Leadership Education of Chinese MBA Students in the United States: A Case Study of Chinese MBA Students' Leadership Education at one American Graduate Business School

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Xin Chen, B.A., M.A.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Huifen Xin and Yongde Chen whose words of encouragement, love and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful friends. I always feel very honored to have my respectful mentors and friends, Beverley Tobin and Eugene Tobin encourage and believe in me, and my wonderful Charlottesville friends, especially EZ, Mary, Mila, Ryan, Yulia, Kari, have never left my side and enjoyed true friendship with.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|----------|
| DEDICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS LIST OF TABLES LIST OF FIGURES | v vii |
| ELEMENTS | |
| I. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW | 1 |
| II. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| III. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS | 35 |
| IV. CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS | 59 |
| V. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS | 163 |
| | |
| REFERENCES | 200 |
| APPENDICES | 216 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | TABLE | Page |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Six stages of the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity | 30 |
| 2. | Participant profile. | 61 |
| 3. | Leadership skills. | |

LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE | | Page |
|--------|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. | The Framework of Data Collection | 46 |
| 2. | The Framework of Data Analysis | 51 |
| 3. | The Framework of Findings | 59 |

Executive Summary

Karen Inkelas

The purpose of this case study was to explore the leadership education and cultural adaptation of Chinese MBA students in a US institution. The study participants were four Chinese MBA students from an American Graduate Business School (AGBS). This study adopted a framework based on Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Social Learning Theory. The qualitative data from individual interviews and observations gave this study a richly detailed context.

Four overarching patterns emerged during the process of analyzing the data: (a) the motivation for pursuing an MBA program in the United States; (b) cultural and language differences as barriers in communication; (c) intercultural communication and people-management skills as important leadership characteristics; (d) extracurricular activity involvement as a way to practice internalizing the acquired leadership skills; and (e) general reflections on leadership education. Chinese MBA students coming to study in a US institution were driven by similar goals, however, the motivation of finding a job or not in the US after graduation varies and this influenced students' cultural adaptation. Even though MBA students generally have had more intercultural exposure and language practices compared to students enrolled in other academic subject fields, language and culture differences are still perceived as major challenges in their daily life. Leadership education experiences are closely related with intercultural communication and people management skills for Chinese MBA students. Extracurricular activities are an important way for Chinese MBA students to internalize leadership skills. The study participants

agreed that the overall experience of leadership education and cultural adaptation in a US institution is a process of exploring, learning and growing.

The goal of the study is to provide a good understanding of leadership education experiences of the future economic leaders from China, and to reveal their learning characteristics, cultural adjustment experiences along with their leadership development. In addition, recommendations in the final chapter of this qualitative case study may provide useful information for US higher education practitioners to improve education programs for Chinese MBA students and other international student groups at large.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

China is an increasingly important economic power in the world, and the country's leaders strengthening its economy in the future will not share the same characteristics as past or even present leaders (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013). Future leaders will have been educated differently; therefore, greater insight into how the country's future economic leaders are educated is needed in order to better understand how to work with these leaders in the global economy (Wang, Zweig, & Lin, 2011). Because many future leaders will have been professionally educated in MBA programs in the United States (Graduate Management News, 2010), it is important to explore Chinese MBA students' leadership professional training in U.S. graduate business schools. Studying how these students are trained will allow for a better prediction of their leadership characteristics and management styles. Therefore, this case study seeks to examine the leadership education that Chinese MBA students receive in an American graduate business school through both in-class and out-of-class environments. It aims to illustrate Chinese MBA students' leadership development along with their cultural adaptation experience when studying in the United States.

This paper will focus on Chinese students enrolled in the "Managerial Psychology" course that runs from March 17th to April 28th of 2014 at an American business school. The conceptual frameworks guiding this descriptive study are the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) proposed by Landis, Bennett, and Bennett (2003) and the Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977). Data will be collected from multiple

interviews and observations. Recommendations to improve the MBA program for future Chinese students will also be generated through inductive analysis of the collected data. The findings of the research will contribute to the knowledge of Chinese MBA students' leadership education experiences in U.S. business schools, and they will additionally illustrate the potential leadership styles of China's future economic leaders based on their U.S. educations.

This study is timely because the economic sector in China is undergoing great change. China has spent decades, and hundreds of billions of dollars, building the physical infrastructure necessary to support the world's second-largest economy (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013). In the years ahead, building China's human infrastructure will move to the force to accommodate the fast-growing economy and its worldwide development strategy (McKinsey Quarterly). Because many of today's Chinese MBA students who have been trained both in western and eastern contexts will become economic leaders in the coming decades, they will not look like the Chinese managers of yesterday or today (BloombergBusinessweek, 2006; BusinessBecause, 2013). The knowledge of their new leadership development experiences is needed to help people predict what future leaders they will become as well as the impact they will have on the world.

Background

China's rapid economic development draws tremendous attention from around the world, and Price Waterhouse Coopers, an influential business consultant firm, made a widely cited prediction that China could overtake the United States to become the world's largest economy as early as 2020 (The Daily Telegraph, 2010). Many factors

have contributed to the country's rate of economic growth that has prompted such predictions. China's political environment has become open and innovative in the past few decades, which began when the Chinese government launched the Open Door Policy in the late 1970s and adopted a market economy strategy (Breslin, 2008; Wang et al., 2011). This policy largely facilitated economic transformation and modernization in China by allowing western capital to enter into the mainland Chinese market (Wang et al., 2011). Any economic advancements would also not have occurred without young Chinese economic leaders' active work and research in cutting-edge fields, such as in the fields of technology, telecommunications, media, computers, and biotechnology (Feng, 2009; Wang et al., 2011).

This group of young economic leaders generally has a different professional profile than the previous generation who received their professional education in China under a planned economy (Bonnie et al., 2007). One significant difference is that a large amount of the young economic leaders have received their MBAs and leadership training overseas (Bonnie et al., 2007). Compared to the young economic leaders, many in previous generations did not receive higher education. The major reason is because the higher education system in China did not start to develop until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the system was completely shut down during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976 (Pepper, 1996). During this period, all the schools were closed, and the intellectuals and students were expelled to do labor work in the farms fields, mountain areas, and factories in the rural parts of China (Pepper, 1996).

The higher education system was restructured and was open to the public in the late 1970s, but the higher education that students received was quite different than what many Chinese students currently experience. The first generation of the college-educated professionals since the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s valued collectivism and authoritarianism because their educations had been heavily influenced by textbooks from the former Soviet Union and Mao Zedong's ideologies (Cheng & Cheng, 1984; Dirlik, 2012). These ideas were later reflected in their daily leadership practice in all the entities in China where 70% of the enterprises were state-owned (Wang & Lin, 2011). For example, Boisto and Child (1988) found that taking individual initiative was not rewarded, and entrepreneurial activities were discouraged in the state-owned entities. Workers and managers were also rewarded for following orders and not questioning the status quo (Vanhonacker, 1992). The general leadership style has been described as authoritarian, top-down, or totalitarian command chains where the followers were not encouraged to participate in the decision-making process that could challenge a leader's authority and consequently spoil any harmony in organizations (Chen et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2013).

In more recent decades, the economy has transformed from a planned economy to a market economy, and the leadership teams of the first generation of college goers are retiring. Their successors have a markedly different professional profile needed to fit the new demands of the newly industrialized, market-driven Chinese economy (Bonnie et al., 2007). The rise of the new market economy has meant China has been experiencing dramatic transitions in all aspects of society in the past few decades because of new global trading opportunities (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). Many have called for new

leaders with different knowledge, skills, and abilities than in the past, and consequently, the demand for advanced management education has greatly increased (Borgonjon & Vanhonacker, 1992; Lefrere, 2007; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010; Tan & Wellins, 2006).

The business higher education system in China, however, has not been fully able to accommodate the increasing demand for business education and professional training for many reasons (Yu et al., 2005). First, formal business higher education systems have not been established long enough to form comprehensive programs (Tan & Wellins, 2006; Wang, 2012). In addition, the quality of current business education, including the facilities and faculty, has not been high enough to accommodate the needs of the students who are increasingly demanding business training courses (Alon & McIntyre, 2005; Ho, 2010; World Bank, 1997). There is therefore a growing trend toward more Chinese students seeking professional MBA training overseas, especially at the top 10 U.S. institutions, to enhance their employability (Lu, 2009; Sun & Wang, 2009).

In response to this trend, study abroad opportunities have become increasingly available since the late 1970s where more and more Chinese students have been able to go to the United States for their MBA degrees (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). Adding to the attraction to study abroad has been that, since the application of the Open Door Policy in the late 1970s, China has embraced a tremendous amount of western ideologies where learning western views in different disciplines are signs of personal achievement among intellectuals (Breslin, 2008). These attractions have meant that, according to the latest Open Doors data from the Institute of International Education ([IIE], 2013), a majority of Chinese students who come to the United States come for business degrees. For instance, there were 194,029 Chinese students studying in the United States in 2013,

and 116,788 (61%) of them were in the field of business and management (Institute of International Education, 2013).

After graduating from U.S. institutions, Chinese MBA students who return to China often find jobs in economic leadership positions in industry and frequently contribute significantly to both the local and global economy (Flew, 2006). For example, Feng (2009) stated that those Chinese students who have left and then returned to the country have started 5,000 enterprises in the country's more than 60 business parks, which are areas created with preferential policies and facilities to help returning professionals start their own careers. The same report also shows the revenue from these newly opened enterprises amounts to a yearly industry output of 10 billion yuan, or US \$1.4 billion (Feng, 2009). This group of economic leaders has improved the industrial structure and the international competitiveness of national enterprises (Overseas Studies Section of the Department of International Affairs of the Ministry of Education and the Intellectual, Development Research Institute of the Shanghai Educational Sciences Research Academy, 2002). For instance, as Wang et al. (2011) reported, Zhang Fan, who holds an MBA from Stanford University, helped Focus Media raised US \$172 million on NASDAQ and made it the first Chinese media company listed on the overseas stock market. Additionally, Wu Shangzhi, who holds an MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, established CDH Venture, which is the first private equity venture capital firm in China. He also owns CDH Management Co., which is an overseas foundation valued at US \$100 million and a domestic foundation of RMB135 million in 2002. Deng Feng who holds an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania is another example of success: He founded a network security company in 1997 that was

listed on the NASDAQ in 2001, which was the first high-tech enterprise listed on the stock market after the September 11th attacks in the United States.

In the next decades, there will be a large number of Chinese MBAs with similar visions, ambitions, and knowledge graduating from U.S. business schools and taking upon leadership roles in various fields in China. Their leadership skills emphasize teamwork, communications, presentations, and intercultural sensitivity, which will be reflected in China's economic and social evolvement (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013). Therefore, identifying the leadership development education experiences of current Chinese MBA students makes it possible to draw a clearer picture of future Chinese economic leaders and the influence they can bring to industry through their daily business practices.

In addition, because Chinese MBA students are developing their leadership skills in a Western institution, their learning experience is intertwined with their cultural adaptation process. Chinese MBA students are from a Chinese cultural background that emphasizes different values from western cultures (Huang & Brown, 2009; Ladd & Ruby, 2010; Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). These distinctive values include being obedient and submissive to authority and believe being humble and modest are keys to success (Keith & Simmers, 2013; Ladd & Ruby, 2010; Vogel, 2013). Some values that are prominent and strongly valued in leadership education in western institutions, such as being proactive, are distinctively different from Chinese traditions (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). Therefore, even when using the same curriculum and pedagogy, the leadership education experience of Chinese students is different from their U.S. classmates because Chinese MBA students have their own cultural backgrounds and learning characteristics (Ladd &

Ruby, 2010; Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). For example, while U.S. students may challenge a professor's point of view, Chinese MBA students may remain quiet and keep their thoughts to themselves because they are reluctant to share with the rest of the class.

Because of their different values, Chinese MBA students are similar to any group of international students in that they have to adapt to a different American culture with unfamiliar values (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013; Thompson, 2000). Their understandings of and reactions to those values vary as they enter different stages of cultural adaptation (Shi, 2010). Because the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) proposed by Landis et al. (2003) illustrates the six stages of cultural adaptation that these students experience, I decided to adopt DMIS as one of the frameworks for the current study.

I will therefore make a survey that is based on the DMIS and send it to the participating students at the beginning of the study; the survey aims to identify the cultural adaptation stage of each student. After determining the cultural adaptation stage of each student, I will conduct a detailed descriptive study with observations and interviews to illustrate the students' leadership learning experiences. The benefit of using the DMIS, observations, and interviews for this case study is that they will help illustrate the leadership learning experience of Chinese MBA students who are at specific cultural adaptation stages. The detailed illustration of the DMIS will be listed in the literature review chapter, and its application for the study will be elaborated in the methods chapter.

In addition, leadership education, as an important part of an MBA program, is different from other program areas such as introductory accounting or economics courses (Komives et al., 2011). The pedagogical format is more than lecturing; it involves a good amount of interaction, observation, and communication with others (Dobson, Frye, &

Mentina, 2013). For instance, general leadership development programs include various courses and activities that involve interactions and communications between students and classmates, professors, and alumni. There are also related activities such as classroom discussion, participation, learning team meetings, student associations activities, and speaker series (Michaelson, Knight, & Fink, 2002; Wood & Gordon, 2009).

Due to the special characteristics of leadership education programs, I decided to use the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain the leadership learning process of Chinese BA students because it focuses on the interaction between the students and their environments (Bass, 2008). The Social Learning Theory is also used in this study because it was useful in the pilot study in explaining how individuals learn leadership skills through interactions with others. I will consequently refer to the Social Learning Theory to conduct the observations and design interview questions for the current study. A detailed description of the Social Learning Theory will be illustrated in the literature review chapter, and its application for the study will be elaborated in the methods chapter.

Problem Statement

When increasing numbers of Chinese students who are becoming economic leaders in the Chinese and global economy are coming to the United States for their business professional training, knowledge of this population and their leadership education becomes increasingly important so other leaders can better prepare to work with them in the future (Butler et al., 2008). Specifically, researchers and educators are concerned about the leadership skills that Chinese MBAs develop in U.S. business schools, their leadership education experience, and their own understanding of leadership

education along their cultural adaptation in a western institution. The existing literature does not answer these questions, and consequently, it is often difficult to fully understand or successfully predict how the future economic leaders from China may act and how to effectively communicate and collaborate with them in a global economy.

However, it is not clear from the existing research how this emphasis on leadership education that differs from their professional training in China impacts China's future leaders. Characteristics in U.S. leadership education that focus on liberalism, democracy, participation, empowerment, and individualized consideration (Bass, 2007) are not emphasized in traditional Chinese educational characteristics that place value in obedience and hesitancy to question authority (Wang, 2007). A descriptive study of Chinese MBA students' leadership education may help other global powers draw conclusions on how Chinese economic leaders may act.

There is also ample literature on Chinese students studying in the United States as a general group, yet there are no sufficient studies on the Chinese MBA students as a more select group. Chinese students are generally perceived as passive learners, good note takers, and those who usually achieve high scores in exams in most of the existing literature (Yeung & Fu, 2011, and Wang 2012). However, because Chinese MBA students are different from many incoming Chinese students studying in the United States in terms of factors such as their ages, professional history, career goals, and motivations (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013; Rayment & Smith, 2013), a focused study on Chinese MBA is needed.

In order to address the listed concerns, this study will focus on the following questions:

- 1. What are Chinese students' who attend MBA programs in the United States understandings of leadership skills and education?
- 2. Do Chinese MBA students at different stages of cultural adaption experience leadership education differently? If so, how?
- 3. Finally, how do Chinese MBA students learn leadership skills through interacting with people around them?

The framework for this current study will use the DMIS and the Social Learning Theory. The DMIS is appropriate to use because it is used as a lens to get a more complete picture of Chinese MBA students' learning experiences in a leadership program by considering their cultural adjustment and adaptation stages. The DMIS offers a set of distinctive positions students take in understanding cultural differences. In this case, the steps in the DMIS can help understand the process of how Chinese MBA students adapt to a new culture when studying at AGBS. Additional description of the DMIS will be provided in the review of the literature.

The second framework used in this study is the Social Learning Theory. Leadership education, as an important part of MBA education, is different from other program areas such as accounting or decision analysis (Komives et al., 2011). Leadership development programs include various courses and activities that involve interactions and communication between students and classmates, professors, and alumni. As one of the leadership education theories that focuses on the interaction between the students and their environments, the Social Learning Theory helps illustrate how Chinese MBA

students acquire leadership skills (Bass, 2008). Again, additional information about Social Learning Theory will be provided in the review of the literature.

Data in this study will be collected from interviews and observations, and it is hoped that this study will result in an in-depth description of the Chinese MBA students' leadership learning experiences along with a special focus on their cultural adaptation processes. After an inductive analysis of the data, I hope to draw conclusions that will not only help fill the gap in the literature regarding the leadership education of the next generation of the Chinese economic leaders but will also provide useful information to the faculty and staff in U.S. business schools to develop their future programs with their Chinese students in mind.

The Significance of the Study

Examining Chinese MBA students' leadership education at AGBS at the University of Virginia raises unique cultural opportunities at the individual, institutional, and societal levels. From an individual Chinese MBA student's perspective, this study may help prepare for studying in U.S. business schools. There are different tangible and intangible factors associated with attending a MBA program, such as tuition, career interests, and students' situations such as family, cultural adaptation, and language issues students must consider. Chinese MBA students may additionally be interested to know about the leadership education experience at U.S. schools when it comes to selecting schools. Information regarding what education the AGBS offers may help students make informed educational investment decisions that meet their individual needs.

In addition, the current study on Chinese MBA students' leadership development can enable individual schools to better accommodate the growing population of Chinese students because instructors can better understand their students' sources of motivation, attitudes, and responses to specific instructional practices (Felder & Brent, 2005). The results of the study can consequently help instructors improve their teaching in leadership development when working with Chinese students because there is no one-type-fits-all set of leadership education for all students from every country (Keith & Simmers, 2013). Findings from this study can help inform the teaching materials, such as the specific curriculum, class activities, and case studies to have a more intercultural emphasis. Feedback regarding how Chinese MBA students perceive leadership education may further help instructors deliver courses in a way that meets the needs of the Chinese MBA students in certain contexts. In short, the study may help instructors better prepare for delivering their courses to a wider cultural range of an increasing number of Chinese MBA students.

Illustrating leadership educational experiences of Chinese MBA students in one U.S. business school also aligns with the important societal theme of international education, which advocates for cultivating global citizens for the next generation. The call for international education has grown because employees working for multinational business have proliferated in the past 25 years (Bass, 2008), and this trend is even more obvious in China (Li, 2010). Regardless of where Chinese students are finding jobs, they are facing a much more frequent intercultural mix of foreign ownership. Therefore, possessing leadership skillsets, as expected as one of the learning outcomes of education in global citizenship, becomes increasingly important in a more globalized society.

The current study's findings can benefit many groups as it explores Chinese MBA students' leadership education in the AGBS. The findings will better prepare prospective Chinese MBA students for their study in a U.S. business institution, help faculty improve teaching practices, and also better inform students of the ways to develop leadership skills to achieve the goal of becoming a global citizen. The next chapter will discuss leadership in general and current practices in leadership education, the nature and characteristics of Chinese students' learning styles, and the relationship between learning and cultural influences for overseas Chinese students.

Definitions

The current case study focuses on Chinese MBA students' leadership education in one U.S. business school. The discussion and research will be centered around several key concepts including what defines a leader and leadership/leadership skills. It is important to define the meanings of these key concepts because these two concepts have various definitions under different cultural and social circumstances. In the current study, these concepts will be discussed as they are used in the business field as well as how they are used in a U.S. business education context. Defining these terms is also important because the units of analysis of the study are Chinese MBA students, and the definitions of these two concepts mean different things to them compared to U.S. students because of cultural reasons. Therefore, the terms leader and leadership skills need to be clearly defined. The definitions will be elaborated on in the literature review, but this section will briefly define these concepts.

Leader. Within the scope of the current discussion on the study, leaders are the future business elites who will be actively working and guiding economic and social

changes. The leaders of tomorrow referred to in this paper are the group of Chinese MBA students who are attending U.S. business schools.

Leadership/Leadership skills. The terms leadership and leadership skills will be used interchangeably in the study. Until the middle part of the twentieth century, scholars focused on social context of leadership and also started to associate leadership with individual behaviors (Blake & Mouton, 1978; Fleishman, 1953). Other scholars continued developing the concept of leadership as a set of behaviors performed by the individuals (Connelly et al., 2000; Katz, 1974; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). Following this tradition, this study will regard leadership as a definable set of skills individual possess that can be learned and developed.

Researchers believe leadership skills include elements as being a competent communicator and having integrity along with interpersonal and social skills (Connelly et al., 2000; Katz, 1974). In addition, leadership skills include having the ability to learn, adapt, persist, envision, and coach (Kalargyrou et al., 2012). They also consist of the ability to actively listen, inspire, motivate, and adopt a holistic view of an issue (Hind et al., 2009; Pincusp & Rudnick, 2013).

Although the general definitions of leadership/leadership skills are presented here, the specific characteristics are still to be explored through the study. This is a descriptive case study through which I aim to explore the definitions of leadership and leadership skills from the perspectives of the Chinese MBA students themselves. Therefore, I will give a general definition in this section and let the specific definition from the perspectives of Chinese MBA students emerge during the study.

Because Chinese MBA students come from different backgrounds and cultures, how they interpret situation, interactions, and leadership skills differs from their U.S. classmates. This means they will interpret a speaker's story differently than their U.S. classmates (Lum, 2006). For example, when the concept of servant leadership is presented, Chinese MBA students may find it useful because they are so used to a top-down management style. At the same time, U.S. students who were brought up in a western culture may not find it a different concept to learn.

Summary

In order to better understand Chinese MBA students' leadership education in the United States, the current study will focus on Chinese students at the AGBS. I will refer to Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Social Learning Theory as the theoretical frameworks for the study. The units of analysis will be selected from four second year Chinese MBA students who are enrolled in the "Managerial Psychology" class at the AGBS from March 17th to April 28th of 2014. The data collection methods include a survey, individual interviews, and observations. All the interviews will be conducted in Chinese, audiotaped, and later translated and transcribed by me. The data will be analyzed inductively; the data collection and analysis processes will be described in detail in the methods section.

The next section will provide a review of the literature. Specifically, it will outline current research findings regarding (a) theories of leadership and practices in leadership education, (b) the nature and characteristics of Chinese students' learning, and (c) the influence of Chinese culture on Chinese MBA students' learning in the United States.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore Chinese MBA students' experiences in leadership education in U.S. institutions and the role of their cultural background in their adaptation and learning. The review includes four major aspects: leadership theories and current practices in leadership education, the nature and characteristics of Chinese students' learning, the relationship between learning and cultural influence for overseas Chinese students, and two conceptual frameworks that will inform this study. Due to the limited literature exclusively describing Chinese MBA students' experiences overseas, this literature review attempts to cover Chinese overseas students' learning characteristics and experiences of which Chinese MBA students are a part.

Leadership and Leadership Education

The following section will cover various leadership theories, leadership education theories, and the examples of existing practices of teaching leadership skills. Leadership is complex and thus is hard to define with an exact meaning. However, as Grint (2005a) summarized, there are some general definitions of leadership. First, leadership is thought as the property of a person, or the personal attributes of a leader. A second definition of leadership might pertain to the achievements of leaders. Third, leadership could be regarded as a position, prompting some to ask where leaders operate and what responsibilities they hold. Fourth, leadership may also be considered as a process, encouraging many to turn their attention to the functions and processes of the concept

more broadly (Bolden, 2011).

Leadership, as a comprehensive concept, has similar but slightly different attributes when applied in different disciplines. For instance, in the area of engineering, leadership is the ability to lead a group of engineers and technical personnel responsible for creating, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating products, systems, or services (Young et al., 2010). In an academic context, leadership may have different concepts, such as instructional leadership that is related to students, teachers, curricular, and learning-teaching processes (Boldon, 2011).

Leadership also has its different types and styles in different disciplines. Bolden (2011) summarized that there are three types of leadership: (a) situational leadership, which is passive; (b) transformational leadership, which is dynamic; and (c) distributed leadership, which is open (Bolden, 2011, pp. 6-7). Bass (2008) also concluded that there are various styles of leadership. For example, autocratic leadership advocated the arbitrary and controlling nature of a leader while democratic leadership emphasizes the consultative and participative nature of a leader (Bass, 2008). Directive leadership requires leaders to play the active role in problem solving and decision making, and expect the followers to act by their decisions, while participative leadership asks the leaders to involve the followers in the process of decision making (Bass, 2008). In addition, in the early 21st century, "new" leadership came to the field of leadership education as charismatic and transformative leadership (Bass, 2008). The variety in its type, style, and application make leadership one of the most compelling concepts today.

Just like the discussion of what is leadership, the debate on what defines leadership education is also contestable (Bolden, 2011). Day (2000), for instance, thought

that leadership education is an investment in human capital. Campbell et al. (2003) concluded that leadership education is a set of developmental approaches to teaching in the areas of interpersonal attributes, interpersonal qualities, cognitive abilities, communication skills, and task-specific skills. Further, Cunliffe (2009) proposed that leadership education aims to develop a philosopher leader with a training targeting rationality, ethics, and reflexivity. Grint (2007) made a similar point for leadership development based on Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* and proposed that leadership education should develop leaders' wisdom to see what may be good in a particular situation and how to generate that good.

Even as what constitutes leadership education is debated, there is an increasing trend where business schools strive to provide it. These schools seek to provide leadership education in order to increase students' capacities to exert personal influence, make proper use of power, motivate others, and negotiate and mediate effectively (Bass, 2008). Business schools, especially MBA programs, are called upon to develop the specific competencies associated with leadership and managerial roles (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 2010; Kass et al., 2001).

The literature indicates that there are various activities in higher learning institutions to teach leadership skills. A good number of business schools have already overhauled their MBA programs to include leadership -based courses in their curriculum (Loman, 2011). The University of Rochester's Simon Graduate School of Business, for example, has started to evaluate its students on their communication skills, even in the course such as accounting; Rochester Institute of Technology's E. Philip Saunders College of Business now includes self-reflection, leadership coaching, planning, and goal

setting, in response to alumni reports on the requirement from the workplace. Others such as St. John Fisher College's Bittner School of Business adopted role-play in videotaped assessments that are evaluated by experts on leadership, communication, and effective teamwork. Further, at Roberts Wesleyan College, team exercises are embedded in 10 of the 12 courses to develop interpersonal skills (Loman, 2011).

Other activities include offering leadership simulation activities in the classroom or intensive training courses, running student-led organizations and workshops, or conducting community service programs (Komives et al., 2011). For example, in workshops, students build leadership skills through self-reflection, small group discussion, peer feedback, and hands-on experiences (Dobson, Frye, & Mentina, 2013). Students obtain leadership skills such as conflict management, decision-making, ethical leadership, community organizing, facilitation skills, pubic speaking, recruitment, risk management, and time management (Komives et al., 2011). Students also practice problem solving, communication skills, conflict management, and coaching skills (Michaelson, Knight, & Fink, 2002; Wood & Gordon, 2009). One of the specific pedagogies involved in these leadership education practices is team-based learning, which is often an optimal choice for learning leadership skills (Komives et al., 2011).

Yet despite the growing number of activities in leadership training within higher education, many MBA programs have been slow to embrace leadership activities and historically have not effectively implemented them (Kirby, 2007; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). For example, the Global Compact EFMD (2005) pointed out that MBA programs fail to seriously address the global responsibility challenges of contemporary society. This statement is echoed by other critiques, such as the criticism

that MBA research is intensively focused on scientific approaches developed by professors with limited real-world experience (Augier & March, 2007), and MBA pedagogy has an irremediable inclination to "reduce managing to decision-making, decision-making to analysis... and analysis to technique" (Mintzberg, 2004, pp. 38–40). A recent series of research on the role of business schools also confirmed similar concerns that there is a gap between what the business education is providing and the leadership skills that is required from the industry for global leaders (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010; Muff, 2013; Rayment & Smith, 2013). In summary, there is no significant amount of reliable evidence showing that MBA studies effectively contribute to improving managerial and leadership practices (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010; Muff, 2013; Pfeffer, 2005; Rayment & Smith, 2013).

Many researchers even have serious doubts about whether leadership is teachable in an educational setting (Gabriel, 2005; Garcia, 2009; Jonhston, 2013) or whether leadership is currently studied, practiced, or developed with sufficient depth in MBA programs (Gill, 2004). These assertions have been prevalent for decades. For instance, in early studies, researchers such as Niremberg (1998) concluded that leadership education is often trivialized, and people still understand leadership as essentially a positional duty that is not socially constructed by practice (Bolden, 2011). Garcia (2009) also asserted that leadership education is reduced to a set of analytical techniques and is rarely used by management educators as a topic for participants to confront their assumptions about leadership roles in organizations. Johnston's (2013) recent study even challenges that leadership education is primarily delivered for individuals in professional organizations rather than business schools.

This section of the literature review summarized various leadership theories and the current leadership education practices in MBA programs. The following section will review the nature and characteristics of Chinese learners studying overseas.

The Nature and Characteristics of Chinese Students' Learning

As most Chinese students studying abroad, Chinese MBA students are in environments with different cultures and traditions. The research indicates Chinese students' struggles in learning in a U.S. institution are due to their different cultural and educational learning expectations (Chen & Sun, 1997). The current review will focus on Chinese students as a collective group due to the limited literature regarding Chinese MBA students and the fact that Chinese MBAs belong to a student body that shares many characteristics with students from mainland China.

Chinese MBAs go through the same country's education system as the rest of Chinese overseas students and thus share many of the same learning characteristics (Ladd & Ruby, 2010). Chinese students, for instance, are widely recognized for their pursuit of academic achievement through recitation and memorization (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987; Huang & Brown, 2009; Keith & Simmers, 2013; Vogel, 2013). Their learning style puts strong emphasis on the acquisition of content; the process does not encourage active learning or understanding (Adams, Stivers, & Bin, 2003). As Huang and Brown (2009) further noticed in a comparison between Chinese and U.S. students' classroom performance, Chinese students memorize their notes and texts for all kinds of exams. They go through the same procedure in their college entrance examinations, and the competition is described as thousands of horses competing to cross a river through a 6-feet-wide bridge (Chan, 1999; Chen & Sun, 1997; Vogel, 2003).

The education system in China illustrates the strong influence of Confucian culture that has a strong impact on the Chinese people's viewpoints, value systems, ways of thinking, and behaviors (He, 1996). The Confucian philosophy, established about 2,000 years ago, views education as a way to improve one's job prospects and even as a means for building one's character (Huang, 2009; Zhang & Carrasquillo, 1992). In education, the Confucian philosophy of learning emphasizes effort and hard work are key to academic success (Yeung & Fu, 2011).

In addition, the Confucian philosophy focuses on practical outcomes of education, such as attaining higher status jobs rather than learning for its own sake (Yeung & Fu, 2011). Under such influences, students study very hard to compete with others for higher and higher scores through strategies such as memorization and recitation that lead to prestigious positions (Vogel, 2013). The general impression of a Chinese student is consequently a student who is good at taking notes, stays silent in the classroom, and performs well on tests to earn high scores (Cheng & Guan, 2011). In other words, Chinese higher education students receive encouragement for rote learning, and as a result, the educational system is not helping young graduates to think autonomously when required to make decisions, such as those made in business (Liu, 2006, 2009; Shepherd, 2010).

In addition, Confucianism also influences students' development of exhibiting critical thinking skills. Questioning others according to the Confucian philosophy is discouraged when acquiring essential knowledge from teachers (Aiko, 2008). When describing eastern philosophy's influence on education, Aiko (2008) concluded that learning means finding good teachers as role models and imitating their words and deeds.

Challenging one's teacher has been often considered taboo, and the Confucian emphasis on modesty reduces the likelihood of Chinese students questioning their teachers (Chan, 1999). The Confucius teaching relationship with students is therefore hierarchical with lecturing as the center (Xiao & Dyson, 1999). In following the Confucian philosophy, rote learning and memorization are emphasized while critical thinking, debating, and challenging authority are discouraged (Rodrigous, 2004; Vogel, 2013).

In addition, as another result of the Confucian influence among the country's students, Chinese students abide by the principles of saving face and silence is golden (Gao, 1996, 1998). There is a long-established face-saving idea in Confucianism that mediates various aspects of Chinese personal and interpersonal communication (Gao, 1996, 1998; Mao, 1994; Shi, 2011; Young, 1994). The idea of face is conceptualized in Chinese culture to represent how individuals present their moral characteristics in society. The loss of face makes it impossible for individuals to function properly according to the Chinese standards within the community (Young, 1994). The Chinese face is within the purview of the community and depends on how individuals think their character or behavior is being judged or perceived by people around them (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Holmes, 2006). If others' remarks are positive, one's self-esteem is boosted and, as a result, one has face. Otherwise, one feels disgraced or loses face (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Young, 1994).

The application of the idea of saving face is the Chinese belief that "silence is golden" (Shi, 2011, p. 577). In the classroom, Chinese students tend to use a more indirect conversational style, accompanied by frequent silences and longer inter-turn pauses to avoid embarrassment or discomfort either to those they are addressing or to

themselves (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). In an academic environment, the verbal messages Chinese students convey are accordingly not merely words or ideas. Instead, the behaviors of Chinese students may be an extension of one's public image, a reflection of one's face and quality as a person (Young, 1994).

With a strong sense of saving face, Chinese students may go through several steps of self-judgment to filter their verbal messages before they feel safe to speak their opinions publicly. The students may not share their comments because doing so may unveil their ignorance or damage their public image as qualified students and thus cause them to lose face (Du-Babcock, 2006). For example, although Chinese MBA students mostly have extensive work experience in multinational corporations, they still do not typically assume active roles in classroom discussions (Du-Babcock, 2006; Qing, 2009). Keeping silent in such circumstances may frequently be used as a strategy to avoid revealing perceived inadequacies publicly (Holmes, 2006).

Therefore, in being influenced by both Confucian and U.S. educational principles, Chinese students have formed their own way of learning and display their own characteristics compared to typical U.S. students. Chinese students put strong emphasis on memorizing class content, are accustomed to believing lecturing is the best pedagogy, and do not express critical thinking skills. The ideas of saving face and silence is golden make Chinese students the quiet and even passive students in U.S. classrooms (Shi, 2011).

The Influence of Chinese Culture on Chinese MBA Students' Learning in the United States

Chinese MBA students studying abroad, as a part of the larger group of Chinese students, are strongly influenced by Confucian culture because their culture, communication, and learning styles are intertwined and interdependent (Lum, 2006). The limited literature on Chinese MBA students studying in the United States indicates Chinese traditions and values play an important role in their learning and helps form a unique educational experience when studying outside China (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). One area of current literature focuses on Chinese MBA students' struggles communicating with U.S. students due to cross-cultural differences. For instance, in scrutinizing three simulated negotiation cases of Chinese MBA students in a U.S. business school, Shi (2011) found that the Chinese concept of saving face complicates students' interactions with U.S. students during their business studies.

One difficulty stems from Chinese students' strong sensitivity to maintaining harmony and interpersonal relationships in their social network that causes students to comply completely with their U.S. classmates in MBA programs. Shi (2010) found this mindset and subsequent behaviors, such as doing what others do, avoiding conflict, and helping everyone save face, show the style of interactions that are deeply rooted in these students' ideological origins and cultural identities that can be quite different from the communicative norms in the context of a U.S. MBA program.

In a study on intercultural communication of 12 Chinese MBA students in a short-term U.S. program, Shi (2011) also affirmed that substantial historical and political differences led the Chinese and U.S. students to interpret language and cultural behaviors

in different ways. This corresponded with Shi's (2010) earlier findings that indicated Chinese MBA students may be strongly influenced by their country's long isolation from the outside world. Shi suggested Chinese students may not have obtained adequate sociocultural knowledge of the western world to cross the geographic and sociolinguistic boundaries needed to become easily acclimated to international educational contexts.

There are other pedagogical differences that can complicate Chinese MBA students' learning in U.S. MBA educational institutions. For instance, one prominent feature of the U.S. MBA education classrooms is the frequency of interactive activities such as studying case methods and having group discussions (Thompson, 2000). Students are often invited or required to engage in spontaneous intellectual exchanges in the classroom; active participation and involvement in classroom activities are both strongly encouraged (Shi, 2010). Chinese MBA students, unlike U.S. students, are often not used to this interactive teaching style because they have been strongly influenced by Confucian culture and have been taught to sit quietly, listen, and obey their instructors (Thompson, 2000; Vogel, 2013). They are uncomfortable asking questions, disputing an idea, or joining the discussion about orchestrated case analyses (Thompson, 2000; Vogel, 2013).

These assertions were echoed by a more recent statistical study on Chinese MBA students' preferences on different instructional styles. Rajaram and Bordia (2013) found that passive techniques such as lectures, guest speakers, videos and classroom presentations were more favored by Chinese MBA students than active techniques including classroom discussion and individual research projects.

The limited literature regarding Chinese MBA students additionally include some qualitative studies that describe how students experience cultural adaptation in MBA programs in U.S. institutions. Parkers and Raymond (2004), for instance, noticed that when Chinese students moved from Environmental Protection Agency courses to MBA courses, they established a different strategy for reading their textbooks and other material. In order to cope with the quantity of reading in the MBA programs, the Chinese MBA students became highly selective in what they actually chose to read. The researchers also noted that a specific participant adopted a way of highlighting the key information in the book as her preparation strategy for the classroom discussions with her U.S. MBA classmates (Parkers & Raymond, 2004). Their findings offer a glimpse of Chinese MBA students' experiences; however, the limited amount of the similar research and the small quantitative sample size indicates the need for future study regarding Chinese MBA students' process of learning and adapting to a U.S. business school.

As indicated above, most of the literature on Chinese MBA students' learning problems and preferences uses quantitative or anecdotal data, and there are few qualitative research studies exploring the learning and cultural adaptation experiences of Chinese MBA students in U.S. business schools. This overall lack of qualitative studies fails to illustrate a whole picture of the needs of Chinese MBA students studying abroad or a portrait of their experiences from their own perspectives, which hinders the development and improvement of curriculum in MBA programs. Therefore, this area requires further study in order to help explain and improve Chinese MBA students' experiences in the United States.

Theories on Cultural Adaptation and Leadership Learning

Chinese MBA students have multifaceted leadership educational experiences at the AGBS, and these journeys need to be examined carefully through frameworks designed to evaluate changing cultural and personal experiences if they are to be understood. Because cultural adjusting and learning leadership skills happen simultaneously for Chinese MBA students, two theories serve as the framework in this study. First, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) by Landis et al. (2003) will be used to understand Chinese MBAs students' cultural adaptation and adjustment processes at different stages.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The DMIS is appropriate because it can be used as a lens to get a more complete picture of Chinese MBA students' learning experiences in a leadership program by considering their cultural adjustment and adaptation stages. The DMIS offers a set of distinctive positions students take in understanding cultural differences. In this case, the steps in the DMIS can help understand the process of how Chinese MBA students adapt to a new culture when studying at the AGBS.

The DMIS was created as a framework to explain the observed and reported experiences of people in intercultural situations (Bennett, 1993). When developing his theory, Bennett observed a group of students from different countries for over the course of a year in intercultural environments such as in workshops and classrooms. He noticed how these students handled cultural differences with the U.S. students while learning to become more competent intercultural communicators (Landis et al., 2003). Developed with a grounded theory approach, the DMIS illustrates six stages of increasing sensitivity

to cultural difference. The DMIS assumes that as one's experience with cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases. These six stages indicate a specific worldview configuration associated with different kinds of attitudes and behaviors (Landis et al., 2003).

Table 1
Six Stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

| Ethonocentric: | Ethnorelative: | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Step 1: Denial | Step 1: Acceptance | | |
| Step 2: Defense | Step 2: Adaptation | | |
| Step 3: Minimization | Step 3: Integration | | |

The first three stages of the DIMS are ethnocentric where one's own culture is experienced as the center of reality (Landis et al., 2003). One's own culture is experienced as the only true one in the denial stage, and consideration of other cultures is avoided by maintaining psychological or physical isolation from any differences. During the defense stage, one's own culture or adopted culture is regarded as the only positive one, and any cultural difference is denigrated. "Other" is experienced as inferior and as a stereotypic representation. A person at this stage feels threatened by cultural differences and reacts accordingly (Sandage & Harden, 2011). In the last ethnocentric stage, minimization, elements of one's own cultural worldview are viewed as universal (Landis et al., 2003; Mohoney & Schamber, 2004).

The second three stages of DIMS are ethnorelative where one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures in an inclusive way (Landis et al., 2003). At

the acceptance stage, other cultures are included in one's experience as equally complex but as different constructions of reality. During the next stage, adaptation, one forms a worldview based on sharing the experiences of those from different cultures. Lastly, in the integration stage, one can shift in and out of different cultural worldviews based on what is culturally appropriate for particular situations (Landis et al., 2003; Mohoney & Schamber, 2004). With the ethnorelative view, the individual not only considers the underlying values and norms which are shared among members of specific host communities but also focuses on the level of individual behavior without assuming that the latter is neither inherently inferior to the practices of the interpreter nor to the standards set by the host community (Guilherme, 2004).

In general, behaviors in the ethnocentric stages can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural differences either by denying their existence, by raising defenses against them, or by minimizing their importance. Behaviors in the ethnorelative stages are ways of seeking to understand cultural differences either by accepting their importance, by adapting a perspective to take them into account, or by integrating the whole concept of cultural differences into their identities. All stages in the DMIS are useful for dissecting and explaining the complex cultural adaptation process and are thus suitable to use in research that explores how people adjust their behaviors when working with different cultures in higher education. For instance, Monhoney and Schamber (2004) defined students' characteristics using the DMIS and studied their changes after participating in a diversity course emphasizing multicultural issues. Anderson et al. (2006) also used the DMIS to assess the extent of which a short-term, faculty-led study abroad program affected the cross-cultural sensitivity of student learners. When analyzing the integration

amongst international students in hospitality and tourism majors in a culturally diverse classroom in a UK institution, Barron and Dasli (2010) referred to the DMIS to study the degree that both home and international students enrolled on hospitality and tourism programmes were intercultural sensitive towards each others' needs.

Social Learning Theory

The second framework used in this study is the Social Learning Theory. Leadership education, as an important part of MBA education, is different from other program areas such as accounting or decision analysis. Leadership development programs include various courses and activities that involve interactions and communication among students, professors, and alumni. As one of the leadership education theories that focuses on the interaction between the students and their environments, the Social Learning Theory helps illustrate how Chinese MBA students acquire leadership skills (Bass, 2008).

The Social Learning Theory, developed by Bandura (1977), suggests that individuals learn behavior (e.g., leadership, aggression) based on modeling the behaviors of others in their environments. The learning process that Bandura proposed consists of several steps. First, people observe actions of those around them. Then, they form ideas as how to form the behavior themselves. They consequently refer to this information to guide their own action on later occasions (Bandura, 1977). The Social Learning Theory therefore indicates learning is a modeling process that focuses on the relationship between the learner and the environment that is highly applicable to help illustrate how leaders are developed. For instance, in a seminal study, Manz and Sims (1980) referred to the Social Learning Theory to describe how individuals develop self-management skills

as organizational leaders. The research findings indicated that those who imitated self-management skills of their supervisors successfully managed their own behaviors.

Summary

The literature, and the lack of literature, points toward a need for an in-depth qualitative study of Chinese MBA students' leadership learning experiences. First, while there is a sizeable amount of literature regarding Chinese students' learning experiences and cultural adaptations when studying abroad, the literature on Chinese MBA student's leadership education experiences when studying in the United States is sparse. Further studies need to be conducted because Chinese MBA students, though belonging to a larger group of Chinese students studying abroad, have different characteristics from Chinese students who chose to pursue other fields. Some dissimilarities include how Chinese MBA students have different prior experiences with multinational companies, motivations and expectations for studying abroad, and experience with unique learning environments. Knowing the cultural adaption and learning experience of Chinese MBA students studying abroad will offer valuable insight into ways to improve the educational experiences and student services that could result in more positive experience for students studying in the United States (Heffernan, Morrison & Basu, 2010).

In addition, although some current literature addresses Chinese MBA students' leadership education in the United States, the discussion is general and anecdotal. It primarily focuses on program content or assessment outcomes, such as students' feedback or satisfaction with particular programs. In other words, there is not substantial research on Chinese MBA students' leadership educational experiences or analysis of their learning experiences and cultural adaptation process from the students' own perspectives

(Bolden, 2011; Garcia, 2009). The current qualitative study will seek to add to the research by reporting students' views on their experiences.

The two theories used in this study, the DMIS and the Social Learning Theory, are appropriate when addressing Chinese MBA students' leadership education because they focus on the change students may experience as they interact with their surroundings. The DMIS, with its six distinctive cultural adaptation stages, will be referred to when I design a survey and create questions for individual interviews, because there is a connection between the ways that students interpret their leadership learning experience at different cultural adaptation stages. The Social Learning Theory will then help explore how students learn leadership skills through interacting with people around them at the AGBS. The detailed applications of these two theories will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the leadership learning experience of Chinese MBA students in a western learning context. The aim of this study is to have an in-depth description of Chinese MBA students' leadership learning experiences with a focus on their cultural adaptation. Given the difference between Chinese and western cultures, the study will focus on the description of Chinese MAB students learning by the following guiding questions:

- 1. What are Chinese students' who attend MBA programs in the United States understanding of leadership skills and education?
- 2. Do Chinese MBA students at different stages of cultural adaption experience leadership education differently? If so, how?
- 3. Finally, how do Chinese MBA students learn leadership skills through interacting with people around them?

This chapter provides a description of the methods I will use to address these research questions. This chapter begins by describing the frameworks. Next, it provides an explanation of the methods for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by describing the criteria necessary to ensure validity of the study, reflexivity, and the limitations of the study.

Research Frameworks

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The current study uses the DMIS to examine the complex cultural adaption process of Chinese MBA students studying in the United States who need to culturally adapt and learn leadership skills at the same time. Like any cultural group, Chinese MBA students are at different stages of cultural adaptation when gaining leadership skills. Their responses to their experiences are consequently different due to the diverse cultural adaptation stages that each of them is at during the MBA program. Therefore, referring to the diverse stages of intercultural sensitivity experienced by Chinese MBA students can help define their leadership development and will help the school design leadership programs with appropriate facilities and support to improve these students' experiences.

The DMIS thus will be helpful in both ascertaining the current stage of intercultural sensitivity each of the Chinese MBA students in the study, as well as shaping the interview questions and in analyzing the data. First, I will administer a survey to each of the Chinese MBA participants in the study to determine his/her current stage of intercultural sensitivity. Then, I will use those survey results to tailor more focused interview questions specific to a certain period of cultural adaptation. For example, after defining the students' cultural adaptation stages based on previous surveys, the questions regarding peer interactions posed to the students who are in the early, more ethnocentric stages include: "Do you sometimes feel you do not understand the conversation and do you care about what is being said?" In contrast, for students who are in the later, more ethnorelative stages, a sample question may include: "how do you join the group discussions even though the topics are not so familiar to you?" In addition to helping

craft interview questions, the DMIS will be helpful in analyzing the interview responses and data from observations. If a student had been classified as being at the intercultural adaptation stage based on preliminary data, for example, I will compare his following interview responses and observations with that preliminary data and note any changes in his learning processes and classification using the DMIS.

Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory may be particularly suitable to look at leadership skills among MBA students enrolled in interactive programs. For instance, at the AGBS, students are provided various opportunities to adopt and to improve their leadership skills by interacting with those around them. These opportunities include but are not restricted to studying case methods, working in project teams, and attending guest lectures series. All these contribute to the learning environment where Chinese MBA students can learn leadership knowledge and skills by observing and modeling the people around them such as their peers, professors, alumni, and industry leaders. Thus, the Social Learning Theory is a foundational lens to use when observing, interviewing, and talking with Chinese MBA students and assessing their development of leadership skills.

Using the two theories described above, the current study aims to investigate Chinese MBA students' leadership development at the AGBS. The DMIS illustrates the cultural adaptation of Chinese MBA students, while the Social Learning Theory elaborates on how they obtain leadership capabilities through interactions with alumni, professors, and classmates. This two-theory framework will additionally inform the research methods in the following section.

Methods

The current qualitative study is a case study illustrating the leadership development experiences of Chinese students enrolled in an MBA program at the AGBS. Specifically, this study will focus on students enrolled in the "Managerial Psychology" course at the AGBS. The basic data collection procedures include observations of in-class and out-of-class activities as well as individual interviews. The validity of the study will be demonstrated through procedures including member checking and triangulation of the data.

Rationale and Setting

The current qualitative research aims to provide in-depth descriptions of Chinese MBA students' leadership learning experiences in a U.S. business school. To achieve this goal, I expect to answer the research questions as "what are Chinese students' who attend MBA programs in the United States understanding of leadership skills and education, do Chinese MBA students at different stages of cultural adaption experience leadership education differently, if so, how, and, how do Chinese MBA students learn leadership skills through interacting with people around them. Therefore, I chose case methods for the current study is because case studies are preferred strategy when the research has "why" and "how" questions, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the research focus is a contemporary concern with real-life context (Yin, 2003). The contextual conditions, such as the culture of the AGBS, the teaching methods, the student population ratio, is highly pertinent to the phenomenon of the study. Additionally, in order to gather the data required for these descriptions, multiple interviews and observations of a specific group of Chinese MBA students are needed. Because the

process of conducting case studies covers the logic of design, data collection, and specific approach to data analysis (Yin, 2006; Schreiber, 2011), I decided to adopt case method to conduct the current study.

The AGBS is selected as the context for the case study because it is one of the top business schools in the United States with a number of activities promoting leadership development and a steadily-increasing population of Chinese students (J. Jennings, personal communications, October 30, 2013). Although the international population at the AGBS is steadily increasing, U.S. students still represent most of the AGBS's MBA student body (AGBS, 2013a). Thirty percent of the student population at the AGBS are internationals (while 35% of the Wharton Business School is comprised of international students). Twenty percent of the international students are Chinese. In other words, there are 38 Chinese MBA students out of 600 full-time MBA students in the AGBS. This number is larger among other business schools, such as for Wharton at University of Pennsylvania and for the Anderson School of Business at UCLA (Janelle Jennings, personal communication, May, 2014). Due to the relatively small Chinese student population compared to other schools where there are larger Asian populations and stronger Asian cultural influences, there will be many interactions between Chinese and U.S. students. Second, the AGBS's distinctive U.S. culture presents an appropriate context for this study. The AGBS also has a colonial culture that distinguishes itself from the other elite business schools on the west coast or northeastern parts of the United States (Friga, Bettis, & Sullivan, 2003). The AGBS is located in the city of Charlottesville which offers the comfort of a southern style small town. The buildings are traditional red-bricks compounds and this sets it apart from the modernism atmosphere at

the business schools in west-coast.

Additional reasons the AGBS is appropriate for this study include the school's strong focus on leadership development for its students. For example, the AGBS's case methods learning style is designed to help students strengthen communication and leadership skills by learning to make difficult decisions with limited information. Its required and elective courses also have a strong emphasis on global leadership, such as "Leading Organizations," "Mastering Global Leadership," and "Leadership and Diversity through Literature." In addition to the leadership training from academics, there are over 40 student organizations and clubs that are run by students, which provide a platform for students to practice the leadership knowledge (AGBS, 2013b). Finally, the selection of the AGBS for the study is also related to convenience and familiarity. I am currently enrolled at the University of Virginia and have worked as doctoral intern in the Office of Student Affairs at the AGBS. Therefore, I have easy access to the participants and observation sites at the AGBS. My familiarity with the school's culture will aid in the data analysis and interpretation.

I selected the specific class "Managerial Psychology" because it is designed to teach leadership (see Appendix A for the syllabus). It is a class for second year MBA students at the third and fourth quarter of the academic year of 2013-2014, and it takes place within the time frame of this study every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon for 90 minutes from March 19th to April 24th of 2014. As one of the classes under the series of "Leadership and Organizational Behaviors", "Managerial Psychology" course covers topics such as gender, race, meanings, habits of excellence, relationships, creativity, and life-long growth. Students will consider those issues and prepare themselves for the

leading position in the field of business later. Students will have classroom discussions and group activities, such as discussing the impact that some of the concepts have on how they see the world. As a weekly assignment, students are also required to write a weekly paper on the leadership implications from the course readings. In addition, the students will present a final paper as a reflection on the discussion in the class regarding leadership from their own cultural perspective.

This class also provides opportunities for me to observe interactions between students and their classmates and professors. The classroom activities in "Managerial Psychology" such as group discussions, may illustrate how the Chinese MBAs practice leadership skills. The observations may indicate students' interaction characteristics at different cultural adaptation stages. At the same time, according to the Social Learning Theory, the interactions among students and their learning environment, in this case their professor and classmates, may best illustrate how these students learn leadership skills.

The out-of-class observations will occur in group activities where the observations will focus on Chinese MBA students' interaction with people around them. The possible observation opportunities exist in the many following situations. The project team meetings is one of the observation sites where students gather together to work on the class project after school. The meeting time and place will be decided by all the team members. The speaker series, as another focus of out-of-class observations, is an additional activity that will be observed that the AGBS offers to encourage students to gain leadership knowledge and to network with the AGBS's alumni. It is organized by Career Development Center at the AGBS. Alumni as industry leaders are invited to give 60 minute speech with a topic related to the leadership in the industry, and students will

have opportunities to interact at the end of the speech in a question and answer session. In addition, the AGBS has more than 40 student-run clubs and associations. Activities provided by these organizations will be another ideal social setting to observe Chinese MBA students interact with people around them. The AGBS's Second Year Peers is another program where a Second Year student serve as a mentor and coach for a First Year student as they navigate their way through the First Year at the AGBS. Because the analysis of the current study are the second year Chinese MBA students, the Second Year coach meeting is considered an ideal occasion to observe Chinese MBA students practice leadership skills. According to the DMIS and Social Learning Theory, the interactions among the Chinese MBA students and the people around them describe how they communicate across cultures. At the same time, those interactions with others.

Researcher as Instrument

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is one of the primary instruments of learning in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the primary researcher in this study, my cultural background, as well as my professional experience in student affairs impacted the design, analysis, and future results of this study. As stated previously, I have a connection to both the study site and the backgrounds of Chinese students studying in the United States. My in-depth knowledge of both the US and Chinese cultures, as well as the education systems in both countries, will help me in designing the research methods, collecting, and analyzing the data. I am an international student from China, and I am currently studying in a western institution in the United States. My Chinese upbringing gives me extensive knowledge of Chinese culture and values, and the nearly five years I have studied in the

United States has familiarized me with U.S. culture. Additionally, I am particularly familiar with the higher education systems in the United States and China. I attended school in China for 20 years until graduate school, and I am currently finishing up my doctoral study at the University of Virginia in education focusing on international higher education.

Further, my role as an intern in international student affairs at the Office of Student Affairs at the AGBS well informs me of the Chinese MBA student population at the institution. I have weekly check-in meetings with international students, especially Chinese MBA students, about their general studying experience at the AGBS as part of my internship. This work experience familiarizes me with Chinese MBA students in terms of their academic and cultural adaptation problems and concerns. These experiences have shaped and impacted the design, process, and future results of this study. For instance, it helps me design the research questions with the awareness of cultural difference and interpret the information from interviews and observations from the perspective of a Chinese student. Last but not least, as a Chinese native speaker and an international student myself, I share a cultural background and the experience of studying abroad in the US with these students, which makes the students and me more related than if I were not. It is hoped that when having the conversation in their native language and discussing the similar study abroad experience, Chinese MBA students will be able to feel more comfortable with me and therefore make more comments with deeply-thought reflections than when speaking and reflecting in English. It also enables me to have richer data collection and improves the research project as a whole.

Sample

The units of analysis will be second-year Chinese MBA students enrolled in "Managerial Psychology" course, which is an elective course for second-year MBA students. The small number of students allows me to spend more time on describing and analyzing each individual's case. After the initial and small-scale study of Chinese MBA students has been completed, future research could replicate this study using a larger sample size.

The students in this study will be chosen using a mixed selection strategy. First, I will adopt a site sampling strategy where Chinese students enrolled in the AGBS's "Managerial Psychology" course will receive the information for the current study and will indicate whether they would be willing to provide their information (Schreiber & Asner-self, 2011). This information will be retrieved from Kitty Smiley (personal communication, August 23, 2013), the senior registrar at the AGBS, who has agreed to participate in the study. I will email this select group of students and invite them to participate in the study.

Next, I will seek maximum variation by selecting participants with a wide range of intercultural sensitivities (Schreiber & Asner-self, 2011). To determine participants' intercultural sensitivity levels, I will send those who agree to participate in the study a brief illustration detailing the six steps of the DMIS. I will then ask the students to select to what degree they agree with a statement on a Likert scale regarding whether they have experienced a certain stage and how much they feel related to the each statement (see Appendix B). The students' self-report information will help me tailor interview questions and observations.

With the self-report information, I will select the participants using the maximum variation sampling strategy in order to ensure a variety of individuals from different phases of the DMIS (Patton, 2001; Yin, 2003). It is hoped each selected student will represent two or more different stages of the model; it is possible for one individual to simultaneously be classified in more than one stage of the DMIS at a time. It is also hoped all the total answers from the participants will reflect the six stages of the model to increase the validity of this study.

Pilot Study

The pilot study for the current project was conducted from mid-February to Mid-May of 2012 for a class project in Advanced Qualitative Analysis in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. Two Chinese MBA students from the Class of 2011 at the AGBS were selected as the units of analysis based on their educational and professional backgrounds. Even though the students had similar lengths of work experience and educational backgrounds, they were different in gender, future career aspirations, perception of cultural differences, degrees of exposure to traditional Chinese cultures based on the locations of their cities of origin, and the specific function of their previous occupations. I selected two classes where both students were enrolled in order to conduct class observations. The classes were "International Deal Making," where many intercultural issues were discussed, and "General Manager Actions," where alumni of the AGBS were invited as guest speakers in each class to share their experiences and lessons with the current students.

Due to the time constraints of the Advanced Qualitative Analysis course, the basic data collection procedures only included in-class activity observation and two rounds of

interviews. However, the pilot study helped refine future data collection methods and procedures (Yin, 2003). The pilot study, for instance, provided me with valuable insights regarding the full-scale qualitative research design such as what was successful and unsuccessful in the research protocol and interview agenda. In addition, I was also able to develop the research instruments and identify logistical problems as well such as timing of the schedules of classes and the regular social activities and outings (Yin, 2003). I also applied for IRB approval for the pilot study. Therefore, any findings from the pilot study are eligible for later use in the full-scale qualitative study.

Data Collection

The data collected in the spring of 2014 in the course of "Managerial Psychology" will include material from individual interviews, a focus group interview, and multiple observations from both inside and outside the classroom. In order to make data collection a process as deliberately purposeful as possible (Erickson, 1986), the research will employ multiple methods of data collection for this project, and each of method will be described in detail below.



Figure 1. The framework of data collection.

Observations

Observation is the most used method of research in cultural anthropology and a fundamentally important method in all qualitative inquiry (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002;

Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Observation allows me to discover the complex interactions in natural social settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and thus serves as another source of evidence in a case study (Yin, 2003). As Erickson (1986) noted, education settings are places where informal and formal interactions intertwine. In conducting observations for this study, I will refer to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which states that individuals learn leadership skills through interaction with his/her environment. The data will be collected when students are participating in in-class and out-of-class activities at the AGBS. I will have multiple occasions to collect data because the AGBS provides many opportunities for students to learn from one another in classroom settings as well as in out-of-classroom activities such as team learning and listening to speakers in multiple leadership series. Multiple observations will therefore allow me to understand the ways Chinese MBA students and people around them construct their learning environment (Erickson, 1986).

During the observations, I will act as an unobtrusive observer by being present at the scene of the action and being identifiable only as a researcher (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Lichtman, 2006). I will not actively participate in classroom activities or any out-of-classroom meetings, such as project study meetings or alumni speaker series. The 90-minute class will happen twice a week, and the class will be from the week of March 18th until the week of April 27th, which is six weeks in total. The total classroom observation time will be about 15 hours. The individual observation hours for each student will vary from four to five hours depending on the final number of the participants in this study.

The observations for out-of-classroom activities will include observations in various social settings, such as project meetings, club activities, classroom breaks, alumni speaker series, and other social gatherings. I plan to have one-hour observation for each student every week in six weeks. The total observation time for learning teams will vary from 30 to 38 hours. The activities that I am going to observe will be decided with each student based on their schedules. I will finalize the observation information once I receive the participation consent from the students. I will also make sure there is a detailed introduction of each observation occasion in the final dissertation write-up.

The field notes from these observations will provide me an opportunity to record students' patterns of behaviors while at the field site and will help to focus data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Field notes from these observations will focus on the details of MBA students' interactions including body language and the dialogue among Chinese MBA students, their professors, classmates, and alumni. The field notes will be transcribed within 24 hours of the given observation and will be kept for repeated analysis to look for emerging themes in the data.

Interviews

In addition to observations, I also plan to conduct two rounds of individual interviews to investigate the focal students' impressions of their leadership education experiences and their cultural adaptation to their environment. The two rounds of interviews will be semi-structured and open-ended so they are guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2003). The interview questions will be constructed using principles from the DMIS, Social Learning Theory, and observation data from students' multiple activities. In addition, the interview questions will be informed by the

findings from the pilot study. For example, when the participants answered the opened-ended questions from their own meaning-making perspectives in the pilot study, several important cultural adaptation themes were mentioned that will be referred to in the interview agenda for the current study. These themes included the desire to adhere to Chinese cultural norms by sitting silent in the class in order to save face and then the shift toward modeling the U.S. students' presentation skills and manners.

The first round of interviews will be conducted before the observations, and the other will be after the observations. Each interview will last 50 to 60 minutes. Through the individual interviews, I aim to follow my own line of inquiry as well as to ask actual conversational questions in as unbiased a manner as possible that also serves the needs of her line of inquiry (Yin, 2003). For the first round of individual interviews, a semi-structured interview protocol will be employed (see Appendix C). The example individual interview questions include: "Was there ever a time at the AGBS when you felt like an outsider? If so, why?" and "Are there any activities that you enjoy doing with your U.S. peers at the AGBS? Why?" The second round of individual interviews will be conducted after the observations are complete. This round of individual interview questions will be constructed and refined from the data from the previous interviews and observations and are thus subject to change (see Appendix D). It is hoped these two sets of interviews will provide the study with a rich account of self-reflection from the participants.

All interviews will take place in an informal setting, such as in a private meeting room in the library, to allow interviewees to feel comfortable and thus to be more likely to speak freely (Bogdan & Biken, 2007). Although I will generate guided questions before the

interview, she will not follow a strict sequence of questions. Rather, depending upon how each individual responds to questions, participants will be free to take the lead in continuing the conversation. When the interviewees want to elaborate on their responses at length, they will not be stopped; there will be some flexibility based on the narrative that the participants provide. The purpose of this flexibility is to capture the Chinese MBA students' *emic* perspective rather than my *etic* perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The interviews will be conducted in Chinese and audio recorded to allow for easier translation and transcription.

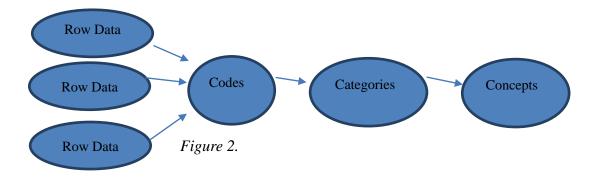
Lastly, a working journal will be kept during the research study in order to facilitate reflexivity, help me examine her personal assumptions, and clarify individual belief systems and subjectivities (Lichtman, 2006; Russell & Kelly, 2002). In this case, the journal will contain research schedules, my concerns, and her understanding of Chinese MBA students' leadership education experiences at the AGBS. I will refer to the journal when writing up the study. The journal, most importantly, will help me to improve transparency in the research process and to critically explore the impact of her self-reflection on the data collection and later analysis (Lichtman, 2006).

Data Analysis

This study adopts the analytic induction approach when analyzing data because this approach will help me establish my own empirical assertions and an evidentiary warrant for these assertions (Erickson, 1986). In this study, the patterns in the data will emerge from studying field notes from observations and interview transcripts; patterns and codes will be derived from holistic and continuous analysis that will lead to empirical assertions (Schreiber, 2011). In addition, due to the fact that the round two interviews are

based on what I will have learned from the first round of interviews and observations, I will start analyzing data at the beginning of data collection and keep analyzing all the way through data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As preparation for data analysis, before the process of data analysis starts, I will organize all the raw text data—interview transcriptions and observation field notes—into separate files using a word processing package, and my comments will be inserted in brackets in a different font and color (Lichtman, 2006). All the data will be organized by each participant (Schreiber, 2011). At the same time, I will start a working journal, and all the information collected during the data analysis will be recorded (Lichtman, 2006).

I will view the process of data analysis as one of sifting and sorting as shown in Figure 2 (Lichtman, 2006). All the qualitative data from interviews and observations will be dissected and categorized into codes. These codes will be organized into hierarchical categories, in which some codes will be subsets of larger categories (Lichtman, 2006). By reviewing the data, I will organize the codes into different categories and subcategories. During this process, it is expected I will find some common elements among the various interviews and observation notes as well as some inconsistencies. A note will be made about inconsistencies, but they will not discredit the existing coding and categorizing (Lichtman, 2006).



I will continue the sorting and sifting process among all the categories and subcategories (Lichtman, 2006). The assertions will be made based on the themes and concepts that emerge from this review. The assertions, as Erickson (1986) found, may vary in scope and in level of inference. The assertions to be generated in this study may therefore first be narrow in scope and then broaden and be reworked to become high-inference assertions that align with patterns in the data. Key linkages between assertions will then be examined to determine the relationships of these initial conclusions.

Once any assertions are made, I will review the data again to develop an evidentiary warrant that illustrates how the assumptions made in the study have been reached (Erickson, 1986). In doing so, I will go back to the field notes, interview transcripts, and working journal to seek the evidentiary warrant for each assertion, which will include evidence from the data that confirms or confutes the assertions being built. The evidence, for example, is in the form of quotations from the raw textural data (Lichtman, 2006). At the same time, I will continue reframing the assertions as analysis proceeds (Erickson, 1986).

All the evidence will be arranged in a two-column chart and categorized by various assertions. I will compare the data against the assertion to make sure the data that supports the assertion are kept and those that dispute the assertions are explained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Yin (2003) asserted, one of the strengths of the case study approach is that the collection and analysis of multiple forms of data will make triangulation possible and thus the study's validity stronger. Therefore, as part of data analysis, I will triangulate the data by comparing different sources of information

including the observations, individual interviews, and reflection journal entries. The triangulation process will strengthen the findings and thus validate the conclusions of the current study (Schreiber, 2011; Yin, 2003).

Validity

In order to strengthen the validity of any conclusions, the current study will attempt to ensure credibility, transferability, trustworthiness, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To increase credibility, all interview data will be systematically and professionally translated and transcribed by me, and the observations will be immediately recorded in the form of field notes within 24 hours of the given observation. Examples of both confirming and disconfirming evidence will be recorded from the transcriptions, the observations, researcher memos, and journal entries. In addition, to bolster credibility, the write-up of the findings will attempt to present a thick description of the Chinese MBA students' experiences and utilize direct participant quotations so as to impart the participants' emic perspectives (Geertz, 1973). I will also ask the participants to review my inferences including transcripts, field notes, and the final write-up as a member check process (Schreiber, 2011).

I will ensure the study closely aligns with the study's frameworks, the DMIS and the Social Learning Theory, to increase transferability. Transferability will be strengthened in two additional ways. The first way is to make the sampling frame of the participants the most representative of the students' cultural adaptation stages so that the findings can be transferred to inform other U.S. business schools in order to improve the programs. In

addition, the thick description of student experiences in leadership education will be presented in its entirety so as to achieve a high level of transferability (Geertz, 1973).

Trustworthiness and dependability are also essential when strengthening dependability of any study's conclusions. To strengthen trustworthiness, I will have to make sure to document all the procedures of the study; in this way, it will allow other investigators to repeat the whole study in the future (Yin, 2003). To strengthen dependability, this study will make use of an inquiry auditor in which the process and the product of the research will be reviewed for consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317). I will present the data and findings to Ming-Jer Chen, a professor in the AGBS, to review. Ming-Jer Chen has taught classes in cultural differences between the east and the west for MBA students at the AGBS and has worked closely with international students either in the classroom setting or on research projects. Chen also has high language proficiency in both Chinese and English so that he will well serve the role of inquiry auditor for this study by reviewing the quality of the interpretation of the data from interviews. In addition, Chen is an ideal faculty member to view the data because he has not been on my dissertation committee nor involved in any procedures of this project.

Next, confirmability will be reached by utilizing member checking where participants will receive transcriptions and the draft of the final write-up to corroborate findings. Member checks will help me to rule out misinterpretations of respondents' statements and make sure the descriptions and interpretations are properly interpreted (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A research journal will also include document processes and analysis notes so that neutrality of the research interpretations can be improved. In addition, the triangulation method will be adopted to bolster the level of confirmability of

the research findings. I will continuously review the pieces of data from different sources to confirm the conclusions drawn.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is important in this study because reflexivity is a process of self-examination primarily informed by my thoughts and actions, and I must acknowledge the mutual relationship between me and study participants (Lichtman, 2006; Russell & Kelly, 2002). It will be important for me to acknowledge the ways in which my own values, experiences, and beliefs shape the entire research design including the process and write-up (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). For example, I am an international student from China, and all the interviews will be conducted in Chinese and later be transcribed by me. The Chinese MBA students may therefore be more comfortable conversing with me.

Being more comfortable with the research may mean respondents share personal views and judgments that can influence the research process, and the research may be influenced by my compassion toward the participants when interpreting the data (Erickson, 1986; Pyett, 2003). For instance, my own experience as a student affairs professional who works closely with international MBA students may lead to some biased judgments or conclusions that may be more sympathetic to the international students. These reflections will be made explicit in a research journal written throughout the data collection and analysis processes as well as in the final write-up.

Limitations

The research design has several limitations. One of the primary limitations is, although the proposed study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences

of Chinese MBA students' leadership learning experience in a U.S. business institution, the findings will be based on data describing what is likely to be a small number of students. In addition, because the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the "Managerial Psychology" classes are all second-year MBA students who are more familiar with the western culture as well as the AGBS learning culture than the first year students, it is possible that these Chinese students who opt to participate in the program are not representative of the greater number of Chinese MBAs students populations at the AGBS or at other business institutions.

Second, there are other informal education opportunities offered at the AGBS that are also likely to be part of the leadership learning experience for Chinese MBA students. For example, career development related education sessions given by the Career Development Center, the company briefings, and job track field trips may all be potential learning settings for Chinese MBA students. Therefore, the leadership skills that the participants report in the study will not be exclusively acquired from the activities that this study is going to cover.

Other limitations stem from the personal characteristics of the participants in this study. First, there is a possibility that the participants may not represent all six stages of cultural adaptation. The findings would then not be complete enough to describe a full circle of cultural adaption and leadership learning. For example, the first cultural adaptation stage, denial, may be often experienced by a student who has just come to the United States instead of a second year student at business school. Second, the MBA participants in this project will take part in listed activities with different levels of

involvement. This may cause a difference in their cultural adaptation rates. However, the different rates may not be significant within a two-month research period.

In spite of these limitations, a major strength of the research design is that it provides a set of detailed data in a variety of forms regarding Chinese MBA students' leadership learning as well as a unique opportunity for viewing leadership education with an intercultural lens. Although case studies can be weak in terms of generalization, they can pioneer new ground and gain useful insights for further research (Ghauri et al., 1995).

Summary

Increasing numbers of Chinese MBA students are studying in the United States as an investment in their future careers, and how they are being groomed as future leaders has caught the world's attention because of the implications for how they will lead in a global economy (Friga, Bettis, & Sullivan, 2003). To illustrate some of these students' experiences, this study focuses on Chinese students at the AGBS enrolled in a "Managerial Psychology" course. This qualitative research uses the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Landis et al., 2003) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) as its conceptual frameworks. The data collection procedures include interviews and observations: The individual interviews aim to uncover the students' cultural adaptation and their leadership learning experience from their own perspectives, while the field notes from multiple observations will record the interactions of students and their environment in and outside of the classroom. The analytic induction approach will be used to test the assumptions developed along the data collection, and the data will be reviewed continuously to ensure the validity of the study's findings.

In seeking to capitalize on a qualitative methodology, it is hoped the proposed

study will allow Chinese MBA students to share their unique experiences in leadership education in a U.S. institution with their peers, instructors, and international practitioners. Sharing these experiences is important because the reflections from Chinese MBA students' own perspectives on their leadership development at different stages of their cultural adaption are largely missing from the literature. It is hoped that information-rich narratives provided by this study will ultimately serve to better illustrate and illuminate the challenges these students face and the potential steps that institutions might take to improve their programs, and therefore, to better accommodate the increasing number of Chinese MBA students on U.S. campuses.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I organized the information based on the repeated themes from the data analysis as well as on the research questions listed in the methods section. These questions ask what leadership skills the students learned, how they learned them, and what their general reflections are, as well as touching on the emerging topics that were not expected based on the previously proposed framework. The data will be presented in the following five major sections: (a) the motivation for pursuing an MBA program in the United States; (b) cultural and language differences as barriers in communication; (c) intercultural communication and people-management skills as important leadership characteristics; (d) extracurricular activity involvement as a way to practice internalizing the acquired leadership skills; and (e) general reflections on leadership education. I will follow with profiles of the four participants, including direct quotations from their stories to support these emergent themes. Some subthemes were also identified under each major theme to bring forward the participants' detailed descriptions about their stories (See Figure 2).

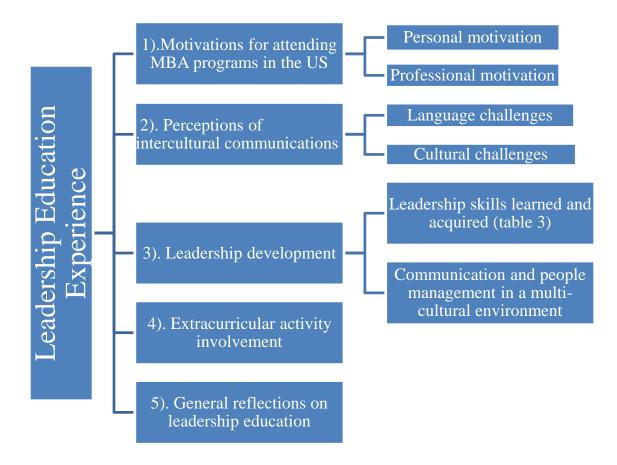


Figure 3: The framework of findings

The themes are also shaped by existing literature and research; the research questions and theoretical framework of this study connect all participants' stories and lead to the final analysis and discussion. The research findings from this study include the descriptive accounts of the participants and the interpretative analysis based around the aforementioned five themes. Ultimately, the findings of this study aim to increase understanding of Chinese MBA students' leadership educational experience in order to inform American educators and administrators who seek to provide appropriate social and academic support toward meeting their goals.

Profiles of the Participants

Before reporting the findings, this chapter will provide a brief overview of each participant in this study in order to characterize their backgrounds (See Table 2). There are one female and three males in this study, all between 30 and 40 years old. All of them had more than three years of working experience in professional settings before they came to the MBA program at the AGBS.

Table 2: Participant Profiles

| Name | Gender | <u>Hometown</u> | Age | <u>Major</u> | <u>Highest</u> | Overseas | Stage |
|------|--------|-----------------|-------|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| | | Region | | (pre-MBA) | degree | experience | Defined by |
| | | | | | | | Development |
| | | | | | | | Model of |
| | | | | | | | Intercultural |
| | | | | | | | Sensitivity |
| | | | | | | | (DMIS) |
| AW | Male | Shandong | Early | Accounting | B.A. | 0 | 4,6 |
| | | | 30's | | | | |
| HW | Male | Henan | Early | Economics | B.A. | 0 | 4,6 |
| | | | 30's | | | | |
| PC | Male | Anhui | Mid | Engineer | M.S. | 5 years in | 4,5 |
| | | | 30's | | | US | |
| TZ | Female | Hunan | Mid | Finance | M.S. | 1.5 years | 4 |
| | | | 30's | | | in UK | |

About AW

AW served as an auditor at a highly regarded firm in Beijing, China. He went to Nankai University in Tianjing, China for undergraduate study and majored in international accounting. After spending six months at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as an exchange student, he went to Beijing to work as an auditor in Ernst and Young. After almost five years there, he applied to the AGBS's MBA program. After he resigned and before coming to the AGBS, he served for five weeks as an intern at a private equity firm. His first-year summer internship was as a financial

analyst for 10 weeks in Staunton, Virginia. By the time this study was conducted, AW had a job offer from Ernst and Young in Hong Kong as an associate. At the same time, he was in the process of seeking other opportunities, preparing for interviews for other two potential employers.

AW's interview answers suggest that he is ambitious. He wanted to be successful when he was growing up, and his dad played a major role in how his future plans. However, AW is a very careful and detail-oriented person. He made it very clear in the interview that he wished he had not paid so much attention to very detailed things and had been more aggressive and braver in his actions. However, this also indicated that he wasted time and missed opportunities. AW believed he was the quietest in the classroom; he talks quietly and often seems shy when in a group.

Based on his interview answers, the DMIS model indicated that AW was at the stage of 4 and 6. AW received a score of 8 out of the 10 questions in the DMIS for stage 4 and 6. He is at the acceptance stage, and the DMIS indicated that AW viewed other cultures as equally complex but that they are different constructions of reality. At the integration stage, the DMIS indicated that AW is able to shift in and out of different cultural worldviews based on what is culturally appropriate for particular situations (Note: The four students' assessments are all based on Landis et al., 2003; and Mohoney & Schamber, 2004).

About HW

HW completed his undergraduate work at Renmin University in Beijing with an economic major in 2006. He served in the US and Swiss Chambers of Commerce for two years followed by three years in DHL and Johnson & Johnson, Beijing, as a marketing

professional. HW had his first-year summer internship in the marketing section of Microsoft in Seattle, Washington. He recently received an offer from Microsoft and will go to Seattle in the marketing section. By the time this research was conducted, he had just started looking for housing in Seattle and talking to different classmates to gain additional information.

Observations from the class indicated HW always looked serious. He sat straight in the classroom all the time when listening and participating. HW had more interaction with US students and the professor compared to the rest of the group in the current study. The professor who was teaching the class indicated that he had witnessed a lot of progress in HW in the past two years, and that HW seemed to do everything he could to improve and adapt. This professor had also noticed that HW displayed the motivation to put himself outside of his comfort zone to adapt to his new surroundings. In the interview, HW indicated he would like to start a new life in the US after graduation.

The DMIS model indicates that HW was at the stage of 4 and 5. HW scored 8 out of 10 on the questions. While at the acceptance stage, he seems to view other cultures in his experience as equally complex but having different constructions of reality. At the stage of adaptation, HW seems to have a worldview based on sharing the experiences of those from different cultures.

About PC

PC graduated from Southeast University in Nanjing, China, in 2005 with a major in electronic engineering. He received his master's degree in biomedical engineering at the same university. He then worked in General Electronics' medical device ultrasound section as a service engineer for a year before he came to the US seeking a second

master's degree at the University of Alabama. He applied for the MBA program at the AGBS and deferred the enrollment until the next year while his wife was working on her MBA in Salt Lake City, Utah. During this time, he went back to GE in the US and worked first as a service engineer and then as a product manager in charge of the recall program. PC had two first-year internships last summer. One was at Johnson & Johnson in China, and the other was at Corning in the US. By the time this research was conducted, PC had full-time offers from both places; he decided to go back to China to join in the international leadership program, J&J, in Shanghai. He will be the sales manager in charge of a specific region for two years, and then he will go into a marketing position. He and his wife and children will be living in Shanghai, China. She was employed as an administrator at the Curry School of Education at UVA while PC was studying at the AGBS. Their two children, a son and a daughter, who are 4 and 8 years old, respectively, were both born in the US.

At the time of our interview, PC had been in the US for about 10 years, which is the longest stay among the four participants. He seemed calm and more mature than the rest of the Chinese students, and he embraced different cultures in a positive way. For example, he is a cheerful individual—during the interview, he was always laughing and smiling. He also actively participated in the social activities as much as he could. Furthermore, he has a leadership role in the AGBS's career club. He did not comment a lot in the classroom; however, one could tell he was comfortable with the whole environment. He followed the rhythm of the classroom discussion, laughed with his classmates at certain jokes, and made some synthesizing comments. PC seemed the most mature and confident among the three male students. For example, when he was called

upon by the professor, he kept calm and answered the question with smile. On some occasions, he would even make jokes with the appropriate context.

The DMIS model indicates that PC was at the stages of 4 and 6. PC earned a 9 out of 10 when answering the questions on the DMIS. From his perspective at the acceptance stage, PC believes that other cultures are equally complex but have different constructions of reality. Because he is at the integration stage, PC can shift in and out of different cultural worldviews based on what is culturally appropriate for particular situations.

About TZ

Trinity is the only female participant in this study. She is 35 years old, the oldest among the four participants. She received her BA degree in accounting in South Central University of Finance in Hunan, China. After serving the former entity of Southern Petrol Group as an internal auditor for eight months, she went to the UK for her MA at Liz University. During that time, while working in a charity organization in the local area, she was inspired to go back China for good. She worked at P &G, Qingdao, China, marketing section for six and a half years before she launched her own business. After a year of entrepreneurship, during which time she gave birth to her son, she applied to the AGBS and was admitted with a full scholarship. She had her first-year summer internships as an MBA associate at Danaher, and as an MBA intern in the strategy department at Tencent. By the time of this research was conducted, she had received an offer from Johnson & Johnson China, marketing section, Shanghai.

My general impression is that TZ knows what she wants in both her personal life and professional development. She is feminine, and always smiles when she talks to

people. Her experience of studying in UK during her early twenties, being in a high position in a corporation, her unsuccessful start-up, and the birth of her son seem to have given her strength for facing difficulties. However, her age and her experience make for a very complicated position—she felt shameful because she thought a person her age should have done better than the juniors. While she faced challenges due to the language and cultural barriers, at the same time, she did have a lot to offer to the community by sharing her seasoned knowledge in marketing, which made her feel valuable in the class. She has had to deal with this duality while at the AGBS. TZ is clearly a person who never compromises her passion in pursuit of bigger dreams. She had more family responsibilities than the most of the students; however, she did an exchange program in countries outside of the US and crammed in a lot more credits than she needed to fulfill the requirements. In other people's eyes, she was doing way more than others thought she could. She kept taking on challenges and continued fulfilling her goals, regardless.

The DMIS model indicates that TZ was at the stage of 4. TZ achieved 10 out of 10 from the questions. At the acceptance stage, she views other cultures in her experience as equally complex but with different constructions of reality. (Landis et al., 2003; Mohoney & Schamber, 2004.)

Summary

These four participants are similar at some respects, such as: they all had more than three years' working experience as business professionals before coming to the AGBS; they all have higher-education credentials; they have all worked in big metropolitan places in China and elsewhere. At the same time, they are different in terms of motivation, working experience trajectories, and family makeup (Choudaha & Chang,

2012).

These four participants are unique in their own ways. What sets them apart from the rest of the group is relatively individual yet can still represent a group of students with the same experiences. For instance, HW had always worked with western colleagues when he was in China and is very comfortable with western thinking. He has had a very clear motivation to stay in the US after graduation, and everything he has done revolved around this goal. Currently, more and more multinational companies are establishing headquarters in China (Wang, H., Zweig, D., & Lin X., 2011; Ling, 2007). Therefore, more and more young Chinese professionals have had similar influences and experience to HW's. PC can represent a group that has a master's degree both in China and the US, as well as working experience in both countries. He has been to different parts of the US and lived in the South and the Midwest for quite a while before moving to the East coast. He has a lot more western cultural exposure than the average Chinese MBA student. With more and more Chinese students coming to the US for graduate studies, a lot of them choose to stay and work in the US. As this number has increased in recent years, the number of students from this group who choose to pursue an MBA degree increases as well (Wang, H., Zweig, D., & Lin X., 2011). PC's experience apparently represents this group. AW has the culturally familiar working experience as an auditor in China, and very limited interaction with the west before he came to the US for his MBA. His professional trajectory is the most linear and his professional experiences are relatively limited compared to the majority of the student body. In this sense, AW represents the largest group of MBA students from China who did not have prior experience studying in the US. TZ is a female student in her mid-30's, which is considered the senior students'

age group in business school. She had various working experiences and different cultural exposure. She is here with her son while her husband is back in China. There are many students here in the US with their families but not many of them are here as single parents. At the same time, the start-up, while not seemingly innovative in the US, is still a fairly new concept in the Chinese business world, not to mention that the entrepreneur herself is a female (Zweig, Fung, & Vanhonacker, 2006). Therefore, TZ's case is relatively more unique compared to the rest of the group. Thus, these four students are very diverse and each of them can represent a certain group of professional students in the business school.

The more diverse the participants, the more that common themes are convincing. In addition, the variety among the participants makes this report a rich story—diverse like the market place and like the student population. Leadership development is not one-size-fits-all. Besides, the exploratory nature of this study will open up more dimensions for future study, such as female business school students and their career development, which I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Based on the participants' cultural adaptation indicators from the DMIS, the four participants achieved almost the same DMIS score (8 or 9 out of 10 on the sixth stage of intercultural sensitivity development: Integration). This piece of information helps reveal the fact that these students have high intercultural awareness and are willing to adapt to western culture. They are willing to adjust and integrate into the study and living environment. The interview data echoes this finding. For example, AW was aware that US and Chinese students would have different opinions about some issues in class readings, and he thought that they all would have to find a modified way to express their

ideas and thoughts about China and China-related issues in such a cross-cultural environment. Even though HW did not grow up with a sports culture, and has no interest in US football, he understood the importance of getting to know US culture through socializing with US students and also that sports is a good way to make conversation. PC commented that his better understanding helps him to work well with his US colleagues. Also, he realizes the general cross cultural communication knowledge he acquires will help him to work with his Chinese colleagues in China as well. TZ admitted that when integrating into US culture, she would have to give up some features of Chinese community. She felt it was about balancing and sometimes struggling.

While the DMIS successfully indicated the intercultural sensitivity of the students, as well as their success in adapting to US environment, it does not provide sufficient information about students' cultural adaptation in reality where they communicate with non-Chinese people and develop their leadership skills. The findings of this study show that the DMIS evaluation does not fully serve the purpose of this study—it does not show the degree of cultural immersion of each student within a group of people with high intercultural sensitivity. For instance, the DMIS indicated that these students all understand the importance of getting to know the US culture; they wanted to get integrated into US society and they were participating in some social events, and yet their immersion in reality is not consistent with DMIS' indication. Take Thursday Night Drinking Club (TNDC) for example, an AGBS's monthly social gathering at a local bar every other Thursday night during the academic year. Three participants were all there seeking socialization opportunities. They behaved in a similar way as they arrived in the ballroom, such as walking around and talking to some people. After 30 minutes, only one

student was still drinking and talking with US students; the other two were sitting and chatting with other Asian students. These students had almost the same high DMIS score, but they reacted differently in an intercultural setting and taking the initiative to build their intercultural communication skills through such socialization opportunity. The students with the same intercultural sensitivity score indicated by DMIS vary tremendously in their leadership development experience and therefore, it cannot help me fully answer one of the research questions, which is what the leadership education experiences are for the students at different cultural adaptation stages. The model captures the mindset of the students regarding their cultural adaptation but does not give any further indication of how they might differ in a real-world cultural immersion.

DMIS serves well in predicting the stages of students' general intercultural sensitivity; however, it still requires other tools to identify students' specific cultural adaptation status and their behavior in reality. I will present further discussion of the application of the DMIS model in this project and its implications for further studies regarding students' intercultural sensitivity and adaptation in Chapter 5.

In the interview and observation process, all participants were very cooperative. During the second semester of their second year, which was followed by graduation, all the participants were busy with class, exams, job placement procedures, family travels, last round of job interviews, etc. Regardless of the hectic schedule, they all expressed that they could be reached via email for any further transcript verification. During the interview process, I established a very strong rapport with the participants which enabled me to get a deep and rich story about their experiences with ease.

Themes of Findings: Introduction

The above participant profiles and overview illustrate the background of each participant at the AGBS. These four students show many of the same issues and characteristics together with the uniqueness of each of their stories. Beginning with their individual stories, this study intended to gain an understanding of the leadership education experience of each participant in the multicultural environment at the AGBS.

After reviewing participants' complicated and massive narratives collected in the two rounds of interviews and field notes from multiple in-class and out-of-class observations, I followed a thematic analysis procedure by Marshall and Rossman (2006) as a roadmap to identify, analyze, and report on the pattern. In this study, the thematic analysis is data-driven and attempts to provide a more detailed and nuanced account of each particular theme within the data set inductively. Before the interviews, the protocol of interview questions with prompts (Appendix C and D) was sent to the participants for them to better understand what questions would be posed during the interviews. These interview questions were structurally formulated to elicit responses on participants' actual experiences in their cross-cultural transition from Chinese to North American education. During the interview process, the protocol was very effective in not only guiding the researcher focus the narratives that were needed for the project.

After I collected all the data from interviews and observations, I started to organize my data analysis in the form of codes, categories, and themes. First, I cleaned the raw data files in a common format, and put data in the four different folders of the

participants. I read through text data within the folder of one participant, and at the same time identified specific segments of information as coding. I illustrate this with one of the coding examples. Participant AW gave this response to his impression of working with US students: "In the meantime, except the uncertainties coming from the objective conditions, there are lots of uncertainties that are from people and their communication. People are collaborating together, and the ability to handle the uncertainties from each individual is also crucial, such as how to deal with different opinions, etc. So you can see the important role of communication." This response was considered to contain four different meaning units and was assigned four code numbers that related to three different categories. The first text segment of meaning, "People are collaborating together", given the data I collected related to such topic was almost with the context of out of class activities, fit into the category of extracurricular activity. The second text unit of meaning was determined to be "how to deal with different opinions"—this text segment was considered to fit into the category of viewing things from different perspectives. The third text segment of meaning, "So you can see the important role of communication", was considered to fit into the category of communication skills. The fourth unit of meaning is the whole paragraph and it fit into the category of the Social Learning Theory and interaction with students.

I conducted coding for each individual participant's transcription and the observational notes. At the end of the data analysis, there were 68 codes for AW, 40 for HW, 92 for PC, and 61 for TZ. Codes are listed, such as "being open to challenges", "high self-awareness", and "leadership skills_facilitate". After coding the text segments with different categories, I later reduced the number of categories by merging the smaller

and similar categories. For instance, the labels of "professional knowledge," "promotion," and "career switch" appeared to be on a continuum of "professional development." This bigger category thus seems more meaningful, demonstrating students' motivation-related narratives.

After my rigorous and systematic reading and coding of the transcripts, there emerged five themes: (1) the motivation for pursuing an MBA program in the US; (2) cultural and language differences as barriers in communication; (3) intercultural communication and people management as important leadership skills; (4) extracurricular activity participation as a way to practice and internalize the acquired leadership skills; and (5) general reflections on leadership education. The participants' narratives were presented following the five emerging themes shown in Figure 2. The following sections will be organized by these five themes as emerging patterns from the data analysis, and the writing will also answer the research questions of this study, such as what leadership skills are acquired by Chinese MBA students at the AGBS, how this is accomplished, and their impression of overall learning.

Theme 1: Motivations for Chinese MBAs to Study in the United States

There has been a steady increase in the number of Chinese students pursuing their MBA degrees in US business schools (Thomason & Gui, 2000). Their learning experience and personal and professional achievements are influenced by certain underlying motives (Thomason & Gui, 2000). The four participants in this study were asked how they made their decision to study in the United States. These decisions, reflected in their narratives and collected as data, appear to have been made due to a mix of professional and personal motivations.

Certain patterns emerged from their explanations on study motivations. The motivations fall into two major categories: professional and personal.

Professional motivations: Obtaining professional knowledge and career advancement

Based on the interviews, two similar professional motivations emerged: obtaining professional knowledge and achieving career advancement. Students come out of college with a major in a specific field, such as accounting, financing, and management. When more and more multinational companies are moving to China, the local talents are motivated to upgrade their knowledge (Schuler, 2007). The data from interviews indicates that, for individuals, the more they work, they more they realize that their knowledgebase needs to be expanded to keep up with the changing work environment, including the increasingly high-tech facilities, and to be able to compete for professional advancement.

Graduate and professional education is often described as the development and socialization into the culture and values of a selected profession (Gansemer-Topf, Ross and Johnson, 2006). MBA, Master of Business and Administration, is a professional degree; students are enrolled for professional development purposes in business. The general enrollment statistics indicate that in many MBA programs, adult learners are the primary student population (Blass & Weight, 2005). The career aspirations and life experiences that the MBA students bring at this stage of their lives differ from the traditional undergraduate population, and there are more career and professional concerns involved (Healey, Kneale, & Bradbeer, 2005).

Professional knowledge is not only a major motivation for the Chinese MBA students to gain a degree from an overseas institution; it is also a requirement for

participation in the global economy. When there is a global market, there is an increase in communication and exchanges in the business field; technology has resulted in the expansion of many businesses beyond local borders, and leaders need to be prepared to navigate their business relationships across such borders (Schuler, 2007). At the same time, globalization and technological change will continue to eliminate some old jobs and create new ones, generating a need for skilled, flexible workers with a global perspective (Romano & Dellow, 2009; Wats & Wats, 2009). Employers as leaders of global corporations, as a result, aspire to hire graduates well-prepared for the global marketplace (Brownell, 2006).

Business schools, which provide education in managerial knowledge, skills, and business solutions, and award degrees and certificates to students (Trank and Rynes, 2003; Pfeffer and Fong, 2004), are the major pathway for filling the gaps in the professional workforce. For instance, the top-rated MBA programs put great effort into integrating students' learning experience with proactive involvement in diverse cultures and perspectives (Flores, 2010). Therefore, an MBA education becomes the ideal option for Chinese students to seek professional development (Thomason & Gui, 2000).

AW learned from his dad's successful experience that equipping oneself with a well-rounded knowledge is important. His dad, an engineer by trade, also worked in the office as a secretary for some time. His case indicates that a successful leader needs to be capable of broad knowledge in more than his or her own field of expertise. After he came back to the engineering department, the father saved the factory from closure and made it national example of success. The following is a narrative that AW shared with me:

I would like to share with you something about my dad. He has an

engineering background. After he was done with college, he was assigned to work in the factory in a state-owned enterprise. He was the secretary in the director's office, and then he was promoted to manage some plants of the enterprise. Then he was in a leadership role. He was in charge of about three or four plants and the industries varied from food, beverage, chemistry, textile and etc. The last plant that he was overseeing increased its revenue from five million RMB to two hundred million RMB during the year from 1996 to 2012 when he was the head of the plant. I think a successful entrepreneur is half gifted and half is due to the practice in different areas. My dad is good at defining the problems and looking for the resolutions. He is also very action driven. He is quick at telling the problems of the plants and leading the people to find actions to tackle the problems. (AW, 5 March, 2014)

TZ and PC, each of whom has more than six years working either in multi-national companies and startups, realized that knowledge in business is critical for success in career development. After six years of working in P&G as a marketing expertise, TZ decided to start her own business. Due to the lack of knowledge in establishing a factory from scratch and managing it as a whole entity, TZ felt underequipped for her desired career and decided to come to the MBA program for more specialized knowledge in management.

Through this experience, I realized I need to change an environment and needed some break-through improvement in my knowledge and skills. I also realized that I did not have diversity in my friends or

colleagues—most of them are in the consumer industry and marketing related. I would like to make friends with people from different industries and with different expertise. That's why I would like to come to business school. (TZ, 8 March, 2014)

PC, who has an engineering background, worked at a US company in the back office for a while. When he developed an interest in dealing with customers, he sought information and determined that the knowledge of MBA courses is essential for a general manager position.

After I graduated from college, I got my biomedical engineering master in the same university. I worked in GE's medical device, ultra sound section, as a service engineer. I realized that the equipment and operation procedures were all imported from the US and after some altering, the products were into the Chinese market. I was very interested in the business and operation in the US. GE would not pay for a low level engineer like me to the US to learn. I then quit my job and applied for graduate school in the US. I got my second master degree in University of Alabama. I went back to GE in the US after I graduated. I was a service engineer again and then was promoted to product manager in charge of recall program. I developed my interest in business during the work. So I decided to go for MBA program as an opportunity to switch careers as well as learn some new skills. (PC, 10 March, 2014)

HW also indicated in his interview that professional skills and knowledge have a lot to do with the soft skills, that is, interpersonal relationships. Many of HW's former colleagues were westerners and their people-management skills, such as viewing things from different cultural perspectives before making any decisions, made him aware of what he needed to learn.

I had a boss from Canada. I was so much impressed how polite he was. He brought this western tradition to the Chinese working environment. No matter what people were doing there, he would always say thank you. This really echoes with what I learnt in the "Managerial Psychology" that people are so diverse and we need to respect them as an individual. Chinese people have this type of mentality that China has thousands years of history and people are proud of a lot of things. After working in the multi-cultural working environment, I tend to know the viewpoints of others and learned what diversity is. I then tend to view things from different perspectives, more than what my Chinese fellows do. I do not have this mentality that China is the best because of its long history; I tend to view issues in China from more perspectives and sometime even in a very critical way. (HW, 2 March, 2014).

Gaining professional knowledge has a strong association with another motivation—career advancement. A lot of students who came out of college with a degree in a specific field would like to make a career switch; most of them are going for an MBA to achieve this goal (Thomason & Gui, 2000) There are a lot of young professionals who need an MBA for specific career-related concerns, such as to break the promotion

bottleneck in the organization, or to equip oneself with managerial skills as an addition to the existing professional specialty (Thomason & Gui, 2000). The four participants in the study expressed similar career concerns in their interviews.

PC and TZ both had former working experience in a specific discipline, that is, marketing and service engineering. Both developed an interest in the business and each would pursue a more comprehensive and elevated role as general manager. This requires a more comprehensive skills set and it is considered a career switch as well as a promotion.

I was a service engineer again and then promoted to product manager in charge of recall program. I developed my interest in business during the work. So I decided to go for MBA program as an opportunity to switch career as well as learn some new skills. (PC, 10 March, 2014)

I became very curious about the customers and their needs. In addition, I had some talk with the successful leaders about how I can climb the ladder. The feedback is that it is difficult for people from engineering background.

A better management skill set would help, having some business background will be help (PC, 5 May, 2014).

Through this experience [which is an unsuccessful start-up experience], I realized I need to change an environment and needed some break-through improvement in my knowledge and skills (TZ, 8 March, 2014).

Studying for an MBA overseas is a means of career development, and to the other two participants, the career switch has more to do with the locale than the function of the

next job. This is what AW and HW indicated in their interviews. While AW indicated his short-term goal is to gain some practical experience in Hong Kong or Shanghai for some other new experience (personal communication, 5 March, 2014), HW would like to move his career and his whole life to the US from China.

I think compared to other student, my motivation is very clear, I would like to stay here to work and to live after I graduate. So I try to integrate into the environment and the culture... I think it has a lot to do with my former experience. I used to work with a lot of western colleagues. I am so used to the environment with them. I like the whole atmosphere (HW, 2 March, 2014).

To sum up this section, professional development is a major reason for the four Chinese MBA students to make the decision to study abroad. They would like to gain a broader scope of managerial knowledge, such as analytical skills, as well to achieve the goal of career advancement through an MBA and the management knowledge. These four students' responses indicated the common career-driven motivations.

Personal motivations: Personal growth and chasing one's personal values and dreams

The research findings show that personal motivations are also driving forces in the students' decision to come to the US for an MBA degree. Those motivations fall into two major categories: achieving personal growth into a well-rounded person, and chasing one's personal values and dreams. The students' backgrounds indicate that they are highly educated individuals. They have continued to update both the models they respect and

their expectations for themselves. Their professional and personal experiences are the factors that drive their motivation toward personal growth.

HW was interested in sociology when in college; his approach to economics includes social concerns. He had the intention of studying abroad and getting to know more about advanced social theories from the west. His later working experience with western colleagues, which had a strong influence on his decision to come to the US for his MBA, confirmed his interest in being a well-rounded person with an openness to diverse cultures and perspectives.

I always would like to study abroad. I had my TOELF and GRE exams when I was in the college. There were some good working opportunities so I started working after I graduate. After these years, especially when I was working with the colleagues from the west, I understand more about western culture and society, and I appreciate their ways of thinking. It helped me understand of western and eastern cultures. I had good amount of reflections of the societies in different countries, and I decided to go out to the western world to study. To be honest with you, I was also looking at some sociology graduate programs in the US. But finally, due to the practical concern, I chose to do MBA. After some time, there were financial crisis. I saw that is a good opportunity for me to go out and invest in my education. I applied twice. The first year I was on the waiting list by the AGBS and I got accepted the second year (HW, 2 March, 2014).

His decision is also highly influenced by his former working experiences with western colleagues, and he felt his personal values could be realized through this working culture.

It seemed relatively equal and democratic. It is not like what we usually have in China where there is a lot of hierarchy. People are more relaxed and so is the environment. For example, when I was working with state-owned enterprise, I needed to talk and communicate with multiple levels, one after another. I felt like I just passed on the information to the higher level. At that job, I felt like I could make a lot of decisions. I felt valued and I felt like I had the ownership of the whole thing. (HW, 6 May, 2014)

As HW was influenced by his former colleagues, AW was influenced by his relatives. His way of viewing things from diverse perspectives also motivated AW to seek self-fulfillment as a better person living in the world of globalization.

After working for several years at E&Y, then I changed my mind and thought MBA will be a great thing to do in life. I have a relative who went to Wharton and then came back to work in China. I definitely see the changes in him through MBA training. He is so good at viewing things from new perspectives. There is another example is my dad. He is a great leader in his organization. He is a good role model for me. So under the influences of these people, I would like to develop my own skill set and be a good leader in some cooperate in the near future (AW, 5 March, 2014).

Being the only female of these four participants, TZ's personal motivation has more to do with her faith in the broader scope of values she cherishes. As she mentioned, she was in a senior position in P&G and being in a comfort zone was no longer meeting her values. She aimed for something bigger. This could be her own personal realizations or achievements. After the failure of her start-up, she reflected on her experience. She still aimed for larger values she could promote to the community and the world. She gave birth to a son and then nine months later she was in business school in the US as an older-than-average student. The only thing that kept her here is her determination to promote values in the community.

It was 6.5 years. If I continued staying at P&G, I would be promoted to do national project... The life you would have there, even though you will not be billionaire, still you could live a very good life. No problem for that. But I had passion in my heart. When asked whether I would be interested in the start-up, I said yes... After 2.5 years, it became very difficult for us to move forward to take a step back... I gave up the company. (Trinity, 8 March, 2014) [...] It was a tough decision for me to come here and study. My son was just nine months old. My husband was very supportive for my decision... We had a newsletter project where everybody put his or her dream on it. It is about our professional goals and also other things we would like to do in the future. I talked about my business growth, and also I hope one day that I would like to create an elite plan for senior high school students in my hometown. I wish to let excellent students in my

hometown to have sponsorship to study and learn. I wish they could see more and this is like how the AGBS supports me. I wish they could get to more about the world and open their life doors to a lot of things. But this cannot be done until I am very powerful in something (TZ, 4 May, 2014).

PC came to the US for very practical reasons—to get professional knowledge and become a general manager working in the business with customers. During the last interview when asked if he would go back to China for an MBA program after he got his MS in the US and four years of working experience here, he answered with no hesitation that he would stay in the US for his MBA education because he would like to have this intercultural experience. His answer indicated that having the multicultural communication and learning experience would be regarded as one of the major reasons for him to study in a US business school.

I also very much appreciate the diversity in this community. I don't think I can have such experience in any school in China. I think I have already become very international, it will be very difficult for me to study in a domestic school with very little diverse culture. (laugh). I like studying here and pushing my own limit (PC, 10 March, 2014).

PC also indicated he appreciated the multicultural experience when being asked about his feelings towards some of the social activities at the AGBS. His appreciation of intercultural communication will be elaborated on later in this paper.

I didn't go to the AGBS' Days last year due to the bad weather. I didn't go to

Foxfield because I had already started internship in Shanghai. I don't think my AGBS life is complete without participating events like this. So I am determined to go and I appreciate the cross-culture experiences in these activities (PC, 5 May, 2014).

Summary

It is clear that students come to the US not only for a practical business education, but also to fulfill their personal goals. They were fond of a different lifestyle and the western way of communication; they were also optimistic about the opportunities in the US for them to realize personal dreams and values, and they appreciate the diversity in the population and culture in the US which has contributed to a unique part of their lives. Those motives underlie the personal reasons for Chinese MBA students to study in a US institution.

Theme 2: Perception of Intercultural Communication

Because effective interpersonal communication is essential for success in international business, an appreciation of the interaction of language and communication with power and culture is important for international MBA students (Eckert, 2005). These four Chinese MBA students, like any other Chinese students studying in the US, are facing academic and cultural differences every day. Drawing on the interviews and the evidence from field notes from in-class and out-of-class observations, I would like to discuss two sub-themes which emerge in the study. They are language challenges and cultural differences (norms, expectations, way of thinking, social behaviors, etc.).

Language Challenges

Even though all international students need to take an English placement test when applying for graduate school in the US, and there is some language support from the school, such as remedial courses over the summer before the semester starts and writing tutor support throughout the academic years, Chinese MBA students usually face language proficiency problems as their first challenge in business school.

The nature of the learning at business school has a lot to do with communication skills, and being effective on the job requires excellent communication skills. Due to the fact that for most international students. especially these from the Asian-language-speaking countries, the language is dramatically different from English; this becomes an obstacle for the students, and language barriers might alienate some international students (Welikala, 2008). The interviews and observations provide a detailed account of students' perception of their language situation and its impact on their academic and the psychological status.

First and most obviously, students could not fully catch the meaning of some of the conversation among US students, and this resulted in misunderstanding or incomprehension of the in-class discussion or missing the class content or social conversation. AW, who is the quietest Chinese student in the class, usually did not make comments or participate in the class discussion. His problems regarding language proficiency in the first few months are typical among the Chinese students and created additional challenges to his in-class learning. The language barrier also has an impact on their career development later on. AW expressed his appreciation of how efficient the coach in the career development center was when he went there asking for help with his

storytelling skills. All MBA candidates need to be good at telling the others about their stories within two minutes. A lot of international students have problems synthesizing and delivering it in the most efficient way.

In addition, I felt there were difficulties for me to understand US students when I first came here. I missed or I did not understand the implications of what they said. I could not catch the meanings. When I felt something and I was trying to understand the implication of what they said, but the conversation kept going, so I often missed a lot of points or implications. For instance, when in the classroom, I observed how students are making their arguments, and if some students do not agree with some view points, how they started forming their own and reason with it (AW, March, 2014).

I talked a lot with the CDC staff. [In two minutes pitch,]I talked a lot about my previous experience with a lot of details. But I failed to give people a major impression of me by my stories. ...I went to talk to CDC staff, K, for dozens of times. I told him the stories as detailed as I could. It includes all the aspects. He reframed it. He told me the story in his way and it was much shorter and still covered all the important information. Can you imagine that! (laugh)... Well this is not just my problem. A lot of my classmate

s had the same issue. We didn't know how to deliver the same ideas in English. You know, sometimes we can just use one or two terms to summarize a paragraph (AW, March, 2014).

Some idioms and common ways of expression are not appropriately interpreted or perceived by Chinese MBA students, and this makes them feel different and more aware of the different culture.

Just like what we have discussed in the class. The other Chinese student responded to another comment with "Oh, that's interesting." Previously, I thought if others say that it is interesting then I need to keep talking to him or her because he or she is interested. However, this is not necessary the case. They just imply that ok, yes it is interesting and that is it. They don't care that much. (AW, March, 2014)

Inadequate language proficiency seemed to be a bigger barrier for students who are older than average. It impacts their daily academic performance as well as their confidence and self-efficacy. Sometimes, students start doubting their capability and even qualifications in the program. TZ, who was in her mid-thirties, is conscious of her age and learning ability when surrounded with "kids who are younger and smarter than I am." The language problem really made her adjustment more difficult than expected.

The classroom adjustment was a problem. I think a lot of first years are very good at listening English. I was a couple more generations ahead of them. The English training for the later generations are much better than the previous. They are not like me who have been away from school and classroom for such as long time. So I totally think they are living under much less pressure than I am... I was so bad at listening at the beginning. I felt shameful to ask them to repeat or explain because I am kinda old. I pretended that I understood everything at the moment.

After class, I went to talk to the Chinese students for clarifications. I did that for some time... I felt like I didn't have face. I could not listen correctly and could not keep up with the conversation. I did not have confidence in myself... I believe everyone of Chinese students here are coming here with a very strong self esteem or respect, and we all wanted to show the better performance. However, due to the language and cultural barriers, we were not able to integrate very well (TZ, March, 2014).

Language is a problem even for those students who had been in an English-speaking environment for longer than the average student. HW has worked in a small team in DHL for two years, and 70% of his colleagues were westerners; PC had spent seven years in the US, during which he got his Masters from Alabama University and worked in GE, Salt Lake, Utah for four years. Both participants still find language is a constraint in terms of their academic and social adjustment in business school.

As a Chinese, from a non-English-speaking country, I will always have my accent. The way to think and to organize the sentence is still different from the westerners (HW, March, 2014).

I remembered when I first came to the US, I was invited by my professor to his house. I didn't know so much about the social convention or tradition here. I did not know how to react or behave properly in his place. I didn't speak very fluent English by then. I often confused when I said he and she because in Chinese they have the same pronunciation but when speaking in English, I need to make effort

to switch the pronunciations. There were some similar mistakes. Yeah, so it takes some time to correct something and also to learn something (PC, March, 2014).

Cultural Differences

There are also some differences in terms of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. Differences in cultural beliefs, values and attitudes, along with personal experience and prior educational background can create a challenge for a student from one culture to another (O'Connor, 2000). The four Chinese MBA students all gave examples of cultural differences when communicating with their US classmates, professors and friends. The differences focus on how people from various cultures act and think based on different value interpretations. Certain behaviors and the underlying values matter a lot when it comes to communication with US students. Most of the participants felt out of place and did not know the reason why. After some time, they started realizing that these different ways to perceive things really make socialization with the US students difficult.

AW noticed that Asian students gathered together and US students gathered together. He did not realize there was a reason until when he was second year and had some better understanding of cultural differences. He realized that Asian students seek the close feeling of being in the same ethnic group; for US students, according to his observation, being together is because they would like to appreciate each other's strength and values.

We have closer relationship with Korean and Japanese students though. I think US students are not natural born to be staying together all the time. In the case of

Chinese students, we stick together is a natural thing. If we don't, then there must be something wrong with us. However it is not the case among US students. They stick together only there has to be a reason to be together. They have to like something about you in order to stay together. Some US student asked me this question: do you guys naturally like each other? I know that if US student stays with you then he/she likes you and there must be a reason. From my first year experience, I would say your classroom participation, the way you think and also your mannerism, count a lot in terms of letting US students want to be friends with you and stay together. If you think very quickly but you speak out the answer in the class without raising your hand, you will not be liked. (AW, May, 2014)

This is also true from the observations with AW at different out-of-class occasions. It is obvious that it is natural and comfortable for him to hang out with Chinese or Asian students, for example, during the Cold Call event—a picnic in the courtyard at the AGBS campus as a Thursday student routine gathering. We all were in line for food. When in the back of the line, the other Chinese male student was looking around while AW was mostly talking to me or the other two Asian male students. After we had fetched food and other students were talking to each other including US and international students. AW stepped out and continued chatting with another Asian male student (AW, 3 April, Coldcall, 2014).

In terms of ways of socially interacting in the US, there are some things that AW is not used to. He realized how important that is and how typical it is as well. However, he found it difficult to follow the suit of his US classmates in order to be part of them.

This is indicated in the observation about the TNCD—a social gathering of the AGBS's students every Thursday night at a local pub—and the related discussion in the interview. AW picked me up at my place and we headed to the theme party. We chitchatted on the way. He was not dressed in any costume. He was wearing a light blue shirt and beige colored pants. I asked him if he had a costume for the theme party and it turned out he did not have anything special for social occasions like this. He even mentioned he did not know where to park because he did not come here often and he did not like the noise in the place. The theme party was on the second floor, in the private section. AW and another Chinese male student were sitting in an area between the first and second floors and never joined the big crowd to drink, chat or dance. They quickly formed a chat circle of five or six Asian students. When I asked why they were not coming upstairs, they both indicated it was noisy for them. During the interview regarding the typical US social gatherings in colleges and graduate schools, AW explained his uncomfortable feelings of joining the crowd.

This is a very typical college weekend culture in the US. Everybody have fun together after getting relaxed by the alcohol. This is another type of networking, for example, there are some stories about people really built up connections after getting drunk and being super relaxed. It would be very ideal if everybody could be equally relaxed and having fun and friend conversation together. However, not all the people would choose to do it or be able to do it. Some people do not appreciate this loud and crowded place. This is a good place for people who are extroverts or appreciate the dynamics. I am not really this type of person. So if I went there, I would pick up a quiet corner. Sometimes people would come and

talk to me coz there are some people just like me who do not enjoy that atmosphere too much (AW, May, 2014).

The cultural differences were magnified at some critical events for MBA students, and this even extended to networking events. AW became mentally exhausted due to the lack of the knowledge of the US business culture and this made his experience less satisfying.

I remember I had an interview for a leadership program at MWV in Richmond. From 7am to 8pm. There were a lot of events focusing on dealing with uncertainties. I felt I am kinda exhausted, mentally and physically. I felt a little uncomfortable having dinner with all of the recruiters and could not be myself. All of them were Americans and they talked about Marathons and boats, and I felt very hard to join in. I was the only one from China and now I think I could have done better to bring something unique to the table and make the whole atmosphere exciting. I could have delivered more of my values. It requires a lot of talking skills, observation skills, and interpersonal skill generally. (AW, May, 2014)

HW is regarded as the student among the four who was most expressive about cultural difference and awareness. His interview indicates a different set of behaviors and values that he observed, and how it impacts his interactions with the US fellows.

I sometimes feel like got caught by these two cultures. I like some parts of these two cultures and some I don't like. Sometimes I feel struggled. I appreciate how

people highly value the concept and the value of family in China. However, the over respect to authority in China is something makes me feel uncomfortable. There are some other values and topics related to these two big topics. I like how westerners value the individual rights and freedom. But sometime, I got irritated when people push the individual rights to an extreme that it will sometimes hard the society and the rights of other people...[In terms of making friends with domestic students, I found it is difficult] and This is because sometimes my US friends are having some very good friendly gesture to me but I don't know how to respond... I find it very difficult to make friends with US students...I found the biggest difference between Chinese and US students is that, relatively speaking, US students are more open and Chinese students are more conservative. Just like the feedback from my learning team member. The implication of that comment is that I am not open enough (HW, March, 2014).

A similar situation was also faced by PC, who has been in the US for more than six years. PC is very comfortable with the life in US culture; however, in his retrospection during the interview, he clearly expressed the cultural differences among these two cultures and what it meant for him in terms of intercultural communications. He believes that people have different ways of communicating and also various from one another, and people even have opposite expectations of each other.

The overall impression of US culture for me to learn is that when you are communicating with US people, you are expected to be very direct, honest, and open. In Chinese culture we appreciate being modest, humble, and reserved. But

people here would prefer you not to be like this. You just hit the point and express your talent, and show people what you have. Just be yourself and let people know...Being direct is a very big difference between Chinese and US students (PC, March, 2014).

A similar situation is also true for TZ, who had been working in a US company in China for six years, and had study-abroad experience in UK for a year and half. TZ thinks she got used to western culture more easily than the average Chinese, partly due to her two years' studying in the UK. With her strong intercultural awareness, she noticed that there are a lot of differences between two cultures and sometimes the best way is just to give up one and try to adapt to the other. For example, she agrees that unlike their American peers, most of the Chinese students do not have an interest in nightlife such as bar-hopping or partying. Most of their activities are associated with their Chinese friends. Generally speaking, most of them are in the process of becoming acquainted with American-style extracurricular activities instead of truly enjoying it.

I hanged out with them [US students] a lot when I was a first year. There were a lot of parties. Generally speaking, it's a lot easier for international students to hang out with each other. It is not that easy to make friends with US students. You have to make efforts to make friends. In addition, when you are integrating into the US society, you have to give up something Chinese [...] Sometimes you have to leave the Chinese community [...] and sometimes you will struggle with it.[...] For instance, my alcohol tolerance is poor. But in order to make friends with US students, you have to learn to be able to drink. Only when you get relaxed then you can chat and make some friends (TZ, March, 2014).

[In terms of socialization, especially the US bar culture], for most the Chinese, we were trained to be diligent. Under this education, we are told to spend a lot of time working on your cases and studying. However, in the eyes of US students, playing and having fun is equally important as working hard with books and cases. When we Chinese would think, oh I haven't finished this or that and I cannot go to the parties. Once I would like to make some Chinese buns for my team members. But on that day, they might have already eaten something, or maybe they were conservative and would not try this exotic looking food. At the first few seconds, I felt I got hurt but later I thought fine and maybe I did think very carefully, maybe they would like it more if I just prepared some cookies, and [people have different expectations, even about dessert] (TZ, March, 2014).

Summary

During the interviews with the four students, they all mentioned that the language barrier and cultural difference play an important part of their adaptation in this US learning environment. From the findings, it is obvious that language makes it more difficult for Chinese MBA students to communicate and get integrated into the US life. Repeated observation that the Chinese students did not laugh with the US students in the class at someone's jokes clearly indicated their lack of both cultural familiarity and language proficiency. The students missed the class information, could not keep up the formal or social conversation with the US students, and even had difficulty in their recruiting preparation. It does not matter how long they have been in the US or how

much exposure they had before they started their MBA program; there are certain cultural differences in terms of the values, the mannerisms, the way to communicate, etc., that prevent Chinese MBA students from getting effective and efficient communication with US students and professors. Language and cultural differences are a lasting theme in international students' learning experience.

Theme 3: Leadership Learning

This section is to present the information regarding students' leadership education—leadership skills and leadership learning narratives of four participants respectively. This section aims to answer the questions, "What are the leadership skills that students have acquired in the past two years?", and "How do they learn the leadership skills?", with related findings from the data collection and analysis. The subsections are as follows: (1) a list of leadership skills (learned; both learned and acquired); and (2) the core leadership skills, with the narratives of skills acquisition from the four participants.

Leadership Skills: Introduction

In the previous discussion, I introduced the findings from the perspectives of each individual student. Having the description of each individual case helps understand the students' study aboard experiences in a great depth. At the same time, all four of the Chinese MBA students also shared similar cultural backgrounds and professional experiences. Most importantly, they were studying in the same MBA program which has a strong emphasis on leadership education. Therefore, I decided to analyze leadership skills that are common across these four students with a hope that the findings will be representative for these four and many more other Chinese MBA students.

In addition, an MBA degree has been historically regarded as a business leadership qualification, and this fact highlights the need to explore and reveal what leadership skills the students have learned (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business [AACSB], 2005). During the data collection, especially the interview section, I realized that students responded to "What skills have you learned?" with a set of leadership skills. However, when Chinese students mentioned "learned", it has two meanings—sometimes it means they heard about or observed it, and sometimes it means they heard or observed it and finally internalized it through practice and later on in reflection. I therefore went back to the interview transcripts and also the observation field notes for each participant. I sorted out the raw data, and compiled all the leadership skills that the students mentioned in the interviews and demonstrated in all the observations. The following table shows three clusters of leadership skills: (1) the leadership skills that are heard by the students, as listed in the left column; (2) the leadership skills that are both heard and acquired by the students, as listed in the right column; and (3) the leadership skills that are similar across the four participants' narratives, as highlighted in blue. I will be focusing on the second column for this particular study—the leadership skills as heard and internalized. This allows me to ask the research question, "How are the leadership skills acquired?", and to apply the Social Learning Theory to structuralize the data collection and analysis.

As an additional notes, first, the skills listed are directly translated from the participants' narrative, and none of my personal interpretation of the skills is involved.

Table 3: Leadership Skills

| Leadership Skills as Observed | Leadership Skills as Acquired |
|---|--|
| AW | AW |
| View things from different perspectives | To work together |
| People-management skills | To learn from each other |
| Action-drive attitude | To adjust our own methods for good |
| Analytical skills | teamwork results |
| Communication skills | Manage his own emotions |
| Strong initiative-driven mindset, influencing | Have intercultural awareness as a good |
| others | start and |
| Brave heart | then to handle the issue around it |
| Passion | Ability to learn about other cultures in |
| Vision | day- to-day life |
| Make themselves available | View things from different perspectives |
| Know the interests of the team members and | Become more tolerant and open-minded |
| make them work and to solve the | Appropriate way to deliver the |
| problems and conflicts | information |
| Distribute responsibilities | Be open to different opinions |
| Establish working mechanism | Critical thinking |
| Manage emotions | |
| (AW, cont'd) | |
| Have intercultural awareness as a good start | |
| and then to handle the issue around it | |

Responsible Take ownership Emotion management Ability to learn about other cultures in day to day life Encourage the team members Spread the positive energy around Appropriately deliver information to each other Be open to different opinions Learn from each other A soul leader Public speaking skills $\mathbf{H}\mathbf{W}$ HWGetting to know people quickly through Intercultural communication within groups Understanding of oneself communication and find the ones People management and relationship be friendly with (social Envision activities) Motivation Have positive attitude towards cultural Communication skills difference and its impact Working with people and in a team Adapt (HW, cont'd)

See business not just as money or profit,

from social and cultural and human perspectives Good at self-correction Become humble Become well-rounded See things from different perspectives and from others' shoes PC PC Being approachable Better self-awareness and better position of oneself Good at selling one's ideas Motivate people Be able to work closely with different Enjoy working people Stay focused Develop new values Identify stake holders and prioritize their Adopt the mentality of giving back to buy-in the society and volunteering Interpersonal skills or soft skills work Setting up a goal for a team and leading the Interpersonal skills team going toward that goal, and Positive thinking letting everybody contribute their Appreciate diversity effort to the goal A more humane person Know the direction Manage crisis and manage people's Negotiation skills expectations at the same time (PC, cont'd) (PC, cont'd)

| Confidence | Change people's negative expectations |
|--|--|
| Knowledge of the person, the team, and the | on you when there is a crisis |
| culture of the organization | Assign people to different positions and |
| A good control of the situation | make sure the organization |
| Get people to work/energize people | works |
| Have vision and being innovative | Connectedness |
| Professionalism | Being sensitive with others |
| | Being direct in communication |
| | Respect person as unique individual |
| TZ | TZ |
| Good understanding of human nature | A good understanding of her own |
| Deliver message in a very acceptable way | strength |
| Envision | Good understanding of human nature |
| Enable | Positive mindset |
| Energize | Good at decision-making |
| Execute | Pay attention to details |
| Engage | Deliver message in a very acceptable |
| Find the right people to do right work | way |
| Be courageous to make the changes | Communication skills |
| Give others opportunities | Good at taking advice from the leaders |
| Be humble | Intuition based on systematic analytical |
| | skills before any |
| | decision-making |

| Follow passion |
|---------------------------------|
| Public speaking skills |
| Take initiatives to communicate |

In the following section, I will focus on the findings regarding the similar leadership skills that the four participants heard and also internalized in the past two years. I will demonstrate, with the data, the way that Chinese MBA students learned these skills through interactions with the people around them in the AGBS.

The Core Leadership Skill: Communication and People Management In a Multicultural Environment

The four students all mentioned that these two years at the AGBS are important for their leadership development. Each participant described his or her specific leadership skill development in a slightly different way due to the uniqueness of each of their own experiences. Regardless, the learning pattern that emerged from the data is clear. The skills that are listed and highlighted in the right-hand side column of Table 3 include most of the communication-related skills. A core skill set can be summed up as the skills of people management and interpersonal skills in a multi-cultural environment.

The findings of the leadership skill set echo the literature which proves that through certain kinds of socialization at business school, students generally gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful access to a professional career that requires a higher level of specialized knowledge and skills (Weidman, Tawle, and Stein, 2001). In this study, the students learned and acquired leadership skills from various

interactions with non-Chinese students, professors, and alumni, and this is where the Social Learning Theory plays its role.

This section will present the common skills that each of them mentioned as acquired, communication and people management in a multicultural environment. With these communication-related leadership skills being frequently repeated among the participants, I will present the findings of each participant's learning from the point view of their interactions with professors, students, and alumni. I hope to present a vivid picture of how students learned leadership skills using supportive description from interviews and in-class and out-of-class observations as a way to answer the research question of how the Chinese MBA students acquire leadership skills.

Narratives on Leadership Skills of Communication and People Management In a Diverse Cultural Environment

It is clear that people management and interpersonal communication skills are most repeatedly mentioned by the participants. I would like to examine how each of the four participants acquired the leadership skills as mentioned. The narrative description is drawn from interview transcripts and the researcher's field notes of in-class and out-of-class observations. The organization of this section, in the form of individual stories, is based on the following considerations: First, the participants have different pre-MBA backgrounds, and each of them has developed slightly different understanding or focus of education experience and even leadership skills. Therefore, there will be four independent stories with the same theme. Second, the specific acquired leadership skills as listed in the table are direct statements from the participants themselves. I will, therefore, construct the full narrative of leadership acquisition for each participant with these most original concepts. Even though they look slightly different from one person to

another, they are presented in terms of people management and interpersonal communication skills for each participant.

I. Story of AW

During his two years at the AGBS, AW developed a set of leadership skills and, according to his statement, interpersonal communication and people management are the most important elements of them. He is good at observing, which is evident from comparing the list of the leadership skills as observed and as acquired—the former is much longer than the latter, and it is the longest list among four of the participants.

With non-Chinese students

As AW mentioned, being a good communicator is a very important quality for a good leader. During his study and work at the AGBS, he took classes with US students and worked with non-Chinese students on various projects. During the communication with people from different cultural backgrounds, he learned how the others delivered the message and how they got things done by observing his classmates and later practicing these skills by himself.

In the classroom, AW observed discussion with and among his US classmates, and witnessed the effective way to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds. He noticed the different way of communication, such as appropriate ways to make an argument and carry on the discussion. His habit of always attentively listening to the conversation between the students in the class indicated his effort observing and learning the way of better communicating with the people from different cultural backgrounds and viewpoints. He also realized this type of communication is helpful for him to carry on his leadership role in business development in the future.

When in the classroom, I observed how students are making their arguments, and if some students do not agree with some viewpoints, how they started forming their own and reason with it. I noticed the students are very good at raising questions against the previous statement tacitly without causing any sharp argumentative moment. That helps me to get to familiar with how US people make argument and make statement. I think it is helpful for me for later negotiations at business occasions. I learn this from learning team as well. Such as observing and practicing how to greet each other when meeting in the hallway, and how to make a point and find the evidence to support your point but also in a very friendly way instead of creating a very argumentative atmosphere. This helps me communicate with US people in general. (AW, March, 2014)

AW became more and more aware of the communication difference due to the fact that people are from different backgrounds, such as having a better understanding of the audience before delivering the message. He observed the way that US students approached culturally sensitive cases and admitted that it is a good way to communicate in a multicultural working environment.

I think this is the essence of case method. When people had an issue of questions, we should be careful with the way to delivery it based on the audience. The very interesting part of this class is that I could hear different opinions from students and witnessed how they organized the responses. In addition, it is also interesting to witness the way that the students phrased some issues and topics. For instance, I noticed that US students rarely mentioned "we are Americans." They seldom

categorize people in terms of this. I think it is mature. Some Chinese students would summarize or generalize saying this is the childhood of Chinese people and that is our interpersonal relationship, etc. I think it is not right to say so because almost everyone has his or her own opinion. It is not right to generalize what happened for a generation with a single person's story. Especially when US students would take that as their definition of what has happened in China or to Chinese people. I realized that US students are doing much better than us for this matter. (AW, May, 2014)

AW also indicated that being able to have control of an unexpected situation is an important trait of being a leader and this is what he learned from his US classmates.

Some students were really making comments with no such substance but constantly making comments while other students making comments very few times but it was of high quality... I think students should let each other feel respected. This is important. There was an Indian student who rarely made comments in the class. He asked a series of questions about a small issue which almost all the class was very clear about. He kept asking about the similar questions. I think it was like wasting each other's time ... Another student cut him off and all the class was laughing, and the topic got switched. (AW, May, 2014)

AW also thinks that when the workplace becomes more and more diverse, the ability to work with people from various backgrounds becomes critical. He observed his non-Chinese classmates when working together with them and he learnt the important

leadership character from them. He indicated that this helps him better understand that a strong sense of responsibility will enhance the leading role of that person and this will help keep a positive communication between a team leader and the rest of the team.

There are three people in our team. G is from Hong Kong, the youngest member of our team. She is the leader of our team, and she took ownership of what she does. She is still busy with a couple of projects even during the graduation season. She's being responsible to the project is definitely showing her leadership skills. She takes care of her responsibilities and leading role, at the same time influencing the rest of the team in a very positive way. (AW, May, 2014)

AW had plenty of opportunities to observe and to learn from his non-Chinese classmates, especially US students. He thinks that being good at communication is important for leaders. He learnt the effective way to communicate in a multicultural environment, such as being open to viewing things from different perspectives, delivering the message in a more appropriate way by being sensitive to the audience, having a good control of the unexpected situation in a formal setting, obtaining a strong sense of responsibility and promoting a strong bond between the team leader and his or her subordinates in order to have better communication. AW believes that all these character attributes of good communication helped him toward his goal of becoming a good leader, and he believes he learnt them from his classmates, as indicated by the transcripts and my observations.

With professors

For AW, in a good leader, having intercultural awareness is important; this is a

good start, and it needs to be followed by some actions. AW learnt it from observing the professor in a class with a multicultural atmosphere who takes the role of a facilitator as well as a leader. He looked at professors very attentively all the time in the class as confirmed by the field notes of observations.

If somebody cannot make any comments, the professors will ask another student to give the answer. This is different and actually everybody could say something about anything. Even though I was not actively making comments, I still enjoyed the class very much. He did not push students too much but also left enough room for students from different cultures with different commenting styles. If a student raised up hand, he would notice, and be aware of the possible performance of the students and then he would give the right direction or lead the student to the way he/she felt comfortable to express themselves. He would also use different ways to encourage those who were not that active making comments in the class. I quite like Alec's teaching methods (AW, May, 2014).

In addition, Alec is great. He is always walking around us before and after class, asking us how we are doing. I am amazed that he could always catch the emotional changes in me. During this class, I was very engaged in the first part of the class, and he sensed it and facilitated the class discussion based on it. I think this is very good. He knows what questioning method works for me and my cognitive characteristics. This helps me talk and express myself in the class. I was in the auditing team leading different people, it is not always a successful case for me to motivate and encourage the team to work together. I didn't have the

awareness to tell the difference between people and find the right way to make them work (AW, March, 2014).

AW observed the professor of the class and noticed his cultural awareness and how he treated students differently to effectively motivate students to talk in the class based on the cultural traditions of each student. As AW made it clear himself at the end of the interview, a keen intercultural awareness and sensitivity will help him in a multicultural working environment later.

With alumni

The AGBS has a close community and there are quite a few opportunities for the current students to interact with alumni. AW indicated appreciation of getting to know and meeting with Chinese AGBS's alumni. During the interview, he also mentioned he would go back to Shanghai before graduation to attend the financial summit organized by the Center of Global Initiatives at the AGBS. There, AW will meet and network with successful Chinese alumni. The successful alumni, to AW, are good learning examples. AW expressed his adoration and respect to them and generously detailed the positive traits of a few of the alum, such as Jerry Peng (The AGBS, Class of 1999).

For instance, we have Jerry Peng, an alumni from China who graduated from the AGBS in 2003. He is very successful. He is excellent at presenting, communication, networking, and he has a special and great attitude to the people there. He has a great set of soft skills. He also demonstrated a person who strives to get success. He keeps looking for next life goal once he achieves the current

ones. What he is doing now requires a lot of mental and physical effort, no less than what it was ten years ago for him. He has strong leadership skills and also a very strong heart. I would call him a brave man. He can do a lot of things by himself and also influence a good number of people around him. This type of leadership means important to me... Previously, I thought leadership is just to finish what you are asked to do, and maybe do it better than others. It seems a little passive to me now. Jerry shows me a man with strong initiative-driven mindset—dong a lot of things himself and also influencing people around him. I treat this as the profound foundation underneath specific leadership skills (AW, March, 2014).

To be a good leader and a successful business person, AW regarded Jerry Peng as an excellent communicator with great soft skills. These leadership skills include taking initiatives to communicate and to lead, effectively presenting and expressing oneself.

Summary of AW's story

AW indicated in the interviews that he has learnt a lot of leadership skills, especially which of being a good communicator in a multicultural environment and emulating the best people-management results from his non-Chinese classmates, professors and alumni. For instance, by witnessing his classmates in the classroom during discussion and making comments, he learnt to see things from various perspectives so that he will be able to work with people from different cultures. He was impressed by the alumni for their professional successes but also learnt how to be an efficient communicator, working with people around him to push to the team to work toward the final goal. In addition, his observation

of the professor in the class inspired him that a good leader has to be a conscious communicator knowing the audience and take actions based on the sensitivity and the understanding of others. These skills are crucial to AW as part of leadership development for a future career.

II. Story of HW

HW is one of the students in this study who had clearly mentioned his intention to stay in the US after graduation. Therefore, as indicated in the interview and the observation notes, intercultural communication is very important to him. The two years at the AGBS are a good leadership education experience for him as well as helping him a lot in intercultural communication. He reflected that this experience changed his understanding of leadership. To him now, "Leadership is not only about envision, motivation, and it has more to do with working with people and make the team work. A lot of communication and collaboration are involved." (HW, May, 2014).

The leadership skills he indicated he acquired in the past two years also echo his renewed understanding of leadership. The skills, as listed in the table above, include having higher intercultural sensitivity and making friends with people from different cultures, correcting himself and adopting a humble attitude when communicating, and also seeing things from different perspectives. All these help him manage people relationships now and later as he adapts to the US cultural when settling down here. The interviews and observations also clearly reveal his leadership skills acquisition in interactions with his non-Chinese classmates, professors and alumni.

With non-Chinese students

As noted in the previous section, HW had a very clear motivation to come and

study in the US. He would like to stay and live here after graduation. His goal of adapting to communicate with people from other cultures seems closely tied with his day-to-day life. When asked about leadership education, he mentioned communication with people from different cultures as the most important part of the whole skill set package. As summarized in the findings section on intercultural communication, he tried his best to communicate with his non-Chinese colleagues. No matter whether it is an in-class discussion, or out-of-class activity, he clearly was learning how the others were doing and adjusted his reactions to make himself part of the community. With students, he realized that in order to have good communication, it is important to view things from different perspectives, thinking of the issue from others' shoes, and never to cease to have self-correction.

Among the four students, HW was the most active in communicating and joining in the activities with US students. The classroom observation notes show that he was always sitting straight, listening to the discussion between students back and forth. By more often raising his hand than other Chinese students, he showed that he had followed the discussion of the class. All the class observations of HW's attentiveness showed that he was learning from his classmates how to place oneself in the multicultural environment. Some US students' mentality of viewing things from different perspectives and appreciating diversity really inspired HW and he was learning and trying to adopt this mentality as well.

Chinese people have this type of mentality that China has thousands years of history and people are proud of a lot of things. After working in the multicultural working environment and learnt from my non-Chinese colleagues, I tend to know the viewpoints of others and learnt what diversity is. I then tend to view things from different perspectives, more than what my Chinese fellows do. I do not have this mentality that China is the best; I tend to view issues in China from more perspectives and sometime even in a very critical way.. I see some Chinese students and their mindset is that anything US students say is bull** and anything they do is stupid. Actually there are some conversation from US students have a lot of important points... I found the biggest difference between Chinese and US students is that, relatively speaking, US students are more open and Chinese students are more conservative. Just like the feedback from my learning team member (HW, March, 2014).

In out-of-class activities, HW tried to stay in contact with non-Chinese students as much as he could. He indicated in his interview that in the first year, he chose to live with a US political science PhD student and from him, he learnt an effective way to approach discussing sensitive issues, and to understand the situation from different perspectives (HW, March, 2014). Overall, HW was adopting the way of thinking from US students all the time. At the same time, he learned how to stay open-minded, to appreciate diversity, and to view things from different perspectives. All these efforts that he made had more to do with his personal motivation for adapting into US culture than aiming to hone his leadership skills.

With professors

During the interviews, HW attributed a great deal of his satisfaction of studying in the AGBS to the professors. He learned and was inspired by the professors' leadership skills in the class, such as managing the students from various cultures and leading their discussion from various points of view. He also thinks that being humble is a great way to connect people and that it is a good start for effective communication between people from various cultures. The lengthy reflections on how professors inspired him are strong evidence showing how he learned leadership skills, specifically intercultural communication, through the professors' examples.

HW appreciated the leading role of professors such as their ability to control the situation and to facilitate the discussion in a culturally diverse class, as well as their ability to connect with students.

I like the communication with professors. In Alec's class, I have a lot of same reflections as his in terms of the class discussion. I felt like sometimes he understands what I mean and the same for me with him. It is more than language, it is also the content of the talk and discussion. For example, when we were talking about category as part of the discussion of discrimination, I had echoed a lot with him (HW, May, 2014).

The professor handles the multicultural classroom and discussion really well, and communicates the main message of the readings to the class so that people were still talking about it later. I am impressed by the way the professor as leaders to synthesize all the expressed thoughts from the students and make them feel valued. This is very very important (HW, March, 2014).

HW also thinks that being a leader, besides having a good control of the situation and connectedness to the audience, requires an ability to communicate with subordinates—this is like the relationship between the professor and students. The important trait of being humble is a very important thing for the leader to build the trust in his team and thus leads to a successful leadership.

I like Susan very much. She has some disability in his hand. She would go to you and shake hands with you. She did not show a bit of self-consciousness of her disability... Some people would take the disability as an advantage. Because I had disability, so I can do this and do that. She did not show any sadness or tragic feelings among others due to her disability. People would make it a big deal in China, saying, I achieved so much and I am disabled, and people around them would make it a big deal as well. She does everything like normal people and she has a lot of titles and responsibilities in school as well. She often comes to me for a chat. I really admire her (HW, May, 2014).

To HW, the professors are excellent leaders in the classroom. They are good at connecting students from various backgrounds, facilitating the discussion, and humbling themselves to build the trust of the students and make the communication even easier and meaningful. As indicated in the interview many times, HW learnt a lot of leadership-related skills from professors.

With alumni

Regarding HW's study motivation, he would like to learn how to adapt to US culture because he would like to stay here for the rest of his life. Among non-Chinese

students, professors, and Chinese alumni, HW spent more of his attention learning from the former two than the Chinese alumni. The conversation about his interaction with alumni was very limited. He briefly mentioned that they are successful and he once attended some events, but was not interested in giving much more detail. When asked about alumni, he directly talked about his current Chinese classmates instead of the Chinese students who had graduated a long time ago.

For example, Trinity is very good at dealing people relationship. She is more mature doing this than I am. She is good at handling the situation where there are interest conflicts. She is able to process that in a very nice way. Sometimes you will find if you do this for person A and you will harm the interest of person B. She can make everybody happy and at the same time problem solved! There are other people who have different characters. Andrew Zhong is a very focused person. He is very trustworthy. You will feel very secured if you ask him to do some things for you. As to my roommate, Chong, is good at establishing relationships with others. He is good at talking to different people. He will break out his comfort zone and do the things he had never done before (HW, May, 2014).

Summary of HW's story

Among four participants, HW is different in terms of his strong motivation to stay and start a new life in the US after he graduates from the MBA program. His motivation guided his daily action with people. He spent a lot of time getting adjusted to the US culture and trying to be part of the community. Therefore, his major learning task is to communicate with people from the US cultural background. He learnt interpersonal

communication from the discussion with his US classmates in the classroom, such as how they think and the way they deliver the ideas. He thus developed an openness to different ideas and cultures and tends to think about issues from others' perspective. When he was interacting with professors, he realized that they are good at controlling a class of multicultural elements, and they have characteristics such as connectedness and being humble to make students or subordinates feel trust in the whole relationship. These are biggest things HW learnt from viewing professors as role models in the past two years.

III. Story of PC

Among four participants in the study, PC has spent the longest time in the US. In terms of US culture, he has the most familiarity among all the participants. He stated in the interviews that people-management skills, especially the intercultural communication skills, are the crucial part of his leadership development and this is the biggest takeaway from his study in the AGBS in the past two years. He found that he had a strong self-awareness so that he knew where to position himself in the organization; he also had a better connectedness with the people that he has been working with so that he knew how to put the human and material resources into better use and to make the organization work. He summarized that the best way to communicate with Americans is to be direct and at the same time to be sensitive with others and respect people as unique individuals. The interviews and observational evidence show that PC acquired these skills through interactions with the US students, professors, and alumni.

With non-Chinese students

PC had interactions with US students both in and outside of the classroom. He witnessed the effective ways that US students communicate with each other, such as

making an argument, negotiating, and solving the problems. These, he thinks, are important communication skills in order to be a leader. In the interviews, PC generously reflected on his previous experience and how he acquired those skills by observing and working with US students.

The general impression that PC learned from his US classmates is the importance of being culturally sensitive, and to respect people's differences and treat them as individuals. This is the foundation for success in a multicultural environment.

Yes, of course, people are different and you need to use different approaches to talk to them. However, we are working towards the same goal, which is very important. I have to let them know that I care very much about their contribution in the team and care them as individual (PC, March, 2014).

After observing them [his US fellows] in the past two years, including myself, I realize that it takes time for everybody to learn and to deal with things. We should not push people too much because people are different in terms of how they absorb, accepting and learn new things. So for me it does not matter whether the person is from Chinese culture or US culture, it is more important to know them as individual and how that person deals with the issue in his or her own way. Then you can start leading him or her to integrate into the team and working together to achieve the organizational goal (PC, March, 2014).

In the context of cultural differences and diversity, PC strongly agreed that being direct, honest, open-minded, and viewing things from different perspectives are the ways that US students approached communication in a multicultural environment. This shows

respect to others from different cultures and these skills are the lubricant in interpersonal communications.

The overall impression of US culture for me to learn is that when you are communicating with US people, you are expected to be very direct, honest, and open...The overall US culture gives me a feeling of directness. If you like it, you will say you like it; if not, then not. They will not try to hide or find excuses or being extra tacit about some things. This really helps with working efficiency and will help people avoid a lot of suspicion, guess and misunderstandings. The directness also has something to do with the fact that the discussion is only about the thing itself instead of having something to do with the person him or herself. There will not be any personal attack during the discussion (PC, March, 2014).

[In the classroom learning with US students, I realize that,] viewing the facts from different cultural perspectives you will have different conclusions. For instance, we had a case that Johnson and Johnson recalled a type of baby powder which was defined to harm the babies' skin. US students would approach this issue more from US company's perspective to make money and more objectively talking about the market instead of the real welfare of babies in China. For Chinese students, they would wonder, why the US company coming to the Chinese market with such a product that has potential harm to the babies. Chinese students would have this negative feelings toward the topic itself and also the comments from US students (PC, May, 2014).

Like what I mentioned before, even facing the same fact, due to the different perspectives, people will have different understandings and explanations (PC, March, 2014).

Sometimes student do not agree with each other. I notice [from the class observations) that the best way to communicate among peers would be, for example, I will not be very hard criticizing the other person's idea. This is also what we learnt from the class. When you disagree with others, please don't get very emotional with each other or make any hard comments. For instance, saying "I don't agree with you and," instead of "I don't agree with you but". When US students are arguing and discussing back and forth. I think when each of us are expressing what we agree and what we don't without getting emotionally involved, this is a good process to inspire each other's new thoughts. During this back and forth communication, it is not argument, it is more like discussion (PC, May, 2014).

With this intercultural communication mentality in the US, PC also realized that this is a part of interpersonal communication skills that works to help people have a successful negotiation over different options or work on an argument. He also reflected that this mentality, which is a little different from his Chinese cultural traditions, is helpful for him to succeed in professional settings as a leader in a multicultural environment.

Most of the times, you don't need to reach agreement. Just to share different point

of views. Because we all have different backgrounds, and of course the thinking systems and methods are different (PC, May, 2014).

Take in classroom discussion for example, I am very impressed that people are expressing their different thoughts and ideas in the classroom but they keep it as it is. Different ideas in the classroom discussion will not impact the personal relationships outside of the class. Business is business. I cannot agree with your opinion and idea but I do not hold any negative impression of you as a person. No personal attack. I am not saying that you will still make a lot of good friends at this type of communication, but at least you all will not establish enemies through this type of ways of communication. So I am fond of this type of very direct way of communication (PC, March, 2014).

Under the Chinese culture, people are only confidently talking about something that they are very sure about. If not, they would rather stay silent. This is very different from US culture. I noticed that some US students are very actively sharing their thoughts even they are not so sure about it or the comments are barely connected to the topics. I think if you think of anything, you should encourage yourself to express it to the student group. There is no right or wrong, and this is a classroom where is a place for you to discuss not judging right or wrong. You should not think you should only speak when you are 100% sure and you will not make any comments unless the comment is going to be agreed by everybody (PC, March, 2014).

When interacting with his US fellows at the AGBS, PC realized the importance of cultural sensitivity, and keeping an open-minded mentality toward different cultures and opinions. He witnessed and reflected on the US students' dealing with negotiations, discussions, and arguments with this intercultural personal interaction mentality. This skill set, which he described as a lubricant in managing people, definitely helps him toward a better fit in a leadership role in a multicultural working environment.

With professors

Being a member of the classroom where the students were from different countries and backgrounds, PC realized that the professors are the leaders of the class—their sensitivity to the differences among the students, their ability to direct and facilitate the discussion. This echoes PC's understanding of being a good leader who has a clear vision of the organization and knows how to motivate his team toward the organizational goals. Their capability in dealing with diversity makes them the role model for PC.

In terms of intercultural communication, I like Alec, the professor, and I think he is very diversify. He accepts any comments. He is a professor and his role is to lead the class, ask students to express different ideas and let the others listen these diverse ideas from different psychological understanding (PC, May, 2014).

I think one of the most important things that I learnt from the professors is when you give advice to people or ask people to do something, try to use some questions instead of ordering. Questioning will inspire people to think. It is more

efficient that just ordering people to do things for you. If you just order people to do things, there will be some problems. First, it is possible that people will just do what you tell them do but not think about it by themselves. Second, it is also possible that people will not always do what you tell them to. Usually people will do better if they personally think about these issues and process them in their minds. Questioning will inspire people to do things and to learn as well (PC, March, 2014).

Yes, I feel like the professors have already set the goal for each class. They will lead the class to achieve this goal by different means. During the process, such as the professor just being a facilitator, will help students learn a lot and achieve the same goal in the end. ..People management is important for a leaders. However, the leader him or herself should also have his/her own ideas and thoughts about the situation. The leader should know what resources are available (like professors know the students) and how to use these resources to achieve the organizational goal (PC, May, 2014).

PC not only observed how the professors control the classroom as a leader but also learnt how to be a good leader at the interpersonal level. Being able to connect with each other is a good way to develop trust in people, to gain buy-in and thus strengthen one's leadership.

I would like to give you an example of the professor, Jackie, from General Manager Take Action. I just gave you an example how I managed speaker series. I

think there is a huge difference between her and me in handling this. It is ok because seeing the difference can motivate me to learn more. Her flow is like this: students arrived, almost all of us, speakers are around in the classroom, and all the equipment set up. She would start with an announcement. She delivered it in a very soft way. Her introduction to the speakers, every time, is awesome. She does not have high voice volume. Sometimes she will have a note in hand if she does not know the speaker very well. Most of the time she doesn't. Her announcement always hits the point and full of humor. This really warms up or even spiced up the classroom. For instance, there was an alumni coming here as a speaker. The speaker's husband is also from the AGBS. Then Jackie was joking, they recently had a kid and they are still married, this is a good thing. She made jokes with speakers in a very appropriate way that is dependent on how close the relationship she has with the speaker. Doing all the icebreaking and introduction based on your understanding and control of the relationship is very interesting. Controlling the environment and defining the relationship are very important. Hitting the key point is also very important, and would be better with humor. People like this. Once people like it, then you will have a lot of buy-in. Having buy-in is a good way showing you have the leadership (PC, May, 2014).

It is clear that PC regards the professors as his role model. He has not only learnt how they, as the class leaders, facilitate the conversation and make sure every student from different cultural backgrounds get to express their opinions and feel valued and respected. At the same time, he witnessed how the individual professor also exhibits her

own character of being connected to the individual to gain buy-in and exercise her leadership.

With alumni

PC strongly believes that a strong relationship between the leader and his/her team is fundamental to the success of the organization. He learnt this directly from observing the professors in the classroom. PC had an overall feeling that the AGBS community is very close; he emphasized that there is a very tight relationship between the students and alumni. Even though he did not have direct interaction with the alumni to experience this close relationship on a personal level, what he learnt from the other students clearly indicates he feels the kind and connected atmosphere. In his interview transcription and the out-of-classroom activity observations, the data all clearly show his leadership learning influence from the alumni.

There is a very close relationship between students and alumni. They are so supportive. I can give you an example. There is another Chinese student looking for internship last year this time. He still did not have internship in May. He contacted our alumni in GE in Shanghai and after some communication he was offered an opportunity via networking with alumni. The alumni was trying to arrange some interview for him. Finally he got an internship offer. This example shows that at that moment, even if at such a critical moment or last minute thing, the alumni were still trying everything they could to help you (PC, March, 2014).

I think organizational culture, such as closeness, is a very good thing to keep, and it has already become a tradition. For instance, if I am going back to Shanghai and

work for Johnson and Johnson, and if an AGBS student approaches me later, I would definitely help them out (PC, March, 2014).

PC understands that being sensitive to the other people's needs and that trying to think from other people's shoes help to create the connectedness between each other. This helps build up the trust and makes it possible the close organizational culture.

Summary of PC's story

PC has been in the US for about nine years, and he spent the longest time in the US among the four participants. He reflected that he learnt a lot from the past two years at the AGBS. In terms of leadership, he thinks people management is the most important part of the skill set. He learnt in the classroom that in terms of their way of communication in a multicultural setting, the importance of being open, direct and respectful to diversity is very different from Chinese culture. He learnt from the professors and alumni that creating connectedness between people is a good way to develop trust and buy-in from subordinates, and therefore gain the leadership.

IV. Story of TZ

TZ is the only female student among these four participants. She thinks it is important to get to know oneself and the audience first so that one can find the best way to deliver the message. In a multicultural working environment, it is important to be aware of the cultural differences and to act in a way that is acceptable to both sides. She had been in a leadership position for a long time—six years in P&G as a director and then two years as the owner of a start-up. The leadership skills that she mentioned sound similar to what she had before, and the biggest difference is that she had improved or

upgraded her leadership skills in a multicultural setting. She mentioned quite a few leadership skills that she acquired in the past two years. Most of them are communication-related, and she highly rated people skills; as she suggested in the interview, "It is all about communication skills. It is about how to communicate with others in a correct way, to speak right and smart. I learn a lot and this will be very helpful for me to communicate with leadership team in my future company." (TZ, May, 2014). Therefore, as indicated in the interview transcript and observational field notes, intercultural communication becomes the biggest piece of her leadership learning. The interactions with non-Chinese students, professors and some alumni helped her improve her leadership skills, such as efficiently delivering the message, using good public speaking skills, and improving her interpersonal communication.

With non-Chinese students

TZ thinks good communication, especially in delivering your message in public in an efficient and effective way, is really important to one's leadership success. She was not good at it in the beginning. TZ told me that she was different from the rest of the class at the business school in terms of her age. She indicated that she was older than the average and had been away from school for a longer time than her classmates. In addition to these differences, she was an international student, and English is not her native language; she could not express herself as easily as she wanted. She felt different from others and her confidence in expressing herself in the class was very low. Witnessing the communication of non-Chinese students, seeing how they treated people from different cultural and academic backgrounds, TZ changed her mind-set and started embracing difference as diversity and viewing things from multiple perspectives.

[When asked to describe the take-away from the experience at the AGBS, TZ thought] it was diversity...Actually you can tell the Chinese group or country is not full of diversity, how we look, and how we think. We are such a stable nation. In the US, people look differently, and they behave differently as well. I made reflections and think that we did not do very well with the diversity within China. In the business world, having diversity is also very important. In China, we said that sea is very big and it contains all the streams and creeks and it itself become bigger, and we should have the tolerance for all the diverse elements just like the sea, therefore we can grow stronger. We said it long time ago. In reality, if we can tolerate the diversity and difference, we can become stronger (TZ, March, 2014).

Through communicating with non-Chinese students, TZ learnt that embracing diversity is the way to promote good communication with people in a multicultural environment. In addition, TZ also furthered her understanding of intercultural sensitivity and cultural diversity.

I learnt a lot. First of all, Chinese culture is very different from US or western culture. Even if I lived in UK for some time, I didn't pick up a lot of details as how to adjust and integrate into a different culture. I didn't pay enough attention on details. After I came here, I would say I learn a lot from other people, especially the details. In my eyes, these western kids are more mature than our Chinese kids. I think US educational system does a great job. It teaches the kids how to express themselves very well. They are so good at delivering their ideas in a very acceptable way. I think Chinese is nation which wants express ourselves,

but we need to know how to do it under a very different culture. It is easy to do it in the Chinese culture. But now we are in the western culture. The difficulty is not just from language. It includes the social manner, talking logic and so forth. This takes time to adjust. I was working in P&G, a US company. Even though I thought I was thinking alike the local US students more than my other Chinese folks, still it took me some time to get adjust. I think the AGBS helped sharpen my communication skills (TZ, May, 2014).

As she saw how her US classmates communicated among themselves and in the classroom, TZ reflected on her own communication style from a Chinese perspective. She started to pay attention to the way she conveys information in daily practice, such as being sincere, genuine, culturally sensitive, etc., so that the message would be delivered with care and respect.

US students are very sincere and genuine. They will express whatever in their mind and they do it with very good skills. I think for most Chinese, we either do not express our thoughts, or we deliver our thoughts in a very simple, abrupt and even blunt way. And the listeners usually get hurt about this. This can be changed through some training. US students are overall good at this and this has a lot to do with their training in their education. I am very impressed by this. In addition, my US classmates are very insightful. They are very smart and excellent. You are easily got shocked by them about their talents. What is more impressive is that these talent students are working very very hard. We Chinese sometimes think that the smart can sometimes not work so hard to achieve a lot. However, the

AGBS's smart students are generally very hard working students. They might not have chosen AGBS if they were not this diligent. Third, I learnt that we need to be humble. I realize that no matter how prestigious the family that they are from, how good their grades are, and how pretty they look, most of them are very humble. This is what Chinese young generation should learn from. Even for me I think it is a good lesson. I thought I had very good education, occupation, and social status. I was arrogant, to be frank, and most of the time, I was not aware of it until now. However, we should not forget that our ancestors encouraged humbleness. Being humble can encourage others, give some other people who are not always that aggressive some opportunities to express. At these occasions, what those people say and do will save your company from crisis (TZ, March, 2014).

Communication counts as a major part of leadership skills and responsibilities to TZ. Through the interaction with US students, TZ realized that being open and tolerant to diversity opens a door for communication. She also improved her intercultural communication awareness by realizing the value of being honest and humble in communication among people from different cultures. With the knowledge gained from these reflections on the communication between the east and the west, TZ is becoming more confident of her leadership skills in a multicultural setting as she plans for her future.

With professors

TZ indicated her appreciation of the interaction with professors in the interviews.

She learnt that being culturally sensitive to another person helps one with all communication. This is also an important characteristic of being a good leader who knows his/her subordinates well and encourages each one to his or her full growth potential.

My confidence was built up when I took the class with Professor Child at Strategies. In that class, that US student's comment indicated that he adopted the view point of US to view the international market. He only focuses on the US market. I raised up my hand to make my comment. I thanked the opportunity from the professor to me to express my ideas. Even though I was speaking broken sentences. The professor encouraged me to come to the front of the class. At that moment, I felt like I could contribute something to the AGBS community. I shared with the market at different tiers in China. The first sentence was that there is not just something identical and unified about China. There are 3 to 4 about China. I noticed that US students were a little bit interested. I continued introducing the Chinese market. I mentioned there were various things to consider for scooter business in China. After the class, the professor thanked me for sharing the knowledge. Even after several months when I had dinner at his place, he mentioned again that your speech last time was fantastic. I felt so thankful for him. This is the time when I truly picked up my confidence. I realized my value. (TZ, May, 2014)

He gives me a good opportunity to express myself. I am not saying other professor did not give me opportunities. I mean sometimes a professor is very

easy to miss the chance to have this sense to give opportunities to international students. This is the most proud thing that I had when I was a first year student. After the class, some US students came to me and told me that they never thought Chinese market is this complicated, and the things we needed to think about as doing business in China are so different from the US business (TZ, May, 2014).

Clearly, building up her confidence was an important part of her experience at the AGBS. This quality will help her become a good leader to her subordinates at workplace later on.

With alumni

TZ has a strong desire to learn from the students, professors and alumni at the business school. When asked about leadership development in learning through interaction with alumni, TZ excitedly shared with me what she learnt from a class where the successful or experienced alumni are invited to give lectures to the current students. TZ was inspired by these business leaders in their ability to manage the unexpected situation, such as getting to understand the nature of a crisis and successful ways of delivering the message to the team members to solve the situation. This experience encouraged TZ toward overcoming her personal difficulties in the future.

There are so many interesting classes. I can share with you some second year classes. GMTA is one of my favorite. It is called General Management Take Actions. It had people who had actual experience tackling with crisis to be with students. For instance, a speaker was part of a firm which experienced a major crisis before and he was part of the team tackling it. I think this is so meaningful

to us. I think most of the students in the class did not have that experience at all. If one day we might encounter those issues, we will have a bench mark or a base for us to think about it and possible ways to deal with it. This is a very efficient way of learning. Those advice from these fore runners are also very constructive (TZ, May, 2014).

For instance, a speaker once shared with us that there is nothing that we cannot take. Actually most of the time, the result is not as bad as you could imagine. Sometimes we are afraid of dealing it and then at the end you will find that it is so so and even not as bad as you expect before. You might have the similar experience in our lives, and in business, you will have a lot of this type of difficulties. If you lack of courage, you will not be able to tackle with anything that is tougher (TZ, May, 2014).

Summary of TZ's story

TZ appreciated the interactions with US students, professors and alumni very much. She learnt the communication characteristics of westerners, such as being direct and honest. As a result, she opened her heart, embracing the diversity of the rest of the class. She started viewing things from different perspectives and found effective ways to manage people relationships. She increased her confidence because the professor gave her the opportunity to express her knowledge in class. Through this experience, she learned that being sensitive to others is important for a good leader of a team, facilitating communication and collaboration. At the same time, she especially appreciates the

knowledge-sharing from alumni. From these industry leaders, TZ was encouraged and, relating to her previous experience of lacking confidence in a new learning environment, she had a better understanding of herself. Her self-understanding helps her better position herself in any communication situation. This experience will be a great asset for TZ to become a good leader in her next professional position.

Summary

The interpersonal communication and people management skills are the core leadership skills acquired by the students. The stories of each participant vary due to the fact that they do not have identical learning motivations or backgrounds. However, the interactions, direct and indirect, between the students and the people who inspired them illustrate the learning process.

In the next section, Theme 4, I will present another common subject among the data collected from these four participants. That is, they all regard participating in extracurricular activities as an important way to learn and practice leadership skills. This is a new discovery from this research that was not expected in the proposal stage. This finding will be a good start for other, similar research, such as the characteristics of these extracurricular activities, how different activities work for students with different leadership roles and cultural backgrounds, how the schools can better facilitate the leadership development based on the qualitative and quantitative evaluation results on student leadership development, etc. A more detailed discussion will be offered in Chapter 5, Discussion and Implications.

Theme 4: Extracurricular Activity Involvement Is Part of Leadership Learning

During the interviews, the subject of extracurricular activity involvement emerged as an unexpected theme. The students were socially involved in out-of-class activities and trying their best to make themselves available in the AGBS community, such as at an AGBS student society activity, a career related event, or a student life program. As it turned out, my research also indicates the importance of extracurricular activity involvement for learners. The involvement allows students to apply the skills they learnt in the classrooms to real-world business issues. (Andrews, 2007; Atkinson, 2009; Kielsmeier, 2011; National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2008). It helps learners to internalize the skills when the students further the learning process through experiences in unfamiliar situations (Atkinson, 2009). The activities mentioned in the current study provide the students with similar learning benefits; for example, they serve as a platform to test and practice the leadership skills. In addition, extracurricular activities play an important role in students' internalization of their leadership skills.

In addition, these activities are similar to real-world scenarios for adult learners as MBA students, and are different from the normal extra-curricular development available to undergraduate students in the US (Cao, 2012). This finding will serve a good start to further research, such as some exploratory study on characteristics of out-of-classroom educational and practical activities in business school, and how these activities better the learning experiences of international students. The following narratives will demonstrate the extracurricular activity involvement in each participant's learning experience.

I. Story of AW

In the previous section, AW indicated that he learned from the professor how to be culturally sensitive and realized the value of getting to know the audience or the people you are going to work with. This, he noted, will make you a good communicator and thus lead the team to move forward. In addition, he also appreciated learning how his US classmates effectively and efficiently deliver the message in the classroom—skills which, he thinks, are crucial for one's own ability to view things from different perspectives in order to negotiate change.

During the interviews, AW mentioned his involvement in the GBE program at the AGBS. This project aims to bring the alumni and current students together to work on the emerging market product from an alumni's business, and thus to provide the current students hands-on experience, as well as developing the potential for bringing the business to the local community and creating employment. This project has a confidential nature; therefore, the details will be eliminated in this report. During the interviews, AW kept mentioning his experience in this project as an example of how he applied his thoughts on leadership education in the practice. This finding is inspiring and it certainly shows how a project like this elevates the leadership learning experience of the students, in addition to giving them a ground-level view of business development.

Working with students from different countries, AW practiced being sensitive to different cultures in order to have a better working result. Because they were introducing a new product to the US market, there were a lot of uncertainties. They needed to distribute work and develop various channels, and then focus on each of several specific

areas. Effective and smooth communication is very important at the very beginning stage, when the project is open to opinions of all of the team members.

The following narrative indicates how AW successfully managed people relationships among the team through intercultural sensitivity, viewing things from different perspectives, and staying open. When introducing a product from China to the US market, he realized that because the team members were from different countries, not all of them had the same passion for the product as he did. Therefore, noticing this difference and making an effort to bring the team toward the same goal with a similar amount of passion for the product seemed very important at that point.

This time we are introducing some product from China to the US market. This is a very good product and people haven't got a chance to try it so far. As a Chinese, I feel very proud of this product and introducing it to the western world. However, as non-Chinese, my colleagues don't understand or were not quite so sure about it. They will still follow AGBS's rule to work on the project but you can tell they are still suspicious of the product. For instance, the Indian student is working hard with us but I can clearly tell he/she is not enthusiastic about the product as I am. It is my personal feelings. (AW, May, 2014)

I think this is a good thing to realize this different feelings to the product due to the fact that we were from different countries. After I sensed his different reactions, I tried to influence him. I found this product online. It is available in Chinese market but not in the US. I bought some for my parents who are living in China and asked feedback from them. They liked it. I forwarded this information

to my Indian colleague. I noticed my colleague thus became passionate working on the market entry for this particular product. (AW, March, 2014)

By realizing the involvement and passion difference due to the fact that the team members were from different countries, AW made effort to change the situation. He purchased the product and made his parents use it. He then forwarded this information to the other non-Chinese colleagues. He realized people from different cultures have different understanding of a certain issue therefore it might lead to different levels of trust in the product. He then looked for some more universal feelings to improve the team involvement. He approached this issue with positive evidence from his parents' trying and successfully gained confidence from his colleagues about the product. Obviously, this small anecdote about with his team experience shows his actively applying leadership skills in the practice, especially intercultural communication and people management.

Leadership skills, of course, require you to understand people's or other colleagues' emotions... Different cultural genes lead to cultural difference, and this is mentioned in the managerial psychology class as well. We are different in terms of this, therefore we will have different opinions, attitudes and emotions towards the same subject. First of all, we need to admit this difference. Second, being aware of this does not mean we exactly know what is happening there. With this mind-set, I realized that Indian student really had different feelings to the product. So I tried to keep the same feelings with them and enforced strong communication with the whole team. (AW, May, 2014)

A good leader is able to communicate effectively and efficiently. Working with team members from different countries, and especially in the first stage of the project where there were a lot of uncertainties, requires a leader to be able to communicate with them in a way that is acceptable by all of them. Working in a certain project also allows AW to change his way of communication for better teamwork. After AW realized how he could change his way of communication, he resorted to what he learnt from the class and classmates, as well as thought about the mistakes he had made before. He overcame his usual way of delivering the message, waiting until he was very sure about it. It turned out to be the best change he had made in himself.

I always wanted to do things with a very clear picture in my mind, but the situations do not always allow this. Many times when I was confident of my understanding of the situation, I had already missed the best time to tackle that issue. It shows people that I am not that efficient... this is very difficult to change. In the case like this, I had already been aware of it, but it took me some time to get it into action. I wish I could have more action-driven mentality. I tell myself, stop thinking that much, I will do something first, and then later I can have some minor changes or improvement. Get things going first; but having a plan at hand is also important. How to keep the balance is very important. I am still exploring. For instance, GBE program is going to have a trip in China. We are scheduling trips now. I was struggling how to word it in the email for trip coordination. However, when I was ready to send the announcement out after careful thinking, it would seem a little late for everybody. People were not patient for my

thoughtful emails. So I finally chose to send out the email first and then I would contact them later in an hour or two to finalize the details. (AW, May, 2014)

The involvement in a real-life project like GBE allows AW to practice what he learnt about leadership education, especially intercultural communication skills and people management. He needed to be able to communicate with team members from different cultures. This is a perfect example of how he internalized the leadership skills acquired through extracurricular activity.

II. Story of HW

HW is a special participant in the study in the sense that he is the only one of the four students who clearly expressed his interest to stay in the US. He would like to integrate into the extracurricular activity here regardless of how difficult it might be. He had a lot of intercultural communication opportunities and this strengthened his skills, as he mentioned in the interviews. For example, he tried best to be at any extracurricular activities as often as he could, from Chinese student Lunar New Year, the AGBS's promotion events, to all the AGBS's social outings.

I tried to integrate the life here. I went to all the social outings with my US friends. I went to TNDC, a club in the corner, every Thursday night...As to my impression of that place, it is overwhelming. It is very much like what I had in China with my foreign co-workers. Everybody needed to shout to each other and ended up not being able to talk the next day. I was also shaking a little bit when they were dancing, (laugh). (HW, March, 2014)

I also went to football game. It was a little difficult at the first. But they would explain the rules to me, so it was fine. I was only there once. I was not interested in it at all. But I would like to make extra effort to make friends with US students. I have this motivation to do it. I would like to integrate into the life here so I would like to do it. (HW, March, 2014)

When HW was working on Deloitte Case competition with other two US students and an Indian student, he thought this is would be very good practice. He not only saw the working ethics of everyone but also developed and strengthened his ability to work with the people from different cultures, and to see things from various perspectives. In addition, he learned how to communicate effectively with people from various backgrounds, such as in setting a norm that everybody will have to work according to later. (HW, May, 2014)

I like Deloitte Case competition and I like it very much. I worked with 2 US students and 1 Indian student. We spent the whole night working on this. This is a very good practical opportunity. I enjoyed this multi-cultural and multi-national working experience. Everybody was working so hard to get things done by communicating and collaborating. Everybody was driving for the best. It really helped me think the best way to think about the relationships and how to deal with it in day to day life, such as how to push the discussion in a constructive way. For example, there should first be a norm before everybody executes. Having a norm before discussing is really important. Usually when people are discussing, there

will be a lot of ideas and thoughts. Sometimes there was too much discussion and people sort of lose the track. [By setting a norm first,] we will still let everybody talk, maybe at the end we will not adopt any of them, but at the same time we will not make them think what they just said or did is of no value. (HW, May, 2014)

Due to the fact that HW wanted to stay in the US after graduation, he had clearer goals and stronger motivation to reach out, get involved, and learn from any activities in which he participated. He was the most active participant among these four students in the out of class activities. His interview transcription, especially the cited examples from his conversation, together with the observation evidence, all indicated that extracurricular activity involvement was a very major piece in his leadership development experience, especially in developing communication skills with non-Chinese students.

III. Story of PC

In the past two years, PC has been actively involved in quite a few extracurricular activities. His interview transcripts and the observation field notes all indicate that he strengthened his leadership skills, especially those he mentioned having acquired in the past two years, at those occasions. He tried to be sensitive to people from different backgrounds, respect people as individuals, and create connectedness with them. All these helped him set a standard for a good leader in the organization with good communication skills and the ability to promote working toward organizational goals.

By working with people from different cultures in the learning team, PC furthered his understanding of intercultural communication and sensitivity to difference when developing interpersonal relationships.

I also prefer to approach them case by case. For instance, one of our team members is married, so he was more concerned about family issues, and the other is a resident at the hospital who is very social, so I will approach him with some interesting social or cultural topics. For example, I had a learning team member, a very young and smart guy. He is so American, and so proud of US. American is good and excellent. You guys are international and you come here to learn and adapt. He usually makes jokes with others and sometimes I don't get it. He seems very happy about his jokes. Then I think he likes to make jokes and takes it as a way of communication. So I start talking to him with a lot of jokes. He is working on entrepreneurship. I make jokes with him, of course I am not degrading him, instead, I am complementing him. This is how I communicate with him in a way that he is comfortable with or familiar with. So I joke with him saying, oh you are a billionaire, when you company is open, can you hire me, etc. So in a word, adopting a way of others to communicate with the other. (PC, May, 2014)

As the president of the health club at the AGBS, PC had been working with students as his subordinates from various academic and cultural backgrounds. He exercised his ability to respect students as individuals and to try to put himself in their shoes when he tried to reach the organizational (in this case, the club's) goal. The following incident from his experience demonstrates his efforts to apply what he learnt in his daily practice.

I am the health club president at the AGBS. I led a small team with five VPs. Among them, two were US students, two were Korean students, and one was

Brazilian. We had been working on this project since last April. We set up club goals and did a lot of activities over the summer, such as raising fund and inviting speakers. Our team members were working in a very collective way on achieving these goals. Two team members have been very busy and cannot make it all the time. One of them is the resident at the hospital and super busy. But it is not a problem and we worked well with each other. However, until last September when we had a lot of actual events, there were about to be problems. For instance, when we had speaker series which are usually in the afternoon after the class, we will often provide lunch to attract more students to join us. The VP of speakers was responsible of inviting the speakers and the VP of events who was in charge of logistics for cold call or case competition. I didn't give too much consideration on ordering food. This task sounds earlier on paper than in action. These two VP thought ordering food was the other's duty so no one ordered the food. Since people were very busy and we didn't have a lot of meetings, there was some miscommunications or some things were left undiscussed. I was cc'd in all emails. I followed them all and then I noticed that there was some potential problems, and it is about the food ordering. I went ahead and ordered the food. After it, I talked to both of them individually. I understood their situations, I didn't criticize them but asked them what went wrong and set the responsibilities of each of them. I think distributing leadership responsibilities is very important otherwise it will cause a lot of troubles and misunderstandings between team members. (PC, March, 2014)

Interpersonal communication skills are, to PC, a very important part of good leadership. After being culturally sensitive and being thoughtful and respectful to others, getting connected to people is a crucial important next step. PC realized this and he took advantage of activities within the AGBS community to develop this connectedness to others.

[In terms of how I get connected to people, I think it is good that we are] open to communicate with people and try to pick up any topics that you both know about. It can be your previous working experience or other hobbies. I will give you an example. During the camping trip which aimed to mingle internationals and domestic students before the school started, there was an activity very similar to trick game. The students put a lot of alcohol in a big barrel and they would have a sip of it one after another. There were a few international students around but not so many of them would like to join and try. I was standing there and once a domestic student invited me have a try, I did. I just would like to tell them that I was part of the group and I was happy to accept what you did and would like to have a try with you. This is important, letting the people know you accept them and would like to be a part of the team, and then they will start treating you as a friend, at least, part of the circle. (PC, March, 2014)

In the past two years, among very busy study and job-search schedules, PC took advantage of the limited opportunity to get involved in the activities within the AGBS community. No matter when he was participating as a club president, a second year international student, or a learning team member, he was exercising the people

skills—communicating in a multicultural environment with people around him. He excels at being connected with people, thinking about the issues from different perspectives, and being a good leader to achieve the organizational goals despite collaboration difficulties due to the various backgrounds of people.

IV. Story of TZ

TZ mentioned that during the first year, she tried to participate at the AGBS events as much as she could. This really helped her in interpersonal communications. She did not join the extracurricular activities later on due to the fact that she had a heavy workload, including academic requirements and recruiting events. In addition, during second year, her family was here with her. She needed time with her 3-year old son and her own parents. However, she tried to make herself as available as possible at a lot of the AGBS's community events, such as the AGBS's Days, and TNDC monthly theme party, etc. These involvements helped her become familiar with US culture and also provided her with opportunities to internalize the intercultural communication skills that she learnt at other occasions.

TZ participated in TNDC, a monthly theme party at a local pub. TZ started to understand the US drinking culture and the role it plays in networking for professionals. She got rid of the stereotype of viewing drinking and chatting as an exotic way of socialization. She actively joined the group and practiced her intercultural communication skills.

What I did is just to participate in the activities that US students organized, and try to socialize and drink with the students. To many Chinese students, drinking

and socialization does not sound exciting or interesting to them. They did not like to go to TNDC—the AGBS's drinking night. However, if you would like to be part of the US students' circle, you have to do the things they do and follow the rules they have. If you say no to these, of course it is very difficult to make friends with them. (TZ, March, 2014)

You have to enjoy the US style of socialization. For instance, my alcohol tolerance is very poor. But in order to make friends with US students, you have to learn to be able to drink. Only when you get relaxed then you can chat and make some friends. I do enjoy it. I was drunk after one glass. But if your heart is really open and you do have an open mind, you will make it. (TZ, March, 2014)

Then people will be open and chat. At that moment which is different from formal occasion, people tend to talk about anything but serious topics. This is exactly how friends talk to each other and socialize. If you would like to know a person, you are sure to learn him or her from different angles, and this is how US students view you as well. That's why most of the Asians are regarded as nerd. (TZ, March, 2014)

At the events like TNDC, TZ deepened her understanding of US culture and cross-cultural communication. At some other extracurricular activities, TZ went one step further to practice negotiation and discussion skills in a different culture. Among US colleagues, she got a chance to make an argument for her decision. There are a lot of

interpersonal skills involved there, and TZ had a great opportunity of practicing her leadership skills as described below.

I am not very active in student activities. But I was involved in DSB, which is a student committee that is in charge of selecting outstanding alumni and put their pictures on the wall in the hallway. I think because of my age and I would be better communicating with our alumni. I am more confident that I would do better than anyone else. In addition to my former experience working with people, I am more confident. Through this work at the committee, I also saw the AGBS as a big community via this small organization and how it worked. People were working one round after another, I learnt a lot from this working process. (TZ, March, 2014)

I selected an alumni, Mr. Jin. He is the AGBS' 2012, a very young alumni, one of the top youngest ones. You know there are so many changes in China in the past two decades that would take other countries more than hundred years to achieve. China is an old yet young country and not so many students were here in the AGBS in the previous years. Therefore, he would be one of the senior alumni in China even though he was considered very young. The AGBS is going to have three big centers in the world, NYC, SF and Shanghai. So it is our priority to help build up the network of alumni. This is also very encouraging to the current students. I insisted to have this young alumni listed and to hang his picture on the wall. People were very struggling at that time. This young man was on the top of the waiting list after my talk to the dean. Because one of the alumni ahead of

him could not make it so this young man was one of the star alumni and his picture is on the wall ever since. I am very happy about this. He is the very first alumni from mainland China to be listed in all these years. This is not just working with students but also with the school leadership team. (TZ, May, 2014)

I have listed just two examples showing TZ's active involvement in the AGBS extracurricular activities. This not only helps her have a better understanding of the western socialization and networking, it also established a better understanding of US and Chinese cultural differences and comparison. With this open mindset, TZ successfully practiced her skills in making arguments and negotiation at other extracurricular activities. This real-life situation is different from a normal school or academic setting, and it is a great learning and practicing opportunity for TZ's leadership development.

Summary

The listed theme, extracurricular activity involvement, is one of the emerging themes that play an important role in the students' leadership education. It mainly helps the Chinese students internalize their intercultural communication skills and thus enhances their leadership skills overall. More detailed discussion of these academically unrelated extracurricular activities in business school and their roles in helping students develop their leadership skills will be offered in the next chapter.

Theme 5: General Impression of Leadership Education

This section seeks to consider the experience of leadership education at the AGBS for the students in the past two years from their own perspectives. There is no better or more authentic way to describe the genuine experience than through voices of the students themselves. This section is therefore organized with key words and narratives from the students themselves as they reflected on leadership education at the AGBS during the past two years. This account aims to give a vivid and complete description from the experience of leadership learning from students' own perspectives.

When this research was conducted, it was the second semester of the second year, which was the last three months of their two-year MBA program at the AGBS. Compared to the hectic studying and recruiting days in the previous 20 months, the overall pace slowed down in this last three months. In addition, this time of the year allows the students to have profound reflections of their learning experience. The students might have learnt and practiced leadership skills without knowing it previously due to the seamless study or job-hunting schedules. However, in the last semester, when participating in the class with a focus on soft skills, such as managerial psychology, the students, in class discussion, had a chance to review what they have learnt and practiced. *AW's Key Words: Exploring, Push/Stretch, and Self-Awareness*

AW regarded the previous 20 months as being full of uncertainties, and there were so many things that he did not know about. Most of the content of his remarks is very cultural related. He seems to have found that this learning experience allows him to see how much he did not know about living in another culture. At the same time, he also realized certain soft skills that he needs to succeed in a different cultural environment.

During this period of time, AW started to have better understanding of himself.

First of all, exploring. I was in a lot of occasions with uncertainties and see whether I could survive and get adjusted to it. I think it is very important to a manager. I remember I had an interview for a leadership program at MWV in Richmond. From 7am to 8pm. There were a lot of events focusing on dealing with uncertainties. I felt I am kinda exhausted, mentally and physically. I felt a little uncomfortable having dinner with all of the recruiters and could not be myself. All of them were Americans and they talked about Marathons and boats, and I felt very hard to join in. I was the only one from China and now I think I could have done better to bring something unique to the table and make the whole atmosphere exciting. I could have delivered more of my values. It requires a lot of talking skills, observation skills, and interpersonal skill generally... I had this feelings through my exploration at the AGBS. (AW, May, 2014)

When facing so many uncertainties and the difficulties in tackling them, AW tried his best to apply what he learnt into practice, and sometimes he needed to do something that was outside his comfort zone. He has been testing his limits and changing his way of doing things, and even pushed himself by setting higher personal standards.

The second word is push or stretch. I needed to apply what I learnt into practice. In the last few presentation, I tried to focus on applying what I learnt from the class as how to stretch myself in public speaking for example. When I was giving the presentation, I set standards for myself based on what I learnt from the classes.

First, I tried to be natural while delivering the message in a more efficient way. Second, how to have self-control right the way when I was on the stage. (AW, May, 2014)

After seeing what he knew and what he did not know, as well as how far he could push himself, AW has apparently gained a better understanding of himself during the past 20 months. His understanding of people as human beings has increased, and especially his recognition of own problems and strengths. He also made decisions to improve himself through these realizations.

Third, self-awareness. I felt there is no limit getting to know yourself. I started to know that people behave differently at different occasions and deal with the situation differently. I realized that I have some short comings, constrains and problems, how to know them and change them. It is impossible for me to change them all but I need to take steps to tackle with it. For example, I always wanted to do thing with a very clear picture in my mind, but the situations do not always allow this. Many times when I was confident of my understanding of the situation, I had already missed the best time to tackle that issue. It shows people that I am not that efficient.. this is very difficult to change. In the case like this, I had already been aware of it, but it took me some time to get it into action. I wish I could have more action-driven mentality. I tell myself, stop thinking that much, I will do something first, and then later I can have some minor changes or improvement. Get things going first; but having a plan at hand is also important. How to keep the balance is very important. I am still exploring. For instance, GFE

program is going to have a trip in China. We are scheduling trips now. I was struggling how to word it in the email for trip coordination. However, when I was ready to send the announcement out after careful thinking, it would seem a little late for everybody. People were not patient for my thoughtful emails. So I finally chose to send out the email first and then I would contact them later in an hour or two to finalize the details. (AW, May, 2014)

AW's reflection on his leadership education discloses that he explored himself in terms of his knowledge, his own ability of changing things, and even his potentials. Then he had a better self-awareness and this already started helping him improve his daily practice. His general experience about leadership learning is positive and rewarding.

HW's Key Words: Reflective, Well-Rounded, and Humble

Overall, HW thinks his leadership education experience is a reflective process. He broadened his perspectives, and increased his understanding about certain issues. This gives him an ability to view things from more diverse angles, with a more universal perspective, seeking a well-rounded conclusion in a managerial role later on.

I would say reflective. I usually approached things from a very technical perspective. Before I started MAB, I would read a lot of finance related books and discuss these issues with my classmates. Then I realized the discussion turned into a little bit more like politics argument. I noticed the way I think and the discussion I have got elevated to another level. I would think, this is a human being, he or she has this type of motivation, personality, etc. I used to just be directly reacting

to others without thinking too much. Doing dominated. Now I tend to think something more profound underneath. Second, well-rounded. When I am in a leadership role, I would think about things in a more complete way. (HW, May, 2014)

By comparing his former way of doing things with the current learning experiences, he had an updated evaluation of himself. His understanding of being a successful individual started to have more philosophical meanings. He decided to be "more humble" (HW, May, 2014) and this definitely will change his way of working and leading people in the near future.

PC's Key Words: Rethinking, Inspiration, and Confidence

As with the other participants, PC's experience at the AGBS regarding leadership development helps him rethink what he used to believe and how he used to behave. This has been a refreshing process for him. He got to know many characteristics of being a good leader by interacting with professors, as noted in the previous section.

Rethink. I learned a lot and I rethink what I did before and what I will do in the future. Inspiring. No matter from the experience of that interview or observing the way how professors dealing with different situations, there are times that I felt I had never met so many people with leadership characters. (PC, March, 2014)

At the same time, he was inspired by new experience and thoughts from others, especially alumni as industrial leaders coming to the class for presentations.

Their knowledge sharing is very inspiring to me. GMTA let me know what the other managers do at different situation and this really inspires me, and I learnt even more during the classroom discussion about these cases. (PC, May, 2014)

After gaining so much knowledge and having related practice experience, PC felt he was more confident than ever when anticipating a leadership role in the future. As he described in the previous interview, confidence is very important in communicating with people regardless of different cultural backgrounds. He concluded, "I think after these two years, I feel more confident dealing with a lot of challenges in the future."(PC, May, 2014)

TZ's Key Words: Updated Understanding of Leadership Skills

TZ is the only participant whose general impression of leadership education referred to specific leadership concepts and her updated understanding of each of them. She had a broader vision of the profession, especially in thinking more broadly about the market potential of a certain product. She adopted new interpersonal communication skills to engage people from different backgrounds at the workplace. She also understands the importance of seeing things from different perspectives within a team, specifically beyond just the manager-subordinate relationship. In addition, this also helps to energize the team members. Overall, she notes, a more equal working relationship will bring much better results of teamwork.

I would like to describe the overall experience around my 5 E theory because I can compare what I had before and now to see the growth of me in these past two

years. About envision. I used to think about business from national level, now I tend to see it as a global market. I think this has a lot to do with US's position in the world market. Here you think about US market and non-US market. Then this is global market. Then it is quite natural for you to see the business in a very global perspective. In China, we tend to think like this, setting a head-quarter in Beijing, and divide the big region into east, west, central, and north and south, etc. I would not have thought if I set China as the center and what I should do to extend the business to Africa, America, and Australia, etc. This is a change in my thinking system. So I tended to think business in a more local sense, and after I came here, I really defined my globalization mindset. Envision has a lot to do with globalization, and this is how I got improved in leadership skills. I have a clear vision of the trend in a global scope of a certain industry, and also how to make the right strategies to be ready for all these. (TZ, May, 2014)

Engage people. I used to do a lot of engaging people, such as in my start up work and also leading the team at P&G. When so many younger and smarter kids are around you, how to engage them became a task for me. You have to speak their language...it is all about sell in. It is different from what I had in the firms in China. They are more like my peers. During group project, I needed to sell in my ideas to other people, and invite American guys to join you. These are good practice opportunities. (TZ, May, 2014)

Execution. I changed my understanding of it. I tended to talk about it from the perspective of a manager. After I came here, I realized that I have executed a lot of things from different levels, and even very small things that I would not do when I was a manger. For instance, I needed to write a ppt or change a layout. I had people to take care of these little things. I think I improved all my skills. I also become aware of the online marketing and some other detailed branding knowledge. When everything becomes digital, having this awareness and knowledge is definitely valuable to be a great leader. (TZ, May, 2014)

I would describe TZ's general impression of the leadership education as reflective. She was comparing what she thinks now to what she used to understand. The renewal of confidence, understanding and knowledge definitely exhibits her ability for reflection and rethinking before and after the learning experience.

Summary

The general impressions of the two-year leadership education experience at the AGBS for the four students are positive. They all felt it helped them know more about themselves, both as a professional at work and also as an individual human being. By comparing what they learnt from successful leaders, they know the characteristics of a good team leader. They also identified their weaknesses and strengths by comparing themselves with the leaders, as well as comparing who they are today and before. This awareness will help them better position themselves as team leaders in the future and also individually, as each seeks to become a better person.

Summary of Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the findings are about the leadership education experience for these four Chinese MBA students at the AGBS. The findings address research questions such as what leadership skills the students acquired and how the students acquired these leadership skills. They are reported in the form of repeated themes from the data analysis and presented with verbatim quotes from the participants as well as observational notes. I sought to show that the students' leadership education developed in an environment where intercultural communication plays an inevitably important role. The motives that drove the Chinese students to come to the US for their MBA study include both professional and personal reasons. Generally, the desire to be better equipped for a future career is the major purpose to have a degree from a US business school. At the same time, considering the maturity of the students in MBA programs, they have other, personal motivations to leave the country and come to study on the other side of the planet. They have their personal values to fulfill, greater dreams to achieve, and the personal ambition to invest. Those personal goals are unique to students in the professional schools in a sense that they are crystalized through their own unique and fairly long working experience in the past few years in various settings.

Participants also expressed, as shown in the discussion of theme two, that communication is a big part of their learning, while language and cultural differences were viewed as a major barrier in their daily study and social life. The slangs and certain culturally-based phrases, as well as manners and gestures that are very different from Chinese culture, made the intercultural communication between Chinese students and the

people around them more difficult, and sometimes the difficulty would even evolve into low self-efficacy or feelings of isolation.

However, the findings also indicated that at the same time that they were experiencing challenges in intercultural communication and related problems, the Chinese MBA students were still learning and acquiring leadership skills. Among all types of leadership skills, they all indicated that the progress they had made in interpersonal communication and people management in a multicultural environment is what they appreciated most; they all agree that this type of skill will be very important for their future careers. By referring to the framework of social learning theory, I organized the findings showing the process that each student acquired leadership skills, specifically intercultural communication skills, with students, faculty, and alumni. Besides the interviews, the observation notes are also a valuable source supporting the idea that the four participants acquired leadership skills through interactions (direct and indirect) with the people around them and not solely in the classroom.

The listed findings discussed the most frequently acquired leadership skills with an in-depth description of each student's leadership learning through interacting with people around them. Due to the fact that these students all had very high intercultural sensitivity, as indicated by DMIS model test, the findings cannot answer the research question of whether the Chinese students at different stages of cultural adaptation do experience leadership education differently. The discussion on the application of the DMIS model in this study and the related findings' implication for future research will be discussed in the next chapter. However, the evidence shows that students from the same high-intercultural-sensitivity group react differently on some occasions. For example,

when all of these students were at a local bar trying to interact with US students and alumni, even though they were all aware of drinking's role in the culture of socialization in the US, some students tried to interact with others by drinking with them while some of them ended up the night holding a glass of beer or water and talking to the some other Asian students. As another example, the students all indicated that they appreciated the diversity in the AGBS community and would like to take part in more social events. The reality is when the students were in a social event, such as the AGBS' Days where the current students are welcoming the incoming students over an informal dinner at a local vineyard, some of the study participants stayed together with other current Chinese students throughout the night, while two of them kept seeking opportunities to talk to US students. These are some examples showing high intercultural awareness does not necessarily lead to students' actual engagement in socialization activities. Through the interviews, I learned that there are different factors influencing students' different reactions. I sought to explain these differences in much detail and also their implication for future practice and research in international education.

In addition to the major finding, that the most appreciated and widely acquired leadership skills are interpersonal communication and people management in a multi-cultural environment, there is another emerging theme showing that extracurricular activity involvement is a great way for Chinese MBA students to internalize and practice their leadership skills. They all described their development of leadership skills with their actual involvement in these activities. Furthermore, after students observed the skills in various types of interactions with others whom they appreciated, they practiced these skills by themselves and internalized them as their own.

These findings were consistent with past studies of international students' experience of cultural adaptation issues. However, the overall leadership learning experience, with communication and people management skills as its core, seems a rewarding experience for the Chinese MBAs, as indicated in the last section about students' general impression of their leadership learning. Participants expressed that they really enjoyed cultural diversity as a learning experience, and all considered it a great opportunity for personal and professional growth.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

After I collected the data through the DMIS model survey, interviews, and observations from classes and extracurricular activities, I coded, categorized, and analyzed the data. The findings emerged as recurring concepts through rigorous analysis and continuous reading. I listed five major findings in Chapter 4. A brief review of the findings follows.

Review of findings

First, despite different previous experiences, the four Chinese MBA students had similar motivations to come to the US business schools. Their motivations include both personal and professional elements. The motivations are similar among the participants, such as to fulfill personal dreams, switch careers, and achieve professional advancement. Second, all of the four participants agreed that a lack of language proficiency and cultural capital is a barrier for them to socialize with US students and professors, and it also impacts their leadership experience at various levels. Third, they all acquired quite a few leadership skills during their graduate studies through direct and indirect interactions with non-Chinese students, professors and alumni. Among these acquired skills, communication and people management skills in a multicultural environment serve as an overarching theme, which encompasses such skills as seeing things from different perspectives and being more aware of oneself and one's position in a larger organization. Fourth, extracurricular activities were unexpectedly and repeatedly mentioned by the participants as the important opportunities for them to exercise and strengthen leadership

skills. Fifth, the general impression of leadership education in a multicultural environment was summarized as inspiring and rewarding.

There are some important implications in the narratives of the participants under those five themes. Given the fact that this case study was conducted in such a diverse cultural setting and the individual backgrounds of the students varied widely from one another, the experiences of cultural adaptation and leadership skills development of each student are rich and unique. Therefore, a careful interpretation of the themes and implications seems necessary. I will interpret the first four major findings in the following section by referring to the DMIS model, Social Learning Theory, and other theories that are relevant for this analysis. I will also reveal the limitations as well as implications of the current study for the purpose of improving future practice and research.

Interpretation of findings

This section aims to interpret the four major findings with the basic framework introduced in Chapters One and Two and other supportive theories. The interpretation will first be based on the frameworks of this study including the DMIS model and Social Learning Theory. In this study's setting, the students are interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds at the AGBS. Immersed in this multicultural environment, they are developing cross-cultural communication skills as well as overcoming language and cultural barriers. In other words, this is a cultural adaptation as well as a leadership learning process; these two principles will guide my interpretation of the findings regarding students' cultural adaption and leadership education experience. The DMIS model helps define the intercultural sensitivity of each participant, and Social Learning

Theory serves as the lens to capture the leadership learning process of the students. In addition, there are findings emergent from data analysis, such as the relationship between motivation and learning, and extracurricular activities, that cannot be fully explained by the existing framework. I will, therefore, refer to other supportive theories to form the discussion and interpretations of these findings.

Theme 1: Motivations for Chinese MBAs to Study in the United States

The findings show that the four students all had their own motivations to study in a business school in the US. First of all, the motivations can be categorized into professional and personal aspects. Categorizing motivations as professional and personal for Chinese MBA students to study overseas echoes previous research outcomes. For example, Griner and Sobol (2014) researched motivations of studying abroad for Chinese students, and Hegarty (2014) also examined whether Chinese students studying overseas had their expectations met. Both publications indicated several important reasons and expectations to study abroad, such as to improve one's professional and financial potentials, to develop skills that are not available at one's home country, and to have access to better technologies and network facilities, etc. In a qualitative study on Chinese MBA students' career choices and overall learning experience overseas, Shen & Herr's findings also confirm that personal growth and professional development are important factors in their daily learning and decision-making (2004).

All four participants in this study mentioned similar professional and personal motivations for them to spend two years in a US business school. The participants desired more management knowledge so that they could broaden their capability function area

from a specific field. For instance, AW and PC were in auditing and marketing sections respectively before they came to the AGBS. They would like to achieve career advancement by excelling in a broader range of professions, such as general management realm. Meanwhile, the participants also would like to realize their own personal values and fulfill their own dreams by learning the specific skills at business school. For instance, PC would like to be a good leader in the healthcare industry and also to actualize his wish of providing better quality of life to patients. Another participant, TZ, would like to realize her personal dreams as a champion in improving education for the children in her hometown. She would like to become an inspiring entrepreneur and establish schools in her hometown so that the young local talents, despite the disadvantageous geographic location, will have opportunities to see the world and explore their own values. These expectations of the four participants clearly reflect the previous research summarizing the motivations of Chinese MBA students studying overseas.

The findings also indicate that despite the fact that all the motivations fall into two general categories, there are among them different reactions and behaviors in cultural and social adaption as well as in their leadership development in a US business school. This resonates with the previous research on motivation and students' learning. For instance, a series of research papers confirmed that different types of motivations could be significantly related to different behavioral strategies and patterns (Biggs, 1991, 2001; Entwistle, 1988; Rosario et al., 2005; Valle, Cabanach, et al., 2000). Some research on students, their motivation and behaviors also indicated that students build their own learning and their related experiences on their own motivations (Schunk and Zimmerman,

1994, 2003). Different motivations make the students' personal choices in the learning task and in the intensity of their effort and persistence in the activity (Pintrich and Schrauben, 1992). In the current study, although students had similar motivations in studying in a US business school, such as achieving personal and professional growth, the differences among the motivations still resulted in distinguishable behavior and learning experience of these four participants.

Certain differences in motivations are reflected in the students' varying degree of effort in cultural adaptation and related learning experiences. Take two of the participants, HW and AW, as examples. They had different motivations regarding their preferred career development locale, and their behaviors in cross-cultural communication and leadership learning are different. For instance, HW would like to come to the US for MBA study; this is mainly because he would like to move permanently to US and start a new life here. Strongly inspired by his former western colleagues during the past few years, he appreciated western culture and social norms that they introduced to him, such as that people are more polite and have a more inclusive attitude toward diversity than in his home environment. These two years of MBA study have been a good opportunity for him to immerse himself in US culture and society. In every day of school life, he was the most active among the four participants in classroom and extracurricular activities. For instance, HW made the most comments among the Chinese student group in the class; he was the most attentive and engaged in class discussions among these four participants at current study, and his comments often compared US and Chinese perspectives. At social events, HW actively engaged in communication opportunities with non-Chinese students by talking to different students and staying until the end of the events. In addition, HW

would make extra effort by participating in social outings where he did not ordinarily feel comfortable, such as drinking and talking in a noisy local bar, and watching an American football game with US students, even though he had to learn the game basics from the beginning. In summary, HW made great effort and stretched himself in order to get as much cultural exposure as possible.

In contrast, AW would like to go back to China to work after graduation, and his behaviors in cultural adaptation and leadership learning reflected his particular motivation. For example, in the classroom, he preferred to sit quietly and just listen to the professors and classmates' comments instead of sharing his own perspectives. He sometimes answered a question but only when he was called upon by the professor. As for other social gatherings in the community, AW might start with talking to people from different backgrounds but quickly ended up conversing with students from Asia or China. In other words, he felt comfortable with students from a shorter cultural distance, and would not stretch himself as much to connect with students from other cultures, as his Chinese classmates did. In terms of socialization, AW did not take initiatives or make extra effort to become part of the community. For example, he did not want to prepare a costume to attend theme parties at the business school's Thursday Happy Hour night. Relatedly, AW also found it was mentally exhausting to network with US recruiters by talking about topics that he was not familiar with, such as American football or boating. He indicated at the interviews that he was aware of this uncomfortable communication but he did not want to take any action to fill this knowledge gap, such as being proactively engaged in conversation with local students. In summary, different

motivations lead to different levels of effort and engagement in cultural adaption and leadership learning for Chinese MBA students.

In summary, the existing research includes various motivation categories, together with different behaviors due to particular motivations that were useful in understanding the findings of the current study. The four participants had similar motivations in studying in the US, and some of them would like to stay in the US after graduation while others may not. This difference led to different efforts their cultural adaption and leadership learning, and it also helps explain some incoherent findings from the data. For instance, this clarifies why the four students achieved similar high scores on the DMIS survey with an indication that they all had similar high intercultural sensitivity, but they behaved differently in reality. The discussion on disconnection between students' intercultural awareness and their daily intercultural communication practice requires future studies on factors that determine international students' cultural adaption and learning. Discussion regarding the implications of such findings will continue in the next section.

Theme 2: Cultural and Language Differences as Barriers in Communication

The current research findings indicated that the four participants all encountered a series of challenges in a transition from a Chinese educational background to an American educational system. These findings are consistent with the outcomes of previous studies regarding language difficulty, cultural challenges, and related struggles in their lives in the US. It is a long-standing observation that Chinese students usually have language proficiency issues that make their adaptation in the US learning

environment more difficult (Sun & Chen, 1999; Upton, 1989; and Zhong, 1996). Many Chinese students rank language barriers as the most serious problem they faced in cross-cultural learning (Mori, 2000), and sometimes it is even perceived as a language shock to the students (Gu, 2009). In this study, despite the fact that the four students had high scores in English standardized tests, such as GMAT and TOEFL, and had foreign language and cultural exposure from former working experiences in multinational companies and studying overseas experiences, they all still had challenges and hardships.

TZ and AW each had one year studying overseas experience, HW was working with western colleagues all the time, and PC studied and worked in the US for more than seven years before he came to the AGBS. Despite these experiences, the students still found language adjustment was a challenge, especially in academic circumstances. TZ could not keep up with the discussion flow in the classroom due to her inadequate English listening skills; AW failed to give his first class presentation due to his lack of confidence in public speaking in English, and PC and HW could not always comprehend the jokes and slang in the classroom or learning team discussions. They all admitted that language was a big challenge for them in the first few months of their business school experience.

Besides the language barriers, cultural knowledge also contributed to challenges for the four participants. Different cultures led to differences in the rules of learning and other shared assumptions (Hofstede, 1991), particularly between countries that have larger cultural distances (Hofstede, 2001 & 2005). Because all four participants were born and raised in China and came to the US in their late twenties or early thirties, they do not share the same cultural foundations as their US classmates or the future recruiters

(Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001). In the classroom, students who grew up in the Confucius culture where concepts such as viewing teacher as absolute authority and valuing harmony over argument influenced their class performance (Holmes, 2004; Wang, 2006; Ozturgut, 2008; Cheng, Andrade, & Yan, 2011). For instance, some participants stated they were not used to the US-style classroom discussion where students were arguing back and forth, while the professor was just a facilitator instead of giving the ultimate answers to the class (Yan and Berliner, 2009). In some out-of-classroom social settings, for example, AW and HW wanted to join in the social gatherings at a local Irish bar with domestic students but they had trouble with the college drinking culture and therefore could not fully immerse themselves into the interactions as they wished. TZ had a similar situation when she made a Chinese dessert in order to help enhance a friendship with her learning team members. Because she was not aware of what her US classmates' taste preferences, she ended up in an awkward situation when her classmates did not enjoy her dessert and she felt her effort was not appreciated.

The challenges resulting from language incapability and cultural differences therefore influenced the students' learning in this multicultural environment; obstacles such as this usually led to emotional and psychological stress (Gu, 2009). As previous research indicates, language and culturally related incapability often result in frustration for students and thus impact their daily learning experiences (Wan, 2001; Liu, 2009; and Yuan, 2011). The inability to adjust can even have a negative impact on students (Burgess, 2005). The findings of the current study echo these previous research findings. For example, TZ was not fully competent at English listening in the first few months and

often missed the conversation or discussion in the classroom, and sometimes she could not keep up with the daily conversation with her learning team members. TZ's confidence was defeated by her low verbal English comprehension. Due to the fact that she was at a senior management position before she came to the AGBS, as well as being a couple of years older than the average student in the class, she felt even worse for not performing as well as or better than her classmates, solely due to language issues. She therefore became less and less confident, felt guilty and isolated, blaming herself in the first few months of school.

Besides a lack of US cultural familiarity, some traditional Chinese concepts and ideas make the adaptation experience more complicated and challenging. PC had about seven years of experience in the US before entering the MBA program at the AGBS. Despite such cultural exposure, PC still regarded his low language proficiency and cultural capital a challenge. For instance, it was difficult for PC to make comments in the class when he could not fully understand the discussion content or could not organize the comments as he wished to in Chinese. PC therefore was very cautious about making any comments in the classroom, fearing that low-quality or less satisfying comments would reflect insufficient knowledge and incapability as a business professional. With an old Chinese saying in mind that making no comments is better than making any stupid comments, PC thought it would give him a feeling of losing face if he made any comments but the well-thought ones. This limited his opportunities to practice his communication skills in a cross-cultural setting.

Similarly, AW could not finish his first presentation in the class, and he felt he lost face, which was a significant setback to his ego and pride. This led to other behaviors that

included retreating from communication with people from different cultures, and thus prevented further communication with US students or faculty when English was used as the communication language. For instance, at several social events with the whole AGBS's community, he would only gather together with students coming from a Mandarin-speaking cultural background. This restricted the opportunities for him to learn and practice his multicultural communication skills. The less he participated, the less engaged he would feel in the next similar interaction. As a result, there were fewer and fewer leadership development opportunities for him, especially for cross-cultural communication skills.

In summary, regardless of previous exposure to western cultures, lack of language proficiency and cultural understanding still plays an important role for students in their daily academic and social life. They are perceived as obstacles to communicating with US students. The negative feelings of unsuccessful experiences resulting from a lack of language proficiency and cultural understanding impair students' confidence, and sometimes will also jeopardize their further learning experiences.

Theme 3: Communicating in a Culturally Diverse Environment Is a Core Leadership Skill

As indicated from data analysis, the majority of the acquired leadership skills are communication-related, especially with people from different cultures (Table 3). The listed communication related skills include "working together with people from different backgrounds," "connectedness," "being sensitive to others," "appreciating diversity,"

"interpersonal skills," "seeing things from different perspectives," and so forth.

First, the findings resonate with the outcomes of the previous research that summarizes intercultural communication skill development in a multicultural environment. This communication skill set is the combination of the ability to effectively and appropriately conduct communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 241). Among these activities, intercultural sensitivity is at the core, and it represents the individuals' active desire to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures (ibid). With increased intercultural sensitivity, people gradually recognize, understand, and appreciate cultural differences, identify their own cultural status, and acquire skill in the process. This helps people build significant capability for living and working together successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds (Zhao, 2002). Other existing research findings show that intercultural sensitivity-related skills include intercultural comprehension capability, seeing things from others' perspectives, having knowledge of specific cultural rules, self-awareness, sensitivity to difference in contextual interactions, being open-minded and respectful, etc. (Lin, 2012; Spitzberg, 2000; Fantini, 2000; and Kupka, Everett, & Wildermuth, 2007).

The four Chinese MBA students in the current study all developed high intercultural sensitivity according to their scores on the DMIS model, and they all acquired communication skills related to intercultural sensitivity at different levels. Each one mentioned his or her classroom experience with US students, and different discussion

different perspectives. They admitted that being able to embrace different perspectives allows a person to see more of the issue. In this mindset, the students therefore saw and appreciated the diversity of such learning environments. For instance, PC summarized that studying in such an intercultural environment in the past few years enabled him to grasp the variety of US culture, and gradually he started appreciating American open-mindedness. The more he saw, the better he could position himself; in other words, he had better self-awareness. TZ also became more culturally sensitive, and she gradually adapted to specific cultural norms and rules. For instance, she became aware that making friends over drinks is typical in American culture and that this is one of the common ways to socialize with each other in the US. In this culturally diverse environment, where the four students were immersed in different cultures and languages, they developed their intercultural sensitivity as well as communication skills, including being able to see things from different perspectives and to appreciate diversity.

Second, the findings also go hand in hand with the idea that people learn leadership skills from interacting with each other (Bandura, 1977). As one of the supporting theories in the current study, Social Learning Theory indicates that individuals learn leadership skills by taking people as role models and learning by imitating their behaviors. In the current study, the students were also acquiring leadership skills, especially cross-cultural communication skills, through interacting with their classmates, professors, and alumni.

The four participants interacted, directly and indirectly, with students, professors, and alumni, and developed leadership skills such as the ability to view things from different perspectives, obtain higher cultural awareness, and appreciate diversity in

general. First, the four students learnt how to effectively communicate as a group leader with an audience from different backgrounds. For instance, PC appreciated the way that the professor at General Management Take Action communicated with the students. He regarded her as his role model for communication. He stated that the professor's ability to introduce the speaker, including her voice volume, the introduction content, the feeling of connectedness, and the humorous tone, are what he wanted to learn. The professor's effective communication not only made the class go smoothly but also connected her very well with the speaker and the students. PC emphasized that it is this connection that makes the trust between the professor and the students possible. PC thought that the professor is a leader in the class who gains the support from her subordinates based on such trust, and this would work well for a manager in any multicultural organization to achieve successful leadership.

Second, all the participants stated that they learned leadership skills by observing their non-Chinese classmates' performance in the class, such as how they made comments in a critical but also acceptable way, viewed issues from different perspectives, etc. These four students then tried to follow suit by adopting diverse viewpoints when looking at a certain issue, which later helped them communicate effectively with people from various backgrounds.

For example, HW stated that he used to think about China-related issues just from the perspective of being Chinese. Early on in the classroom, HW was impressed by various ideas and thoughts from his US classmates that were not only different from his but also different among US students. At first, he could not understand their comments and even categorized some of their comments as stereotyping China and Chinese people.

Through getting to know his classmates and their perspective, he began to understand the foundation of their comments. He realized that two different opinions are the result of people viewing things from two perspectives. With the mindset of viewing thing from different perspectives, HW thinks that one can see things in a more complete way. This helps him understand the issues, other people, and himself within a bigger picture.

Third, when interacting with students from different cultural and professional backgrounds, these four Chinese students become more and more apt in embracing, appreciating and respecting diversity in general. The student population at the AGBS is very diverse in terms of their pre- business school professional experiences together with their own cultural and educational backgrounds, which enrich the diversity of the community in general. For example, at one of the classes, a student who was a former US Marine expressed his opinion with some emotion in a way that was different from a lot of the rest of the class. His comments were not widely accepted, and he did not seem to feel comfortable about it and he finally excused himself and left the classroom. This, reflected later at the interviews, did not shock or even surprise these four students. AW commented that he understood that people have different former experiences and different training, therefore they bring different viewpoints to class discussion. He added that US classmates were very tolerant of variety among people and he did not see a reason why not to. PC stated that diversity is the thing he would not be able to experience in China, and he understood that people are different in many ways. PC even mentioned that if given the chance to choose to study MBA in China and in the US, he would still make the same decision because he deeply appreciated diversity and how people treat diversity in the US. He learned that US students appreciate diversity and he became more

open to diversity in the US learning environment. PC summed his perceptions by stating: "This diversity is not possible in any Chinese universities." (PC, May, 2014).

Fourth, the students themselves, through observing and mimicking their role models exhibiting their high intercultural awareness, gradually grew their own. This capability will help the students better position themselves in a culturally more complicated environment later on. For example, these four students all indicated that they found the professor in the class of Managerial Psychology was exceptionally aware of the differences among students, such as their personalities, cultural backgrounds, and knowledge base. With such awareness, the professor treated the students with different approaches geared to specific students. These students indicated that they were all favorably impressed by the professor's high awareness of differences among students. PC became inspired and stated that being a good leader is to get to know people, help each of them position themselves well, and finally bring the best out of each one. In addition, PC stated that being a business leader is the same as the professor being the classroom leader. When the professor was aware of the differences of the students, and encouraged each of them to learn and to explore the knowledge in the way that each of them would accept, the individual student achieved his/her own learning experience; it is the same for being a business team leader. PC indicated that being aware of team members' differences and motivating them in a most appropriate way will bring the team performance to a higher level.

These findings all suggest that the four students acquired solid cross-cultural communication skills through interacting with and learning from the people around them.

They witnessed how the students and professors behaved, and they made role models of

the people around them. They learned effective and acceptable ways to communicate with people from different cultures, view things from different perspectives, appreciate diversity, and to be open-minded. This also enabled them to become better aware of themselves in different cultures. When facing culturally sensitive situations, these four students would respond in an objective, inclusive, and open-minded way. Take what they often repeated in the interview for an example: "This is how American students would think, but this is how Chinese would think...I understand that." In summary, interacting with people around them and modeling them helped students lay a very solid foundation of intercultural communication.

Theme 4: Extracurricular Activities Help Internalize Leadership Skills

One of the findings of this study suggests that extracurricular activities play an important role in helping Chinese MBA students internalize their leadership skills. These activities include out-of-classroom course projects, entrepreneur initiatives at international startups, the AGBS's social and cultural activities, career club events, etc.

The important role of extracurricular activities in MBA student leadership learning echoes previous research findings. The researchers discovered that students involved in campus-based, outside-the-classroom programs as part of their college experience are more successful in their development and learning (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser,1993). Tinto's interactionist theory also supports the idea that the higher students' connection and participation on campus activities, the more they learn (1987 & 2004). Skinner's behaviorist theory indicates that students taking extracurricular activities in connection with their class learning reinforce their knowledge at the same time (1985).

Chickering asserted that, through extracurricular activities, students develop their competences, including intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal aspects (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

In this study, the four Chinese MBA students participated in various extracurricular activities. The activities ranged from out-of-classroom class projects and student organization events to Thursday happy hours in a local bar with US students, alumni and future recruiters. There were plenty of occasions in these events for the students to practice leadership skills, especially intercultural communication skills. As a result, these students actively participated in the extracurricular activities in the AGBS, and their interpersonal competence was greatly improved.

Participating in extracurricular activities helps students internalize leadership skills by practicing leadership roles. The students had opportunities to view things from various perspectives by working with different team members and finally achieved effective communication results. For instance, AW participated in an entrepreneurial initiative called the AGBS's Global Field Education where he had a chance to work with people from different cultures. When an Indian team member could not understand the way AW viewed, trusted and invested in the new product, AW saw that cultural difference was playing a role in this situation. He tried to understand the standpoint of that student. He then found an approach to win the support and understanding of the Indian team member by referring to something that is universal in both cultures—he bought some product for his own parents asking them to try it and later shared the positive usage feedback with the rest of the team. In this case, AW not only exhibited intercultural awareness but also

practiced intercultural communication skills, such as respecting different opinions, viewing things from various perspectives, and finally finding a common ground for everyone to move things forward.

PC had a similar experience reinforcing his leadership skills in cross-cultural environment while participating in extracurricular activities. PC was the president of the AGBS's Health Club, leading a team with students from different cultural and professional backgrounds. While overseeing the preparations for a conference, he noticed some small problems in coordination among team members. He was aware of the special situations of two students who were on the same committee organizing an important healthcare conference—one student was doing an MBA/MD dual degree program and juggling different duties, and another student had his family visiting in the US and he was therefore busy with other personal obligations in addition to his academic and recruiting endeavors. PC noticed that there was misconnection and miscommunication between the team members. He thought this would potentially lead to operational problems, and could even have a negative impact on the conference preparation. He then intervened at the right time without disturbing the complicated schedules of each team member, and filled the loopholes in operations. He later talked to the students individually and reiterated their responsibilities to make sure the current organization would work next time. While working with the students as a leader in this extracurricular activity, PC managed the situation by identifying and analyzing the difficulties from the differing standpoints of those involved, and finally by making a decision that would control the crisis successfully.

These practical experiences all indicate that extracurricular activities provide students a good platform to practice their leadership skills, while helping students reinforce their intercultural communication skills. Serving as team leaders, the students saw things from the different perspectives of their team members, made decisions while being aware of others' needs, and found common ground to achieve the organizational goals. This reflects the importance of extracurricular activities in MBA students' learning. There will be more related discussion in the implications section.

Summary

There are several interpretations in the findings from the current study. First, students have similar motivations to come to a US business school for their MBA education, yet the decision of whether or not to stay in the US after graduation plays an important role in their overall cultural adaptation and leadership learning experience. Second, language and cultural adaptation is still a big barrier for Chinese MBA students. Language frustration usually left a negative impact on their adaptation and learning progresses. Third, these four students learned cross-cultural leadership skills through interacting with students, professors and alumni. They identified their role models, tried to understand and internalize what they could learn from them, and used these models of behavior in any occasion as they could. During this learning process, the students acquired the related communication skills such as viewing things from different perspectives, having better awareness of different cultures and people, as well as appreciating diversity in general. Fourth, participating in extracurricular activities gives students a good platform to reinforce their leadership skills. They practiced leadership skills, especially cross cultural

communication skills, by interacting with others at different activities. The findings of the current study have some limitations, however. I will address these limitations in the next section, after which I will show related implications of these four major findings for future practice and research.

Limitations

The current exploratory study serves its purpose well with the four major findings, which can be used as a starting point of inspiration for research and practice. At the same time, the study also comes with a few limitations. It is hoped that revealing these limitations will be helpful for further studies about similar topics on understanding international MBA students' cultural adaptation and leadership education, not just for Chinese students but also for students from other nationalities.

First of all, the DMIS model is an efficient tool that identifies the level of one's intercultural sensitivity; however, it is still a too basic instrument for this particular study, where the participants happened to be a group of students with equally high cross-cultural awareness. The DMIS model has six stages describing an increasing intercultural sensitivity: the first three stages are ethnocentric including denial, defense, and minimization; the second three stages are ethno-relative including acceptance, adaptation, and integration. This model would work efficiently in identifying one's sensitivity toward another culture, especially when applied in a group of participants who are assumed to have various levels of previous cultural exposure and of intercultural sensitivity.

The DMIS model did not work well for this particular study. It turned out differently from expectation, as the application of the model did not locate participants at different stages of intercultural sensitivity despite the fact that the four students did behave differently in their environments. There are a few possible explanations for this unexpected result. First, all of the four participants in this study had a lot of western cultural exposure before they were enrolled in this MBA program. Therefore, it was highly likely they would all end up in the last two stages of intercultural sensitivity development. Second, when the study was conducted, it was already the end of the students' second year at business school, and they were more familiar and comfortable with US culture than when they first arrived in the US. Therefore, when applying the DMIS model to these four participants, they all achieved high scores and all fell into the sixth stage, that is, integration. As a result, this study ended up showing leadership skills development for students only with high intercultural sensitivity, and failed to describe the leadership skills development for Chinese MBA students at other stages of cultural adaptation, as expected at the dissertation proposal. Therefore, the findings are limited to a group of Chinese MBA students who are highly culturally sensitive. For future studies on related topics, some other intercultural sensitivity assessment instruments will need to be employed. These tools should be able to detect the differences among a group of people with similar levels of intercultural sensitivity, who have already had significant exposure to Western culture.

The second major limitation of the current study is that its framework ,which is based on DMIS and Social Learning Theory, and is effective in revealing the listed four findings, is not inclusive or complex enough to explain the student leadership learning

experience while other important factors might have played an important role in students' overall experience. The current framework successfully helped reveal the association of being in a multicultural environment (cultural adaptation) and communication skill development (leadership development). Therefore, the findings expectedly answered two of the three research questions, that is, the study outcomes indicate that students learned cross-cultural communication skills as the essentials of leadership competencies, and they learned it from interacting with and modeling people around them.

However, the findings also show that there are some factors other than culture and language-related aspects which also influence students' behaviors and their overall learning experiences. These factors include motivation and personality. For example, HW wanted to stay in the US after graduation and this motivated him to tackle all the challenges in adapting to the US culture. As a result, he naturally and gradually developed his leadership skills, especially cross-cultural communication skills. In the case of AW, who would like to go back to China after graduation, his engagement level of socialization and cultural adaption is relatively low compared to other Chinese students. As a strong contrast, AW would always like to stay close with the Mandarin-speaking community, and retreated from communicating with US students or recruiters once he became uncomfortable in continuing the conversation. Therefore, a more complicated framework which includes more variables as factors influencing students' learning experiences seems necessary for a study on international students' leadership education and cultural adaption.

The third major limitation of the current study results from the inadequacy in data variety. The findings have substantial supportive evidence from students' narrative of their reflections on their cultural adaptation and leadership education; however, the actual observational evidence is scarce. This leaves the findings not as persuasive as expected. I had designed this study with four second-year students at the end of the semester of their last year at business school, which was useful in certain ways. First, compared with when they were first-year students, these four participants had more experiences to reflect on. This enables the students to share sufficient reflective statements as important data for this study. In addition, the Management Psychology class, which is one of the leadership-series classes and only available for second-year students, made possible the rich reflections from the students to this study. Under the facilitation and guidance from the professor together with leadership-related readings, the students were able to focus on leadership education experiences. A lot of meaningful reflections in my interviews were made possible by their experiences and discussions on leadership education topics in this class.

However, having the second-year students as the participants of this study has its own compromises because there were not so many occasions where I could observe students exercising leadership skills. Therefore, it put limitations on the variety of data and this makes the findings less convincing. MBA students have plenty of opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and take on leadership roles in the second semester of their first year and the first semester of their second year. Such opportunities are winding down for the students when they are approaching the end of their MBA program. When this study was conducted, most of the participants had already resigned

from their leadership positions in various student organizations. Therefore, besides having rich narrative from in-and-out of classroom observations and the original voice of the students from individual interviews, I did not have much opportunity to observe how they actually exercised their leadership skills on-site in a multicultural environment.

Implications: Educational Practice

The current study aimed to explore the Chinese MBA students' cultural adaption stages and to give an in-depth description of their leadership education experience at certain stages. The findings cover four general themes: students' common motivations to study MBA in the US; language proficiency and cultural differences perceived as barriers by students; development of cross-cultural communication skills through interaction with people in a multicultural environment; and extracurricular activities as learning aids for internalizing leadership skills. In addition, the findings also shed light on the research questions of this study. The main leadership skills that the participants acquired are intercultural communication skills, such as viewing things from different perspectives, being open to and appreciating diversity, being more culturally aware, having self-awareness, etc. The findings also piece together a picture of how Chinese MBAs acquired their leadership skills—they interacted with students, professors and alumni, identified role models from them, and used models as guidance for later behavior. In addition, the findings also show that the students found the overall leadership learning experience inspiring and that they believed it helped them know themselves better.

Based on these four major findings, this study has several important implications for future practice and research. First, even though the current Chinese students were studying in the US with shared personal and professional motivations, having the motivation for staying in the US after graduation or not really determined the degree of effort they made in cultural adaption, and it also influenced their overall learning strategies. For instance, the people communication skills are different from west to east, and the students had to make the effort adjusting in order to integrate into the western communication mode. Some students accomplished this by jumping outside of their comfort zone to adopt the behavior of their US classmates and friends. The reason is because they would like to comfortably be part of US society after graduation. In contrast, studying in the US is merely a step of career advancement or a part of one's cultural experience for some other students who had the goal of finding jobs back in China after graduation. Therefore, when facing intercultural communication hardship due to language or cultural barriers and feeling frustrated or difficult, this group of students would not perceive it necessary to make the extra effort to accept, to adjust and to learn.

Such motivations as this, staying in the US after graduation or not, do not always come up in conversation with the students, yet they affect the students' engagement level in the activities, and the go-or-stay plan usually is the deciding factor if they are going to overcome or avoid an obstacle. The current leadership education programs and extracurricular activities at business school would be perceived more welcoming and beneficial by the group of students who would like to stay in the US and make the effort to integrate into US culture. In order to have more students' needs met, such as helping

the students with different preferences for career locale and development of their leadership skills, student service or student affairs staff should keep in mind the association between students' different motivations and their behaviors when programming student activities and delivering advisory and counseling services.

Second, the findings of this research indicate that a lack of language proficiency and cultural differences is really a barrier, and it is possible that students would be more likely to feel comfortable and confident about themselves in a cross-cultural communication environment with some extra support. Take learning characteristics for example. Chinese students are different from US students in that they are used to lecture-style communication in the class, with an actual authoritative role of the professors, and brief discussion without arguments or critical comments. The classroom culture in the US, on the contrary, encourages equal roles of students and professor. In addition, the discussion, instead of lectures, is highly valued in the US classroom. Chinese students are neither fluent in English nor familiar with the US classroom culture. They are not confident of their English or their participation in the class, so they are usually the quietest students in the classroom. All of these negatively impact their overall grades, which depend heavily on classroom participation. The feeling of being unqualified and even a failure is likely to undermine their overall confidence, which seriously and negatively impacts their learning and overall study abroad experience, and this would eventually harm their later recruiting performance.

Besides, considering that an MBA program is just two years, there are not too many language practice opportunities for students in the school before they graduate. At the same time, the students will have to go for recruiting events and promote themselves

right after their first two months in their first semester. With this compact nature of MBA program, a lack of language proficiency seems a more acute issue for international MBA students. Bearing in mind this finding from the current study, higher education professionals will need to create and improve the current low-stakes language immersion opportunities in business school for international students. These activities will not only allow students to learn the language and communication techniques but also give them a platform to practice intercultural communication skills without course grades or job prospects at stake.

Similarly, communication challenges also extend to the activities outside of classroom. As indicated in the current study, the Chinese students struggled with some cultural differences, and it made their cultural adaptation and learning experience difficult. For instance, students were not familiar that drinking in the bar with classmates is a way of socialization in the US, and some of them turned away from this type of activity and thus felt isolated. Also, some students were not aware of or prepared to have the conversation with alumni around topics such as football or boating, and therefore felt very discouraged at the networking occasions when they could not continue or further the conversation to the point that both of them could foster friendship around it. It is understandable that there is some cultural disconnection between US and Chinese students. It is even too much to ask the Chinese students to become familiar with the cultural items in a short period of time which they had little or no exposure with while their US students all grew up with, with the result being energy lost from their academic studies. However, the business schools could organize some events or workshops that will quickly brief the international students the basic knowledge of certain cultural event

or items, such as American Football 101 workshop (Yan & Berliner, 2009). This sort of activity could have the added benefit of promoting intra-class relationships. The activity could even be reciprocal, with Chinese students teaching American students about popular cultural phenomena in China, which will aid US students seeking to work in China with relevant cross-cultural knowledge.

Third, the findings also inspire people with the important role of diversity to promote students' leadership skills. A diverse student population brings a lot of perspectives in the school. This allows the students to think from others' shoes and also to adjust one's previous opinion or broaden one's vision. This makes it possible for students to see a more complete picture of the issue. In addition, it makes the students more culturally aware and open-minded, and therefore it lays a good foundation for their intercultural communication skills. I cannot emphasize enough that the workplace in the world is constantly becoming more diverse. The ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds really matters to economic and social development. This study shows that the AGBS does well in promoting and appreciating diversity, and its students are maximizing their learning experience in a diverse environment. While working in the business school, the higher education professional needs to be aware of the importance of diversity and to keep exploring ways to increase diversity in students' life.

Fourth, the findings of the current study resonate with Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that one learns leadership skills by interacting with others, setting up role models, and following suit. As shown in this study, students learned tremendously from their professors and they admitted that they are really their role models for now and

even for them later on at their future workplace. For instance, when the professor took the diverse cultural backgrounds of students into consideration when asking the questions in the classroom, the student witnessed this and was inspired to his/her own intercultural sensitivity. When a student was aware of her own language difficulty and not wanting to speak up in the class, the professor noticed this quiet student and encouraged her to share her knowledge with the class. Starting from something that one is familiar with is a good way to practicing public speaking skills, especially for international students. The professor's sensitivity and understanding with others from different cultural backgrounds not only helped increase her confidence but also inspired her with cross-cultural communication skills. This experience taught her the importance of being able to connect, understand and communicate with people from other cultures.

Learning through interaction with professors works even better for Chinese students because of their special learning characteristics. Chinese students usually view the classroom teacher as absolute authority, and the latter was the learning role model for the students for a long time.

When all these influences listed in the previous interaction examples are coming from professors, Chinese students are more willing to adopt and follow suit. Taking this special character of Chinese students' learning into consideration, higher education practitioners, especially professors and instructors, will have better pedagogical strategies with students and facilitate student learning at a higher level.

Fifth, the current findings also serve as a reminder for emphasizing diversity among students who are from the same ethnic and cultural group. The findings of this study reveal five common themes among the subject students, yet at the same time, there are

several diversity-related topics emergent in regard to their different backgrounds, career needs and expectations, and former intercultural exposures, etc. In addition, the students all had similar professional and personal motivations, but some of them would like to stay in the US and some would not. This difference influenced students' efforts in cultural adaptation and related leadership skills development.

This reminder of diversity among students within same cultural group will be helpful for higher education professionals in their efforts to improve international students' study experiences. While the schools are providing the support and services to international students, people are always working on the ways to improve the learning experiences for certain groups of students with an assumption that students from the same nationalities have the same needs. It is understandable that this approach is an effective and efficient way to improve the education experience for an overall international student population. However good the first step, we should not overlook the diversity among the same group of students while working on service improvement. This is also an achievable goal, as some of the findings of the study suggested. For instance, the findings revealed that some students observed a few professors at business school to be very culturally sensitive and aware of the differences among the students, and they facilitated the class while treating each student as individual. In addition, when being culturally aware, faculty will be able to understand that certain students' behaviors in the class are strongly influenced by their different culture heritage. For instance, when faculty realize concepts such as "silence is golden" and "losing face" and their meanings to Chinese people, Chinese students' being

silent in the classroom would not be simply interpreted as being shy or not fully being prepared for the class discussion. Treating students as individuals can improve student overall learning experience in business school or any institution, and the subjects of this study rightfully observed that it can apply equally well for efficiency and team performance in the workplace.

Implications: Future Research

The findings of this study also have implications for future research. First of all, considering the importance of this group of people in future economic development worldwide, their overall learning experience, cultural adaptation, and leadership development will continue to draw researchers' attention. In addition, Chinese MBA students are a unique group of students, in terms of their age, former experiences, professional aspirations, etc, and there is not sufficient research on this specific population. Therefore, the findings of this study will be especially helpful for future inquiries on related topics with this demographic. For instance, one of the findings indicated that motivations play an important role in the student cultural adaptation and leadership learning. This finding inspires a set of further research questions that are related and also with strong practical implications, such as how motivation defines international MBA students' attitudes toward different cultures, how it decides their effort in getting to know the other cultures, and how it influences their overall learning experience.

Second, the findings also implicate further research regarding student intercultural sensitivities. These four students had high intercultural sensitivity as indicated by their

scores from the DMIS model; however, the data analysis showed that the students reacted differently in intercultural interactions and in learning leadership skills, especially in cross-cultural communications. For example, as noted before, the interviews showed that all the four students realized drinking is a social norm in the US for people to make friends, and some of them enjoyed and fully immersed themselves in drinking culture and socializing with US students, while some never truly enjoyed it or made any real efforts. The unexpected difference shows that the DMIS model is good at defining the cultural sensitivity of individuals but just as an initial tool. For more details on intercultural sensitivity and its association with students' intercultural reactions in reality, other instruments need to be developed and applied.

Third, the findings also suggest that extracurricular activities are helpful for students to internalize cross-cultural communication capacities and other leadership skills. As mentioned in the findings section, professional schools such as the AGBS have many more out-of-classroom activities that are different from those at other colleges or graduate schools. Such activities usually are designed for leadership education and are relevant for real business practice. The current study is inspiring in a sense that the findings reveal the important role of such activities in helping students internalize their leadership skills. Not only knowing what but knowing how students internalize and strengthen these skills is more of a research concern. However, although there is a substantial amount of research on extracurricular activities for international undergraduate students, there is very little research dedicated to international graduate students, not to mention international MBA students. The current research, therefore, serves as a good foundation for developing inquires in this regard.

Fourth, the rich description of a Chinese female MBA student also inspires a further research interest on female international graduate students in the US. International female MBA students have distinctive characteristics, such as their maturity, female thinking, multiple roles between family and working places, different career aspirations, etc.

Having better knowledge of this group of students will enable the schools to deliver a better educational experience. The current findings also briefly indicated that compared to the male Chinese students, the female student has a better understanding of the different cultures and adapting in new cultural environment. Although this observation is just from one female MBA student, it still serves a good start for future interesting research with larger and broader study samples. The research topics include but are not restricted to exploring female graduate students' overall learning experience, their cultural adaption, their cross-cultural communication skill development, their overall study and career expectations, and the effect of greater age and experience on their academic goals, interests and participation.

Finally, this study successfully identifies cross-cultural communication skills as the main leadership skills that Chinese MBA students acquired during the last two years, and this should inspire a series of future studies on Chinese business elites and the influence of their leadership onto the regional and world economy. For example, it would be worthwhile following up and observing how these four students exercise their leadership skills with their colleagues at real working scenarios, and also how much of what they learned they can apply in the Chinese or US working context. Such research will help people understand the continuing leadership development of Chinese MBA students as well as its association with their actual professional contribution. At the same time, such

research outcomes of the present study will be helpful in better defining leadership skills and therefore will help improve MBA leadership programs for international students at this institution.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first interpreted the four major findings of the current study by referring to the framework of the DMIS model and Social Learning Theory. These five major findings are summarized as follows: (1) personal and professional motivations influence students cultural adaption as well as leadership learning experience; (2) language and culture difference are perceived as barriers for these four Chinese MBA students; (3) communicating in a culturally diverse environment is a core leadership skill; and (4) extracurricular activities help internalize leadership skills.

Rigor of research and detailed analysis notwithstanding, there are a few limitations to this study. First, the DMIS model with six stages of intercultural sensitivity development does not have specific and nuanced enough description as required by this study. This group of participants all have high intercultural awareness due to their previous international exposures as well as the fact that they were in the US for two or more years. As a result, they all ended up in the last stage of this development model. Therefore, the final findings failed to answer one of the three research questions; the findings could only describe the leadership development of the students at the sixth stage of the DMIS model instead of the descriptions of students at different stages as expected at the research proposal. In addition, due to the fact that the students were at the end of their program and they all left the previous leadership positions in the school, the data failed to capture

the descriptions of students exercising leadership skills in a real setting. Therefore, the less diverse data makes the findings less persuasive.

Even with its limitations, the current study can be regarded as important to current educational practice as well as to future academic research. The different motivations, especially the students' decision of whether to stay in the US or not after graduation, play an important role in students' cultural adaption and leadership education. Being aware of the role of such motivation of the students will enable the school to provide more helpful and consistent support to all students. In addition, knowing that language and culture differences prevent students from successful adaptation to the US studying and living environment, the student service professionals will be able to continue their efforts in creating supportive systems for the international students. Moreover, the diversity among students from the same group as revealed by this study emphasizes that having diversity in daily practice as well as treating students as individuals could be among the solutions. All these are helpful information for the student affairs professional in working with international students in the US.

The findings of the current study also implicate future research related with international student cultural adaption and leadership education. First, the current study could serve as a good start for a longitudinal study on Chinese MBA student leadership development, comparing the learning outcomes at school and later at their workplace. In addition, the findings regarding female MBA student learning characteristics could be followed by future research on female graduate students and their leadership development in US graduate professional schools. In regard to the knowledge base of

extracurricular activities in higher learning settings, the findings of the current study can not only enrich the theory as how these activates strengthen students' leadership skills but also fill in the gap on research in extracurricular activities for a group of international graduate students.

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Appendix A

Syllabus

MANAGERIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2014—Q3 and Q4

This course is designed to provide in-depth research and analysis into the issues that influence managerial behavior. The course draws upon fourteen different books over the course of fifteen weeks. Although the books are different they are related and similar in many themes.

The books have been selected to provide subject matter insight and personal insight for the reader. Each week we will have a free flowing discussion of the ideas and how each of you found the ideas interesting. This is a course about inquiry and I am interested not only in your understanding of the ideas presented but how you found those ideas interesting from your perspective.

Each week I encourage you to create a single page of the one or two ideas that you not only found interesting but would like to think about after you leave [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. These one page reflections will be turned in as the basis of your written project at the end of the course.

Assigned Readings

| Session | <u>Date</u> | Major Theme/Issues | Reading |
|---------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Joines | January 15 | A Way of Thinking About People | TA Today, Stewart & Vann |
| 2 Joines | January 16 | The Structure and Function of Personality | TA Today, Stewart & Vann |
| 3 | January 23 | Choices | Choice Theory, Glasser |
| 4 | January 24 | Choices | Choice Theory, Glasser |
| 5 V. Frank | January 29 | The Essence of Meaning | Man's Search for Meaning, |
| 6 V. Frank | January 30 | The Essence of Meaning | Man's Search for Meaning, |
| 7 Csikszen | February 6 tmihalyi | Evolving Self | The Evolving Self, |
| 8 Csikszen | February 7 tmihalyi | Evolving Self | The Evolving Self, |
| 9 | February 12 | Life Cycle Management | Switch, C. Heath & D. |

| Heath | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 10 Heath | February 13 | Life Cycle Management | Switch, C. Heath & D. |
| 11 Budd | February 19 | Structural Determinism | You Are What You Say, M. |
| 12 Budd | February 20 | Structural Determinism | You Are What You Say, M. |
| 13 Budd | February 21 | Structural Determinism | You Are What You Say, M. |
| 14 New Scie | | Social Intelligence | Social Intelligence: The |
| D. Goler | nan | | Of Human Relationships, |
| 15 New Scie | | Social Intelligence | Social Intelligence: The |
| D. Goler | nan | | Of Human Relationships, |
| Session | <u>Date</u> | Major Theme/Issues | Reading |
| 16 Deci | March 19 | Personal Behavior | Why We Do What We Do, |
| 17 Deci | March 20 | Personal Behavior | Why We Do What We Do, |
| 18 | March 26 | The Role of Expectations | Mind Over Mind, C. Berdik |
| 19 | March 27 | The Role of Expectations | Mind Over Mind, C. Berdik |
| 20 S. Ach | March 28 or | Being Positive | The Happiness Advantage, |
| 21 Langer | April 2 | Mindfulness | On Becoming an Artist, E. |
| 22 Langer | April 3 | Mindfulness | On Becoming an Artist, E. |
| 23 Not By M | April 10 <i>Me</i> , C. Tavris | Creating Personal Success | Mistakes Were Made But & E. Aronson |

| 24 Not By M | April 11 <i>Me</i> , C. Tavris | Creating Personal Success | Mistakes Were Made But & E. Aronson |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 25 Zander | April 16 r & B Zander | Leadership Reflections | The Art of Possibility, R. |
| 26 Zander & | April 17 & B Zander | Leadership Reflections | The Art of Possibility, R. |
| 27 | April 23 | Ideas for Questions | Flourish, M. Seligman |
| 28 | April 24 | Ideas for Questions | Flourish, M. Seligman |
| 29 Gilbert | April 30 | Stumbling in Life | Stumbling on Happiness, D. |
| 30 Gilbert | May 1 | Stumbling in Life | Stumbling on Happiness, D. |

MANAGERIAL PSYCHOLOGY

We will begin the course reading most of *TA Today* by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines. TA or Transactional Analysis is a useful framework for developing an understanding of human behavior. The TA framework provides both structural and functional insights into human behavior. It is a model, one of many, and I believe a useful one for understanding personal and interpersonal behavior.

TA Today - Session 1

Read Parts I-III (pp. 1-94)

<u>TA Today – Session 2</u>

Read Part V-VI (pp. 173-258)

Choice Theory Session 3

Read Choice Theory

Choice Theory Session 4

Choice Theory (continued)

Man's Search for Meaning Session 5

Read Man's Search for Meaning

Man's Search for Meaning Session 6

Man's Search for Meaning (continued)

The Evolving Self – Session 7

Read Chapters 1-4

The Evolving Self – Session 8

Read Chapters 5-7

Switch - Session 9

Read Pages 1-24, 100-123, and 250-264

Switch - Session 10

Switch (continued)

You Are What You Say – Session 11

Read Chapters 1-2

You Are What You Say - Session 12

Read Chapters 3-4

You Are What You Say – Session 13

Read Chapters 5-6

Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships Session 14

Read Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships

Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships Session 15

Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships (continued)

Why We Do What We Do Session 16

Read Why We Do What We Do

Why We Do What We Do Session 17

Why We Do What We Do (continued)

Mind OverMind Session 18

Read Mind OverMind

Mind OverMind Session 19

Mind Over Mind (continued)

The Happiness Advantage Session 20

Read The Happiness Advantage

On Becoming an Artist, -- Session 21

Read Pages 1-98

On Becoming an Artist, -- Session 22

Read Pages 99-230

Mistakes Were Made But Not By Me – Session 23

Read Pages 1-67

Mistakes Were Made But Not By Me - Session 24

Read Pages 68-238

The Art of Possibilities – Session 25

Read Pages 1-99

<u>The Art of Possibilities – Session 26</u>

Read Pages 99-200

Flourish Session 27

Read Flourish

Flourish Session 28

Flourish (continued)

Stumbling on Happiness – Session 29

Read Pages XIII-110

Stumbling on Happiness - Session 30

Read Pages 111-239

Appendix B

Survey

Intercultural sensitivity development is an ongoing process and it includes different stages. You may have experienced some of the following situations or even all of them. Please circle the scale that best describes the degree that you agree towards each statement.

Part: 1

I feel that topics or events related to Chinese culture are very valuable and are always interesting to me. I love Chinese food and songs. I tend to socialize only with Chinese classmates and attend only Chinese events. As long as I have time, I like to discuss what is happening in China with my friends and speak in Chinese. Additionally, whenever my non-Chinese classmates are talking about U.S. culture, such as football, food or pop songs, I am not interested in participating in most cases, and I want to walk away. I do not like U.S. culture at all. If am not going to find a job in the United States, I see no reason why I should care about this culture.

0 = not at all like me

1

2

3

4

5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me

6

7

8

9

10 = completely like me

I felt that there are cultural differences between U.S. and Chinese students, but the difference does not bother me. For instance, among our learning team, the U.S. students would suggest to go to a sports bar for a meal while I would prefer to go to Chinese restaurant for dinner. No matter where we will go in the end, I would insist that going to the Chinese restaurant will be a better option. I am very proud of Chinese culture and primarily only act in ways that align with what I would do in China. Every time there are only Chinese people together, I would suggest everybody speak in Chinese. I would say anything about China is better such as the food, the music, and the movies. When there is some debate on the topic of any difference between U.S. and Chinese culture, I would try to support Chinese culture by giving examples and sharing experience. Maybe there is something interesting about U.S. people, food, sports, and other elements of U.S. culture. However, I believe Chinese culture is superior to what I see in U.S culture.

0 = not at all like me

2

3

4

5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me

6

7

8

9

I feel that it is completely fine for me to do what I used to do in China. My U.S. friends and classmates have their own way doing things, and I have mine. There are no good or bad aspects about the two cultures; they are just different. I assume my way does not bother others and vice versa. The fact that people think differently about a certain issue and how to solve a problem does not bother me at all. I know the differences are here but I don't pay attention to them. As long as we can get along and live harmoniously and have something very basic in common, I do not care about the differences. I am happy and comfortable living among people from two different cultures.

0 = not at all like me

1

2

3

4

5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me

6

7

8

9

I feel that there are a lot of cultural differences between U.S. students and Chinese students. I understand that people have different ways of thinking and acting. For instance, I developed ways of thinking when I was in China, and my U.S. classmates have their own ways of thinking as well. We definitely have different but equally complex understandings of the world around us. The difference is not a bad thing; it will just always exist. I am willing to learn and am not afraid of asking questions about things that are unfamiliar.

0 = not at all like me

1

2

3

4

5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me

6

7

8

9

I clearly see the cultural difference among people from different countries. I am eager to learn their perspectives and to try to understand their viewpoints. For example, I am very willing to learn my classmates' perspectives on certain topics in the class, and I would keep them in mind and reflect on them. Then, when the topic is discussed again or similar situations occur, I would know how my U.S. classmates would react. I'm interested in being friends with my U.S. classmates, and I am eager to try to do things in the ways that my U.S. classmates do, even if what I'm doing is very different from Chinese culture. I would like to make an effort to fit in while I am in the United States.

0 = not at all like me

1

2

3

4

5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me

6

7

8

9

I understand that there are different perspectives, and I am willing to try different ways to think and approach things. I am willing to learn to adjust myself based on the situation. I tend to view things from both Chinese and U.S. perspectives. Sometimes I adhere to Chinese values; sometimes I adopt the ways that my U.S. classmates deal with things. Sometimes, I do both: I try a solution based on considering these two different viewpoints and find the most effective solutions to a certain issue. I try to find a way to behave that will make me not merely one member of the group but a part of the group with my own cultural identity.

1
2
3
4
5 = somewhat like me and somewhat not like me
6
7

10 =completely like me

9

0 = not at all like me

Appendix C

Interview with individual students regarding their intercultural sensitivity development stages

Questions and probes:

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself, such as where you are from, your educational background, and your working experience before you came to the AGBS.
- Why did you want to get an MBA?
- Why did you choose a U.S. business school and specifically the AGBS?
- When you first arrived at the AGBS, what was your first impression of the AGBS and its culture?
- Can you generally talk about your cultural experience so far at the AGBS, especially your interactions with professors, U.S. classmates, and alumni as guest speakers?

✓ Denial:

- In the previous survey, you indicated that there are times when you only wanted to be close to the Chinese community. Would you talk more about why?
- Do you ever choose to avoid U.S. culturally related topics? Under what circumstances?
- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?
- Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

✓ Defense

- In the previous survey, you indicated that you think Chinese culture is better when your domestic classmates are expressing their appreciation of U.S. cultural issues involving food, sports, current policies and so forth. Would you talk more about why?
- Do you ever try to tell or argue with your U.S. friends that Chinese culture is more interesting? Do you ever try to argue this to your Chinese friends as well?
- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?

— Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

✓ Minimization:

- Except for the language difference, do you think how you interact with people in China would still work when interacting with people in the United States?
- What is your understanding of Chinese values or to U.S. values? How big do you think the differences are?
- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?
- Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

✓ Acceptance:

- In the previous survey, you indicated that U.S. and Chinese cultures are different but have a lot of commonalities. Would you talk a little bit more about that?
- What are the things that you would think a U.S. student would like or would do that are different from what a Chinese student would like or would do?
- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?
- Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

✓ Adaptation:

- Do you and your domestic classmates share some similar worldviews or do similar activities? What are they?
- What are some changes in your thinking that are very common among the U.S. students and that you would not have a few years ago, such as how you define a good professor, good classroom participation, or a good student? Can you give me an example?
- What things or values that you think you have adapted quite well or not so well?
- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?
- Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

✓ Integration:

- What is your understanding of how to view things from different cultural perspectives?
- What do you do to try to understand a certain issue from a U.S. perspective? How would you react to a situation where a U.S. and a Chinese student would usually respond differently after you think of the issue from both a Chinese and U.S. perspective?

- What are three key words to summarize your cultural experiences when interacting with professors, classmates, and alumni as guest speakers, etc?
- Can you tell me more about why you chose those words?

Appendix D

Interview with individual students regarding their leadership education

(The questions are subject to change based on the actual data collected from multiple observations.)

- What is your definition of being a leader, leadership, and leadership education?
- What do you think of a good leader in business, what one should do and how one should do it?
- What is your understanding of leadership education in both Chinese and U.S. contexts?
- What are you understandings of leaders and leadership education before and after you came to the AGBS?
- What type of role does leadership play in the real world, according to your experience? Would you please share some your favorite leadership applications in life or in your previous working experience?
- What do you think of your professors, classmates, and alumni as the guest speakers at the class?
- Do they represent some leadership characteristics that you mentioned above?
- Can you give me an example when you were impressed by the any of them that you interacted with?
- Do any of them have some traits that you think you also would like to develop?
- Do you think the interaction with professors, U.S. students and alumni help you develop leadership skills; if so, then how?
- Would you give me an example?
- Can you summarize your experience in "Managerial Psychology" class?
- What you find is most difficult for you?
- What is the most important thing you have learned?
- What do you want to get out of the class?
- How do you like the leadership education experience at the AGBS so far? If there are some events or programs or people impress you, would you please elaborate on them?
- Can you use three words to summarize your leadership development experience at the AGBS?
- Can you give me an example why you describe your experience in this way?

Appendix E

Focus group interview protocol (The questions will be further developed based on the data collected from the interview from individual students and the repeated occurred themes.)

Appendix F

Protocol Form for Pilot Study



Protocol Form

Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences *University of Virginia*

- To submit a protocol, complete this form and email it and any accompanying materials (i.e. consent forms and instruments) to irbsbs@virginia.edu. For more information on what to submit and how, please see our website at: http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/sbs_submit.html. Please note that we can only accept our forms in Microsoft Word format.
- Please submit one signed copy of the first four pages of the protocol form, including the Investigator's Agreement. Signed materials can be submitted by mail, fax (434-924-1992), or email (scanned document to irbsbs@virginia.edu). Signed materials can also be submitted in person to our office.
- In order to not delay your review, make sure that you (and any researcher listed on the protocol) have completed the CITI training in human subjects research. Please see: http://www.virginia.edu/vprqs/irb/training_citi.html
- You will be contacted in 3-7 business days regarding your submission (depending on the protocol queue). For more information on the review process, please see: http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/sbs_submit.html

| Protocol Information | |
|---|--|
| IRB-SBS Protocol Number (assigned by SBS office, leave blank): | |
| IRB-SBS Grant Approval number (If you received a Grant Approval prior to submitting a protocol, please include the number issued by our office. If you did not submit a Grant Approval Form, please leave this line blank.) | |
| Submission Type (delete all those that don't apply): | New Protocol Resubmission of previously rejected protocol Updated protocol form (includes all previous modifications) Reopening expired protocol |
| Protocol Title: | |
| • | |
| Principal Investigator: | |

| Professional Title: | Doctoral Student | |
|--|--|--|
| School, Department or Center: | Curry School of Education, Department of Leadership, Policy and Foundation, University of Virginia | |
| Division (if applicable): | | |
| Messenger Mail Address: | | |
| Mailing Address (only if messenger mail address is not available): | 210 Copeley Road #5, Charlottesville, VA,22903 | |
| Telephone: | 4344663126 | |
| UVA e mail address (no aliases, please): Your computing ID is used for tracking your IRB CITI training. | Xc7rd | |
| Preferred e-mail address for correspondence (if applicable): | Xc7rd@virginia.edu | |
| You are (delete all those that don't apply): | Graduate Student | |
| TI: 1 : (/ 1 1 () | | |
| This research is for (delete all those that don't apply): | Class project and Doctoral Dissertation | |
| • | Class project and Doctoral Dissertation Karen Inkelas | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal | | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): | Karen Inkelas | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: Contact's Phone: Principal Investigator's | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: Contact's Phone: Principal Investigator's Signature | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu 4342431943 | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: Contact's Phone: Principal Investigator's Signature Faculty Advisor: | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu 4342431943 Karen Inkelas Curry School of Education, Department of Leadership, Policy and Foundation, University of | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: Contact's Phone: Principal Investigator's Signature Faculty Advisor: School, Department or Center: | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu 4342431943 Karen Inkelas Curry School of Education, Department of Leadership, Policy and Foundation, University of | |
| those that don't apply): Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): Contact's Email: Contact's Phone: Principal Investigator's Signature Faculty Advisor: School, Department or Center: Division (if applicable): | Karen Inkelas kki5x@eservices.virginia.edu 4342431943 Karen Inkelas Curry School of Education, Department of Leadership, Policy and Foundation, University of Virginia | |

| Other Researchers*: Please list all other researchers in this study that are associated with LIVA * Please provide the | |
|--|--|
| UVA.* Please provide the following information for each researcher: Name, UVA email address (no aliases, please.) | |
| Please list all other researchers not associated with UVA.* Please provide the following information for each researcher: Name, Institution, Phone Number, Mailing Address, Email Address. | |
| Funding Source: If research is funded, please provide the following: | |
| grant name (or name of the funding source): | |
| funding period (month/year): | |
| grant number: | |
| Anticipated start and completion dates for collecting and analyzing data: | February 15 th , 2012-May 10 th , 2013 |

^{*} Please only list researchers that are working directly with human subjects and/or their data. All researchers listed on the protocol must complete the IRB-SBS Training or provide proof of completing IRB training at their institution. If you have any questions about whether a researcher should be listed on the protocol or if a researcher has completed training, please contact our office (irbsbshelp@virginia.edu). Proof of training can be submitted to our office via fax

(434-924-1992), by mail (PO Box 800392 Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392) or by email (irbsbs@virginia.edu).

INVESTIGATOR AGREEMENT

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE INVESTIGATOR AGREES:

- 1. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until the Investigator has received the final approval or exemption letter signed by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-SBS) or designee.
- 2. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until all key personnel for the project have completed their yearly human investigation educational requirement.
- 3. That any modifications of the protocol or consent form will not be initiated without prior written approval from the Chair of the IRB-SBS, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the participants.
- 4. That any deviation from the protocol and/or consent form, adverse events that are serious, unexpected and related to the study or a death occurring during the study will be reported promptly to the SBS Review Board in writing.
- 5. That all protocol forms for continuations of this protocol will be completed and returned within the time limit stated on the renewal notification letter.
- 6. That if this study involves any funding or resources from a source outside UVA, the Investigator will contact the Office of Sponsored Programs regarding the need for a contract and letter of indemnification. If it is determined that either a contract or letter of indemnification is needed, participants cannot be enrolled until these documents are complete.
- 7. That all participants will be recruited and consented as stated in the protocol approved or exempted by the IRB-SBS board. If written consent is required, all participants will be consented by signing a copy of the consent form that has a non-expired IRB approval stamp.
- 8. That the IRB-SBS office will be notified within 30 days of a change in the Principal Investigator for the study.
- 9. That the IRB-SBS office will be notified within 30 days of the closure of this study.
- 10. That all researchers involved in the protocol including the Principal Investigator and the Faculty Advisor have completed the Online Training module and are certified to conduct this study.

Xin Chen

February 6th, 2012

| Principal Investigator (Name Printed) | Principal Investigator (Signature) | Date |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | TAFF PROPOSALS ONLY CUMENT, THE FACULTY AD | OVISOR AGREES: |
| | esponsibility for the conduct of this | |
| | investigator, and with the SBS Re | eview Board, as needed, in maintaining |
| 3. That the Principal In | vestigator is qualified to perform | this study. |
| Faculty Advisor | Faculty Advisor | Date |
| (Name Printed) | (Signature) | |
| | | |

The SBS Review Board reserves the right to terminate this study at any time if, in its opinion, (1) the risks of further experimentation are prohibitive, or (2) the above agreement is breached.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1. **Brief Description of the Research**. Write an original, **brief**, non-technical description of the project addressed to lay members of the SBS Review Board. If you have multiple phases to your study, please outline each phase. Do not copy the abstract from your grant proposal. **Include in your description:**

a. Your research hypothesis or question:

My dissertation aims to study Chinese MBA students' leadership development education provided by American business schools and its relative influence on students' mindset and later career development. This current pilot study aims to investigate four Chinese MBA students' learning experiences in their leadership development in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. This study is my class project for "Qualitative Analysis," and the data collected and the related analysis will be used for my future dissertation as well. The question of the current research is, "what is the Chinese MBA student learning experience in leadership education in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality]?"

b. A narrative that explains the major constructs of your study:

The current qualitative study aims to investigate the influence of leadership development education provided in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business for Chinese MBA students. The study covers the leadership education from three aspects: in class, in the curriculum, and in out-of-classroom activities. The descriptive aspect of this study will explore the leadership development education given by [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. The study focus is on pedagogical emphasis, curriculum, and out-of-classroom activities. The interpretive side of the study will reveal individual Chinese MBA students' personal interpretation, understanding and experience of the leadership education. The current study aims to present the leadership development of Chinese MBA students through their own reflection and understanding of their current learning experience.

c. The methodology:

The current study is an interpretative case-study.

d. From where/whom the data will be collected:

The data will be collected from four current Chinese MBA students in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. The researcher will conduct observations for 15-20 hours (both in the classroom and in out-of-class activities, such as [Name removed to protect confidentiality] Student Association, [Name removed to protect confidentiality] Club, etc.) and interviews for 5 hours (with individual student and group interviews).

e. How the data will advance your research hypothesis or question:

The observation data will help describe specific aspects of leadership education in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. It also explains the Chinese MBA students' learning processes in leadership development from a non-student's perspective. The data from the interviews will display students' individual understanding of their leadership. This set of data serves as a self-interpretive record of Chinese MBA students' learning experiences. The comparison of these two sets of data, from observation and interviews, aims to demonstrate two realities of leadership development in the business school for



Chinese MBA students: what leadership education is and what it is to the students.

f. A brief description of the investigator(s)' and faculty advisor's (where applicable) experience in working with this population:

The investigator has working experience with international students and scholars in the International Center at the University of Virginia as program assistant for two years. She is capable of communicating with international students at a professional level. With a Chinese upbringing, she is fluent in Mandarin and familiar with Chinese culture, which is a helpful skill set for this qualitative study.

Dr. Karen Inkelas is the director of the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education at the University of Virginia. She is experienced in quantitative and qualitative studies on how college environments—curricular, co-curricular, interpersonal, and structural—affect students.

- 2. What will the participants do in the study? (Please submit one copy of all instruments, surveys, interview questions or outlines, observation checklists, to irbsbs@virginia.edu or see 2b below.)
 - a. Describe all steps the participants will follow. What do the data consist of?

The data consist of observations and interview record. The observation will take place in class and in out-of-class activities, such as activities in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] Student Association, Student Clubs, etc. The observation aims to record their normal interactions in these different leadership development contexts. During the interview, the participants will be asked questions based on their leadership development in [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. These questions are open-ended and the participants should answer the questions freely. Participants can withdraw from both the observation and interviews by asking the investigate stop the data collecting at any time if they feel uncomfortable about any question or situation.

- b. The IRB-SBS has an **Instrument Library** (listed on our website at http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/sbs_library.html). If you are using one of the listed instruments, you don't need to submit it, but instead list the **Instrument Number** below:
- 3. Location where study will be conducted (*Please be specific.*):

The study will be conducted in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. Some observations may happen outside of the classroom. The specific locations of these observations depend on where the activities will be held.

4. **Data:** Describe what will be done with the data and resulting analysis, who will have access to this information, and if/when it will be destroyed.

The investigator will use the data to analyze how Chinese MBA students understand and interpret the leadership development education that they experience in [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. Only the investigator will have the access to this information, such as observation record and interview recordings. When the study is finished, the information will be destroyed.

Revision Date: 09/01/11 1



5. Benefits: What benefits can reasonably be expected from the study? (Benefits may be to the participants and/or to the knowledge base of the area. Benefits do not include compensation.)
The participants will have a better idea of what the leadership development education means to them, how they are learning and the possible ways for them to maximize their learning experience. This information may allow them to make better use of their time in MBA program.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Estimated number of

6. **Participant numbers:** If you have multiple types of participants (e.g. students, parents, teachers) please specify the number, age, and gender of the participants.

| | participants in upcoming protocol year or sample size for archival data sets: | 4 |
|----|---|---------------------|
| b. | Age: | 25-30 |
| c. | Gender: | 2 male and 2 female |

7. Participation Coordination

a. **Selection:** Please describe the criteria you will use to select participants. If applicable, please describe the criteria you will use to exclude participants from the study.

I will select the participants from the Chinese MBA students in [Name removed to protect confidentiality]. Age: 25-30, gender: female and male; grade: 2nd year master students; nationality: China

b. Recruitment: Describe in detail how you will contact participants regarding this study. Please provide all materials used to contact participants in this study. These materials could include letters, emails, flyers, advertisements, etc. If you will contact participants verbally, please provide a script that outlines what you will say to participants.

I plan to contact the participants regarding this study through email. The email that I will write to them is listed below: Dear Chris (one of the 4 participants), My name is Xin Chen, a doctoral student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. I am currently working on a research study regarding Chinese MBA student leadership development in [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. You are one of four students selected to be a part of this case study. I would like to observe your classroom and out-of-classroom experiences, with your permission. In addition, I would like to interview you in a location of your choosing. Would you be willing to assist me with this research as a participant? During the observation and interview, you can withdraw at anytime if you feel uncomfortable with any question or situation. Thank you for your time. Please reply by 02/20/2012. Best, Xin Chen.

c. **Relationships:** State the relationship between Principal Investigator, Faculty Advisor (*if applicable*) and Participants. Do any of the researchers have positions of authority over the participants, such as grading authority, professional authority, etc.? Are there any relevant financial relationships?



There is an advisory relationship between principal investigator and faculty advisor. None of the researchers have positions of authority over the participants. There are not any relevant financial relationships between the investigator, the faculty advisor, and the participants.

- 8. Consent Procedures: Describe in detail how you will obtain consent from participants and/or parents/ guardians. Attach a copy of all Informed Consent/Assent Agreements. For consent templates and information on developing a consent procedure, please see:

 A general consent form is attached with this protocol.
- 9. Confidentiality: In this section, please describe how you will protect the confidentiality of your participants. Indicate whether the data are archival, anonymous, confidential, or confidentiality not assured and then provide the additional information requested in that section. If you are collecting more than one type of data (i.e. archival data, anonymous survey, confidential interview), you may select more than one category; make sure to clearly indicate what type of data you are describing. The IRB-SBS asks that if it is possible for you to collect your data anonymously (i.e. without collecting the participants' identifiable information), please construct your study in this manner. Data collection in which the subject is not identifiable (i.e. anonymous) can be exempted in most cases.

| manner. | 8 1 1 | e information), please construct your study in this is not identifiable (i.e. anonymous) can be |
|------------------|--|--|
| a. Are t | he data archival? (Data are already c | collected). Please mark one: |
| YE | S (Please answer <i>i-iv</i> below) | NO (Please skip to b) X |
| Please blank. | note: If your study only includes arch | nival data, answer no to 9-b, 9-c, 9-d and leave 9-e |
| i. | Are the data publicly accessible? | |
| | YES (Please skip to ii) | NO (Please answer below) |
| | Please describe how you will obta proof of permission to access the o | ain access to this data and provide the board with data: |
| ii. | | l of identifying information, including names, postal ail addresses, social security numbers, medical record |
| | YES (see below) | NO (see below) |
| | v / L | nk and strip the data. Please note that this person data and they should be a neutral third party not |
| | If no, please describe what data will not be removed: | will remain identifiable and why this information |
| iii. | Can the names of the participation | ants be deduced from the data set? |
| | YES (see below) | NO (skip to iv) |



If yes, please describe:

| | this study |
|----|--|
| | iv. Please provide the list of data fields you intend to use for your analysis and/or provide the original instruments used in the study. |
| b. | Are the data that you will collect anonymous? (Data do not contain identifying information including names, postal addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, social security numbers, medical record numbers, birth dates, etc., and cannot be linked to identifying information by use of codes or other means. If you are recording the participant on audio or video tape, etc., this is not considered anonymous data.) |
| | YES (see below) NO (skip to c) X |
| | i. Describe the process you will use to collect the data to ensure that it is anonymous. |
| | ii. Can the names of the participants be deduced from the data? YES (see below) NO (skip to c) |
| | |
| | If yes, please describe: |
| c. | Initial the following: I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in this study Are the data that you will collect confidential? (Data do contain identifying information and/or can be linked to identifying information by use of codes or other means.) Please |
| | note that if you will use participant data (such as photos, videos, etc.) for presentations beyond data analysis for the research study (classroom presentations, library archive, conference presentations, etc.) you need to provide a Materials Release Form to the participant. |
| | YES (See below:) X NO (skip to d) |
| | Please describe the process you will use to collect the data and to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Verify that the list linking codes to personal identifiers will be kept secure. |
| | I will use pseudonyms for the names of the participants during the data collection in order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The participants will be informed that the information that they give in the study will be confidential. Their names will not be collected or linked to the data. If it is possible to deduce the participant's identity, I will inform the participants the following: Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you. |
| d. | Will you not assure confidentiality in the study? (For example, will the identity of the |

Initial the following: I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in



| | | participant be known or will it be easily de participant data (such as photos, videos, etc.) for research study (classroom presentations, library need to provide a Materials Release Form to the po | r presentations beyond data d archive, conference presentat | inalysis for the |
|------|---------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| | | YES (See below:) | NO (s | skip to e) X |
| | | Please describe why confidentiality will not be as | ssured. | |
| | e. | If you answered "No" to ALL of the questi confidentiality in your study. | ions in section 9 (#a-d), p | lease describe |
| DECE | PTION | | | |
| 10 | . Are a study | ny aspects of the study kept secret from the parti)? | cipants (e.g. the full purpose | of the |
| | | YES (Describe below:) | NO (ski | ip to #11) X |
| 11 | . Is any | deception used in the study? | | |
| | | YES (Describe below:) | NO (ski | p to #12) X |
| | | , describe the deception involved and the debr fing statement and consent form offering participan | | oost-experiment estroyed. |
| 12 | . Will j | participants be debriefed? | | |
| | | YES | | NO X |
| | invest | n a copy of your Debriefing Statement. If the answigator must debrief the participant. If your study is include a debrief statement. | 1 1 | • |
| MEDI | A USE | | | |
| 13 | will b | answer yes to any question below, in question 1c, pe used and justify why it is necessary to use the med formed Consent Agreement under "What you will d | lia to collect data. Include a | how the media description in |
| | a | Will the participant be recorded on audiotape? | YES X | NO |
| | b | Will the participant be recorded on video tape? | YES X | NO |
| | c | Will the participant be photographed? | YES X | NO |
| | d | Will the participant be audio taped, | YES | NO X |
| | | | | |



| Univ | ERSITY of VIRGINIA |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| | videotaped, or photographed without their knowledge? |
| | If yes, please describe the deception and the debrief procedures: Attach a post-experiment debriefing statement and a post-deception consent form offering participants the option of having their tape/photograph destroyed. |
| e. | If a participant withdraws from a study, how will you withdraw them from the audio tape, video tape, or photograph? Please include a description in the Informed Consent Agreement under "How to withdraw from the study." |
| | If the participant wants to withdraw from a study, I will delete all the audio tape, video tape, or photograph that shows this participant's identity. |
| RISKS | |
| the par vulner inform behavi | ere any possible physical, psychological, professional or personal risks and/or hazards for rticipants? (Please be sensitive regarding potential risks for participants, particularly able populations such as minors, prisoners, etc. If there is a potential for you to collect action about illegal behaviors, consider instructing the participant not to discuss these ors or apply for a Certificate of Confidentiality. If data are not anonymous, loss of entiality may be a risk.) |
| | YES NO X |
| a. | Describe the risks: |
| b. | What will you do to protect participants from these risks or hazards? |





Appendix G: IRB for Dissertation Project

Protocol Form

Using this document:

- The purpose of this document is to provide you with a guide for providing the information that the IRB-SBS needs in order to review your protocol. Each question provides instructions as well as suggestions for completing the question. After every **Instruction** section, there is a **Response** area; please provide your answer in **Response** area.
- In addition, any blue underlined text is linked to related areas in our <u>Researcher's Guide</u> on our <u>website</u>. If you have questions about how to respond to a question, start with the Researcher's Guide and then <u>contact</u> our office for additional help.

Submitting a protocol:

- This document has three parts: Section A "Investigator's Agreement," Section B "Protocol Information," and Section C "Description of the Research Study." To submit a protocol, complete this document and email it and any accompanying materials (i.e. consent forms, recruitment materials, instruments) to irbsbs@virginia.edu. For more information on what to submit and how, please see Submitting a Protocol.
- Please note that we can only accept forms in Microsoft Word format and in this form only. Do not submit your responses in a separate document. We do not accept hand-written documents (with the exception of the signature on the Investigator's Agreement). Please submit the electronic form in its entirety; do not remove the signature pages from the document even though you will submit these pages as a pdf/hard copy. Do not alter this form; simply provide your responses in the Response area. Forms that are not completed correctly will be returned to you and you will be required to complete them correctly before they are accepted. No exceptions! If you need help using our form, please contact our office. For tips and suggestions for completing the protocol, please see Protocol and Informed Consent Tips.
- Section A "Investigator's Agreement" must also be submitted with signatures. Signed
 materials can be submitted by mail, fax (434-924-1992), or email (scanned document to
 <u>irbsbs@virginia.edu</u>). Signed materials can also be submitted <u>in person to our office</u>. Your
 study will not be approved until we receive this document.



- In order to not delay your review, make sure that you (and any researcher listed on the protocol) have completed the CITI training in human subjects research.
- You will be contacted within 3-7 business days regarding your submission (depending on the protocol queue). Please see Protocol Review Process for more information.



A. Investigator Agreement

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE INVESTIGATOR AGREES:

- 11. That no participants will be recruited or data accessed under the protocol until the Investigator has received the final approval or exemption letter signed by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-SBS) or designee.
- 12. That **no participants will be recruited** or entered under the protocol **until** all researchers for the project including the Faculty Advisor have completed their **human investigation research ethics educational requirement** (CITI training is required every **3** years for UVA researchers).
- 13. That any **modifications of the protocol or consent form** will not be implemented without prior **written approval** from the IRB-SBS Chair or designee except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the participants.
- 14. That any deviation from the protocol and/or consent form that is serious, unexpected and related to the study or a death occurring during the study will be reported promptly to the SBS Review Board in writing.
- 15. That all protocol forms for **continuations of this protocol** will be **completed** and returned **within the time limit stated** on the renewal notification letter.
- 16. That all participants will be recruited and consented as stated in the protocol approved or exempted by the IRB-SBS board. If written consent is required, all participants will be consented by signing a copy of the consent form that has a non-expired IRB approval stamp.
- 17. That the IRB-SBS office will be notified within **30 days** of a **change in the Principal Investigator** for the study.
- 18. That the IRB-SBS office will be notified when the active study is complete.

| XIN CHEN | January 30 , 2014 |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Principal Investigator (print) | Date |
| Leadership Education of Chinese MBA Students in the | |
| United States: A Case Study of Chinese MBA Students' | |
| Leadership Education at an American Graduate Business | |
| School | |
| Protocol Title | Protocol Number (SBS office only) |
| | |

Principal Investigator's Signature

FOR STUDENT AND STAFF PROPOSALS ONLY

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE FACULTY ADVISOR HAS READ THE PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH AND AGREES:

- 1. To assume overall responsibility for the conduct of this research and investigator.
- 2. To work with the investigator, and with the SBS Review Board, as needed, in maintaining compliance with this agreement.
- 3. That the **Principal Investigator is qualified to perform this study**.

| Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Faculty Advisor (print) | Date |



Faculty Advisor's Signature

The SBS Review Board reserves the right to terminate this study at any time if, in its opinion, (1) the risks of further research are prohibitive, or (2) the above agreement is breached.



Protocol Form

B. Protocol Information

IRB-SBS Protocol Number (assigned by SBS office, leave blank):

| by 565 office, leave blank): | |
|--|---|
| Submission Type (delete all those that don't apply): | New Protocol |
| Protocol Title: | Leadership Education of Chinese MBA Students in the United States: A Case Study of Chinese MBA Students' Leadership Education at an American Graduate Business School |
| | |
| Principal Investigator: | Xin Chen |
| Professional Title: | Doctoral Student |
| School (Curry, Medical, Arts & Sciences, etc.): | Curry |
| Department (CISE, Family Medicine, Psychology, etc.): | Leadership, Policy and Foundation of Education |
| Campus Box Number: | |
| Mailing Address (only if campus box number is not available): | 668 Lockesley Terrace, Charlottesville, VA, 22903 |
| Telephone: | 434 466 3126 |
| UVA e mail address (no aliases, please): Your computing ID is used for tracking your IRB CITI training. | Xc7rd@virginia.edu |
| Preferred e-mail address for correspondence (if applicable): | Xc7rd@virginia.edu |
| You are (delete all those that don't apply): | Graduate Student |
| This research is for (delete all those that don't apply): | Doctoral Dissertation |
| Primary contact for the protocol (if other than the principal investigator): | Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas |



| Contact's Email: | Kki5x@virginia.edu |
|--|--|
| , | <u> </u> |
| Contact's Phone: | 434-243-1943 |
| Faculty Advisor: | Karen Inkelas |
| School (Curry, Medical, Arts & Sciences, etc.): | Curry |
| Department (CISE, Family Medicine, Psychology, etc.): | Leadership, Policy and Foundation of Education |
| Campus Box Number: | |
| Telephone: | 434-243-1943 |
| UVA e mail address (no aliases, please): Your computing ID is used for tracking on-line human subjects training. | Kki5x@virginia.edu |
| Other Researchers*: | |
| Please list all other researchers in this study that are associated with UVA.* Please provide the following information for each researcher: Name, UVA email address (no aliases, please.) | |
| Please list all other researchers not associated with UVA.* Please provide the following information for each researcher: Name, Institution, Phone Number, Mailing Address, Email Address. | |
| IRB-SBS Library | |
| Instruments: | |
| Funding Source: If research is funded, please provide the following: | |
| grant name (or name of the | |



| I am paying participants using State or UVa funds (including grants) and will include the UVa or State Funds Study Payment Procedures Form. I am not paying participants or I am not using State or UVa funds (including grants). | Х |
|--|--|
| Fobruary 15th 2014—May 20th 2015 | |
| | participants using State or UVa funds (including grants) and will include the UVa or State Funds Study Payment participants or I am not using State or UVa funds (including grants). |

^{*} Please only list researchers that are working directly with human subjects and/or their data. All researchers listed on the protocol must complete the IRB-SBS CITI Training or provide proof of completing IRB training at their institution. If you have any questions about whether a researcher should be listed on the protocol or if a researcher has completed training, please contact our office (irbsbshelp@virginia.edu). Proof of training can be submitted to our office via fax (434-924-1992), by mail (PO Box 800392 Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392) or by email (irbsbs@virginia.edu)

C. Description of the Research Study

- 15. **Study Overview:** Give a brief overview of your project. Consider the following when framing your response:
 - What is your purpose in conducting this research? How does the project contribute to the advancement of knowledge and why is it worth doing? What is the general benefit of the knowledge you expect to gain?
 - Include information about the study's logistics (where and when it will be conducted, what instruments and/or methods you will use, etc). What will you be asking participants to do, and what do you hope to learn from these activities?
 - Will participants be <u>compensated</u> for taking part in your study? If so, how much will they receive?
 - If your study has more than one phase, please clearly map out the different phases.

Response 1: (enter response below this header)

My dissertation project aims to explore Chinese MBA students' leadership development education at business schools in the United States along with their cultural adaptation in a western learning context. This case study will happen in [Name removed to protect confidentiality] of Business, University of Virginia. This descriptive study focuses on the students' explanation of their experiences. The findings of the study will fill the gap in the literature regarding Chinese MBA students' leadership education as well as their cultural adaptation process. In addition, the study also aims to summarize Chinese MBA students' leadership education at various cultural adaption stages. Therefore, the findings will be helpful for faculty and staff at U.S. business institutions to improve the programs for an increasing number of Chinese MBA students.

The study will be conducted in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business, University of Virginia. The two frameworks adopted in this study include Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and Social Learning Theory. DMIS with six cultural adaptation stages helps the understanding of cultural adjustment status of the participants. Social Learning Theory is one of the most used leadership development theories and it indicates that individuals learn leadership skills through the interaction with his/her environment. The methods design of the current study will be based on these two theories. The data collection procedure will start from the beginning of March, 2014 till the end of May, 2015 I will invite the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the course of Leadership and Diversity through Literature to participate in my study. After I receive the students' confirmation to participate in the study, I will send to them a cultural adaptation survey which is based on DMIS and it aims to define the cultural adaptation stages of each of them. According to their rating to each statement, I will identify them with different cultural adaptation stages. I will have a first round individual interviews with all the participants. The purpose of this round of interview is to understand their cultural adaptation experience from their own perspectives. Then I will conduct multiple observations of the students regarding their interactions with peers, professors, and alumni as guest speakers at the class during the semester. The observation protocol is based on Social Learning Theory to describe students' leadership learning experiences through their interactions with their learning environment. After I collect all the observation data, I will have another round of individual interviews with each student. The purpose of the interview is to get the students' explanation on their leadership learning through interaction with the people around them. After the individual interviews, I will have organize a focus group interview and discuss the repeated themes and confirm the potential findings.



The participants will not be compensated for taking part in my study. The study includes survey, interviews, and observations. They will be organized consecutively. There are no distinctive phrases.

16. Participants: Please describe as best you can the population(s) you plan to work with.

Please describe them in the terms that are most pertinent to your project. We need to understand how working with them will further your research objectives and what steps need to be taken in order to minimize <u>risk</u> to them. **Please respond to questions a-e in this section.**

a. Please fill in the following blanks below. If you are working with more than one population, please provide information for each group.

Response 2-a: (enter response below this header)

Age: 25-35

Gender: Male and Female

Race: Asian

Estimated number of participants: 5-6

b. Describe how participants will be identified and selected to participate in the study. Are there specific populations that you will be targeting and if so, why? Are there potential participants that you will exclude from the study and if so, why?

Response 2-b: (enter response below this header)

The study aims to explore the Chinese MBA students' leadership education at a U.S. business school. Therefore, the participants are these Chinese MBA students who are enrolled in the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business and also enrolled in this leadership class. I will send out participation invitation to all the Chinese MBA students enrolled in this class. However, only those who reply yes will be the participants of the current study. The estimate of the final number of participants will be around five or six.

c. Will you deceive and/or withhold information from the participants about the study? If so, please justify why deception and/or withholding information from the participants is necessary and describe the deception. Using deception requires specific consent forms and processes; please describe this process in the Consent section under Response 3-a and 3-b.

Response 2-c: (enter response below this header)

I will not deceive or withhold information from the participants about the study. I will state the purpose, nature, procedure of the study clearly and completely in the email invitation asking students to take part in the study.

d. What special <u>experience or knowledge</u> do you, your faculty advisor, and the members of your research team (where appropriate) have that will allow you to work productively and respectfully with your participants?

Response 2-d: (enter response below this header)

The investigator is a doctoral student in higher education program at Curry School of Education. She has a solid training through various coursework at Curry in terms of educational theories and research methods. In addition, she has working experience with international students and scholars in the International Center at the University of Virginia as program assistant for three years. She is thus capable of communicating with international

students at a professional level. At the same time, she is currently serving as the doctoral intern at the Office of Student Affairs at the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. She is familiar with the MBA students at business school where is a professional higher learning setting. The researcher is from Chinese cultural background and is fluent in Mandarin and familiar with Chinese culture, which is a helpful skill set in communicating with the group of Chinese MBA students.

Dr. Karen Inkelas is the Director at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education at the University of Virginia. She is experienced in quantitative and qualitative studies on how college environments—curricular, co-curricular, interpersonal, and structural—affect students. Her expertise in higher education research methods will definitely help the investigator conduct a productive and respectful study.

- 17. **Consent:** Consent is an on-going process that starts when you first inform your participant about the study through your recruitment/advertising efforts and ends when the participant's data are no longer needed. The federal regulations require a formal consent process takes place where you provide participants with specific information about the study (usually provided in the consent form, see General Consent Template) and the participants are required to sign the form. Not every study will fit this mold and there are some alternative methods for conducting the formal consent procedure. In general, the Board needs to understand how participants will be recruited and consented to participate in the study. Please note that if your study qualifies for exemption, you will not be required to follow the federal regulations for consent, but the Board may require that you provide information about the study to the participant. Please respond to questions a-d in this section.
 - a. How will you approach/recruit participants to participate in your research? Please provide all materials used to contact participants in this study. These materials could include letters, emails, flyers, advertisements, etc. If you will contact participants verbally, please provide a script that outlines what you will say to participants.

Response 3-a: (enter response below this header)

I will first contact registrar at the [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business and find out the information of the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the class of "Leadership and Diversity through Literature". I will contact the instructor of the class for class observation permission. I will contact each Chinese MBA student enrolled in this class via email. The email will serve as the invitation asking the students to take part in the current study. The email will include the information of the study such as the purpose, nature and the duration of the study, and what I would like the students to do during the study. The email that I will write to them is listed below:

Dear student,

My name is Xin Chen, a doctoral student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. I am currently working on a research project regarding Chinese MBA students' leadership development in [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. The purpose of the study is to examine the leadership education experience of Chinese MBA students. You are one of the Chinese students enrolled in the class of Leadership and Diversity through Literature, and I would like to invite you to participate in this case study. I would like to have 2 individual interview (50 minutes for each) with you, observe you when you are in the class and related out of class activities, with your permission. For observation, I will not disturb your study or



any activities. In addition, the interview will be in a location of your choosing. Would you be willing to assist me with this research as a participant? During the observations and interviews, you can withdraw at any time if you feel uncomfortable with any question or situation. Thank you for your time. Please reply by 03/07/2014.

Best, Xin Chen

b. What is your <u>consent process</u>? Who will present the consent information and how will it be presented? How will you <u>document consent</u>? Are your participants able to sign a form, and if not, how will you document consent? Will you use more than one form (if you use more than one version of the consent form, each form needs to have a unique title in order for our staff to keep track of the different forms)? When and where will participants receive the consent form? Who will give them the consent form? Will you pay participants?

Response 3-b: (enter response below this header)

I will present the consent form to the students. I will bring two copies with me when I meet with each student. Both the student and I will sign the consent form and each of us will keep a copy. The consent form will be delivered to the students in person after I receive the confirmation email from them stating that they will take part in my study. The participants will not be paid by taking part in this study.

c. Are any of your participants <u>unable to consent</u> (i.e. vulnerable population)? These populations include (but are not limited to): <u>minors</u> (participants under the legal age of consent), <u>prisoners</u>, and participants with <u>diminished mental capacity</u>. These participants generally need a parent (or surrogate) consent form and a participant assent form (prisoners being the likely exception unless they are minors too).

Response 3-c: (enter response below this header)

Not applicable.

d. What is your <u>relationship</u> to your participants? Do you know them personally or hold any position of authority over them? Do any of the researchers (including the faculty advisor) have positions of authority over the participants, such as grading authority, professional authority, etc.? Are there any relevant financial relationships?

Response 3-d: (enter response below this header)

I am currently serving as the doctoral intern at the Office of Student Affairs at [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business. I work closely with all international students as a group. These Chinese MBA students, as the participants of the current study, are part of the student group that I work with. I do not have particular authority over the participants, such as grading authority or professional authority; I do not have relevant financial relationship with them either. My duty for my internship position is to deliver new non-academic programs for all international students as a group.

e. Do any of the researchers and/or the faculty sponsor have significant financial interests in the study's financial sponsor(s) or in any other entity whose financial



interests could be affected by the research?

Response 3-e: (enter response below this header)

No.

- 18. Materials/Data collected: For most SBS studies, the risk to participants often lies in the information that is collected from them. Thus the manner in which the data are collected, how they are stored, and how the data are reported in your research is an important part of determining the risk to participants. When you develop your procedures, consider minimizing or eliminating the collection of identifying information where possible and provide justification as to why it needs to be collected. Please respond to questions a-d in this section.
 - a. Are any of the <u>data already collected</u>? (If you are only using archival data, please use the <u>Archival Data protocol form</u> instead of this form.) Are the data <u>publicly available</u> or part of a <u>private collection</u>? Please describe the data set(s) and provide a list of data fields you will use (when applicable). What will you do to protect the <u>confidentiality</u> of the pre-existing data? (If the data are anonymous but it is possible to deduce identities, please state that you will not attempt to deduce identities.)

Response 4-a: (enter response below this header)

None of the data from the current study is already collected.

b. What will you do to protect the <u>privacy</u> and <u>confidentiality</u> of your participants? Describe the process for <u>collecting data</u> from your participants, focusing on the kinds of information you will gather and the material forms it will take. Describe the level to which participants will be <u>identifiable</u>, why this information is necessary for you to collect, and how the identifying information will be linked with the participant's data. If you don't intend to collect identifying information, describe your process for keeping the data anonymous (if the data are anonymous but it is possible to deduce identities, please state that you will not attempt to deduce identities).

Response 4-b: (enter response below this header)

The two major kinds of information that I am going to collect from the participants are the data from interviews and observations. In the interview transcripts and field notes from observations, I will keep the participants' names anonymous. I will use pseudonyms for the real names of the participants during the data collection in order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The participants will be informed that the information that they give in the study will be confidential. Their names will not be collected or linked to the data. If it is possible to deduce the participant's identity, I will inform the participants the following: Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

c. Will you use audio recordings, photographs, video recordings or other similar data recording devices? Please justify why it is necessary to use these devices, how you will use them, and what you will do with the data after they are collected.

Response 4-c: (enter response below this header)

I will use audio recordings to capture the data during multiple interviews with participants. Using the recording helps the researcher to track as much as information possible from the participants' responses. I will transcribe the interviews based on the recordings and analyze it accordingly. After completion of the study, the audiotapes and transcriptions will be destroyed.

d. How will your materials be stored? Discuss both how you plan to store it while you are collecting and actively analyzing it, and your long-term plan for maintaining it when the active research phase is finished. How will your data be reported in your study? Will you report the results in aggregate or will individual data be discussed? If you are storing electronic files, make sure that your data storage plan complies with UVa IT policies.

Response 4-d: (enter response below this header)

All the data will be carefully stored in the researcher's private computer with password protection when the researcher is collecting and actively analyzing it. After the research is finished, the data will be archived as electronic files and it will comply with UVa IT policies. After the dissertation is finished, the data will be destroyed.

The transcripts and observation data (field notes) will be a separated attachment to my dissertation.

- 19. <u>Risks</u>: Almost any intervention into other people's lives carries with it the potential to cause them social, psychological, physical, or legal harm. However, not every interaction will put a participant at risk beyond what is considered <u>minimal</u>. Please describe to the Board the potential risks and the probability of harm to the participants in your study. In this section, consider the following when framing your response:
 - <u>Describe the risks</u> to the participants in your study. Does your study include "risk-sensitive" participants (as identified in the Participants section)? What is the probability that harm could occur?
 - Describe what you will do to <u>minimize those risks</u>. Describe what you will do if a harmful situation occurs.
 - Would a loss of <u>confidentiality</u> of any of your materials put participants at risk? If so, how will you prevent this from happening?

Response 5: (enter response below this header)

There are no potential risks to the participants in the current study.

20. <u>Benefits</u>: Benefits help to outweigh the risks to the participants, though not every study will have direct benefits to the participants. Will there be any direct benefits to the participants in your study? If so, what are they? (The Board also considers the general benefits of the study, as described in section 1).

Response 6: (enter response below this header)

Except the general benefits of the study described in section 1, there is no specific direct benefit for the participants in the current study.



Appendix H: General Consent Form

Informed Consent Agreement

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to explore Chinese MBA students' leadership education experience in U.S. business schools. This is a descriptive study with [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business, University of Virginia as the case. The findings will be helpful for the higher education faculty and staff in U.S. business institutions to improve their future programs.

What you will do in the study:

Chinese students enrolled in the class, "Leadership and Diversity through Literature," will be invited to participate in the study.

Participants will:

- Complete a survey regarding cultural adaption
- Participate in two rounds of individual interviews
- Be observed as part of a classroom observation of "Leadership and Diversity through Literature," as well as out-of-class activities such as learning teams and speaker series
- Participate in a focus group dialogue.

All interviews and focus groups will be audiotaped, and those audiotapes will be transcribed. Each interview will last about 60 minutes. Participants may skip any question that makes them uncomfortable during the interviews and they can stop the interview/survey at any time. The data from their interviews will be destroyed after the completion of the study

Time required: The study will require about 3.5 hours of your time:

Interviews: Each interview will last 60 minutes.

Observations: The observation will be based on the class "Leadership and Diversity through Literature." All 14 classes will be observed. There will also be observations of learning teams and speaker series.

Focus group interview: The focus group interview will last 60 minutes.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help people understand Chinese MBA students' leadership education together with their cultural adaptation in the U.S. business institutions. The findings will be helpful for program improvement.

Confidentiality:

The data including the survey responses, field notes and field notes will be stored carefully in the form password-protected electronic files.

Data linked with identifying information: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report. After the study is closed, the tape with all the interview recordings will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time



without penalty. The interview will be audio taped. Your tape will be destroyed once you decide to withdraw from the study.

How to withdraw from the study: If you feel uncomfortable at any stage of the study, please feel free to let the researcher know. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the study. There is no penalty for withdrawing. At the same time, the data collection will stop and your response to the survey or interview will be erased accordingly. If you decide to withdraw after the study is completed and your materials have been submitted, please contact the researcher. Any data collected from you will be destroyed and the related data analysis will be erased from the final study write up.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact:

Xin Chen

Department of Leadership, Foundation and Policy, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA 22903. Telephone: (434) 466 3126 Email: xc7rd@virginia.edu Professor Karen Inkelas

Department of Leadership, Foundation and Policy, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Telephone: (434) 243 1943 Email: kki5x@virginia.edu

If you have questions about your rights in the study, contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences

One Morton Dr Suite 500

University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392

Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392 Telephone: (434) 924-5999 Email: <u>irbsbshelp@virginia.edu</u> Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Agreement:

| agree to participate in the research study described above. | | |
|---|---------|---|
| Signature: | _ Date: | |
| agree to be audiotaped. | | |
| Signature: | Date: | · |

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix I: Administration Approval Form



Administration Permission Form: Conducting Research in



an Educational Setting

- In order to conduct a research study in an educational setting, it is necessary that you
 obtain permission from the appropriate administrator (i.e. principal, director, district
 supervisor). You can approach the administrator by phone, email, or in person. You will
 need to provide the Board with documentation verifying that you obtained approval from
 the administrator. Please see the categories below for more instructions.
- Please provide the administrator with a copy of this form, any accompanying documents, and a copy of your protocol for his or her records (if the administrator does not already have a copy).
- Please keep a copy of this form and all accompanying documents with your IRB materials.
- PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO THE IRB-SBS OFFICE. COMPLETION OF THIS FORM IS A CONDITION OF YOUR APPROVAL OR EXEMPTION. THE BOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CLOSE THE STUDY IF THIS FORM AND ALL APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT RECEIVED PRIOR TO DATA COLLECTION.

| IRB-SBS Protocol Number: | |
|---|--|
| Protocol Title: | |
| Educational Setting (where study will be conducted): | Xin Chen [Name removed to protect confidentiality] School of Business Sarah Wilcox-Elliott Wilcoxelliotts@[Name removed to protect confidentiality].virginia.edu |
| I received permission from the administrator to conduct my study: (Please mark an "x" next to your answer) By Phone: Prior to talking to the administrator, draft a script of what you will say. When you talk to the administrator, please document what was said. Provide the board with your approach script and the documentation of the phone call. Date and Time of the phone call: | |
| By Email/ Letter/ Fax, etc.: Please attach a printed copy of the document to this form. The documentation needs to include both your approach and the administrator's response. In Person: Prior to talking to the administrator, draft a script of what you will say. When you talk to the administrator, please document what was said. Provide the board with your approach script and the documentation of the meeting. Date and Time of the meeting 02/03/2014 | |
| Signature of Principal Investigator | Date |

