

# **Intercultural Friendship Formation**

A study on Chinese students in Japan

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Precedent studies have suggested that the establishment of intimate friendships with people from a host country is an important factor for foreign students to be able to relieve stress when they are faced with challenges both in academic and daily life. However, very little research has focused on intercultural friendship development between Chinese and Japanese students, even though more than 50% of all foreign students in Japan are Chinese.

Aiming at both studying the process of intercultural friendship developments between Chinese and Japanese students and identifying the factors involved in intercultural friendship development, the KJ qualitative research method was used to analyze the verbatim records of interviews with six Chinese students who have experienced intercultural friendships with Japanese people.

The results show that deep self-disclosure, time and frequency of contact, motivation, similarities, mutual understanding, and trustful relationships were the contributing factors for intercultural friendships. On the other hand, language barriers, cultural differences, close-knit Chinese networks, awareness unnecessary for close relationships with Japanese people, and negatively inclined views toward continuing friendships were the factors that prevented intercultural friendship development. The results also indicate that there are three different types of outcomes from effort toward building intercultural friendships between Chinese and Japanese: 1) building intimate friendships through interaction; 2) failure to build intimate friendships due to passive involvement; and 3) failure to build intimate friendships despite the fact of active involvement. These findings could help understanding intercultural friendship development between Chinese and Japanese, and can identify the factors involved in the process of developing intercultural friendships.