

Initial Judgements in Intercultural Friendships of American and International Students

Effects of Self-Disclosure and Perceived Similarity on Social Attraction

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NAFSA estimated in 2017, international students contributed 39 billion dollars and supported over 450,000 jobs to the U.S. economy. The United States hosts over 1,000,000 international students, however, 38% of international students across the U.S. reported not having a single American friend (Gareis, 2012).

!!!WARNING!!!

International students without American friends are more likely to report disappointment, loneliness, isolation, slower language acquisition, psychological depression and alienation (Chen, 2006). Intercultural friendships are not only seminal for the well-being of international students, but are also imperative for Americans, as they help reduce prejudice (Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008).



How to increase social attraction during initial interactions between American and International students?

The association between perceived similarity and social attraction is well documented. Unfortunately, for people from different cultures, this means a perceived lack of similarity could be an obstacle for friendship development. Through self-disclosure, however, people from different cultures may perceive themselves as more similar. The proposed study examines how perceptions of similarity and features of self-disclosure relate to social attraction between U.S. and international

Social Penetration Theory

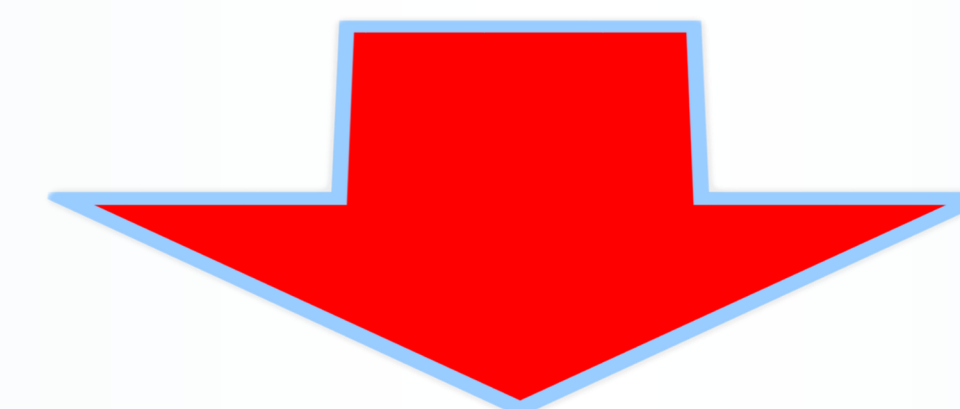
Self-disclosure is critical for social attraction. Breadth (range of topics discussed) and depth (intimacy of disclosure) are key concepts in the theory. Breadth is theorized as more desirable than depth in initial interactions. For this reason, "small talk," defined as disclosure high in breadth and low in depth, is associated with social attraction in initial encounters.



Barnum Effect

Commonly used by psychics and mediums. Barnum effect consists of making general statements that is likely to apply to wide range of people and having people perceive these as "personal" or that they apply to them and have them be perceived as a common point of interest.

Theoretical Foundations



KEY CONCEPTS

Intercultural friendships are different from intracultural (same country) friendships only in **initial stages!**

Social Attraction is a motivational state in which people are predisposed to think, feel, and behave positively towards another person (Simpson & Harris, 1994), which will increase the likelihood of continual contact needed for **close friendships** to form. Knowing what American students judge as socially attractive can help international students make a positive first impression.

H1: Americans will judge international students that they perceive as similar to them as more socially attractive than international students that are perceived as different

H2: Americans will judge international students who discuss a higher range of topics as more similar and more socially attractive

H3: Americans will judge international students who speak in general terms to be more similar to them and as more socially attractive

Methods

Respondents will be recruited from a large urban Southwest university

Criteria for Participants:
U.S. born U.S. citizen who grew up in the U.S.

Pre-test : Online survey
Assignment of Conditions: Similar or Dissimilar

Treatment:
The participants will receive a short "self-introduction" of an international student that is either similar or dissimilar to them based on the results of the pretest. The breadth of the students' interests as well as the specificity will be manipulated in the introduction resulting in a 2x2x2 design. After the treatment, the participants will be asked to rate the similarity, social attraction and desire to contact the international student.

Measurements:

McCrosky and McCain's (1974) social attraction scale, 15 items social attraction scale

McCrosky, Richmond, and Daly (1975) scale of interpersonal and intercultural similarity

Desire for future contact will be measured by the question: "Do you wish to receive the contact information of this international students to get to know them better?"

References

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