程度 | | | | | |
从未发生	很少	偶尔	经常	一直存在		N/A	没有	轻微	中等	很大	及其沉重
○	○	○	○	○	其他人认为我的种族背景的人都 一样。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	其他人认为我的种族背景的人应该受到不公平待遇。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	其他人认为我的种族背景的人仅仅需要努力就能成功。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的种族背景，我在餐馆和商店里受到了糟糕的待遇。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	在课堂或是工作场所，我是唯一一个来自我的种族背景的人。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	我注意到很少有与我相同种族背景的人在电视、书本以及杂志上出现 。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的口音，在课堂上我感到不如别人。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	其他人认为我的种族背景的人，数学应该学得好。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的种族背景，在小组活动中我总被忽视。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的种族背景，社交活动我总是被排除在外。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的种族背景，我失去很多机会。	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	因为我的种族背景，我的社会地位很低。	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q10.	强烈不同意	稍微不同意	既不同意也不反对	稍微同意	强烈同意
我的家人总是尽力帮助我。	○	○	○	○	○
我能从家人那里得到精神支持与帮助。	○	○	○	○	○
我可以与我的家人讨论我遇到的问题。	○	○	○	○	○
我的家人愿意帮我做决定。	○	○	○	○	○
Q11.	强烈不同意	稍微不同意	既不同意也不反对	稍微同意	强烈同意
我的朋友们总是尽力帮助我。	○	○	○	○	○
我可以与朋友们分享的我快乐与悲伤。	○	○	○	○	○
我可以与我的朋友们讨论我遇到的问题。	○	○	○	○	○
遇到问题时，我的朋友们可以依靠的。	○	○	○	○	○
Q12	强烈不同意	稍微不同意	既不同意也不反对	稍微同意	强烈同意
我需要帮助时，总能去找国际学生办公室。	○	○	○	○	○
我可以与我的 major professor（或是 academic advisor）讨论我遇到的问题。	○	○	○	○	○
我相信学校总能在我需要的时候提供帮助。	○	○	○	○	○

Q13. 如果可以重新再来，你还会选择到美国留学吗？

- 会
- 不会 （请解释原因）

Q14. 你愿意把 ISU 推荐给在中国的家人、亲戚或是朋友吗？
- 非常愿意
- 有点愿意
- 中立
- 有点愿意
- 及其不愿意

再次感谢您参与本次研究！

为了更好了解中国留学生在美学习经历，诚邀您参加一次访谈。如果您愿意参加访谈，请点击以下链接提供您的联系方式。您的联系方式信息不会与问卷回答有任何联系。

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3q836qLvcXw1sRT

APPENDIX D. SURVEY INSTRUMENT (ENGLISH VERSION)

Q1 Are you 18 or above?

- o Yes
- o No

Q2 What is your age?

_____

Q3 What is your gender identity?

- o Male
- o Female
- o Transgender
- o Gender queer
- o Additional gender category/identity, please specify
- o Prefer not to disclose

Q4 Where are you from?

- o Mainland China
- o Hong Kong
- o Taiwan

Q5 How long have you stayed in the U.S.? (Select 1 if less than 1 year)

_____

Q6. Which school are you from?

- o College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- o College of Design
- o College of Human Sciences
- o College of Veterinary Medicine
- o College of Business
- o College of Engineering
- o College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- o Other _____

Q7 Which year are you in the program?

- o Freshman
- o Junior
- o 5th or 6th year Senior
- o Doctorate graduate student
- o IEOP
- o Sophomore
- o Senior
- o Master graduate student
- o Exchange student

Q8 In what range is your overall college grade average (GPA)?

- o A (3.67- 4.0)
- o B （2.67-3.0）
- o C （2.0-2.33）
- o Pass / fail classes only
- o A- to B+ (3.33-3.67)
- o B- to C+（ 2.33-2.67）
- o C- or lower (2.0 or lower)
- o Prefer not to answer

Q9 The following questions ask whether you feel that you have been treated a certain way by others because of your race. For each question, please mark how often you feel you have experienced the event described, and whether the incident caused you to feel stressed, upset, offended, or frustrated.

A. HOW OFTEN does this happen to you?					Instruction	B. IF THIS DOES HAPPENS TO YOU, how **stressful, upsetting, or bothersome** is this for you?					
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Statements	N/A	Not at all	Low level	Moderate level	High level	Very High level
○	○	○	○	○	1. Other people act as if all of the people of my race are alike.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	2. Others suggest that people of my racial background get unfair benefits.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	3. Others assume that people of my background would succeed in life if they simply worked harder.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	4. I receive poorer treatment in restaurants and stores because of my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	5. Sometimes I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	6. I notice that there are few people of my racial background on TV, in books, and in magazines.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	7. I have been made to feel inferior in the classroom because I have an accent.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	8. People think I am good at math because of my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	9. I am ignored in group projects because of my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	10. I feel that I am excluded in social gatherings because of my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	11. Opportunities are denied to me because of my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	12. I feel that my status in this society is low due to my race.	○	○	○	○	○	○

The following questions ask about support from family, friends, and university.
Please select how much the following statements applied to you, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer.

Q10	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My family really tries to help me.	o	o	o	o	o
I can get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	o	o	o	o	o
I can talk about my problems with my family.	o	o	o	o	o
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	o	o	o	o	o

Q11	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My friends really try to help me.	o	o	o	o	o
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	o	o	o	o	o
I can talk about my problems with my friends.	o	o	o	o	o
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	o	o	o	o	o

Q12	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The international students and scholars office on campus is available when I need it.	o	o	o	o	o
I can talk about my problems with my academic adviser/ major professor.	o	o	o	o	o
I trust university will offer help when I need it.	o	o	o	o	o

Q13 If you had to do it over again, would you come to study in the U.S.?

- o Yes

- o No (Please specify the reason) _____

Q14 How likely would you recommend ISU to other people (like your family, relatives or friends in China)?

- o Extremely likely

- o Somewhat likely

- o Neither likely nor unlikely

- o Somewhat unlikely

- o Extremely unlikely

Thank you again for your participation in the survey!

You are invited to participate in a follow up interview, to talk more about your education experience in the U.S. Your survey response is NOT linked to your contact information.

If you would like to take a follow up interview, please click the link below and enter your preferred way of contact.

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3q836qLvcXw1sRT

Interviewee:

Major_____ Year in school _____

1. Please describe your general experiences in Ames.

2. Please describe your experiences as a Chinese international student
   1) What are the demographics of your classes?

   2) How "aware" are you of your race while in class?

   3) How about around campus, in activities, or in the international students' community?

3. How would you describe your different social groups/friends from campus, school, and the community?

4. Have you encountered any type of mircoaggression because of your identity as a Chinese international student?

5. If yes, please share some obvious, overt examples of encounters you have had that you would define as "microaggression" or motivated by race/culture.

   1) Some examples you've encountered with faculty.
   2) Some examples you've encountered with other students.
   3) Some examples you've encountered with other people around Ames.
   4) "Who" did/said it; where were you, etc.

6. Please share some less obvious examples or encounters you have had that you feel were motivated by your race/culture.
   1) If less obvious, why does it still seem like race/race-related behavior?

7. Please describe your reactions to the overt and covert examples of microaggression.
   1) What did you do in the moment, after, etc?
   2) How did you react to the experience?
   3) Did other people hear/see what happened and what did they do?

8. Can you explain an experience where you weren't sure if it was microaggression but you felt as though they were targeting you because of your race?
   1) Explain why you thought it was race related.
   2) How did it make you feel?
   3) How did you react verbally and nonverbally?
   4) How did others react?

9. How do you think being an international student influences the way you experience race, diversity, and/or race related encounters?

10. How do you think being a Chinese international student influences the way you experience race, diversity, and/or race-related encounters?

11. Please describe how your experiences might be similar or different outside the college environment; in a community larger or smaller than Ames; other environments you want to address.

12. How has microaggression affected your perception about
    1) Your overall educational experience?

    2) Your stay in the U.S.?

    3) The people in the U.S.?

13. Would you recommend your friend/ relative in China to come and study at your institution? Why or Why not?

14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your overall experiences in the U.S.?