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Exploring Intercultural Sensitivity levels of Chinese and non-Chinese working together in
China.

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As societies and individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact, the cultivation of intercultural sensitivity becomes critical for the development of intercultural communication competence. China, and its growing number of cross-cultural working environments, especially in the foreign language education sector are ideal for studying intercultural communication. However, and given the existing gap in research regarding intercultural sensitivity in this context, the present study analyzes what levels of intercultural sensitivity exist among Chinese and non-Chinese working together in cross-cultural environments across China. At the same time, this study investigates which factors contribute to differentiating intercultural sensitivity levels among respondents. To answer these questions, a number of online surveys were conducted in order to examine background information from a group of Chinese and non-Chinese ($N=62$) working together in cross-cultural environments across China. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) was used to measure intercultural sensitivity levels among respondents. Additionally, six interviews were conducted as complementary to the quantitative data. Results indicated that respondents scored high to very high levels of intercultural sensitivity across the five dimensions of the ISS. Furthermore, factors such as fluency in the host country's language (Chinese mandarin) and having previous overseas study experience showed a significant impact on the level of intercultural sensitivity of participants. No statistically significant impact was found on factors such as gender, having close international contacts, nationality, and having a language teaching profession. Lastly, important differences were found in the reported experiences of participants in comparison to their IS levels in the areas of Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Engagement and Interaction Attentiveness. The findings in this study highlight the significance of having overseas study experience and foreign language ability as factors that contribute to higher levels of IS. Nevertheless, the comparison of quantitative and qualitative results suggest that the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale may require further examination as to how it captures the concept of IS.

Keywords: Chinese, non-Chinese, intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural environments, intercultural sensitivity scale.

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1. Introduction

Within the structure of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) taken on in September 2015 by the United Nations, the concept of culture began to gain importance for the SDGs agenda, an acknowledgment that UNESCO marked as ‘unparalleled’ (Hosagrahar, 2017). However, the relationship that exists between culture and sustainable development has not been completely explicit. Different approaches to this relationship have been developed and can be considered as follows:

The first approach is ‘culture in sustainability’ where culture is considered as a constitutive element of sustainability. This relationship sees culture as something we should preserve due to its intrinsic value (cultural heritage, knowledge, history and aesthetics). Secondly, ‘culture for sustainability’ sees culture as a resource. This approach perceives the value of culture as an instrument that can help achieve goals and objectives (educational, human well-being, economic or environmental). The third approach defines ‘culture as sustainability’ in which sustainability is embedded within culture. This last relationship, according to scholars, has been largely neglected (Soini & Dessein, 2016).

1.1 Culture as sustainability

Seen as sustainability, culture is understood as the pillar that mediates between the social, ecological, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. It acts as the platform that allows for transformation towards sustainability. In this way, culture as sustainability is not only capable of linking the first and second approaches which appeal to the protection and preservation of cultural diversity for its intrinsic and instrumental value, but more importantly, it contemplates all the aspects of sustainable development (Soini & Dessein, 2016).

Nevertheless, as exposed above, culture as sustainability has not yet been made evident in the structuring and understanding of the SDGs as seen, for example, in the statement of SDG4. Targets 4.7 and 4.C:

“4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and

appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

4.C By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed" (Shulla et al. F, 2020 p. 3).

In the configuring of these objectives, the concept of culture seems to remain as an element that vaguely links to sustainable development. It is seen as part of the SDG's agenda, but it is not explicitly stated that it is embedded within the very process of sustainable development. As a result, more efforts with regards to culture as sustainability are required in order to demonstrate how culture distinctly contributes to the SDGs.

1.2 Observing culture and its relationship to development in the context of China

As world migration and international travel increases, culture and cultural diversity have been approached from different perspectives as well. One major approach that falls in line with the vision of culture as a resource for development is stated below:

"Globalization continues to redefine our identity in the workplace, at home, and other arenas of our life by breaking down the stereotypical roles we played at previous years...Globalization demands a community where people of different cultural backgrounds must learn to be interdependent in order to survive. As a result, the need for intercultural communication competence in the globalizing society becomes indispensable for a peaceful and successful life in the new millennium" (Chen, 2000 p. 6).

Within this conception, culture awareness and intercultural communication competence are seen as resources for achieving development (mostly of an economic nature).

In the context of China, for example, there has been an explosive growth in the need for foreign languages for many decades. In fact, recruitment of foreign language teachers has been greater in China than in any other country in the world. According to authors such as Xu (1990) as quoted by Cortazzi & Jin (1996), the purpose of foreign language learning in China is to prepare Chinese to join a more competitive, professional and international corporate world.

For this reason, social, economic and political forces have been important factors in the large-scale expansion of English teaching in China (Hildebrandt & Liu, 1991 as quoted by Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). According to scholars, many students in China feel highly motivated and determined to learn English. It is noted that acquiring a good level of English will greatly help, for instance, in getting a better job, joining international companies and joint ventures, having international connections, understanding technical information and/or even traveling or studying overseas.

At the same time, China has been able to attract visitors, workers and students from all over the world, a phenomenon that has contributed to shifting its position within the global order. According to official statistics (Chen, 2020), 33% of inbound tourism in 2018 in China was for sightseeing and leisure, 15% were foreigners aiming to work in China, and 12% of them visited China for meetings or business. Moreover, between, 2001 and 2018, the number of foreigners working in China increased nearly six times. This means that in about 20 years, the total number of foreigners visiting China increased from 8.43 million in 1999 to 47.95 million in 2018. Lastly, data shows that the number of foreign students in China increased from 18,200 to 163,835 between 2001 and 2018 accounting for an average annual increase of 13.80%. The report explains that this impressive upward trend in the inflow of foreign students is the result of the "*China Education Reform and Development Program (2010)*" and "*China Study Abroad Program*" which put China at the top destination for studying in Asia in 2019.

1.3 Why has China promoted international exchanges and foreign language education?

Scholars such as Jacques (2009) and Kang (2010) as quoted by Lo & Pan, S. (2020), explain that China's global rise in migration and attraction of international workers and students has focused on three main aspects: 1. Soft power and China's higher-education policy for the purpose of increasing China's international power relations. 2. China's soft power and Chinese discourses which aim to expand Chinese views in international academic debates, and 3. Internationalization with 'Chinese characteristics' which refers to China's cultural diplomacy.

Within this framework, culture is used as a means to an end. On one hand, it is an element used of foreign language learning which functions as a resource for economic development, and on the other hand, it serves as a means for social and political influence through the establishment of foreign policies.

1.4 My experience as an international student and worker in China

It was within this context that my visit to China took place in 2013 as an international student and eventually as a foreign language instructor. Naturally, while living and working in China for the first time, I experienced a relatively high level of cultural shock. The experienced challenges were not only due to language limitations, but also some level of miscommunication and misunderstandings. Consequently, this had a negative impact on my building relationships with locals. Likewise, I noticed that some of my Chinese and non-Chinese peers reported having similar experiences. We would often agree on how difficult it was to build effective work and personal relationships with each other and how day-to-day communication would be affected by misunderstandings and miscommunication.

As a result, I was left wondering why we experienced such difficulties when working in this intercultural environment. I was also interested in exploring and understanding the gap that existed in these intercultural interactions and whether it could be improved through the cultivation of cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence.

As I continued my career as a foreign language teacher in China, I became involved in the recruitment, training and supervision of a group of Chinese and non-Chinese teachers who were based in China and/or were recruited from overseas. The team consisted of 35 instructors coming from more than 15 different countries. Working alongside this diverse team was without a doubt a challenging, but most importantly a rewarding experience which eventually inspired my masters' research.

The challenges that occurred during the intercultural exchanges in this environment were a signal that part of our responsibilities as language instructors was not only to help students build on their language skills, but also to understand what intercultural communication entails. Students, instructors and members of staff often expressed an interest towards cultural differences, perceptions, ways of thinking, communication styles and how they impact our day-to-day interactions. However, and despite this growing interest, there is still a gap in the efforts that promote these discussions across international working environments in China such as the one I worked in.

Similar to the need for a more explicit conception of culture as sustainable development, more awareness surrounding intercultural exchanges and intercultural communication is required.

For these reasons, the present study aims to generate more consciousness towards the importance of culture and intercultural sensitivity as concepts that are embedded in processes for sustainable development such as the intercultural exchanges that so often occur in working environments in China.

In order to pursue these aims, the objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the level of intercultural sensitivity of a group of Chinese and non-Chinese working together in cross-cultural environments in China.
2. To investigate the factors that contribute to differentiating the level of intercultural sensitivity among Chinese and non-Chinese working in cross-cultural environments.

I envision this study to not only further contribute to the existing data and research surrounding intercultural exchanges in China, intercultural communication competences and intercultural sensitivity, but also to acquaint fellow Chinese and non-Chinese (particularly foreign language instructors like myself) with the concept of intercultural sensitivity and its importance in everyday intercultural exchanges. Moreover, this study aims to inspire and encourage the creation, development and implementation of educational programs that stimulate culture as sustainability and intercultural sensitivity.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Conceptualizing culture and intercultural exchanges

Understanding the nature of intercultural exchanges, intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity requires an exploration of the very concept of culture.

To begin with, plenty of definitions and approaches can be found in literature surrounding the concept of culture. It is a concept that has been addressed from multiple disciplines and systems of thought and has become the object of numerous debates across disciplines. Part of the difficulty with this term resides in its numerous meanings and how it has been attached to different political or ideological agendas. As a result, defining and conceptualizing culture is a task that can go from difficult to extremely political (Spencer -Oatey, 2012). For this reason, this study does not aim to understand culture as a concept that is static or unchanging, but instead as a complex, blurred and ambiguous term.

One major voice in the exploration of the concept of culture was Hofstede's (1994) who proposed a cultural dimensions theory that identified certain differences and similarities among national cultures from around the world. Nevertheless, from a critical standpoint, authors such as Dervin (2010); Holliday (2010) and Virkama (2010) as quoted by Nishimura-Sahi, Wallin & Eskola, (2017) highlight the danger in understanding culture in such essentialist way. According to these scholars, essentialist approaches to culture lead to stereotypes and cultural generalizations that hinder the understanding of the complexity of the individual. In other words, any generalized knowledge about a certain culture can lead to stereotypes about individuals and the groups they identify with (Jokikkoko, 2010). At the same time, it is dangerous to emphasize only the differences in national culture and ethnicity as it creates a dichotomy between the Self and the Other and fails to see recognize similarities in values, beliefs, preferences, and realities that can be shared among individuals.

For these reasons, the concept of culture can be better approached in a more holistic way. Scholars such as Antal & Friedman (2008) as well as Jokikkoko (2010) refer to a vision of culture as a set of values, traditions, social and political relationships that, although can be shared within a group of people, do not necessarily represent all of its members. Therefore, intercultural exchanges are understood are not only mere encounters between different national cultures, but most importantly, between culturally complex individuals whose geographic

location, language, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, preferences, among other factors, constitute the complexity of culture.

2.2 What is intercultural competence?

Having observed intercultural exchanges as encounters between culturally complex individuals coming from different backgrounds, I will now explore the concept of intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence has also been subject of relative disagreement among scholars. Different names have been used to refer to this concept, for example transcultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, cross-cultural adaptation, and intercultural sensitivity (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe 2007 p. 9). However, there is an understanding that seems to point towards the same direction among all conceptualizations; intercultural competence is an individual's ability to functionally interact with people from different cultural backgrounds (Antal & Friedman, 2008; Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe 2007; Bennett, 1998).

Nevertheless, and for the purpose of this study, the concept of intercultural sensitivity differs from intercultural competence as an internal trait that individuals develop before becoming interculturally competent (Antal & Friedman, 2008).

2.3 What is intercultural sensitivity?

Despite being linked to the concept of intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, is understood as a type of sensitivity towards individual differences also known as interpersonal sensitivity (Bronfenbrenner, Harding, & Galwey, 1958).

Berlew (1961), for instance, adds that "there are two types of sensitivities; sensitivity to the generalized other and interpersonal sensitivity" (p. 7). With regards to the sensitivity to the generalized other, individuals appear sensitive to their own set of social norms, while interpersonal sensitivity is the ability that individuals have to differentiate how others' behavior, feelings and perceptions differ from theirs. Taking a similar standpoint, Chen (1997) observed that intercultural sensitivity allows individuals to accept personal complexity, avoid communication inflexibility, become conscious in their interactions, appreciate different ideas,

and tolerate cultural shock (Hart and Burks 1972; Hart, Carlson, and Eadie 1980 as quoted by Chen, 1997)

Bennet (1986), on the other hand, proposes that intercultural sensitivity can be the result of a series of phases that individuals experience when they come in contact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The author presents a six-level multidimensional process where an individual goes from being ethnocentric (a stage where individuals perceive that anything that is not part of their own cultural knowledge and experience is unusual, weird or wrong) to being ethnorelative (a stage where individuals do not make judgments based on their cultural experience and knowledge). In other words, intercultural sensitivity becomes a desired stage in this model. I will be referring to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in more detail in the following sections.

Furthermore, Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) added that intercultural sensitivity can influence the ability to successfully interact with other people which is why the concept is inherently linked to the concept of intercultural competence. Chen (1997), for example, suggests making a distinction between intercultural competence, intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity. According to the author, “intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity are elements necessary for intercultural competence” Chen (1997 p. 11).

“That is intercultural awareness represents the cognitive ability, intercultural sensitivity represents the emotional ability and intercultural competence represents the behavioral ability of an individual. They are all mutually independent and interdependent elements, which together guide individuals to achieve successful intercultural exchanges” (Chen, 1997 p. 11)

2.4 How is intercultural sensitivity measured?

As explained above, intercultural sensitivity denotes the emotional side of intercultural competence and encompasses beliefs, feelings, emotions, reactions, intra and interpersonal skills that culturally complex individuals bring into contact during intercultural interactions. Given this nature, intercultural sensitivity is not an evident or tangible concept that can be easily observed or measured.

However, various scholars have embarked on the journey to create instruments that explore the concept of intercultural sensitivity. These tools have been empirical and validated instruments used to measure the conceptual meaning of intercultural sensitivity.

2.4.1 “The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)” by (Hammer & Bennett, 2003)

I will start by examining the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) which is an instrument containing 50 items that aim to measure the level of intercultural sensitivity of an individual. The IDI came about from conceptual framework developed by Mitchell R. Hammer and Milton Bennett (2003), and it draws on the concepts from Bennett’s Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (As quoted by Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003 pp 22-23). This instrument has been used for a wide variety of purposes ranging from individual use to groups, training programs, evaluations, assessments as well as for research.

A study which used the IDI concluded that the instrument can generate an overall score that measures intercultural sensitivity as well as scores for the different scales and sub-stages of the DMIS (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). According to the author, an individual’s state of development can be defined by the overall score of the model. Likewise, further studies such as Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, and DeJaeghere’s (2003) stated that their results proved that “the IDI is a reliable measurement tool that has little or no social desirability bias and correlates reasonably to Bennett’s DMIS model” (p. 468). Nevertheless, and despite its wide recognition, the DMIS model has been criticized for presenting only a linear movement of development that ignores aspects of intercultural sensitivity are non-linear. For example, individuals intercultural sensitivity may experience changes that are cyclical or transformational (Bennett, 2017).

Furthermore accessing the IDI requires a great financial investment that as an individual and starting researcher, one cannot afford. For this reason, Further search on more accessible IS measurement instruments was necessary.

2.4.2 “The Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ISCI)” (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992)

This instrument is, according to authors, “a report containing 46 items that uses a Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly agree to very strongly disagree” (p. 415). This tool was developed to measure, evaluate and predict effective and ineffective intercultural communication of personnel working overseas. In a study which used the ISCI, the scores produced by this instrument were equated with the respondents’ success in intercultural interactions overseas. The main factors of intercultural sensitivity were identified as respect, empathy, flexibility, interest in culture, tolerance and technical skill (Kapoor & Comadena, 1996).

Despite its development and application, several errors were found in the ISCI. “The validity test of this instrument demonstrated that there was some ambiguity in the tone and direction of the items within the scale. As a result, the ISCI is considered relatively defective” (Kapoor, Blue, Kinsky, & Drager, 2000 p. 215). Additionally, one problem with the Bhawuk & Brislin’s (1992) instrument is that “the items that were chosen to measure behavior patterns are quite abstract in tone and substance” (p. 26). As a result, Kapoor & Comadena (1996) concluded that the measuring items for assessing an individuals’ everyday behavior were rather ineffective.

For these reasons, the ISCI does not prove to be an effective and validated instrument for measuring and conceptualizing the concept of intercultural sensitivity. As a result, further literature research was done.

2.4.3 “The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)” (Chen & Starosta, 2000)

Lastly, after analyzing the validity, reliability and accessibility of the previous instruments, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) developed by Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta (2000) was selected as the measuring tool for the present study.

“The ISS encompasses concepts from behavioral skills and cross-cultural attitudes theories and models” (Fritz & Mollenberg, 2001 p. 12). Its latest version is also a comparatively shorter tool consisting of 24 items/statements which are based on five dimensions:

“1. Interaction Engagement (e.g., ‘I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures’), 2. Respect for Cultural Differences (e.g., ‘I think people from other cultures are

narrow-minded’), 3. Interaction Confidence (e.g., ‘I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures’), 4. Interaction Enjoyment (e.g., ‘I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures’), and 5. Interaction Attentiveness (e.g., ‘I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures’)” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 98)

The five dimensions are described below:

Interaction Engagement: this dimension is related to respondents’ feelings about participating in cross-cultural communication. It aims to measure the willingness to communicate and be open-minded with individuals from different cultural backgrounds

Respect For Cultural Differences: this dimension is related to respondents’ orientation or tolerance towards peer culture and views. It aims to measure self-acceptance. According to Chen & Starosta (2000), having a high sense of self-acceptance is important for individuals to cope with psychological pressure and isolation in processes of intercultural communication and interaction. Self-acceptance can improve positive emotions and enable people to accurately recognize and respect contextual differences in cross-cultural communication.

Interaction confidence: this dimension assesses respondents’ confidence in a cross-cultural environment. In other words, how they perceive their confidence in intercultural exchanges.

Interaction enjoyment: interaction enjoyment involves the respondents’ positive and/or negative reactions to inter-cultural communication.

Interaction attentiveness: this last dimension is related to the respondents’ sensitivity towards the ongoing process communication with people from different cultural backgrounds. It aims to describe social behaviors related to the concentration and perception of individuals in interaction. A higher degree of Interaction Attentiveness indicates that messages can be better received and understood. In other words, interculturally sensitive interactors tend to know how to organize and maintain a conversation by properly handling the process aspects of the interaction.

2.5 Theoretical framework behind Chen and Starosta's model

The theoretical model of Chen & Starosta's comprises three conceptual dimensions that together cultivate intercultural communication competence. These are "intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural adroitness" (Fritz & Mollenberg, 2001 p. 4).

"Intercultural awareness, as a prerequisite of intercultural communication competence, refers to the perceptions and knowledge that we have of other cultures and affects how we think and behave in intercultural interactions" (Fritz & Mollenberg, 2001 p. 4).

On the other hand, "intercultural sensitivity contains the affective elements of intercultural communication competence. This dimension includes the willingness to understand, appreciate, and accept intercultural differences" (Chen & Starosta, 1998 p. 35).

Lastly, "intercultural adroitness addresses elements of behavior necessary for effective intercultural communication competence. It refers to the ability to achieve communication goals in intercultural interactions" (Chen & Starosta, 1996 p. 356).

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

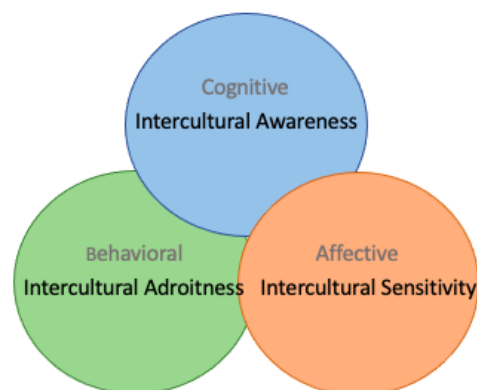


Figure 1. The three dimensions of intercultural communication competence

At the same time, Chen & Starosta highlight refer to "six affective elements within the dimension of intercultural sensitivity: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 80).

While focusing on the element of empathy, the authors point out that the more empathetic an individual is, the more interculturally sensitive they will be. In fact, this factor has been

considered a core component of intercultural sensitivity among authors including Bennett (1986), Yum (1989) as well as Chen and Starosta (2000) (as quoted by McMurray 2007).

As far as Chen & Starosta's model application and reliability are concerned, several studies have been carried out testing the instrument's reliability and validity. The authors of the instrument, for instance, found in their study that "the scale demonstrated strong reliability and appropriate concurrent and predictive validity" (Chen & Starosta, 2000 p. 12). Authors such as Fritz and Mollenberg (2001) used the ISS on a group of German students in Germany to test if the instrument could be used among groups of different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, "their study confirmed the validity of the overall structure of Chen and Starosta's instrument through confirmatory factor analysis and concluded that it was a reliable measuring instrument of intercultural sensitivity among German students" (Fritz and Mollenberg, 2001 p. 5).

2.6 Application of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

In this section, I will look at the findings and highlights of studies that have used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) among culturally diverse groups.

2.6.1 A study on intercultural sensitivity levels of university students in the USA. (McMurray, 2007)

A major study that applied the ISS was carried out by McMurray (2007). The author looked at how different factors such as traveling experience, length of time overseas, ethnical background, study level, age and gender affected intercultural sensitivity levels of students. The target sample were university students (both local and international) at a university in the USA.

The findings demonstrated that having international travel experience impacted IS levels which was explained by the value that students find in traveling to international destinations. They may develop a deeper understanding of cultural differences which inspire them to find new things about different cultures. One of the reasons, according to McMurray (2007) is to immerse themselves in these cultures with the purpose of learning the host country's language. When a person learns a new language, they acquire knowledge of the host country which is an inherent condition of the process of intercultural communication.

The author also concluded that international students showed no statistically significant difference in IS compared to domestic students. The dimension of Respect for Cultural

Differences was the first one to be compared. “This dimension represents how participants position or tolerate each other’s culture and insights” (Chen & Starosta, 2000 as quoted by McMurray, 2007 p. 24). The study reported that students with an international background scored higher levels of IS than domestic students. McMurray (2007) explains that this is due to the exposure to people from all over the world that international students have had. The author also explains that even though the United States has a multicultural population, it does not necessarily mean that its people are readily willing to interact with other cultures.

The next concept that McMurray (2007) compared in the two groups was "Interaction Confidence". This structure is related to the degree of confidence of participants in a cross-cultural environment (Chen & Starosta, 2000 p. 6). The author found that international students scored higher levels of IS than domestic students in this dimension because of their exposure to people from different cultural backgrounds during university. Also, it was found that many of these students had traveled abroad prior to university which allowed them to interact with people from different cultures in those experiences.

Likewise, the study found that graduate students showed no statistically significant difference in their level of intercultural sensitivity in comparison to undergraduates. The author explained that college students in the USA usually come into contact with people from different cultural backgrounds in the early years of university, which can likely give them a higher intercultural sensitivity. Another explanation may be that many of the young participants had already traveled abroad, so they came into contact with new cultures and other countries.

McMurray (2007) also pointed that the level of IS of students who did not participate in a study abroad program is not statistically significant compared to the level of those students who did not participate in a study abroad program. The author found this to be quite perplexing as the theory points out that study abroad program help improve intercultural sensitivity levels. However, one explanation, according to the author, is these study abroad experiences happened a long time ago and/or the length of these experiences is not significant.

Finally, the author found that there was no difference that could indicate that women have higher intercultural sensitivity than their male counterparts. However, the means scores from the ISS of women participants were higher than men’s. McMurray (2007) explains that in many cultures, women are brought up to be more understanding and more accustomed to others’ feelings (Goleman, 1998 as quoted McMurray 2007). This means that the female participants

in this study may have also had this type of upbringing, showed more empathy which resulted in higher levels of intercultural sensitivity.

2.6.2 A study on intercultural sensitivity levels of English language teachers in Turkey. (Altan, 2018)

Another relevant study was carried out by Altan (2018) who measured the intercultural sensitivity level of 70 Turkish ELT (English Teaching) pre-service teachers who took part in an intercultural course. The study highlighted the impact of completing a cross-cultural course on participants. The author also pointed that since only a few teacher education programs provide such courses, he believes the results have a strong teaching significance for teacher education programs. His results conclude that promoting intercultural sensitivity and multiculturalism may be a possible way to overcome ethnocentrism and reduce racial discrimination and conflict in culturally diverse group interactions.

2.6.3 A study on intercultural sensitivity levels of teachers from multicultural backgrounds in Spain. (Segura-Robles and Parra-González, 2019)

Segura-Robles and Parra-González (2019) also conducted a similar study to establish the level of intercultural sensitivity of 364 teachers from two multicultural cities in Spain (Melilla and Ceuta). The study found that teachers in these cities showed high intercultural sensitivity, which according to the authors is helpful for imparting sensitivity to students in a natural way. This also showed that teachers' background and training are variables that lead to the development of higher levels of intercultural sensitivity. The variables analyzed in this study were religion, age, gender, city origin and ethnic origin. Although the authors found differences in IS among participants, they concluded that the intensity of these differences is low and therefore cannot be regarded as relevant differences. Teachers seem to be willing to get acquainted with and get along with people from other cultures, which is greater than what is observed among people of different ages who have experienced migration processes. Furthermore, Segura-Robles and Parra-González (2019) conclude that the differences in IS of teachers in these cities are mainly due to two phenomena. First, the natural environment (most of these teachers grew up experiencing intercultural relationships since childhood or during teacher training (Littrell & Salas, 2005 as quoted by Segura-Robles and Parra-González, 2019). Secondly, they have already conducted a specific training. This last factor has a definite positive

impact on cross-cultural relations according to the authors (Okpara & Kabongo 2011 as quoted by Segura-Robles and Parra-González, 2019)

2.6.4 A study on intercultural sensitivity levels of participants of an intercultural training program. (Sachin, 2013)

Similarly, a study carried out by Sachin (2013) aimed to enhance intercultural sensitivity through the use of intercultural films and panel discussions with invited guests with two groups consisting of 9 participants. 16 group meetings were organized and data the participants' level of IS was checked before and after the interventions through the use of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS).

The results showed that participants in the focus group scored significantly higher levels of IS upon completing the course, while the scores of the participants in the control group were not significantly different (Sachin, 2013 p. 2). This study as well as Segura-Robles and Parra-González's (2019) shows the significance that intercultural training programs have on developing intercultural sensitivity.

2.6.5 A study on intercultural sensitivity levels of Chinese students in a university in Thailand. (Reungthai, 2012)

Finally, there is the study carried out by Reungthai (2012) who aimed to assess the level of intercultural sensitivity of a group Chinese undergraduate students who were completing a joint-program at a university in Thailand. The findings demonstrated that students scored high levels of intercultural sensitivity in the dimension of Interaction Engagement. However, intercultural sensitivity levels in the dimensions of Interaction Confidence, Interaction Attentiveness, and Respect for Cultural Differences were moderate (Reungthai, 2012 p. 57). Interaction Enjoyment was the dimension where Chinese students scored the lowest. The survey results show that most Chinese students show an open attitude towards students with large cultural differences. According to Phromsuthirak (2004 as quoted by Reungthai, 2012), This of the Zhuang ethnic group and Chinese have some similarities in verbal communication in language styles, so Chinese tend to pick words that have phonetic similarities in their spoken language. In addition, Chinese students use non-verbal cues to convey understanding in the dialogue process which showed higher levels of Interaction Engagement and Interaction Confidence.

2.7 Factors influencing intercultural sensitivity

With regards to which factors contribute to higher intercultural sensitivity levels, research indicates that even though there is still lack of agreement among theorists on which factors truly benefit intercultural sensitivity, factors such as gender, nationality, speaking a foreign language, overseas study experience and having international close contacts seem to be highlighted among scholars.

2.7.1 Gender

The first factor to be discussed is gender. The studies from Altshuler, Sussman and Kachur, (2003); Margarethe, Hannes and Wiesinger (2012); McMurrery (2007), Ruiz-Bernardo, Ferrández-Berrueco and Sales-Ciges (2012) and Kairavuori (2012) consider that there are differences between men and women in behavioral roles and task performance. These researchers believe that gender does affect behavior, and that women tend to show more intercultural sensitivity than men.

According to these authors, research has indicated that there are some gender differences favoring girls when it comes to empathy. In other words, females exhibit more empathy than their male counterparts. In an empirical study among 11–18-year-old Finnish school students (N=665), for example, researchers found that girls were significantly more empathetic than boys (Kalliopuska, 1983). However, it was concluded that empathy is a trait that can be developed among boys and girls at school .

2.7.2 Nationality

Another factor that scholars have considered as promoting intercultural sensitivity is nationality. The works of De Santos Velasco (2004), Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard (2006), McMurrery (2007) and Lytle, Barker and Cornwell (2011) point towards the idea that living in a host culture or country and having personal experience with people from different cultures both relate to intercultural sensitivity. The authors report that people living in a host country tend to be more interculturally sensitive since they are more exposed to cultural diversity and may have more opportunities to meet and relate to people from different cultures.

Although intercultural exposure has been understood through different perspectives, these authors explain that exposure to different cultures during middle childhood and/or early

adolescence can have a significant impact on forming interpersonal skills which can then translate into intercultural sensitivity.

2.7.3 Speaking a foreign language

The next factor is foreign language ability which has also been considered as a variable that promotes intercultural sensitivity. The work of authors such as Olsen and Kroger (2001), Sizoo et al. (2004) and Vilà (2006) presented extensive analysis on factors that influence intercultural sensitivity and concluded that having an ability in a second language (or multiple languages) does promote intercultural sensitivity. Likewise, the findings from the study carried out by Ruokonen and Kairavuori (2012) showed that individuals who speak various languages other than their native tongue appeared to be more interculturally sensitive than those who do not. According to their findings, fluent individuals in a foreign language describe their behavior in more ethnorelativistic ways than other respondents. This can be explained by the personal experiences in cross-cultural communication and interactions that may have developed a level of empathy and cross-cultural social skills.

2.7.4 Overseas study experiences

Another factor influencing cross-cultural sensitivity has been studying abroad. Authors such as Bennet (2009) pointed out overseas study programs e.g. international student exchange programs, no matter what study level, type or focus, continue to contribute to intercultural communication competence. This means that when individuals partake in an overseas study program, they have direct contact with the culture of the host country. This contact allows for more successful interaction and adaptation to the host culture (Bennet, 2009). According to Williams (2005), the study results showed that individuals who study abroad generally show greater improvement in cross-cultural communication skills than individuals who have never studied abroad, while individuals who choose to study abroad have higher cross-cultural communication skills. His findings also showed that exposure to various cultures is actually a better indicator of cross-cultural communication skills compared to pre-test and post-test scores.

2.7.5 Having international close contacts

The next factor is having international close contacts. Literature on international educational environments has shown that even though domestic students have a positive view of international students, most surveys point out that domestic students are basically not interested in interacting with international peers. This situation has been observed in international working environments as well. Burns (1991), Nesdale and Todd (1993) and Summers and Volet (2008) agree on the idea that individuals from different cultural backgrounds usually do not find it easy to interact with each other. On the contrary, they prefer to connect with people with similar cultural backgrounds. Summers and Volet (2008) also concluded that the lack of interaction between people of different cultures seems to be not only an isolated phenomenon, but also a characteristic of certain people in certain cultures. Consequently, these studies point that the people whose close friends come from different nationalities and cultures tend to be more interculturally sensitive.

2.7.6 Having a language teaching profession

Finally, I decided to explore the factor of having a teaching profession as an element to consider in intercultural sensitivity levels.

“Language teaching education is often thought to be inherently compatible with multiculturalism” (Kubota, 2010 p. 2). However, the author explains that in many cases, the approach to cultural diversity in foreign language education is quite superficial as it reinforces color or difference-blindness. It also sees the culture of the Other as ‘exotic’, and disguises issues of power and privilege.

In the case of English as a second language, for example, Kubota (2010) explains that second language education supports ideas of monolingualism, monoculturalism, normatism and elitism. Some examples are how English as a second language (ESL) is taught to immigrant students with the aim of assimilating them into a monolingual English-speaking majority without considering their own language inheritance. ESL also seems to reinforce the ideals, values, religion, ethnicity, culture and social class of the majority. Moreover, it presents a version of English as the standard or ‘norm’ for communication as opposed to other varieties or dialects (nonnative or nonstandard).

Similarly, authors such as Crozet & Liddicoat (1999) concluded that multiculturalism has been overlooked in many second and foreign language teaching education contexts. For this reason, the authors propose the development of Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) programs. According to Crozet & Liddicoat (1999), the goal of ILT is to help learners transcend from a singular world view to the development of intercultural competence through the learning process of a second/foreign language. Byram's (1995) understanding of an intercultural speaker, as cited by Crozet & Liddicoat (1999) is:

“someone who can exhibit competences and sociolinguistic awareness in relation to language and the context in which it is used in order to 1. manage interaction across cultural boundaries, 2. anticipate misunderstandings caused by difference in values, meanings and beliefs, and 3. cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands of engagement with otherness” (Byram, 1995 p.32)

3. Relevance of study and research questions

The literature review of studies that have used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale shows that the ISS has been validated and applied to various international groups and contexts. Moreover, thanks to the findings of studies such as McMurray's (2007), Segura-Robles and Parra-González' (2019) and Altan's (2018) various factors such as gender, nationality, study abroad experience, teacher education were found to have an impact on intercultural sensitivity, which provides a fundamental platform for data analysis of the present study.

Nevertheless, it is evident that there are still no studies in the context of China as a host country that explore the influence of the aforementioned variables on the intercultural sensitivity of internationals and locals (Chinese and non-Chinese).

Therefore, the present study aims to get a better understanding of the intercultural sensitivity levels of Chinese and non-Chinese working together in cross-cultural environments across China. The specific research questions are:

1. What is the level of intercultural sensitivity of a group of Chinese and non-Chinese working together in cross-cultural environments in China?
2. Do variables such as gender, having close international contacts, coming from a host country, having a high ability in the host country's language, having overseas study experience, and having foreign a language teacher profession differentiate the level of intercultural sensitivity among respondents?

4. Methodology of research

To understand the status of intercultural sensitivity levels in the context of China, this study focused on Chinese (locals) and non-Chinese (internationals) language instructors who work together in cross-cultural environments, particularly language training centers across China. The focus group was selected due to the contextual framework of China and its increasing number of language training centers and foreign language instructors.

4.1 Quantitative data collection

In order to reach this focus group, an online survey which included the 24-item Intercultural Sensitivity Scale by Chen & Starosta (2000) was administered to respondents. This study used “non-probability sampling techniques, more specifically convenience sampling and purposive sampling” (Buddenbaum and Novak, 2001 p. 4). As mentioned by McMurray (2007), “it was necessary that the focus group was easily reachable and that there were no exclusionary pre-requisites to participating in the research” (p. 35).

With regards to the purposive technique, both non-Chinese and Chinese language instructors were targeted so as to obtain a diverse cultural representation. Respondents were reached via e-mail, telephone, Skype, WeChat, Facebook, LinkedIn and personal referrals.

The data collection process was also in accordance with the research procedures at the University of Oulu and the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. Before answering the online questionnaire, participants were presented a consent form where they agreed to terms of confidentiality and anonymity. These included the following statements: 1) all data will be treated confidentially; 2) participants' names and all other identifying information will be kept to ensure that participants remain anonymous; and 3) data will not be provided to any third party. Only participants who approved these conditions through verification confirmation (I am willing to participate in the research, I allow the use of my data to be collected for this research purposes, and I allow the information that I have provided to be stored and archived for further research use) took part in the survey. Likewise, the same consent form was presented to participants who took part in the video/audio interviews during the qualitative data collection.

The online survey was created using Wenjuan (www.wenjuan.com), “a Chinese commercial online survey service provider that has been extensively used for research purposes in China” (Mei & Brown, 2018 p. 3). Considering the accessibility limitations to services such

as Google Docs in China, Wenjuan was selected as an alternative tool to collect data from participants who were based in China. The authors add that among other benefits, “the basic free version of Wenjuan has no response limit, that is, no limit to the number of questionnaires, participants or data to be exported” (Mei & Brown, 2018 p. 5). In addition, it also supports export of draft questionnaires, encryption of collected data, and previewing of questionnaires on multiple devices through the scanning of a Quick Response (QR) code.

4.2 Elements of the quantitative survey

The online survey consisted of two main sections. The first section collected basic information on respondents’ background and the different factors that may influence intercultural sensitivity levels. The second part presented respondents with the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale.

4.2.1 Basic information

1. *Nationality*: this information was used to check whether respondents came from a *host* or a *non-host* country and the impact of this variable on IS. The concepts of *host country* and *non-host country* were observed in studies such as Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard’s, (2006); De Santos Velasco’s (2004); Lyttle, Barker and Cornwell’s (2011); and McMurray’s (2007). Countries that traditionally have moderate to high rates of international immigrants are considered *host countries*. *Non-host* countries, on the other hand, do not traditionally exhibit moderate to high rates of international immigrants
2. *Gender*: this information was used to test the impact of gender on IS.
3. *Language* (mother tongue, spoken ability in Chinese mandarin, and daily most used language) Recently, Wang and Lehtomäki (2021) have shown Chinese ethnic member’s differential socio-cultural attachments to mother tongue and the national language of Mandarin depending on the institutional regulation of language in use. For this reason, information on respondents’ mother tongue and use of languages provided an insight of how language is not only used as a means for communication but also as a symbolic and cultural concept linked to identity (Steffensen and Kramersch 2017 as quoted by Wang & Lehtomäki, 2021).
4. *Highest educational diploma*: this information was used to identify respondents educational background.

5. *Overseas travel and purpose of travel experience*: this information was used to identify respondents who have had overseas study experiences and the impact of this variable on IS.
6. *Length of stay in China* (for non-Chinese respondents): this information was used to identify the average length of stay in China of non-Chinese respondents.
7. *Description of current job*: this information was used to identify language instructors among all respondents and test the impact of this profession on IS.
8. *Close friends' nationality*: this information was used to check whether respondents had close contacts from cultural backgrounds different from their own and the impact of this variable on IS.
9. *Partner's nationality*: this information was used to check whether respondents were in a partner relationship with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

4.2.2 Instrument: “the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) by Chen & Starosta (2000)”

Chen & Starosta (2000) developed the following scale under the name of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS).

“The scale lists 25 statements referring to different intercultural situations and opinions. Respondents should either agree or disagree to each statement by using a 5-point Likert-Scale (I strongly agree, I agree, I somewhat agree, I disagree, I strongly disagree)” Chen & Starosta (2000, p. 13)

1. “I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures”
2. “I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded”
3. “I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures”
4. “I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures”
5. “I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures”
6. “I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures”
7. “I don't like to be with people from different cultures”
8. “I respect the values of people from different cultures”
9. “I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures”
10. “I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures”

11. "I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts"
12. "I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures"
13. "I am open-minded to people from different cultures"
14. "I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures"
15. "I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures"
16. "I respect the ways people from different cultures behave"
17. "I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures"
18. "I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures"
19. "I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction"
20. "I think my culture is better than other cultures"
21. "I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction"
22. "I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons"
23. "I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues"
24. "I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me" (Chen & Starosta, 2000 p. 14)

"The five dimensions in the ISS are spread throughout the 24 statements and are broken down into: Interaction Engagement (7 items), Respect for Cultural Differences (6 items), Interaction Confidence (5 items), Interaction Enjoyment (3 items), and Interaction Attentiveness (3 items)" (Chen & Starosta, 2000 p. 15)

"Respondents completing the ISS should rank their responses in terms of levels of disagreement or agreement to the statements contained in the questionnaire. The scale is aimed to measure an individual's level of intercultural sensitivity. According to the authors, attaining higher the scores of this measure is suggestive of higher levels of intercultural sensitivity" (Chen & Starosta, 2000 p. 15)

4.3 Online interviews

Regarding sample size in quantitative studies, an effect size of $d = .4$ and a number between 100, 200, or even more participants is generally a good first estimate. When the sample size is small, however, results may lack generalizability and clarity (Brysbaert, 2019). Consequently, and as the sample size in this study was considered statistically limited ($N = 62$), it was necessary to gather additional data that could complement the number of collected surveys. Therefore, 6 interviews were selected from the surveys and from the intended population (male and female Chinese and non-Chinese language instructors working in intercultural environments in language centers across China). The interviews were carried out via Zoom and ranged between 30 and 50 minutes.

The purpose of these interviews was to have access to more data related to intercultural sensitivity and the dimensions where participants scored the highest and lowest levels of IS. Moreover, these interviews helped capture the voice of participants in the study.

4.4 Data description

The intended target population of this study were non-Chinese and Chinese language instructors who have working experience in language training centers across China. Nevertheless, upon reviewing the data, it was found that many respondents' occupations differed from language instruction. However, all respondents (Chinese and non-Chinese) reported working in crosscultural environments across China which corresponds to the general target population of this study. During qualitative data collection, special attention was given to respondents who reported working as language instructors.

4.5 Quantitative data analysis methods

Once surveys were exported, a codebook was used in order to convert the survey responses into numerical data. Then, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis purposes.

First, descriptive statistics analysis were used to present frequencies and percentages. The mean score of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) was then calculated and interpreted according to the mean of the standard rating scale of intercultural competence

“Between 4.51 and 5.00 = Very high intercultural sensitivity
Between 3.51 and 4.50 = High intercultural sensitivity
Between 2.51 and 3.50 = Neutral
Between 1.51 and 2.50 = Low intercultural sensitivity
Between 1.00 and 1.50 = Very low intercultural sensitivity” (Paige et al, 2003 p. 13)

Furthermore, and according to the methods applied in previous studies, “the statements 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 were reverse coded before summing the 24 items” (McMurray, 2007 p. 38). According to the author:

“The questionnaire has both positively and negatively worded items. For example, item 1: ‘I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures’ is positively worded whereas item 7: ‘I don’t like to be with people from different cultures’ is negatively worded. Reverse-coding the negatively-keyed items ensures that all items (both positively and negatively worded) are consistent with each other in terms of what the questionnaire is measuring: agree= more intercultural sensitivity, disagree= less intercultural sensitivity. In other words, when participants scored a (1) ‘I strongly disagree’ to statement 7: ‘I don’t like to be with people from different cultures’, the score was then recoded to a (5). This is based on the assumption that a respondent that scores a (1) ‘I strongly disagree’ to ‘I don’t like to be with people from different cultures’ is similar to an agreement to item 1 ‘I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures’” (McMurray, 2007 p. 39)

In order to obtain the mean scores of the five dimensions within the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), composites were created by using the *transform* and *compute variable* tools on SPSS. Then, the dimensions with the highest and lowest mean scores were identified and individual statements within these dimensions were extracted. This helped pinpoint where the gap in intercultural sensitivity was among participants as well as the areas where participants were showing high levels of intercultural sensitivity.

Finally, the variables gender (male vs female), ability in the host country’s language (fluent vs non-speakers of Chinese), nationality (locals vs host country nationals), having international close friends (locals with vs locals without international close friends) and (non-Chinese with vs non-Chinese without Chinese close friends), and language teaching profession (respondents with vs respondents without a language teaching profession) were analyzed. This analysis

consisted of an independent t-test which extracted the means scores of each of the groups and compared it to the means of each of the five dimensions. This helped identify significant differences in the mean scores of each one of the groups. In other words, the independent t-test was used to analyze whether these variables had any impact on the level of intercultural sensitivity of each of the groups.

4.6 Qualitative data analysis methods

In an attempt to complement the data collected from the surveys and further understand the areas where respondents scored the highest and lowest levels of intercultural sensitivity, 6 interviews were carried out. The interviewees were Chinese and non-Chinese language instructors (3 Chinese and 3 non-Chinese).

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a directed content analysis approach in order to associate the participants' responses with the five dimensions of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS). According to Assarroudi et al (2018), in directed content analysis, main categories and related subcategories are derived from existing or previous theories (Mayring, 2000, 2014 as quoted by Assarroudi et al, 2018). Also, clear and concise examples or identifiers of these pre-selected categories of analysis must be derived from the interviews. Hence, after listening to and analyzing the interviews various times, a comparison between the quantitative results (means scores in each one of the ISS dimensions) and the interviewees' responses was made in order to check any similarities and/or differences.

Additionally, an inductive content analysis approach was conducted. As a technique, the inductive content analysis approach can be learned from the personal authority of the researcher or it can be separated from it. It provides new insights and increases the researchers' understanding of specific phenomena (Rippendorff, 2018). Therefore, using an inductive approach helped identify new concepts or categories of analysis that were not directly related to the dimensions of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. As a result, 14 codes were extracted and later associated with four ISS dimensions:

1. Interaction Engagement: (1. willingness to interact, 2. content of communication, 3. awareness of one's own culture, 4. adapting to the new culture, and 5. social circles)
2. Interaction Confidence: (6. perceptions of confidence, 7. voicing disagreement)
3. Respect for Cultural Differences: (8. ethnocentrism, 9. preferences in interaction)

4. Interaction Attentiveness: (10. definitions of culture, 11. misunderstandings/miscommunication, 12. adapting communication style and 13. factors influencing interaction. 14. advice for better interactions.

4.7 Reliability analysis of the ISS

A reliability test of each of the five dimensions that are present in the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was carried out. A Cronbach's Alpha test is used to verify the reliability of Likert-scale surveys of multiple questions. In this way, the value of the Cronbach's Alpha test can tell us how closely related the items in the scale are within a group (Salkind, 2015 p. 4).

In order to interpret the Cronbach's Alpha test results, the following figures were used:

“ $\alpha \geq 0.9$ = Excellent.

$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ = Good

$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ = Acceptable

$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ = Questionable

$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ = Poor

$0.5 > \alpha$ = Unacceptable” (Salkind, 2015 p. 5)

The test results revealed that the highest reliability coefficient was identified in the dimension of Interaction Confidence (Cronbach's Alpha = .65) followed by Interaction Engagement (Cronbach's Alpha = .60), Interaction Enjoyment (Cronbach's Alpha = .47), Respect for Cultural Differences (Cronbach's Alpha = .44) and Interaction Attentiveness (Cronbach's Alpha = .41). According to Salkind (2015), a low reliability indicates that the items may need to be revised or new items added to better capture what is being measured in the dimension (See [Appendix 3](#), tables 31-35)

Given the small number of statements in each one of the dimensions in the ISS, it is sometimes difficult to obtain an adequate Cronbach alpha value (Pallant, 2011). In this case, reporting the average inter-item correlation value can give us a better idea of how items within each dimension are interrelated:

1. Interaction Engagement (7 items)

Mean value: .22 with values ranging from -.09 to .46 which suggests a weak relationship among items within this dimension.

2. Respect for Cultural Differences (6 items)

Mean value: .12 with values ranging from -.078 to .603 which suggests a weak relationship among items.

3. Interaction Confidence (5 items)

Mean value: .29 with values ranging from .24 to .501 which suggests a weak relationship among items.

4. Interaction Enjoyment (3 items)

Mean value: .23 with values ranging from .20 to .27 which suggests a strong relationship among items.

5. Interaction Attentiveness (3 items)

Mean value: .19 with values ranging from .02 to .4 which suggests a weak relationship among items) (See [Appendix 3](#), tables 36-40)

5. Results

5.1 Quantitative results

After surveyers were collected, a total of 62 respondents, including 33 women and 29 men, participated in the study. The participants’ nationalities are listed as follows:

Table 1. List of participant’s nationalities and percentages

Nationality		
	N	%
Belgian	1	1.6%
Canadian	3	4.8%
Chinese	20	32.3%
Colombian	6	9.7%
Dutch	1	1.6%
Filipino	1	1.6%
German	4	6.5%
Ghanian	1	1.6%
Italian	1	1.6%
Mexican	1	1.6%
New Zealander	1	1.6%
Romanian	1	1.6%
Russian	2	3.2%
Serbian	2	3.2%
UK	5	8.1%
USA	12	19.4%

5.1.1 Descriptive statistics of background variables

In this section, I will report on descriptive statistics regarding respondents’ background based on the variables of profession, close friend’s nationality, partner’s nationality, ability to speak the host country’s language, overseas study experience, and daily spoken language:

With regards to respondents’ professions, 22 out of 62 respondents reported working as a foreign language instructor in China.

Table 2. Participants’ reported profession

Participants’ reported professions	
Language instructors	22
Other professions	40

In terms of close relationships, only 7 out of 42 non-Chinese respondents reported that their closest friend was Chinese (local). Similarly, only 3 out of 20 Chinese respondents reported that their closest friend was a non-Chinese. That is most non-Chinese respondents report having a non-Chinese as their closest friend and most Chinese respondents report having a Chinese as their closest friend. After cross-tabulating these two variables (non-Chinese/Chinese and closest friend nationality), the significance number found was $.00 < .05$; in other words, the relationship between these two variables in this group of respondents was statistically significant.

Table 3. Respondents' close friendships

non-Chinese closest friend		Chinese closest friend	
non-Chinese respondents who reported that their closest friend was Chinese (local).	7	Chinese respondents who reported that their closest friend was non-Chinese.	3
non-Chinese respondents who reported that their closest friend was another non-Chinese.	35	Chinese respondents who reported that their closest friend was another Chinese (local)	39

Similarly, only 1 out of 20 Chinese respondents reported being in a partner relationship with a person whose nationality is different from their own. Similarly, only 6 out of 42 non-Chinese respondents reported being in a partner relationship with a local person (Chinese). 21 out of 61 respondents reported not being in a relationship and 10 out of 61 respondents preferred not to say what their partner's nationality was. In the crosstabulation between the variables Respondents Nationality (Chinese and non-Chinese) and Respondents' Partners' Nationality, the significance number is $0.002 < .05$. The relationship between these two variables in this data thus proved to be statistically significant.

Table 4. respondents partner's nationality

Chinese respondents' partner nationality		Non-Chinese respondents' partner nationality	
Chinese who reported being in a partner relationship with a person whose nationality is different from their own	1	non-Chinese who reported being in a partner relationship with a local person (Chinese)	6

Chinese who reported being in a partner relationship with another Chinese.	19	non-Chinese who reported being in a partner relationship with another non-Chinese.	14
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With regards to the speaking ability of the host country language (Chinese Mandarin) of non-Chinese respondents, 9 respondents reported not being able to speak the language, 13 respondents reported being beginners, 13 respondents reported speaking the language at an intermediate level and 7 respondents reported speaking Chinese Mandarin fluently.

Table 5. Foreign language ability of non-Chinese respondents

Chinese Mandarin ability of non-Chinese	
Respondents who cannot speak the language	9
Respondents who are beginners	13
Respondents who speak at an intermediate level	13
Respondents who speak Chinese Mandarin fluently	7

With regards to the variable: length of stay in China (in months), non-Chinese respondents reported staying in China between 14 months and 198 months with an average of 74 months.

Table 6. Length of stay in China of non-Chinese respondents

Length of stay in China (in months)	
Minimum	14
Mean	74
Maximum	198

As for overseas study experience, 35 of 62 respondents reported having previous overseas study experience.

Table 7. Previous overseas study experience

Previous overseas study experience	
Respondents having previous overseas study experience.	35
Respondents without previous overseas study experience.	27

Finally, 21 out of 22 respondents whose mother tongue was English reported that English was the language they used the most on a daily basis. Similarly, 19 out of 21 respondents who reported Chinese as their mother tongue also used Chinese the most on a daily basis.

Table 8. Most used language on a daily basis

Most used language on a daily basis (English)		Most used language on a daily basis (Chinese)	
Number of respondents reporting a different mother tongue,	40	Number of respondents reporting a different mother tongue.	41
English as the most used language on a daily basis,	22	Chinese as the most used language on a daily basis.	21

5.1.2 Descriptive statistics of the ISS

Based on the analysis methods applied in previous studies, the means scores and standard deviations from the ISS were extracted. The standard deviation (SD) indicates whether there is a consensus around a statement while mean scores can point towards the central tendency around the statement (McMurray, 2007)

After the analysis, item 4. “I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures” (SD: 1.097) item 5. “I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures” (SD: 1.046), item 6. “I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures” (SD:1.103), item 11. “I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts” (SD:1.170), and item 23. “I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or non-verbal cues” (SD: 1.191) all presented high standard deviations (SD: > 1) which means that the items had a high

variance in the responses. This could be explained by the small number of respondents in this study and how this affected the variance of responses, the high influence of outliers and/or the translation of the items which could be vague to some respondents.

5.2 Means scores of statements within the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

With regards to the means of each one of the statements within the 5 dimensions of the ISS, the results were as follows.

5.2.1 Dimension of Interaction Engagement

Table 9. Means and standard deviations of Interaction Engagement statements

Interaction Engagement		
	M	SD
I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons	4.71	.524
I enjoy interacting with people from diff cultures	4.66	.599
I am open-minded to people from different cultures	4.48	.784
I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during interaction	4.05	.858
I have a feeling enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me	3.95	.895
I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts	3.68	1.170
I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or non-verbal cues	3.63	1.191

Within the dimension of Interaction Engagement, the means scores and standard deviations of each one of the statements were: ‘I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons’ (M: 4.71 SD: .524), ‘I enjoy interacting with people from diff cultures’ (M: 4.66 SD: .599), ‘I am open-minded to people from different cultures’ (M: 4.48

SD: .784) ,‘I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during interaction’ (M: 4.05 SD: .858), ‘I have a feeling enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me’ (M: 3.95 SD: .895), ‘I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts’ (M: 3.68 SD: 1.170), and ‘I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or non-verbal cues’ (M: 3.63 SD: 1.191). The mean scores in this dimension thus suggest that respondents exhibit high to very high willingness to communicate and be open-minded with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.2 Dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences

Table 10. Means and standard deviation of Respect for Cultural Difference statements

Respect for Cultural Differences		
	M	SD
I don't like to be with people from different cultures	4.76	.619
I would not accept the opinions of people from diff cultures	4.61	.817
I respect the values of different cultures	4.56	.861
I think my culture is better than other cultures	4.37	.891
I respect the way people from other cultures behave	4.26	.886
I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded	4.26	.828

Within the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, the means scores and standard deviations of each one of the statements were: ‘I don't like to be with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.76 SD: .619), ‘I would not accept the opinions of people from diff cultures’ (M: 4.61 SD: .817), ‘I respect the values of different cultures’ (M: 4.56 SD: .861), ‘I think my culture is better than other cultures’ (M: 4.37 SD: .891), ‘I respect the way people from other cultures behave’ (M: 4.26 SD:.886), and ‘I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded’ (M: 4.26 SD: .828). The mean scores in this dimension thus suggest that respondents are exhibiting very high levels of respect towards different behaviors, values, and beliefs from people of different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.3 Dimension of Interaction Confidence

Table 11. Means and standard deviation of Interaction Confidence statements

Dimension of Interaction Confidence		
	M	SD
I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures	4.44	.802
I feel confident when interacting with people from other cultures	4.21	.852
I find it very hard to talk to people from different cultures	4.10	1.097
I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures	3.79	1.103
I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures	3.39	1.046

Within the dimension of Interaction Confidence, the means scores and standard deviations of each one of the statements were: ‘I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.44 SD: .802), ‘I feel confident when interacting with people from other cultures’ (M: 4.21 SD: .852), ‘I find it very hard to talk to people from different cultures’ (M: 4.10 SD: 1.097), ‘I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 3.79 SD: 1.103), and ‘I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 3.39 SD: 1.046). The mean scores found in this dimension imply that respondents exhibit high to very high levels of confidence when it comes to socializing with people from different cultures. However, relatively low levels of confidence were reported in finding what to say or talk about when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.4 Dimension of Interaction Enjoyment

Table 12. Means and standard deviations of Interaction Enjoyment statements

Interaction Enjoyment		
	M	SD
I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures	4.56	.617
I often get discouraged when interacting with people from different cultures	4.42	.801
I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures	4.56	.738

Within the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, the means scores and standard deviations of each one of the statements were: ‘I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.56 SD: .617), ‘I often get discouraged when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.42 SD: .801), and ‘I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.56 SD: .738). The mean scores in this dimension imply that respondents are exhibiting very positive feelings when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.5 Dimension of Interaction Attentiveness

Table 13. Means and standard deviation of Interaction Attentiveness statements

Interaction Attentiveness		
	M	SD
I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures	4.15	.903
I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures	3.94	.921
I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during interaction	3.44	.969

Within the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, the means scores and standard deviations of each one of the statements were: ‘I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.15 SD: .903), ‘I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 3.94 SD: .921), and ‘I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during interaction’ (M: 3.44 SD: .969).

The mean scores in this dimension suggest that respondents are observant and exhibit high levels of attentiveness when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. However, relatively low levels of attentiveness are being reported when respondents try to understand their counterparts' subtle meanings during interactions.

(For all the ISS statements mean scores and standard deviations, see [Appendix 2](#), table 30)

5.3 Composite mean scores of the five dimensions of the ISS

In an attempt to obtain the mean scores of the five dimensions from the ISS, the statements present in each of the 5 dimensions were collapsed:

“Interaction Engagement (7 items), Respect for Cultural Differences (6 items), Interaction Confidence (5 items), Interaction Enjoyment (3 items), and Interaction Attentiveness (3 items) (McMurray, 2007 p. 37) (See table 14).

Table 14. Composite of Means Scores and Standard Deviations

5 DIMENSIONS MEANS AND SD			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	62	4.5161	.50382
RespectForCDCOMP	62	4.4704	.42306
InteractionEngagementCOMP	62	4.1659	.48476
InteractionConfCOMP	62	3.9839	.63895
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	62	3.8387	.63229
Valid N (listwise)	62		

The findings showed that Interaction Enjoyment presented the highest mean scores (M: 4.51 SD: .503) followed by Respect for Cultural Differences (M: 4.47 SD: .423), Interaction Engagement (M: 4.16 SD: .484), Interaction Confidence (M: 3.98 SD: .638). The dimension with the lowest means score was Interaction Attentiveness (M: 3.83 SD: .632)

This shows that respondents are exhibiting very high levels of Interaction Enjoyment (having very positive feelings in intercultural interactions). The second highest means was found in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences (having positive attitudes towards cultural differences). The third dimension with the highest levels of IS was found in the dimension of Interaction Engagement (having genuine willingness when interacting with people from different cultures), followed by Interaction Confidence (having high levels of self-confidence when interacting with people from different cultures). Finally, the dimension with the lowest

mean score (although not necessarily low) was Interaction Attentiveness (having a sensitivity to individuals' subtle meanings, verbal and non-verbal cues during communication).

5.4 Test results of variables and their impact on intercultural sensitivity levels

With the purpose of further understanding the dimensions where respondents scored the highest levels of intercultural sensitivity (Interaction Enjoyment and Respect for Cultural Differences) and lowest levels of intercultural sensitivity, (Interaction Confidence and Interaction Attentiveness), the variables; ability to speak a foreign language, having overseas study experience, having international friends, gender, having foreign language teacher profession, and coming from a host country were tested.

5.4.1 Having fluency in the host-country's language (Chinese Mandarin)

The test used for this analysis is a one sample-independent t-test. According to Bostrom, (2006), the one sample-independent t-test allows to compare two different means groups e.g. the means of the 5 ISS dimensions of non-Chinese respondents who are fluent in Mandarin speakers vs the means of the 5 ISS dimensions of non-Chinese respondents who cannot speak Mandarin. The test results showed a statistically significant difference in the dimension for Interaction Confidence ($t=.600$ $p=.014$) $p < .05$, but no significant difference in other dimensions. In other words, non-Chinese respondents who are fluent in Mandarin exhibited higher levels of IS in the dimension of Interaction Confidence than non-Chinese respondents who cannot speak Mandarin. (See table 15)

Table 15. Independent t-test of non-Chinese fluent speakers vs non-speakers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.092	.766	-.426	17	.675	-.08730	.20473	-.51925	.34465
	Equal variances not assumed			-.427	16.831	.675	-.08730	.20460	-.51930	.34470
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.974	.337	.111	17	.913	.02407	.21685	-.43344	.48159
	Equal variances not assumed			.112	16.838	.912	.02407	.21436	-.42852	.47666
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.285	.600	-2.737	17	.014	-.51111	.18677	-.90515	-.11707
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.706	15.492	.016	-.51111	.18889	-.91261	-.10962
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.093	.764	-.018	17	.986	-.00370	.20943	-.44557	.43816
	Equal variances not assumed			-.018	16.134	.986	-.00370	.21085	-.45039	.44298
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.265	.614	-1.153	17	.265	-.28519	.24730	-.80694	.23657
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.167	16.821	.260	-.28519	.24439	-.80122	.23085

Results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions also indicated that there are differences between the two groups. For example, in the dimension of Interaction Engagement, fluent Chinese Mandarin speakers (non-Chinese) scored (M: 4.35 SD: .44) while (non-Chinese) non-speakers scores were (M: 4.26 SD: .44). For the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, (non-Chinese) fluent Chinese speakers scored (M: 4.38 SD: .51) and (non-Chinese) non-speakers scores (M: 4.40 SD: .417). For the third dimension Interaction Confidence, (non-Chinese) fluent Chinese speakers scores were (M: 4.6 SD: .36) while (non-Chinese) non-speakers scores were (M: 4.0 SD: .44). With regards to the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, (non-Chinese) fluent Chinese speakers scores were (M: 4.63 SD: .42) whereas the scores for (non-Chinese) non-speakers were (M: 4.62 SD: .48). Finally the scores for the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness for (non-Chinese) fluent Chinese speakers were (M: 4.1 SD: .58) while (non-Chinese) non-speakers scored (M: 3.8 SD: .47). (See table 16)

Table 16. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of non-Chinese fluent speakers vs non-speakers

Group Statistics					
	Level of spoken Chinese	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	do not speak	9	4.2698	.44288	.14763
	fluent	10	4.3571	.44797	.14166
RespectForCDCOMP	do not speak	9	4.4074	.41759	.13920
	fluent	10	4.3833	.51550	.16302
InteractionConfCOMP	do not speak	9	4.0889	.44845	.14948
	fluent	10	4.6000	.36515	.11547
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	do not speak	9	4.6296	.48432	.16144
	fluent	10	4.6333	.42889	.13563
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	do not speak	9	3.8148	.47467	.15822
	fluent	10	4.1000	.58899	.18626

Although, slight differences were found in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Enjoyment, and Respect for Cultural differences between the two groups, these results suggest that having an ability in Chinese Mandarin does stimulate the level of intercultural sensitivity of non-Chinese respondents.

5.4.2 Having previous overseas study experience

The t-test findings showed that there is a statistically significant difference between respondents with previous overseas study experience and respondents without prior overseas study experience ($t=.549$ $p=.024$). $P<.05$) in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences (See table 17).

Table 17. Independent t-test respondents with previous overseas study experience vs respondents without prior overseas study experience.

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.015	.904	-1.162	60	.250	-.14392	.12381	-.39157	.10374
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.158	55.328	.252	-.14392	.12424	-.39286	.10503
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.364	.549	-2.320	60	.024	-.24286	.10467	-.45223	-.03349
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.314	55.482	.024	-.24286	.10496	-.45315	-.03256
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	2.999	.088	.014	60	.989	.00233	.16502	-.32776	.33242
	Equal variances not assumed			.014	49.015	.989	.00233	.16977	-.33884	.34349
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	3.278	.075	-.473	60	.638	-.06138	.12988	-.32117	.19842
	Equal variances not assumed			-.463	51.306	.645	-.06138	.13248	-.32730	.20454
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.822	.368	.009	60	.993	.00141	.16330	-.32524	.32806
	Equal variances not assumed			.009	58.725	.993	.00141	.16082	-.32043	.32325

Moreover, results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions indicated that there are differences between the two groups. Respondents with previous overseas study experience scored (M: 4.2 SD: .47) in the dimension of Interaction Engagement while respondents without prior overseas study experience scored (M: 4.0 SD: .49). In the second dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, respondents with previous overseas study experience scored (M: 4.5 SD: .40) while respondents without prior overseas study experience scored (M: 4.3 SD: .41). In the dimension of Interaction Confidence, respondents with previous overseas study experience scored (M: 3.9 SD: .57) while respondents without prior overseas study experience scored (M: 3.9 SD: .72). Respondents with previous overseas study experience scored (M: 4.5 SD: .47) in the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment. Meanwhile, respondents without prior overseas study experience scored (M: 4.4 SD .54) in the same dimension. Last, for the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, respondents with previous overseas study experience scored (M: 3.8 SD: .66) whereas respondents without prior overseas study experience scored (M: 3.8 SD: .59). (See table 18)

Table 18. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of respondents with previous overseas study experience vs respondents without prior overseas study experience

Group Statistics					
	Purpose of Overseas Study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	No	27	4.0847	.49051	.09440
	yes	35	4.2286	.47784	.08077
RespectForCDCOMP	No	27	4.3333	.41345	.07957
	yes	35	4.5762	.40492	.06844
InteractionConfCOMP	No	27	3.9852	.72095	.13875
	yes	35	3.9829	.57878	.09783
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	No	27	4.4815	.54954	.10576
	yes	35	4.5429	.47200	.07978
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	No	27	3.8395	.59464	.11444
	yes	35	3.8381	.66848	.11299

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups shows that there are significant differences in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences between the two groups. Slight differences were found in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence and Interaction Enjoyment while no major differences were found in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness. These results thus suggest that having previous overseas study experience has an impact on how respondents perceive and respect cultural differences and whether they experience positive feelings when interacting with people from different cultures.

5.4.3 Having close international contacts

The t-test showed no statistically significant difference between non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) and non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends in any of the five dimensions of the ISS. (See table 19)

Table 19. Independent t-test of non-Chinese of respondents with a local close friend vs non-Chinese with only non-Chinese close friends

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.099	.755	.521	39	.605	.09904	.18997	-.28521	.48329
	Equal variances not assumed			.550	9.152	.595	.09904	.18001	-.30715	.50523
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.102	.751	-1.405	39	.168	-.22409	.15949	-.54669	.09851
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.238	7.787	.252	-.22409	.18105	-.64360	.19542
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.029	.866	-.621	39	.538	-.15798	.25451	-.67278	.35682
	Equal variances not assumed			-.628	8.752	.546	-.15798	.25171	-.72986	.41390
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	4.066	.051	1.689	39	.099	.34734	.20567	-.06866	.76334
	Equal variances not assumed			2.069	11.145	.063	.34734	.16787	-.02154	.71622
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.297	.589	-.232	39	.818	-.06162	.26575	-.59916	.47591
	Equal variances not assumed			-.235	8.769	.820	-.06162	.26233	-.65745	.53420

Moreover, results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions differ in some areas. For example, in the dimension of Interaction Engagement, non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) scored (M: 4.3 SD: .42) in comparison to the scores of non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends (M: 4.2 SD: .46). In the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) scored (M: 4.2 SD: .44) while non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends (Chinese) scored (M: 4.5 SD: .37). In the dimension of Interaction Confidence, non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) scored (M: 3.9 SD: .60) while non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends scored (M: 4.1 SD: .61). With regards to the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) scored (M: 4.8 SD: .37) while non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends scored (M: 4.5 SD: .51). Finally, in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend (Chinese) scored (M: 3.7 SD: .62) while non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends scored (M: 3.8 SD: .64). (See table 20)

Table 20. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of respondents with a local close friend vs non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends.

Group Statistics					
	Close Friend 1 Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Chinese	7	4.3469	.42744	.16156
	Non-Chinese	34	4.2479	.46299	.07940
RespectForCDCOMP	Chinese	7	4.2857	.44840	.16948
	Non-Chinese	34	4.5098	.37141	.06370
InteractionConfCOMP	Chinese	7	3.9714	.60474	.22857
	Non-Chinese	34	4.1294	.61473	.10543
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Chinese	7	4.8571	.37796	.14286
	Non-Chinese	34	4.5098	.51401	.08815
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Chinese	7	3.7619	.62994	.23810
	Non-Chinese	34	3.8235	.64215	.11013

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups thus indicates that non-Chinese respondents with a local close friend are exhibiting slightly higher levels of IS in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement and Interaction Enjoyment. On the contrary, non-Chinese respondents with only non-Chinese close friends report having slightly higher levels of IS in the dimensions of Respect for Cultural Differences and Interaction Attentiveness.

With regards to the same variable and its impact on IS levels among Chinese respondents, the t-test showed no statistically significant difference between Chinese respondents with international close friends and Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends in any of the five dimensions of the ISS. (See table 21)

Table 21. Independent t-test of Chinese of respondents with international close friends vs Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.384	.543	-.360	18	.723	-.11485	.31902	-.78509	.55539
	Equal variances not assumed			-.267	2.321	.812	-.11485	.43094	-1.74389	1.51420
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.538	.473	.834	18	.415	.25817	.30964	-.39237	.90871
	Equal variances not assumed			.952	3.119	.409	.25817	.27116	-.58643	1.10277
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	2.250	.151	-1.200	18	.246	-.44314	.36922	-1.21884	.33257
	Equal variances not assumed			-.745	2.188	.528	-.44314	.59442	-2.80138	1.91511
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.663	.426	1.053	18	.306	.32026	.30408	-.31858	.95910
	Equal variances not assumed			1.267	3.313	.287	.32026	.25278	-.44290	1.08343
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	1.402	.252	-1.025	18	.319	-.41830	.40805	-1.27559	.43899
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.513	4.613	.195	-.41830	.27639	-1.14707	.31047

The results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions also seem to differ between the two groups. Chinese respondents with international close friends scored (M: 4.0 SD: .71) in the dimension of Interaction Engagement while Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends scored (M: 3.9 SD: .47) in the same dimension. In the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, Chinese respondents with international close friends scored (M: 4.2 SD: .41) whereas Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends scored (M: 4.4 SD: .50). In the dimension of Interaction Confidence, Chinese respondents with international close friends scored (M: 4.0 SD: 1.0) while Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends scored (M: 3.6 SD: .51). In the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, Chinese respondents with international close friends scored (M: 4.1 SD: .38) while Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends scored (M: 4.43 SD: .49). Lastly, in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, Chinese respondents with international close friends scored (M: 4.2 SD: .38) while Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends scored (M: 3.8 SD: .67) (See table 22)

Table 22. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of Chinese respondents with international close friends vs Chinese respondents with only Chinese close friends

Group Statistics					
	Close Friend 1 Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Chinese	17	3.9328	.47680	.11564
	Non-Chinese	3	4.0476	.71903	.41513
RespectForCDCOMP	Chinese	17	4.4804	.50305	.12201
	Non-Chinese	3	4.2222	.41944	.24216
InteractionConfCOMP	Chinese	17	3.6235	.51421	.12471
	Non-Chinese	3	4.0667	1.00664	.58119
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Chinese	17	4.4314	.49672	.12047
	Non-Chinese	3	4.1111	.38490	.22222
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Chinese	17	3.8039	.67761	.16434
	Non-Chinese	3	4.2222	.38490	.22222

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups thus indicates that Chinese respondents with international close friends are exhibiting slightly higher levels of IS in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Attentiveness. On the contrary, Chinese respondents with only local close friends (other Chinese) are exhibiting slightly higher levels of IS in the dimensions of Respect for Cultural Differences and Interaction Enjoyment.

5.4.4 Gender as a variable

The results of the t-test showed no statistically significant difference between female and male respondents in any of the dimensions of the ISS. (See table 23)

Table 23. Independent t-test of female respondents vs male respondents

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	2.030	.159	-.247	60	.806	-.03075	.12435	-.27948	.21798
	Equal variances not assumed			-.250	59.778	.803	-.03075	.12280	-.27641	.21491
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.276	.601	.988	60	.327	.10641	.10770	-.10903	.32185
	Equal variances not assumed			.981	56.794	.331	.10641	.10846	-.11080	.32362
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	2.956	.091	-.983	60	.330	-.15987	.16268	-.48528	.16553
	Equal variances not assumed			-.996	59.724	.323	-.15987	.16059	-.48113	.16138
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.267	.607	-.183	60	.855	-.02369	.12927	-.28225	.23488
	Equal variances not assumed			-.185	59.986	.854	-.02369	.12829	-.28030	.23293
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.069	.794	-.137	60	.891	-.02229	.16225	-.34683	.30225
	Equal variances not assumed			-.137	57.847	.892	-.02229	.16291	-.34840	.30382

Meanwhile, the results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions, female respondents scored (M: 4.1 SD: .52) in the dimension of Interaction Engagement while male respondents scored (M: 4.1 SD: .43) in the same dimension. In terms of Respect for Cultural Differences, female respondents scored (M: 4.5 SD: .40) while male respondents scored (M: 4.4 SD: .44). As for Interaction Confidence, female respondents scored (M: 3.9 SD: .69) whereas male respondents scored (M: 4.0 SD: .56). As far as Interaction Enjoyment is concerned, female respondents scored (M: 4.5 SD: .53) while male respondents scored (M: 4.5 SD: .47). Finally, in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, female respondents scored (M: 3.8 SD: .61) whereas male respondents scored (M: 3.8 SD: .65). (See table 24)

Table 24. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of female respondents vs male respondents

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Female	33	4.1515	.52966	.09220
	Male	29	4.1823	.43682	.08112
RespectForCDCOMP	Female	33	4.5202	.40129	.06986
	Male	29	4.4138	.44682	.08297
InteractionConfCOMP	Female	33	3.9091	.69479	.12095
	Male	29	4.0690	.56890	.10564
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Female	33	4.5051	.53438	.09302
	Male	29	4.5287	.47574	.08834
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Female	33	3.8283	.61870	.10770
	Male	29	3.8506	.65820	.12222

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups thus indicates that male respondents are exhibiting slightly higher levels of confidence than female respondents during intercultural encounters. Female respondents, on the other hand, are exhibiting slightly higher levels of respect towards cultural differences than their male counterparts. However, no significant difference was found between male and female respondents in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness.

5.4.5 Having a language teaching profession as a variable

When it comes to the variable of having a language teaching profession, the t-test showed no statistically significant difference between respondents who had a language teaching profession and those who reported having other professions. (See table 25)

Table 25. Independent sample t-test respondents with a language teaching profession vs other professions

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	3.738	.061	-1.765	35	.086	-.29827	.16897	-.64129	.04475
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.676	24.670	.106	-.29827	.17799	-.66509	.06855
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.009	.927	.233	35	.817	.03333	.14319	-.25735	.32402
	Equal variances not assumed			.227	27.598	.822	.03333	.14673	-.26743	.33409
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.946	.338	-.225	35	.823	-.05333	.23662	-.53369	.42703
	Equal variances not assumed			-.219	27.107	.828	-.05333	.24358	-.55302	.44635
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.023	.880	-.420	35	.677	-.07778	.18527	-.45389	.29834
	Equal variances not assumed			-.419	30.071	.678	-.07778	.18555	-.45668	.30113
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	3.042	.090	1.002	35	.323	.20505	.20469	-.21048	.62059
	Equal variances not assumed			.934	22.876	.360	.20505	.21955	-.24926	.65936

Meanwhile, the results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions showed slight differences between the two groups. For example, respondents with a language teaching profession scored (M: 4.2 SD: .44) in the dimension of Interaction Engagement whereas respondents with other professions scored (M: 3.9 SD: .58). In the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, respondents with a language teaching profession scored (M: 4.5 SD: .40) while respondents with other professions scored (M: 4.5 SD: .45). In terms of Interaction Confidence, respondents with a language teaching profession scored (M: 4.0 SD: .66) in comparison to respondents with other professions who scored (M: 3.9 SD: .76). In the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, respondents with a language teaching profession scored (M: 4.5 SD: .55) while respondents with other professions scored (M: 4.4 SD: .55). Last, in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, respondents with a language teaching profession scored (M: 3.7 SD: .50) while respondents with other professions scored (M: 3.9 SD: .73) (See table 26)

Table 26. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of respondents with a language teaching profession vs other professions

Group Statistics					
	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Other	15	3.9810	.58371	.15071
	Foreign Language Teacher	22	4.2792	.44411	.09468
RespectForCDCOMP	Other	15	4.5333	.45947	.11863
	Foreign Language Teacher	22	4.5000	.40500	.08635
InteractionConfCOMP	Other	15	3.9467	.76892	.19853
	Foreign Language Teacher	22	4.0000	.66189	.14111
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Other	15	4.4222	.55587	.14353
	Foreign Language Teacher	22	4.5000	.55157	.11760
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Other	15	3.9778	.73966	.19098
	Foreign Language Teacher	22	3.7727	.50799	.10830

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups thus indicates that language instructors are exhibiting higher levels of engagement, confidence and enjoyment when interacting with people from different cultures in comparison to other professions. However, respondents with other professions are scoring slightly higher levels of attentiveness than language instructors. Finally, no major differences between the two groups were found in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences.

5.4.6 Coming from a host country

With regards to the variable of coming from a *host* country vs *non host* country, the definition of *host* country found in the studies of Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard, (2006); De Santos Velasco (2004); Lyttle, Barker and Cornwell (2011); and McMurray (2007) were used to create two groups. 1. Respondents from countries that have traditionally had a moderate to high rate of international immigrants (Belgium, Canada, USA, Netherlands, UK, Italy, Germany and New Zealand), and 2. Countries that have not traditionally had moderate to high rates of international immigrants (China, Colombia, Philippines, Mexico, Ghana, Serbia, Russia and Romania).

The t-test results showed that there is no statistically significant difference between respondents coming from traditionally host countries vs respondents coming from non-traditionally host countries in any of the dimensions (See table 27)

Table 27. Independent sample t-test of respondents from traditionally host-countries vs traditionally non-host countries

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Equal variances assumed	5.117	.027	1.798	60	.077	.21849	.12151	-.02456	.46153
	Equal variances not assumed			1.847	59.597	.070	.21849	.11828	-.01813	.45511
RespectForCDCOMP	Equal variances assumed	5.924	.018	-.203	60	.840	-.02206	.10882	-.23974	.19562
	Equal variances not assumed			-.210	58.475	.835	-.02206	.10516	-.23251	.18840
InteractionConfCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.146	.704	1.142	60	.258	.18571	.16266	-.13964	.51107
	Equal variances not assumed			1.151	59.155	.255	.18571	.16141	-.13725	.50868
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.222	.640	.612	60	.543	.07913	.12924	-.17938	.33765
	Equal variances not assumed			.616	58.913	.540	.07913	.12845	-.17791	.33617
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Equal variances assumed	.000	.982	-.060	60	.952	-.00980	.16269	-.33524	.31563
	Equal variances not assumed			-.060	55.349	.953	-.00980	.16419	-.33881	.31920

Meanwhile, the results based on the mean scores of the 5 dimensions showed slight differences between the two groups. For example, respondents coming from traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.2 SD: .53) in the dimension of Interaction Engagement while respondents from non-traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.2 SD: .40) in the same dimension. In the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, respondents from traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.4 SD: .33) while respondents from non-traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.4 SD: .48). As far as Interaction Confidence is concerned, respondents from traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.0 SD: .60) whereas respondents from non-traditionally host countries scored (M: 3.9 SD: .65). In the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, respondents from traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.5 SD: .48) while respondents from non-traditionally host countries scored (M: 4.4 .52). Last, in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness, respondents from traditionally host countries scored (M:3.8 SD: .66) while respondents from non-traditionally host countries scored (M:3.8 SD: .60) (See table 28)

Table 28. Means scores of the five ISS dimensions of respondents from traditionally host-countries vs traditionally non-host countries

Group Statistics					
	Host country vs Non-host country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InteractionEngagementCOMP	Host Country	28	4.2857	.40030	.07565
	Non host country	34	4.0672	.53015	.09092
RespectForCDCOMP	Host Country	28	4.4583	.33831	.06393
	Non host country	34	4.4804	.48680	.08349
InteractionConfCOMP	Host Country	28	4.0857	.60962	.11521
	Non host country	34	3.9000	.65920	.11305
InteractionEnjoyCOMP	Host Country	28	4.5595	.48900	.09241
	Non host country	34	4.4804	.52024	.08922
InteractionAttentiveCOMP	Host Country	28	3.8333	.66975	.12657
	Non host country	34	3.8431	.60988	.10459

The comparison of mean scores between the two groups thus indicates that respondents coming from traditionally host countries are exhibiting slightly higher levels of confidence and enjoyment during intercultural interactions than respondents from different backgrounds. However, no significant differences were found between the two groups in the dimensions of Interaction Attentiveness, Respect for Cultural Differences and Interaction Engagement.

5.5 Qualitative results

In the following subsections, an overview of the dimensions of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) where respondents scored highest (Interaction Enjoyment and Respect for Cultural Differences) and lowest, (Interaction Confidence and Interaction Attentiveness) is provided in order to understand how the codes were categorized under each one of the dimensions.

5.5.1 Interaction Enjoyment

According to the quantitative results, respondents scored the highest in the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment (M: 4.51 SD: .5) especially in the items: ‘I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures’ (M: 4.66 SD: .599) and ‘I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures’ (reverse-coded M: 4.56 SD: .617).

This dimension refers to the positive and negative feelings arising from the interactions between Chinese and non-Chinese. In other words, we can assume that the participants of this study Chinese generally enjoy interacting with each other while also experiencing positive emotions during these interactions.

Nevertheless, when analyzing the interviews, it was quite remarkable to observe that qualitative data does not support the assumption discussed above. Non-Chinese participants, for example, reported generally experiencing negative feelings when interacting with their Chinese peers. For example, one non-Chinese participant described their experience as follows:

“The Chinese are a wall society, there are insiders and outsiders, and as a foreigner, I will always be an outsider, and the Chinese will always see me as an outsider no matter how much I work, no matter how long I’ve been here, I will always be an outsider and I will always be treated that way” (non-Chinese participant 2)

Similarly, another non-Chinese participant described experiencing negative emotions towards interactions with their Chinese peers:

“Maybe it’s something not very nice to say, but I’ve also noticed there’s a lot of lying implied. Like sometimes to reach a certain goal or to persuade somebody to do or to say something they want (Chinese peers)” (non-Chinese participant 3)

In contrast, the reported feelings of Chinese participants when interacting with non-Chinese (foreigners) were generally neutral as mentioned in the responses of a couple of Chinese participants:

“you know, how to say, when we talk to them, when we communicate, we must be very careful, we don’t know the point he or she really care about, so maybe it takes time to familiarize with each other and then, the communication becomes very different” (Chinese participant 2)

“I think that’s very rare for US people. Most US people I think they’re very busy and have no time to learn about our culture or language. That’s my personal experience” (Chinese participant 3)

5.5.2 Respect for Cultural Differences

Based on the quantitative findings, respondents scored very high (M: 4.4 SD: .4) in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences, especially in the items ‘I don’t like to be with people from different cultures’ (reverse-coded M: 4.76 SD: .619) and ‘I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures’ (reverse-coded M: 4.61 SD: .817). This dimension refers to the respondents’ orientation or acceptance towards their peer culture and views. As its name suggests, it refers to the level of respect that participants have towards differences in behaviors, values, views, opinions and overall culture. Consequently, and based on the quantitative results, we could expect that participants in this study generally exhibit high levels of respect for cultural differences.

The findings from the interviews, however, showed that some non-Chinese participants responses with regards to Respect for Cultural Differences contrasted with the quantitative findings. A couple of non-Chinese participants, for instance, described their Chinese peer’s communication style and behavior as follows:

“I am Westerner. When there’s an issue I prefer to deal with it directly, talk about it, you know I’m a direct communicator, but the Chinese are indirect, so you get into this kind situation where you have to have a relationship with them first for them to open up or to communicate on any level with you which is very frustrating.... I like to iterate concrete language and they tend to be very abstract. I want to talk about specifics, they wanna talk

in generalities. We have the inductive vs the deductive approach to things and it's very aggravating for me" (non-Chinese participant 2)

Dictatorship in China compels people to fall in line, pay attention to what the government says. People tend to follow government, maybe not follow, but more like are obliged to follow. There is a high respect for authority. Authority figures and power... Whereas for me, people in the UK, rebel very openly against authority and we question things. What I believe are universal things, you know, it is in human nature to question things. To stand up when things are unjust. We have to speak.. (non-Chinese participant 1)

Chinese participants, on the other hand, expressed a level of awareness towards cultural differences when interacting with their non-Chinese peers as shown in the response of the following participant:

'I used to have stereotypes, you know, I think that English people are very serious and very strict and sometimes' but you know? I think it's very different when I work with them, I think to myself, no. They're not like that, or most of Americans are open. No I think it depends. It depends on their education, their culture, their personality, their upbringing' (Chinese participant 2)

5.5.3 Interaction Engagement

Based on the quantitative results, participants in this study also scored high levels of IS in the dimension of Interaction Engagement (M: 4.1 SD: .6) especially in the items 'I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons' (M: 4.71 SD: .524) and 'I am open-minded to people from different cultures' (M: 4.48 SD: .784).

This dimension refers to participants willingness to interact with people from different cultures. It also refers to any pre-conceived ideas of the other person's culture, values, preferences and behaviors such as stereotypes.

The responses from participants show a level of contrast between the quantitative and qualitative results. For example, Chinese participants seem to perceive non-Chinese individuals as friendly, open and more direct as shown in the following extracts:

"I feel that foreigners love to come to China, they love to make friends with all kinds of people. But for Chinese, it depends where you meet. Depends on the situation, but most

foreigners here they are very easygoing, very easy to be social with, and they're more fun"
(Chinese Participant 2)

*You know for us Chinese, we think because when I was young just in my 20's, I thought 'Americans are very open, their personality is easy-going...we had these kind of ideas or thinking. We also think that English people are very serious and very strict, you know?'
(Chinese participant 1)*

The interviews with non-Chinese participants showed that they seem to perceive Chinese (locals) as being more shy, conservative, and unwilling to interact with people from different cultures. For example, the following non-Chinese participants described their experience as follows:

"Often times the Chinese staff will hold their own social events and never invite the foreigners, so it's like you have two parallel companies working together and the foreigners are just there for decoration, but we're supposed to be happy.." (non-Chinese participant 1)

"I would intentionally try to be friends with a Chinese person because I've gotten to know them a little better, but they really they don't have much interest in having a real friendship with you because maybe they are completely on a different page" (non-Chinese participant 3)

5.5.4 Interaction Confidence

According to the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), respondents scored a relatively moderate level of intercultural sensitivity in the area of Interaction Confidence (M: 3.9 SD .6) especially in the items 'I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures' (M: 3.39 SD: 1.046) and 'I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures' (M: 3.79 SD: 1.103). This dimension refers to the level of confidence that participants have in interaction with people from different cultures. As its name suggests, confidence expresses both positive and negative perceptions of one-self during intercultural interactions.

According to non-Chinese participants responses with regards to *Interaction Confidence*, there seems to be a relatively high level of confidence in interactions among non-Chinese participants. In other words, foreigners from different nationalities appear to feel more

confident when interacting with each other than when interacting with locals (Chinese). The extracts from the interviews with a couple of non-Chinese participants show an example of this:

“My communication with foreigners at work is characterized by a mutual sharing of information, concern and listening. I treat them as my peers and colleagues I don’t know if that is because of their culture but it is very different from the way I treat my Chinese colleagues” (non-Chinese participant 1)

“I think working with foreigners was kind of natural for me... I think all of us being expats in China, we’re like in the same situation and maybe all of us feel like the aliens here, right? So that gives us, from my point of view, some kind of alliance in a way, so it’s ‘us and the Chinese’ right?” (non-Chinese participant 3)

With regards to non-Chinese responses within the dimension of Interaction Confidence, factors such as personality type and sharing similar interests seem to influence the level of confidence of Chinese respondents. An example of this is presented in the extracts below:

“I think for Chinese, I’ve heard different feedbacks. I think it also depends on people, some Chinese are conservative. They tell me they’re not comfortable to make friends with foreigners, but for some Chinese we have an open-mind, we think making friends with foreigners is more fun” (Chinese participant 3)

“It depends on whether you have the same interests, and also your personality, and also something maybe both you like to do, because if someone likes to dance, I also like to dance, it’s easy to make a good relationship and maybe because I’m mother, another colleague local or foreigner, if they’re mothers, we also share these things in common” (Chinese participant 1)

5.5.5 Interaction Attentiveness

Following the results of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), respondents in this study scored a relatively moderate level in the dimension of Interaction Attentiveness (M: 3.8 SD: .6) especially in the items: ‘I often show my culturally distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or non-verbal cues; (M: 3.63 SD: 1.191) and ‘I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during interaction’ (M: 3.44 SD: .969).

The dimension of Interaction Attentiveness refers to the respondents' efforts to understand the ongoing process of intercultural communication. It aims to describe social behaviors related to the concentration and perception of individuals in interaction.

With regards to this dimension, non-Chinese participants responses seem to complement the quantitative results when reporting difficulties in understanding their Chinese peers' subtle meanings, verbal and non-verbal cues as shown in the response by one of the non-Chinese participants:

“At the beginning it was very difficult for me to figure it out but after working not only with the staff in the company but with my peers, but also with our customers. I’ve come to realize that of course that everyone has a different personality, but I’ve noticed that the Chinese are very indirect in many ways because I know this is what we call a high context culture” (non-Chinese participant 3)

Similarly, the reported experience of Chinese respondents with regards to Interaction Attentiveness show a level of difficulty and adaptation of their communication style during interactions with non-Chinese. An example of this is presented as follows:

“At the beginning I worked with foreigners, I think I got so many experiences with spoken communication, even WeChat, even e-mail, sometimes the understanding is so different, so sometimes I just prefer to talk face-to-face, because you can get information from his or her face, her eyes, and you know some gestures, so it’s very easy to understand each other” (Chinese participant 1)

Moreover, one of the non-Chinese respondents mentioned skin color and nationality are factors that influence the perceptions and interactions that locals (Chinese) have of non-Chinese in China. The participant described his experience as follows:

“I am British, but I also have to say that I’m racially Chinese. I look Chinese. So, to the eyes of local people, I’m a Chinese, but I am also foreigner, so I usually don’t get this ‘foreigner privilege’. I see my friends get the foreigners privilege, but I also like the fact that I can move around unnoticed, other friends, they constantly get attention cause they’re white” (non-Chinese participant 1)

Finally, as part of the inductive content analysis, 13 codes were extracted from the interviews. The coding rule is presented next to each one of the codes as well as a representative example. (See table 29)

5.6 Inductive Content Analysis Results

Table 29. List of participant's nationalities and percentages

Code	Coding rule	Example from the data	ISS dimension
<i>Willingness to interact</i>	showing openness to interact with people from different cultures	<i>There's always stereotypes about certain cultures and that sticks in your mind one way or another, but I try to ignore that.</i>	Interaction Engagement
<i>Content of communication</i>	topics of conversations between Chinese and non-Chinese	<i>As for with local colleagues, Chinese colleagues I would just talk about work, the content would be work</i>	Interaction Engagement
<i>Awareness of self culture</i>	showing awareness of one's own culture	<i>I am generally quite a cynical person, I have very British humor so I have to be very careful with that as I know that doesn't resonate with the general Chinese audience.</i>	Interaction Engagement
<i>Social circles</i>	friends/friendships cultural background	<i>My immediate social circle consists of about 90% expats and foreigners. 10% Chinese. It's been very difficult to make friends with Chinese.</i>	Interaction Engagement
<i>Perceptions of confidence</i>	individuals own perception of confidence in intercultural interactions	<i>some Chinese are conservative they tell me they're not comfortable to make friends with foreigners, but for some Chinese we have an open-mind, they think making friends with foreigners is more fun.</i>	Interaction Confidence
<i>Voicing disagreement</i>	willingness and openness to express disagreement	<i>I think it's completely ridiculous. I don't think any other country does this. It's just a waste of their time. I vehemently disagree with this, so I tend to voice my disagreement with my supervisor</i>	Interaction Confidence
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	expressing that one culture is better than the other	<i>You know in the Western business structure we have power sharing. Everyone is delegated certain responsibilities. We're expected to take responsibility to make decisions for ourselves. In China, that's a no-no. Power is concentrated in one person and one person only.</i>	Respect for Cultural Differences
<i>Preferences in interaction</i>	expressing preferences towards a group of individuals	<i>Another thing because I've mentioned we have this alliance, we're expats we are together in this foreign country.</i>	Respect for Cultural Differences
<i>Definitions of culture</i>	types of cultures	<i>The first one I think it's cultural, it's a different culture. Not only the national culture, even the regional culture, even the working culture is very different, even the company culture is very different</i>	Interaction Attentiveness
<i>Misunderstandings & miscommunication</i>	types of misunderstandings and miscommunication	<i>There have been no compromises. The Chinese is the best way and if you don't like it the leave. They will pretend to compromise but they just go back to do what they do anyway</i>	Interaction Attentiveness
<i>Adapting communication style</i>	showing adaptation to different communication styles	<i>I just prefer to talk face-to-face, because you can get information from his or her face, her eyes, and you know some gestures, so it's very easy to understand each other.</i>	Interaction Attentiveness
<i>Factors influencing interaction</i>	types of factors influencing interaction between Chinese and non-Chinese	<i>there's obviously cultural differences but at the end of the day it's always up to the individuals level of confidence that makes it easier or less easy to engage with people.</i>	Interaction Attentiveness
<i>Advice for better interactions</i>	factors that have a positive impact on interactions between Chinese-non Chinese	<i>you can just first please learn the language, at least the very basic. For your daily life, it makes it easier. Second, I think ...just check what kind of culture it is</i>	Interaction Attentiveness

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of intercultural sensitivity of a group of Chinese and non-Chinese (42 non-Chinese and 20 Chinese) respondents working together in cross-cultural working environments across China. At the same time, factors that could influence this level such as gender, having international close friends, coming from a host country, ability in the host country's language, having overseas study experience, and having a foreign language teacher profession were analyzed. Upon completing the quantitative analysis, a qualitative examination was carried out in order to find any connections between the scores of the five dimensions from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the reported experiences of intercultural interactions between participants in this study.

6.1 How did respondents score on the ISS?

With regards to the first research question: what is the level of intercultural sensitivity of a group of Chinese and non-Chinese (62 participants) working together in cross-cultural environments in China? respondents scored a very high level of intercultural sensitivity in the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment which could be interpreted as experiencing positive feelings when interacting with individuals from different cultures. Respondents also scored very high in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences which means that individuals may have a high level of tolerance towards different values, behaviors and cultures. High levels of intercultural sensitivity were also reported in the dimension of Interaction Engagement which can be understood as being willing and open to interact with individuals from different cultures. Relatively neutral levels of intercultural sensitivity were found in the dimensions of Interaction Confidence and Interaction Attentiveness which refer to respondents' level of self-confidence and level of attention to verbal and non-verbal cues during intercultural interactions. Overall, respondents in this study scored high to very high levels across the five dimensions of the intercultural sensitivity scale (ISS).

6.2 Which factors had a significant impact on the level of IS of respondents?

As far as the second research question is concerned: does gender, having international close friends, coming from a host country, having an ability in the host country's language, having

overseas study experience, and having a foreign language teacher profession influence the level of intercultural sensitivity of participants? The findings showed that:

With regards to the variable of having an ability in the host country's language, this study found that there is a statistically significant difference between non-Chinese respondents who are fluent in Chinese and non-Chinese respondents who do not speak the language in the dimension of Interaction Confidence. This could help to explain the moderately low means scores in Interaction Confidence of respondents who are unable to communicate with locals (Chinese) in their mother tongue. This study findings also validate the conclusions presented by Olsen and Kroger (2001), Sizoo et al. (2004) and Vilà (2006), and Ruokonen and Kairavuori (2012) who found a relationship between the level of intercultural sensitivity and foreign language ability. Overall, non-Chinese respondents with fluency in Chinese also scored higher means in the five dimensions of intercultural sensitivity in comparison to individuals who cannot speak the language. This finding therefore pinpoints the importance of learning a foreign language, especially the host country's language as a way to improve intercultural sensitivity levels.

In terms of the variable of having previous overseas study experience. This study also found that there is a statistically significant difference between respondents who have previous overseas study experience and respondents without previous international study experience in the dimension of Respect for Cultural Differences. These finding validates the conclusions from studies such as William's (2005) and Bennet's (2009) where individuals with previous international study experiences exhibited better intercultural communication skills than those who had no previous overseas study experiences. Overall, respondents from this study also scored higher means in the five dimensions of intercultural sensitivity in comparison to individuals without previous overseas study experiences. Thus, the present study also aims to highlight the importance that international student exchanges and overseas study programs have on improving an individual's intercultural sensitivity level.

6.3 Which factors had no significant impact on the level of IS of respondents?

No statistically significant difference in intercultural sensitivity was found between female and male respondents which was similar finding in studies such as McMurray's (2007). Nevertheless, the present findings contrasted with McMurray's (2007) conclusion on the comparison of means scores of the five dimensions between male and female respondents. Male

respondents in this study scored slightly higher than female respondents in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness. The only dimension where female respondents scored slightly higher means than males was in Respect for Cultural Differences. Even though authors such as Altshuler, Sussman and Kachur, (2003); Margarethe, Hannes and Wiesinger, (2012); McMurray (2007), Ruiz-Bernardo, Ferrández-Berrueco and Sales-Ciges (2012) had pointed that female individuals may exhibit a more caring, sensitive, and attentive behavior than their male counterparts, the diversity in the backgrounds of this study respondents (upbringing, education, personality, etc) may have had a more significant impact on the level of intercultural sensitivity that gender itself.

Similarly, no statistically significant difference was found in the level of intercultural sensitivity between non-Chinese with close Chinese (local) friends and non-Chinese with no local close friends. Nevertheless, the means scores of non-Chinese with close Chinese (local) friends were slightly higher than the means scores of non-Chinese with no local friends in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement and Interaction Enjoyment. Likewise, findings showed that Chinese respondents with close international friends scored slightly higher means than Chinese respondents with no international friends in the areas of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence and Interaction Attentiveness. The small number of respondents with close friends from different cultural backgrounds in this study also validates the conclusions from authors such as Burns (1991), Nesdale and Todd (1993), and Summers and Volet (2008) who had mentioned that culturally different individuals are not usually ready or willing to mix but prefer to connect with people with similar cultural backgrounds instead. Consequently, individuals who have close relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds may exhibit higher levels of intercultural sensitivity. It is important, however, to pinpoint that the number of respondents in this study remains too limited to lead to a definite conclusion on this aspect.

This study also found no statistically significant difference in the level of intercultural sensitivity between respondents coming from a host country and respondents coming from a non-host country. Nonetheless, the means scores of the five dimensions showed that respondents coming from a host country did score slightly higher in the dimensions of Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Enjoyment than respondents coming from a non-host country. McMurray (2007) had similar results when comparing the level of intercultural sensitivity levels of international students and domestic (American)

students. Although it may be assumed that respondents coming from a host-country have had exposure to individuals from different cultural backgrounds prior to coming to China, this exposure may have not been significant enough to make an impact on intercultural sensitivity levels. Moreover, those respondents coming from a non-host country have also had exposure to diverse cultural environments prior to coming to China which makes it difficult for this study to find a significant impact of the variable of host-country origin on the level of intercultural sensitivity.

As for having a foreign language teaching profession, findings in this study showed no statistically significant difference in intercultural sensitivity levels between foreign language teachers and other professions. Within the means scores of the five dimensions, foreign language teachers, however, scored slightly higher in the dimensions Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Enjoyment. This suggests that foreign language teachers are generally more willing to interact, feel more confident in intercultural exchanges and have positive feelings in encounters with people from different cultures. However, the fact that these findings are not statistically significant validate the arguments that authors such as Crozet & Liddicoat (1999) and Kubota (2010) presented. According to these authors foreign language teaching education seems to be lacking multicultural studies and courses that touch on the development of intercultural sensitivity among foreign language teachers. For this reason, the impact that being a foreign language instructor has on intercultural sensitivity levels did not appear to be significant in this study. This finding also highlights the importance of planning and implementing multiculturalism in foreign language teaching education programs as a relevant factor in improving intercultural sensitivity (Altan, 2018).

6.4 Did qualitative data validate the results from the ISS?

As far as the qualitative findings are concerned, the purpose was to complement the limited number of surveys. The aim was to further understand the areas where respondents scored high and low levels of intercultural sensitivity by listening to respondents' own voices.

Even though non-Chinese respondents scored high to very high levels of IS in the dimensions of Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Engagement, the interviews reported that non-Chinese participants perceive their Chinese peers' behaviors and communication style as being different and undesirable, a result that

contrasted with the high intercultural sensitivity levels found in the dimension of Respect to Cultural Differences.

Moreover, within the dimension of Interaction Enjoyment, non-Chinese respondents described their experiences in interactions with Chinese (locals) as being distant and dishonest. Chinese respondents, on the other hand, described these interactions as dependent upon the level of familiarity they have with non-Chinese individuals and factors such as personality and upbringing.

With regards to the areas where respondents scored the lowest; Interaction Confidence and Interaction Attentiveness, it was interesting to observe that non-Chinese participants expressed feeling more confident towards interacting with other non-Chinese than with locals (Chinese). Chinese participants, on the other hand, expressed feeling confident in interacting with non-Chinese when perceiving having similar backgrounds, likes and preferences with each other. Confidence among Chinese respondents was also reported to depend upon individuals personality.

Lastly, in terms of Interaction Attentiveness, non-Chinese respondents appeared to validate the relatively moderate levels reported in the quantitative results when describing the difficulties of understanding their Chinese peers' ways of communication and subtle meanings. Likewise, Chinese respondents described having a level of difficulty in interacting and understanding their non-Chinese peers' ways of communication and subtle meanings.

6.5 Other findings

It is important to highlight the experience that one of the non-Chinese participants reported with regards to skin color and nationality as factors that influence how locals (Chinese) perceive non-Chinese. The participant mentioned that he usually does not benefit from what he refers to as 'foreigners' privilege' since he does not look Chinese. Even though, the participant did not expand on the concept of 'foreigners' privilege', the analysis points that there seems to be a link between skin color, nationality and the perceptions that individuals have of each other during intercultural interactions. As a result, further and a more in-depth analysis regarding these factors and how they impact interactions between individuals from different cultures is worth studying in future studies.

From the point of view of intercultural sensitivity, perceptions on skin color and physical appearance could be part of an individual's level of Interaction Engagement and Respect for Cultural Differences. Individuals with high levels of intercultural sensitivity in these dimensions do not exhibit these pre-conceptions or bias towards physical appearance and therefore engage in more effective interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Another important qualitative finding was the diversity of factors that influence intercultural interactions between Chinese and non-Chinese reported by participants. The reported factors were language, individual's upbringing, education, personality, national, regional and company culture. As a result, these factors are similar to the ones mentioned by Antal & Friedman (2008) as well as Jokikkoko (2010) when referring to intercultural interactions as exchanges between culturally complex individuals whose geographic location, language, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, preferences, among other factors, constitute what cultural diversity is.

7. Conclusions

The findings in this study contribute to the body of knowledge of intercultural sensitivity research in the context of China. Although the findings cannot be generalizable to all individuals working and living in cross-cultural environments across China, they present a snapshot of a small sample of the target population. This study suggests that factors such as speaking a foreign language and having overseas study experience do influence the level of confidence and engagement of individuals during intercultural interactions. Variables such as gender, coming from a host country, nationality, having international close friends, and having a language teaching profession were not found to have a statistically significant impact on the level of intercultural sensitivity of respondents.

At the same time, the qualitative findings in this study suggest that despite scoring high levels of intercultural sensitivity in areas such as Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Engagement, interviews' reported experiences appeared to be in conflict with these high scores. This indicates that qualitative data provided a perspective to intercultural sensitivity that the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale perhaps did not capture. For this reason, further studies that utilize qualitative methodologies that can capture the interactions between Chinese and non-Chinese in cross-cultural environments across China are necessary to better understand where individuals exhibit strengths and weaknesses with regards to intercultural sensitivity. As more overseas language instructors are appointed to job positions in China, it is of great significance that educational institutions as well as multinational organizations become aware of the importance of assessing, informing and training both overseas and local staff in the subject of intercultural sensitivity.

Limitations and significance of the study

There were several limitations in this study. One major limitation was the number of respondents (N= 62) which translated in statistical results that were less generalizable in comparison to similar studies containing larger data. Another limitation of this study is that the target population (language instructors) was minimally represented in the data due to the different interpretations that were given to the invites during the data collection phase. Furthermore, not all cultural backgrounds of Chinese and non-Chinese individuals living and working in cross-cultural environments in China were represented, but those cultural backgrounds of the individuals who participated in this study.

Moreover, given that some of the qualitative results disagreed with the quantitative findings, a possible limitation of the measuring instrument (the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale) could be that respondents may have been aware of what was being measured in the survey. As a result, respondents may have given the ‘politically correct answer’. In other words, respondents may have already been aware of what kind of behavior and characteristics intercultural sensitive individuals should have and may not report on contradictory behaviors, especially when reading statements such as ‘I think my culture is better than other cultures’ or ‘I don’t like to be with people from different cultures’. Additionally, given the extremely high standard deviations and low levels of inter-item correlation found during data analysis, it is recommended that statements within the scale be revised in order to produce a more accurate measure.

Despite these limitations, this study shed light on the gap that exists in research with regards to intercultural sensitivity in cross-cultural environments across China and evoked awareness for further research in this area. This study may also acquaint fellow Chinese and non-Chinese (particularly foreign language instructors like myself) with the subject of intercultural sensitivity and its importance in everyday intercultural exchanges.

Most importantly, this study can help to inspire and encourage the creation, development and implementation of intercultural sensitivity training programs for both Chinese and non-Chinese working together across in China.

8. References

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Appendix 1. Online survey

Basic information:

1. Nationality: _____
2. Gender: male Female
3. Mother tongue: _____
4. Your highest diploma obtained: _____
5. Have you ever traveled overseas before taking this job?
 Yes _____ No _____
 - a. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question.
What has/have been the purpose(s) of your overseas travel experience? (multiple choice is allowed)
 Leisure Work others: *please specify* _____
 - b. Total length of overseas travel experience: _____ month(s)
 - c. Total length of stay in China: _____ month(s)
6. Please describe what you do in your current job: _____
7. Please enumerate the nationalities of your 3 best friends in your current surroundings: _____
8. If you are married or in a partner relationship, please specify the nationality of your partner (spouse): _____
9. Can you speak Chinese? Please circle the score corresponding to your level of Chinese:
Can't speak __
Beginner __
Intermediate __
Fluent __
10. What is (are) the communication language(s) that you use mostly during the day, please write them in order of frequency: _____
11. In your own experience, have you encountered any challenges/difficulties in building relationships with locals?
 Yes _____ No _____
12. Have you encountered any challenges/difficulties in building relationships with (other) foreigners?
 Yes _____ No _____
 - a. If you answered 'yes' to any of the previous questions, please briefly describe the challenges that you have experienced:

13. (For Chinese) if you were asked to describe what working with foreigners is like to a friend, and based on your own experiences, what would you say?

14. (For non-Chinese) if you were asked to describe what working with Chinese people is like to a friend, and based on your own experiences what would you say?

15. (For both) How would you rate the level of communication that you currently have with foreign coworkers?

Usually effective and/or smooth

Sometimes effective and/or smooth

Usually difficult and/or challenging

16. (For both) How would you rate the level of communication that you currently have with Chinese coworkers?

Usually effective and/or smooth

Sometimes effective and/or smooth

Usually difficult and/or challenging

Appendix 2. Mean scores and standard deviations of items in the ISS

Table 30. Means and Standard Deviations of the ISS

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I don't like to be with people from diff cultures	62	4.76	.619	I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during interaction	62	4.05	.858
I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons	62	4.71	.524	I have a feeling enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me	62	3.95	.895
I enjoy interacting with people from diff cultures	62	4.66	.599	I am very observant when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	3.94	.921
I would not accept the opinions of people from diff cultures	62	4.61	.817	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	3.79	1.103
I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures	62	4.56	.617	I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts	62	3.68	1.170
I respect the values from people of diff cultures	62	4.56	.861	I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or non-verbal cues	62	3.63	1.191
I often feel useless when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	4.56	.738	I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during interaction	62	3.44	.969
I am open-minded to people from diff cultures	62	4.48	.784	I always know what to say when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	3.39	1.046
I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from diff cultures	62	4.44	.802	Valid N (listwise)	62		
I often get discouraged when I am with people from diff cultures	62	4.42	.801				
I think my culture is better than other cultures	62	4.37	.891				
I respect the way people from diff cultures behave	62	4.26	.886				
I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded	62	4.26	.828				
I feel condifent when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	4.21	.852				
I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from diff cultures	62	4.15	.903				
I find it very hard to talk in front of people from diff cultures	62	4.10	1.097				

Appendix 3. Reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 31. Cronbach's Alpha for Interaction Engagement

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.602	.668	7

Table 32. Cronbach's Alpha for Respect for cultural differences

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.444	.454	6

Table 33. Cronbach's Alpha for Interaction Confidence

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.652	.672	5

Table 34. Cronbach's Alpha for Interaction Enjoyment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.471	.479	3

Table 35. Cronbach's Alpha for Interaction Attentiveness

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.416	.413	3

Inter-item correlations of the five dimensions of the ISS

Table 36. Inter-item correlation of Interaction Engagement

Summary Item Statistics–Interaction Engagement

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.223	-.095	.467	.562	-4.940	.037	7

Table 37. Inter-item correlation of Respect for Cultural Differences

Summary Item Statistics–Respect for Cultural Differences

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.122	-.078	.525	.603	-6.741	.021	6

Table 38. Inter-item correlation of Interaction Confidence

Summary Item Statistics–Interaction Confidence

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.291	.024	.501	.477	20.900	.031	5

Table 39. Inter-item correlation of Interaction Enjoyment

Summary Item Statistics–Interaction Enjoyment

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.235	.203	.276	.073	1.359	.001	3

Table 40. Inter-item correlation of Interaction Attentiveness

Summary Item Statistics–Interaction Attentiveness

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.190	.002	.400	.398	264.210	.032	3