

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE DYNAMICS OF INTIMATE
INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE
NEGOTIATION OF CULTURAL AND
RELATIONAL IDENTITIES ON
INTERCULTURAL COUPLES' CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT

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Research suggests that intercultural romantic relationships are replete with opportunities for conflict. Intercultural couples not only need to manage relational concerns, they also need to reconcile cultural differences. During this process, interculturally-dating/married individuals often engage in cultural (un)learning. However, the intersection of intercultural communication, acculturation, and conflict communication remains largely untheorized in extant literature. Moreover, extant studies on intercultural couples' conflict management are mostly conducted with Western samples, with a majority of them studying interracial couples that share the same national culture. To address these gaps, this dissertation employed a mixed methods design to study interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational conflict experiences. This dissertation project aims to provide a better understanding of how cultural and relational factors might work in tandem to influence intercultural couples' relational conflict management and relational dynamics, including their relational identity orientations and relationship satisfaction.

Study 1 was conducted using qualitative in-depth interviews ($N = 20$). Results showed that (a) some participants enacted conflict strategies that were inconsistent with their endorsed cultural values and that (b) the so-called (non-)constructive strategies, as categorized in Western conflict literature, did not seem to have uniform influences on relationship satisfaction. These unexpected findings indicated that new approaches are needed to more thoroughly understand intercultural couples' conflict management.

In Study 2, a cross-sectional survey with interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese was conducted to test two working models ($N = 412$). The first working model proposed that cultural (i.e., self-construals), relational (i.e., concerns for self and the partner), and contextual (i.e., neighborhood compositions) factors, collectively, influenced respondents' relational identity orientations. It was further hypothesized that relational identity orientations predicted respondents' actual conflict behaviors, whereas self-construals predicted their preferred conflict styles. The second working model investigated if discrepancies between conflict style preferences and enacted conflict behaviors represented an identity gap, which negatively influenced relationship satisfaction. Results provided partial support for these hypotheses. Although relational identity orientations functioned as better predictors of actual conflict behaviors than self-construals, their effects were in the opposite direction than hypothesized. While personal-enacted identity gap negatively predicted relationship satisfaction, the hypothesized indirect effects from conflict management discrepancies to relationship satisfaction through identity gap were only significant for two out of five conflict types: integrating and avoiding.

Taken together, results indicate that a theoretical framework that simultaneously captures cultural, relational, and contextual influences provides better prediction of interculturally-dating/married individuals' actual conflict behaviors. In addition, this dissertation suggests that inter/cross-cultural conflict research can benefit from a non-Western centric approach to theorizing the effects of conflict tactics.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Shao-Po Chien and Mei-Ying Wang, my sister, Pei-Yin Chien, and my husband, Tzu-Sheng Hsu. Without your love and support, none of this would have been possible. I love you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

Globalization has transcended nation-state boundaries and allows people of diverse cultural backgrounds to have more opportunities to interact with one another, both through face-to-face and mediated channels, making our lives increasingly intertwined with those of people around the world (Legrain, 2002; McGrew, 1992). Additionally, research suggests that the level of racial and/or ethnic segregation is decreasing in various multiracial and multiethnic countries in North America (e.g., Glaeser & Vigdor, 2003), Europe (e.g., Musterd, 2005), and Asia (e.g., Laquian, 1996). With increased opportunities for intercultural exchange among people of different racial, ethnic, religious, and/or national identities, intimate intercultural relationships are on the rise (Frame, 2004; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). According to U.S. Census reports (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, 2013), about 7% of married households in 2010 were composed of spouses of different races, as compared to less than 1% in 1970, and 7% of married households in 2011 had one native-born and one foreign-born spouse. Similarly, in Taiwan, about 6% of married households in 2015 were composed of spouses of different nationalities (Taiwan Department of Household Registration, 2015).

Such notable increases in the number of intercultural marriages around the world have led to an expanding body of research on the dynamics and/or the social implications of intimate intercultural relationships (i.e., romantic relationships in which the partners come from two distinct cultural groups). There seems to be a consensus in this literature that intercultural couples encounter more relational

challenges, ranging from incompatible cultural worldviews and customs (e.g., Baltas & Steptoe, 2000; Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Falicov, 1995; Hsu, 2001) to negative societal or family reactions toward their intergroup intimacy (e.g., Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Foeman, & Nance, 1999; Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004). The notion that intercultural couples may be burdened by additional relational difficulties compared to intracultural couples (i.e., both individuals in a romantic relationship are from the same cultural group) often leads to the assumption that intimate intercultural relationships are more likely to experience conflict and, hence, are less stable or satisfying (e.g., Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Bratter & King, 2008). However, empirical studies comparing the relationship quality of intercultural and intracultural romantic relationships provide inconsistent results. While some studies show that intercultural couples are more likely to experience relational dissolution and psychological distress (e.g., Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Bratter & King, 2008), other studies suggest that intercultural couples' relationship quality is similar to, or even higher than, that of intracultural couples in terms of relationship satisfaction (Bucx & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Troy, Lewis-Smith, & Laurenceau, 2006), commitment (Gurung & Duong, 1999; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), and reported intimacy (Heller & Wood, 2000). These inconsistencies may, in part, be caused by the lack of research on intercultural couples' conflict management.

Conflict scholars (e.g., Deutsch, 1973; Laursen & Hafen, 2010; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) suggest that conflict is not innately destructive; rather, it is how conflict is managed that has a decisive impact on conflict partners' relationship quality (e.g., Canary, Cupach, & Serpe, 2001; Gill, Christensen, & Fincham, 1999;

Zacchilli, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2009) and their individual wellbeing (e.g., Roloff & Reznick, 2008; Reznick, Roloff, & Miller, 2010). Following this line of reasoning, a better understanding of intercultural couples' conflict management can provide insight into why some intercultural couples experience more relational frustration and/or psychological distress while others report their intimate intercultural relationships more rewarding as compared to intracultural relationships. However, several scholars (e.g., MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Tili & Barker, 2015) have noted that research on intercultural couples' conflict management is sparse. In addition, a majority of the limited studies that specifically address intercultural couples' conflict management study interracial couples comprised of partners born and raised in the *same* nation (e.g., Gaines et al., 1999; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Troy et al., 2006), and, among these studies, few have linked each interracial spouse's conflict behaviors to his/her ethnic culture. That is, although there is some research on intercultural couples' conflict management, the role of *culture* in these couples' conflict interactions has not been satisfactorily explored.

There are at least two reasons why a closer examination of the influence of culture on intercultural couples' conflict management is warranted. First, cross-cultural research suggests that one's ethnic or national culture often conditions his/her habituated mode of conflict management (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Kim-Jo, Benet-Martínez, & Ozer, 2010; Oetzel et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Different conflict management styles often complicate intercultural partners' conflict negotiation process because they need to reconcile not only disagreements that originally gave rise to the conflict at hand but also contrasting

expectations regarding how disagreements should be optimally dealt with (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). However, relatively few studies have investigated if, and in what ways, people would change their culturally-dictated conflict management styles to accommodate the needs of their communication partners who do not share the same cultural orientations (cf., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Chan & Goto, 2003). Given that an intimate intercultural relationship is a context where the need to accommodate each other is salient to relational partners (Bystydzienski, 2011; Gaines & Liu, 2000), studying intercultural couples' conflict behaviors could provide a more comprehensive picture of how different cultural norms of conflict management are negotiated and what factors, along with cultural, play a role in determining intercultural partners' choice of conflict management tactics. In addition, this investigation can serve as an important starting point to examine how (non-)accommodation to the partner's conflict style might influence conflict parties' relationship satisfaction and help reconcile inconsistent research findings regarding the relationship quality of intercultural romantic relationships.

The second reason why there is an urgent need for scholars to examine conflict management between partners from two distinct cultures is that standards for a given conflict management behavior's perceived constructiveness likely vary across culture (Ting-Toomey, 1994). Though there is a general agreement among organizational and interpersonal communication scholars that integrating conflict tactics that focus on open communication, emotion expression and validation, and cooperative information-seeking tend to yield more positive effects on conflict parties' relationship quality and their individual wellbeing than competitive,

submissive, or avoidant tactics (e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Davis, Capobianco, & Kraus, 2004; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Kelly, Fincham, & Beach, 2003; Roloff, & Reznik, 2008), this line of research has mostly been conducted in Western contexts and relied on Western standards to assess the constructiveness of conflict management tactics. Little is known if these so-called constructive or positive conflict management tactics would be beneficial for all conflict parties in an intercultural context that involves both Western and non-Western communicators. A closer examination of how partners in intimate intercultural relationships, especially those who are from a non-Western background, perceive the efficacy of their enacted conflict management tactics will provide valuable insight into the potential modification and advancement of theories and practices on conflict intervention that have been largely dominated by Western perspectives.

Some conflict theorists (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) argue that relational factors, such as conflict parties' power discrepancy, their relationship intimacy, and their relational culture, might modify cultural influences on people's choice and perception of conflict tactics. Relational scholars have suggested that when two individuals merge their lives into one, they are in the process of building their relational culture (e.g., Baxter, 1987; Wood, 1982). An individual's self-concept derived from a particular relational culture is conventionally referred to as one's relational identity. Though it has been proposed for some time that intercultural couples with a strong sense of relational identity are less vulnerable to relationship dissolution (Bystydzienski, 2011; Gaines, 1995; Gaines & Liu, 2000), research has been slow to differentiate different types of relationship

identity orientations (i.e., orientations toward building/maintaining a certain role in a given relationship to secure a specific relational culture). That is, research to date mainly conceptualizes that intercultural partners' relational identity is formulated by a sense of equity and a transcendence of cultural differences (e.g., Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, & Monakes, 2011; P.-W. Lee, 2006; Silva, 2009). However, some qualitative studies with intercultural couples reveal that not every partner in an intimate intercultural relationship adjusts to or respects each other's cultural identity to an equal extent (e.g., Nemoto, 2009; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). This inconsistency suggests that other types of relational identity orientations (i.e., ones that are not solely based on equality) need to be identified to allow scholars to better examine how culture works in tandem with different relational structures to influence intercultural couples' communicative dynamics, including their approaches to conflict management.

In sum, the increasing number of intercultural romantic relationships has resulted in a growing body of research on intimate intercultural relationships' functionality and the mechanisms that promote or undermine their successful maintenance. However, conflict management within intimate intercultural relationships has not been adequately explored. That is, research to date provides little information regarding (a) what conflict management tactics are utilized by intercultural couples, (b) how intercultural couples perceive the constructiveness of these enacted tactics, (c) how, if at all, discrepancies between habituated conflict management styles and enacted conflict management tactics influence intercultural couples' relationship quality, and (d) how the choice and perception of conflict

management tactics may differ based on one's relational identity orientation. In addition, a majority of the limited studies that address intercultural couples' conflict management adopt a Western-centric perspective to interpret the effects of intercultural couples' enacted conflict tactics on their relationship dynamics (c.f., Tili & Barker, 2015; Ting-Toomey 1994). This dissertation project seeks to overcome these limitations by more closely examining how cultural differences and relational identity are associated with intercultural couples' conflict management and its resulting relational dynamics via a mixed methods, two-study design. A brief overview of each study design and its respective objectives is offered in the next section.

Study Overview and Purpose of Study

The present mixed methods project seeks to understand what, and how, cultural and relational factors influence intercultural couples' conflict experience. To this end, the present project draws insight from several disciplines, including intercultural communication, conflict management, and psychological research on intimate relationships. In this respect, the present study is both interdisciplinary and exploratory in nature.

The interdisciplinary aspect of the present project suggests that a mixed methods research design is advantageous. As argued by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), mixed methods research helps bridge the schism of separate disciplines or content domains that are dominated (and potentially biased) by either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm. A review of literature suggests that intercultural communication and conflict management scholarships are primarily dominated by

quantitative studies, whereas clinical psychological research on intimate intercultural relationships is more qualitative-oriented. This methodological division may prevent scholars from various disciplines to engage in constructive conversation. As noted by Tili and Barker (2015), the intersection of the above identified research areas is largely under-researched. It is hoped that, by employing a mixed methods framework, the present project can integrate and reconcile interdisciplinary findings needed for a comprehensive understanding of intercultural couples' conflict management experience.

According to Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, and Creswell (2005), an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, in which a qualitative study is conducted before a quantitative study (Creswell, 2013; Hanson et al., 2005), is appropriate for an exploratory research project. The qualitative data, which are collected and analyzed before the quantitative study, serve to formulate an emergent theory of an underexplored topic or surprising findings; the subsequent quantitative study then helps refine this emergent theory and provides information regarding the validity and generalizability of the qualitative study results (Hanson et al., 2005). Through the convergence and corroboration of both qualitative and quantitative findings (a concept that is defined as triangulation, see Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989), mixed methods research provides stronger evidence for its conclusions.

Besides increasing the validity of research conclusions through data and method triangulation, another advantage associated with mixed methods research is its ability to “use the strengths of an additional method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by using both in a research study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie,

2004, p. 21). The qualitative paradigm has the strengths of providing contextualized and in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon based on participants' own perspective and categories of meaning; however, researchers using the qualitative methods alone may suffer from the lack of representation, generalizability, and reliability (for a discussion of how qualitative research rigor is defined and assessed, please see Chapter 3). On the contrary, quantitative methods have the advantages of a greater capability of systematically testing hypotheses and greater confidence in terms of the representativeness and generalizability of research findings if random samples of sufficient size are used. However, using quantitative methods alone can be associated with several limitations, including a greater risk of producing abstract knowledge that are not contextualized and the possibility that researchers' choice of theories and categories do not reflect participants' constituted understandings. It is hoped that a mixed methods design can benefit from the combination of complementary strengths of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms to produce a better understanding of the research topics.

Because of the above-mentioned advantages, the present project employs an exploratory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2013; Hanson et al., 2005) that is composed of one qualitative study (Study 1) and one quantitative study (Study 2). To help address the paucity of research on intercultural couples' conflict management and to better understand how the constructiveness of enacted conflict tactics are perceived from interculturally-dating/married individuals' own perspective, Study 1 was conducted using qualitative in-depth interviews to tap into the lived realities of interculturally-dating/married individuals' conflict management

experiences. As previously mentioned, extant studies on intercultural couples' conflict management were mostly conducted in a Western context, with a majority of recruited intercultural couples composed of two partners born in the same nation but into different ethnic or racial groups (e.g., Black-White interracial couples in the U.S.). Accordingly, results of these studies in terms of what conflict tactics intercultural couples utilize and how they perceive of these tactics may still be reflective of Western conflict management styles and Western criteria of constructiveness. To complement this literature, Study 1 worked with interculturally dating/married Taiwanese whose partners were from a different national culture.

Results of study 1 challenged extant literature by showing that (a) some participants reported enacting conflict management strategies that were inconsistent with their endorsed cultural values and that (b) enacting conflict tactics that were conventionally categorized as constructive or positive in Western conflict literature (e.g., open communication, emotion expression, and seeking solution) at times was linked to lower perceived relationship quality for some participants, whereas the so-called destructive conflict tactics (e.g., attacking, competition, compliance, and withdrawal) did not necessarily reduce one's relationship satisfaction. These unexpected findings suggest that new approaches are needed to more thoroughly understand intercultural couples' conflict management behaviors and their associations with relationship quality. Therefore, Study 2 was conducted to test potential explanations for these unexpected findings.

In Study 2, a cross-sectional survey with interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese was conducted to test two working models. Given that intimate

intercultural relationship is a context where prolonged intercultural exchange and, hence, acculturation can occur, Study 2 integrated Berry's (1990) acculturation model and relational identity literature (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Wood, 1982) to propose four types of relational identity orientations (i.e., integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization). Each relational identity orientation reflects different degrees of willingness or readiness to structure one's relational life based on one's and/or the partner's cultural value systems. More specifically, the first working model in Study 2 tested if one's relational identity orientation predicted his/her *actual* conflict behaviors whereas one's endorsed cultural value, as manifested in his/her self-construals, predicted his/her conflict management style *preferences*. The second working model examined if there was no one-to-one correspondence between enacted conflict management tactics and relationship satisfaction. In particular, based on insights from studies on identity gaps (e.g., Jung & Hecht, 2004, 2008; Kam & Hecht, 2009; Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008), the second working model investigated if discrepancies between one's conflict management style preferences and enacted conflict management behaviors represented an identity gap, which negatively influenced his or her relationship satisfaction.

The goals of this dissertation project are three-fold. First, it seeks to complement extant literature on intercultural couples' conflict management that has been largely Western-centric by studying a non-Western sample. Second, it aims to understand how intercultural couples' cultural and relational identity, respectively, influence their approaches to dealing with conflict. In the meantime, a theory-based typology of relational identity orientations is proposed, which may help reconcile

several bodies of literature on the structures and functionality of intimate intercultural relationships. Finally, this project suggests a new and non-Western-centric approach to understanding how conflict management is associated with intercultural couples' relationship satisfaction.

Chapter 2: Study 1 Literature Review

Based on Gaines and Agnew's (2003) definition, intimate intercultural relationships are broadly defined in the present project as romantic relationships in which the partners come from two distinct groups that the society they live in regards as culturally different. Culture is a learned system of beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, symbols and meaning patterns that is shared to varying degrees by a collective group of people and is sustained by intergenerational transmission (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Samovar & Porter, 1995; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Triandis, 1994). According to intercultural and cross-cultural scholars, culture serves as an essential frame of reference for people to make sense of their social world, to guide their reasoning and behaviors, as well as to foster a sense of common identity and continuity (e.g., Samovar & Porter, 1995; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Though culture is not necessarily bounded by geographical or national boundaries, nor is a shared biological or ancestral origin a prerequisite for one's participation in cultural learning (Fiske, 2002; Smedley & Smedley, 2005), research on intimate intercultural relationships has primarily focused on intercultural couples who represent two (or more) different nationalities, races, ethnicities¹, or religions (Sullivan & Cottone, 2006).

Because intercultural couples tend to possess different worldviews and prioritize different goals or values (Hsu, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), it is generally assumed that intercultural couples would encounter

¹ Several scholars (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; Smedley & Smedley, 2005) use culture and ethnicity interchangeably because they define ethnicity as a group's "peoplehood" marked by shared values, customs, and patterns of behaviors (McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005) and stress that ethnicity is not bounded by any fixed biological boundary.

more conflict than intracultural couples. Some of the key sources of conflict for intercultural couples include language barriers and distinct communication styles, contrasting relational rules and gender role expectations, different attitudes toward money and time, and incompatible views of (extended) family duties and child-rearing principles (Bustamante et al., 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Cools, 2006; Frame, 2004; Hsu, 2001).

Conflict refers to struggles “between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995, p. 21). Because couples tend to become increasingly dependent on each other to fulfill their needs as their relationships develop (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), romantic relationships are replete with opportunities for the emergence and escalation of interpersonal conflict (Canary & Messman, 2000). In line with this perspective, Western interpersonal conflict scholars have generally agreed that conflict is normal and inevitable in close relationships (Ridley, Wilhelm, & Surra, 2001; Sillars, 2010). A corollary of this normative view of conflict² is a belief that conflict is not inherently harmful (Sillars, 2010); rather, it is the process or the outcome of conflict management that has a more direct influence on conflict parties’ relationship. For instance, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) asserted that, when managed constructively, conflict could allow partners to prevent their relationship from becoming stagnant, to open in-depth discussion of desired areas of changes, and to clarify misunderstanding upon which

² Ting-Toomey (1994) cautioned that the normative view of conflicts might be Western-biased and that conflict is often viewed as a risky relational phenomenon that should be either avoided or managed before it actually takes place in some non-Western cultures.

commonality of interests and goals can be established, whereas incompetent conflict management could negatively affect conflict parties' relational, physical, and mental health.

The assumption that how conflict is approached determines the consequences of the conflict scenario has led to a considerable body of research on conflict management. Conflict management, according to Roloff and Chiles (2011), is a broad term referring to “the actions that occur prior to, during, and after a conflict is perceived” (p. 430). These actions are often referred to as conflict tactics/strategies³ (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2009; Sillars, 2010). Many conflict scholars have sought to associate conflict tactics with their (presumed) functionality; therefore, conflict management tactics are often clustered and categorized as constructive, integrative, positive, as opposed to destructive, distributive, and negative (Cupach et al., 2009; Roloff & Chiles, 2011). In this chapter, I will first examine two common approaches to categorizing and assessing conflict management tactics. I will then review recent research findings regarding intercultural couples' conflict management tactics and dyadic coping strategies. Finally, I will discuss why insights derived from extant literature may be inadequate to study some intercultural couples' conflict experiences.

Assessment and Categorization of Conflict Management Tactics

Given that there is a wide array of potential conflict management tactics, conflict scholars have made several attempts to categorize and evaluate these tactics

³ Sillars (2010) stated that though actions during conflict episodes are conventionally referred to as conflict tactics/strategies, conflict parties are not necessarily strategic with their conflict actions and that conflict tactics/strategies do not always represent coherent plans of action.

based on their verbal or nonverbal characteristics, their (presumed) functionality, and how these conflict tactics are perceived by conflict parties themselves. A review of literature shows that two approaches, the dimensional approach and the cognitive approach, have been typically used to organize or assess conflict management tactics. The following sections will examine these two approaches and summarize key findings of studies using these approaches.

Dimensional approach. According to Cupach et al. (2009), “[o]ne of the most important ways of understanding conflict behaviors is in terms of the major common underlying dimensions by which we interpret behavior, and the ways in which such behaviors function to influence the outcomes of conflict behavior” (p. 48). Though different dimensions of conflict tactics have been proposed and discussed throughout the literature, some (e.g., Canary, 2003; Cupach et al., 2009; Hojjat, 2000; Overall, Fletcher, Simpson, & Sibley, 2009; Sillars, Coletti, Parry, & Rogers, 1982; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994) argue that there are two ubiquitous dimensions along which conflict tactics vary: valence and directness. Most typologies of conflict management tactics focus on one of these dimensions or on their combination (Sillars & Wilmot, 1994).

The valence dimension is concerned with “the emotional and relational tone of a tactic, varying along a positive to negative continuum” (Cupach et al., 2009, pp. 48-49). A given conflict tactic’s valence is often judged or presumed based on the degree to which it is enacted in an affiliative or competitive manner, if it tends to generate positive or negative affect, and whether it is capable of reducing conflict escalation and repairing post-conflict relationship quality (Davis et al., 2004; Sillars

& Wilmot, 1994). It is commonly agreed that researchers tend to view positively-valenced conflict tactics as more constructive, such that their enactment increases the possibility of successful conflict resolution and enhances post-conflict relationship satisfaction, whereas negatively-valenced tactics are assumed to result in destructive consequences (Davis et al., 2004).

Although a one-dimensional conceptualization of conflict tactics is generally rejected (Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994), some conflict tactic typologies are created based solely on the valence dimension. For instance, the Kategoriensystem für Partnerschaftliche Interaktion (KPI), an observational coding system developed by Hahlweg and colleagues (1984) to record individuals' behaviors during problem-solving interactions, categorizes tactics into three clusters: positive, negative, and neutral. The positive category includes self-disclosure (e.g., direct expression of feelings and wishes), positive solution (e.g., compromise), acceptance of other (e.g., validating the feelings and opinions of the partner), and agreement. The negative category consists of tactics such as criticism, justification, negative solution (e.g., putting forward unreasonable suggestions for conflict resolution), and disagreement. Problem statement (i.e., neutral description of the problem at hand) and metacommunication (i.e., statements that reflect an attempt to clarify the content of a discussion) are coded as neutral. Halford, Hahlweg, and Dunne (1990) recruited depressed and non-distressed couples, defined by whether or not these couples sought marital therapy, in German and Australia. They asked recruited couples to undertake 10 minutes of problem-solving discussion and coded their conflict tactics using KPI. Results revealed that non-distressed couples in both countries used significantly fewer

negative tactics and more agreement and acceptance than distressed couples. Their results support the view that tactics categorized as negative are more likely to have detrimental effects, at least for couples in Western cultures.

The directness dimension, also called engagement, assertiveness, and activeness (Davis et al., 2004; Hojjat, 2000; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994), refers to the extent to which responses to conflict or provocation are explicit and overt. According to Cahn (1994), direct tactics tend to be considered more constructive than indirect tactics, because the former increase the likelihood that problems giving rise to conflicts can be resolved. Overall et al.'s (2009) longitudinal study with New Zealand couples suggests that the assessment and effects of direct tactics might change across time. Overall et al. had their participants discuss a personal feature of their partner that they wanted their partner to change and complete a post-discussion questionnaire indicating how successful the discussion was in bringing about changes in the feature discussed. Participants were followed up with four telephone interviews, at three-month intervals, and asked if their partner demonstrated desired changes in the feature discussed. Results showed that participants rated direct tactics as unsuccessful in bringing about desired changes in the post-discussion questionnaire. However, follow-up interviews indicated that direct tactics successfully predicted increased changes over the next 12 months. On the contrary, indirect tactics failed to predict later changes. Their findings complement the view that directness is considered more effective in resolving problems that give rise to conflict and, hence, may be valued more highly in some Western, solution-oriented, cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1994).

Researchers have consistently devised either a three-category or a four-category typology of conflict tactics based on these two dimensions (Cupach et al., 2009). A three-category typology of conflict tactics often resembles Horney's (1945) conceptual scheme of three trends of interpersonal coping: cooperatively moving toward, aggressively moving against, and passively moving away from the conflict partner (for a more detailed discussion, see Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994). For example, Sillars (1980) classified verbal acts during interpersonal conflicts into a three-category typology that includes "integrative," "distributive," and "avoidance" categories. Integrative tactics are direct and cooperative acts that include disclosure, soliciting disclosure, initiating problem-solving, expressing support and acceptance of the partner, and emphasizing commonalities. Distributive tactics are direct and verbally competitive acts that involve the use of faulting, rejection, hostile questioning, and prescriptive or demanding statements. Avoidance refers to indirect tactics that seek to minimize explicit discussion of conflict and include tactics ranging from topic shifting to denying the existence of conflict (for a more detailed summary of Sillars' coding categories, see Sillars et al., 1982).

Empirical studies using Sillars' coding system (e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Gill et al., 1999) reveal that relationship satisfaction is positively associated with integrative tactics and negatively associated with distributive tactics. Results of Canary and Spitzberg's study (1989) further showed that avoidance negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. In a more recent study, Reznick et al. (2010) compared conflict tactics used by individuals in intact versus terminated relationships and found that those with terminated relationships reported using significantly more

avoidance and distributive tactics with their previous relational partner. Taken together, Western empirical evidence mostly suggests that integrative tactics are more constructive than avoidance and distributive tactics in maintaining post-conflict relationship satisfaction and/or relationship stability.

A four-category typology of conflict tactics can be created by crossing the valence and the directness dimensions. Davis et al. (2004) classified conflict tactics into “constructive and active,” “constructive and passive,” “destructive and active,” and “destructive and passive.” Hojjat (2000)’s typologies include “positive and active,” “positive and passive,” “negative and active,” and “negative and passive” categories. Similarly, Overall et al. (2009) categorized conflicts tactics based on the positive-negative and the direct-indirect dimensions. Using a similar conceptual framework, Rusbult and colleagues (1991) organized individuals’ responses to relational discontent into four categories: “voice,” “loyalty,” “exit,” and “neglect.” Although specific tactics included under each category vary slightly across typologies, the above-mentioned researchers’ typologies bear a close resemblance to one another. Generally speaking, the constructive-active/positive-active/positive-direct/voice category includes open communication (e.g. bringing up issues that lead to conflict, expressing emotions, self-disclosure), solution-oriented behavior (e.g., gathering information, creating solutions, rational reasoning, seeking common grounds), and accepting individual responsibility. The constructive-passive/positive-passive/positive-indirect/loyalty category consists of the use of humor, forgiving and acceptance, and delayed responding. Acts such as criticizing, accusation, demeaning, coercion, retaliation, displaying negative affect, and using threats are categorized as

destructive-active/negative-active/negative-direct/exit. Finally, the destructive-passive/negative-passive/negative-indirect/neglect category involves tactics such as withdrawal, avoidance, stonewalling, yielding or compliance, self-criticizing, and concealing emotions.

Empirical evidence generally suggests that negative tactics (both direct and indirect) are associated with lower concurrent relationship satisfaction and lower concurrent perceived effectiveness of a given tactic in achieving conflict resolution (e.g., Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000; Hojjat, 2000; Kurdek, 1994; Overall et al., 2009), although some studies find that negative-direct tactics are more successful in bringing about desired changes (Overall et al., 2009) and predicting improvement of relational satisfaction (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989) longitudinally. By and large, positive tactics tend to be associated with higher perceived relationship quality, both concurrently and longitudinally (e.g., Gill et al., 1999; Kurdek, 1994). However, it is unclear if positive-active tactics are more constructive than positive-passive tactics. For instance, although Greeff and de Bruyne (2000) found that positive-active conflict management had the highest correlation with marital satisfaction, results of Hojjat's (2000) study showed that positive-passive tactics had a stronger positive association with both spouses' assessment of relationship satisfaction than positive-active tactics.

In sum, researchers using a dimensional approach to categorize conflict tactics assume that some tactics, taken at face value, are more positive and/or direct than others. Using the likelihood of achieving conflict resolution, self-reported relationship satisfaction, and relationship stability as standards of constructiveness, empirical evidence, which largely comes from studies conducted in Western cultures, mostly

supports the assertions that positive tactics are more constructive than negative tactics and that direct tactics are more constructive than indirect tactics.

Cognitive approach. Though research on conflict management has been more behaviorally-focused (Brew, Tan, Booth, & Malik, 2011), the importance of cognitive processes in influencing conflict outcomes has been increasingly recognized. Unlike the dimensional approach, a cognitive approach to conflict management holds that conflict tactics may not be intrinsically positive or negative; instead, conflict tactics' constructiveness largely depends on how they are perceived and evaluated by conflict parties *themselves* (Canary et al., 2001; Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach, 1994). Scholars embracing such a perspective often rely on a competence-based model of conflict management, proposed by Spitzberg, Canary, and Cupach (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989; Cupach & Canary, 1997; Spitzberg et al., 1994), to examine the perceptual evaluations associated with different conflict tactics (e.g., Brew et al., 2011; Gross, Guerrero, & Alberts, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 1997).

According to the competence model of conflict management, conflict tactics' functionality and conflict parties' communication competence are judged based on two criteria: effectiveness and appropriateness. Effectiveness is primarily assessed by examining if enacted tactics enable conflict parties to achieve their intended goals or to resolve problems that give rise to the conflict at hand, whereas appropriateness judgments concern if conflict tactics violate situational or relational norms (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Gross et al., 2004). Canary and Spitzberg (1987) theorized that effectiveness and appropriateness ought to be conceptually distinct and independent;

however, in reality, there is often a tension between effectiveness and appropriateness within conflict situations (Gross et al., 2004). That is, being effective at times requires sacrificing the partner's wishes or needs to fulfill one's goals, which could be a violation of relational rules and could be judged as inappropriate. In contrast, being appropriate involves minimizing imposition and showing concern for the partner's needs (Brew et al., 2011), which can be less efficient and less effective in terms of individual goal attainment. Conflict tactics that are perceived as both appropriate and effective are deemed most constructive in generating positive relational assessments. In sum, the competence model of conflict management specifies that conflict parties' perceptual evaluations of appropriateness and effectiveness should mediate the effects of conflict tactics on relational outcomes (Canary et al., 2001; Papa & Canary, 1995).

The competence model provides a theoretical framework proposing that conflict tactics' influences on relational outcomes are mediated via conflict parties' perceptual evaluations of appropriateness and effectiveness. Empirical work has tried to supplement the competence model by more closely examining how each type of conflict tactics is associated with different effectiveness and appropriateness judgments. Canary and Spitzberg (1989) had undergraduate students in the U.S. report their romantic partner's conflict tactics and their own perceptions of the partner's competence. Their study showed that distributive and avoidance tactics were negatively correlated with appropriateness and effectiveness, whereas integrative tactics had positive correlations with both appropriateness and effectiveness judgments. In addition, supporting the theoretical argument of the competence model, these episodic evaluations were found to mediate the influence of

the partner's conflict tactics on respondents' self-reported relationship quality. Other studies studying conflict tactics within intimate interpersonal relationships also provide general support that integrative tactics tend to be interpreted as more effective and appropriate than distributive or avoidance strategies by Western respondents (Canary & Cupach, 1988; Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1990; Canary et al., 2001). Gross et al. (2004) applied the competence model to a non-relational context and examined how U.S. students who were randomly assigned to work within a temporary task-oriented dyad perceived of their own as well as their co-worker's conflict tactics. They found that (a) participants judged themselves as more appropriate when they used more solution-oriented and less nonconfrontational tactics, (b) they judged themselves and their co-worker as less effective when either party was perceived as using more nonconfrontational tactics, and (c) participants judged themselves as more effective when they used more controlling tactics but their co-worker as less appropriate when they perceived their co-coworker as using more controlling tactics. These results provide additional support that avoidance tactics are generally perceived as not effective and that distributive tactics are generally regarded as not appropriate in Western countries.

Taken together, a review of Western literature on conflict management reveals that direct and solution-oriented tactics (i.e., integrative tactics, positive-active tactics) are generally considered by conflict scholars and individuals involved in conflicts alike to be more constructive, either because they are considered to be more appropriate and effective or because they tend to predict positive post-conflict outcomes (e.g., greater relationship satisfaction, immediate and successful resolution

of conflict problems). Conversely, non-confrontational or direct but competitive tactics are deemed as destructive, either because they are perceived as inappropriate and/or ineffective by conflict parties themselves or because they tend to escalate conflicts, impede conflict resolution, and have negative associations with post-conflict relational outcomes. In addition, this line of research shows that individuals tend to report that they use direct and solution-oriented tactics more often than other types of tactics during conflict interactions (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002; Feldman & Gowen, 1998; Simon, Kobielski, & Sarah Martin, 2008).

As previously mentioned, although there is a considerable body of research on interpersonal conflict management, studies on intercultural couples' conflict management are sparse. Research on intercultural couple's conflict tactics is important not only because it can help reconcile inconsistent findings regarding intercultural couples' relationship quality; it could also help refine current typologies of conflict tactics and test the generalizability of current conflict models, which are developed mainly based on studies with conflict parties that have a same cultural identity. The following section will first review the limited research on conflict management within intimate intercultural relationships and compare these studies' findings with the general trends found in the interpersonal conflict management scholarship.

Conflict Management within Intimate Intercultural Relationships

Recent quantitative studies on intercultural couples' conflict management found that intercultural couples did not significantly differ from their intraculturally-dating/married counterparts in terms of their enacted conflict management behaviors

(Bucx & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Troy et al., 2006). For instance, Troy et al. (2006) asked their interracial- and intrracially-dating respondents to fill out Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQSF; Christensen, 1987), a measurement designed to assess their tendency to engage in demand/withdraw pattern and/or mutual discussion when dealing with relational conflict. Their results showed no differences in interracial and intraracial couples' reported conflict management behaviors, with intraculturally-dating and interculturally-dating respondents reporting similar degrees of engagement in demand/withdraw pattern and positive problem discussion. In line with Troy et al. (2006), MacNeil and Adamsons (2014) found that respondents in same-race and interracial romantic relationships were highly similar in how they managed conflict. The only two differences found in their study were that respondents in interracial romantic relationships self-reported using more positive-active conflict tactics than their intrracially-dating counterparts and that those in same-race relationships were observed using more negative-indirect tactics. MacNeil and Adamsons (2014) posited that these differences might be explained by the social stigma experienced by interracial couples. More specifically, they argued that, because individuals in intimate interracial relationships often need to deal with hostility or social disapproval, they may become more skilled at managing disagreements.

Complementing these findings, qualitative interview studies reveal that intercultural couples often seek to manage their relational conflict and cope with their cultural differences through open communication, use of appropriate humor, increased cultural flexibility, self-disclosure, perspective-taking, discovering common

grounds, and integrating differences (Bustamante et al., 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; Tili & Barker, 2015). These tactics, which are mostly categorized as integrative, solution-oriented, and positive-active in interpersonal conflict management literature, are generally perceived by intercultural couples as constructive and contributing to their relational growth. In addition, these studies also find that intercultural couples sometimes use tactics such as agreeing to disagree (i.e., accepting differences as a kind of uncrossed line) and deferring to the partner's cultural preferences to manage otherwise unresolvable conflicts. Whereas Bustamante et al. (2011) and Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) stated that their participants were not dissatisfied with these passive coping tactics, Bystydzienski (2011) asserted that these tactics were less than ideal because they only prevented conflict from escalating but were "still not able to resolve it to the partners' mutual satisfaction" (p. 140). Direct but competitive tactics are less discussed in this literature, probably because most of these studies aim to "[provide] a starting point for viewing intercultural couples from a strength-based model rather than a deficit model" (Bustamante et al., 2011, p. 161) and pay more attention to tactics that intercultural couples consider to be more positively contributing to their relationship maintenance.

These limited studies on intercultural couples' conflict management appear to suggest that intercultural couples use similar conflict management tactics as intracultural couples and that both groups tend to judge integrative, solution-oriented, and positive-active tactics more positively than direct but competitive, compliant, or avoidance-related tactics. These found similarities may be attributable to the fact that

most studies on intercultural couples' conflict management were all conducted in Western contexts, with a majority of recruited intercultural couples composed of two partners born in the same nation but into different ethnic or racial groups (e.g., Black-White interracial couples in the U.S.). Accordingly, these intercultural couples' enacted conflict tactics, such as the use of humor during conflict interactions and open discussion of discontent, may still be more reflective of Western norms and standards of constructive conflict management, rather than showing a universal pattern of behaviors.

Working with a predominant Western sample (i.e., intercultural couples that are made up of two partners both born in Western cultures) to study the influence of culture on intercultural couples' conflict management has at least two limitations. First, there is abundant evidence suggesting that individuals in Western, individualistic (i.e., a cultural value that emphasizes self-fulfillment and individual uniqueness), low power distance (i.e., a cultural value that reflects a belief that power should be distributed equally) cultures and those in Eastern, collectivistic (i.e., a cultural value that emphasizes group loyalty and interdependence), high power distance (i.e., a cultural value that reflects an acceptance that power should be distributed unequally) cultures cultivate different communication styles when managing conflict, with the former group of individuals preferring more direct and solution-oriented approaches and the latter group of people having an inclination for smoothing conflict or avoiding confrontation (for a more detailed review, see Chapter 6). Limiting research on intercultural couple's conflict experiences to Western

samples restricts our understanding regarding how different cultural norms of conflict management are negotiated in an intimate intercultural context.

Second, although there is a consensus in Western conflict literature regarding certain tactics' constructiveness, it is unclear if these results would be consistent with the lived experience for people from a non-Western background. Western scholars studying conflict management often use Western standards to assert that positive tactics are more constructive than negative ones and that active tactics are more constructive than passive ones. However, Ting-Toomey (1994) cautioned that collectivistic cultures might hold a different set of standards to evaluate conflict tactics' constructiveness. For instance, whereas Western individualists with a monochronic mindset may be concerned with finding instant solutions to the present conflict, a person from a collectivistic and polychronic culture may be more likely to take a long-term viewpoint to assess the effects of conflict tactics and judge tactics that fail to lead to immediate resolution but allow ongoing negotiation beyond the initial conflict episode as constructive (Ting-Toomey, 1994).

The competence model of conflict management suggests that direct and solution-oriented tactics are judged more favorably by conflict parties in Western cultures than other types of conflict tactics because they are perceived to be more effective and appropriate. However, as different cultures may have different standards for constructiveness, the definitions and evaluations of appropriateness and effectiveness likely vary across culture. For example, effectiveness is commonly defined as whether tactics allow successful goal achievement. Members in different cultures tend to prioritize different goals, with individualists placing more focus on

personal goals and collectivists having more emphasis on relational goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). In this respect, non-confrontational tactics (e.g., smoothing, compliance) that are judged by Westerners as ineffective in getting one's instrumental objectives (e.g., generating desired changes in one's partner) may actually be perceived as effective in the eyes of collectivists because they minimize risks of offending or upsetting one's relational partner and, hence, fulfill one's relational goals. Similarly, whereas tactics that follow norms of equality and minimize power differentials may be viewed as more appropriate in low power distance culture, they may be perceived as inappropriate by individuals from a high power distance culture. Besides varying standards for effectiveness and appropriateness, Brew et al. (2011) found that their Western respondents discriminate conflict tactics primarily with effectiveness judgments and that their Chinese respondents discriminate conflict tactics using appropriateness assessments, suggesting that concerns for effectiveness may be more salient for those in an individualist culture and that concerns for appropriateness may be more salient for those from a collectivistic background.

Several lines of research suggest that people from non-Western cultures cultivate different conflict management styles and use different standards to assess conflict tactics' effects. Indeed, cross-cultural comparative research has provided some evidence that individuals from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies are often outliers, as compared to the rest of the world's populations, on various behavioral and psychological domains, such as cooperation, reasoning styles, and self-concepts (see Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan,

2010). Therefore, conclusions derived from studies with these samples may not generalize to other cultures or societies. In this respect, it is important to expand current literature on intercultural couples' conflict management and start to investigate conflict tactics enacted by intercultural couples with a wider array of cultural compositions.

Rationale and Research Question

Conflict management within intimate intercultural relationships is an important but under-researched area (MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Tili & Barker, 2015). The few studies that address intercultural couples' conflict management suggest that intercultural couples manage conflict and judge the constructiveness of enacted conflict tactics in a way similar to individuals in intracultural relationships. Although these findings represent incipient attempts to challenge a problem-based view of intimate intercultural relationships, they may be criticized for their heavy reliance on a Western context and/or Western samples, especially when there is evidence suggesting that couples' cultural compositions may influence how intercultural couples deal with conflict and how they assess their conflict management experiences (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1994). Therefore, it is critical to extend research beyond a Western context and Western samples to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultures affect the dynamics of intercultural couples' conflict interactions. The goal of Study 1 is to help address the paucity of research on non-Western interculturally-dating/married individuals' conflict management experiences, including what conflict tactics they use and how they perceive these enacted strategies.

According to Hofstede and colleagues' (Hofstede et al., 2010) research on cross-cultural dimensions, Taiwanese culture is marked by relatively high power distance, a great endorsement of collectivistic and long-term orientation values (i.e., emphasizing virtues oriented toward perseverance and thrift) and a high preference for uncertainty avoidance (i.e., a lower degree of tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity). These characteristics make Taiwan very distinctive from most Western countries. Therefore, this study chooses to work with interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese to explore the following research question:

RQ: How do interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese manage conflict within their intimate intercultural relationships and how do they perceive their enacted conflict tactics?

Chapter 3: Study 1 Method

Because Study 1 seeks to extend the research on conflict management within an intercultural romantic relationship beyond a Western context and/or a Western sample, it is exploratory in nature. According to Berry (2000), when the goal of a study is to explore a new cultural setting or to discover cultural-specific phenomena not already identified in the extant literature, an emic methodological approach (i.e., an inside approach with an aim to understand and describe a phenomenon of a culture from its members' perspective) is more suitable. Following Berry's (2000, p. 202) "culture first, comparison second" rule, the present study contends that an in-depth understanding of how non-Western interculturally-dating/married individuals understand their conflict management experiences and how they relate their conflict experiences to their relationship quality is needed before the researcher can examine if Western literature on conflict management can be applicable to interpret non-Westerners' conflict management experiences. Therefore, the present study employed qualitative in-depth interviews with interculturally dating Taiwanese to explore their conflict management experiences.

Qualitative In-depth Interviews

A qualitative interview is a data collection method that seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a given research topic from the perspective of participants, and it is ideal when research questions cannot be answered by direct observations and/or when participants need room and time to elaborate their experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Although having participants video- or audio-record their relational conflict with their partner or having them come to the lab

to discuss conflict issues with their partner could be useful methods to study interculturally-dating/married individuals' enacted conflict tactics, these methods may fail to fully capture participants' lived experience. The awareness of being recorded or the artificiality of the setting of a lab observation may lead some participants to produce unnatural behavior that does not reflect what participants would typically do in their real life. In this respect, qualitative interviews may be better able to encourage participants to reflect on their lived experiences. Researchers using qualitative interviews as their research method assume that individuals have unique and important knowledge and that this information can be ascertainable and shared through verbal communication (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In addition, given that nonverbal communication plays a large role during interviews, researchers need to take care to hear not only what is (not) said but how it is said (Berg, 2009). With active listening and careful probing, interviews provide opportunities for both detail and depth (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

A qualitative interview can be structured in various ways depending on its research objectives. Highly-structured interviews allow for systematic comparisons, but such a format interferes with interactional flows and may implicate an asymmetric power structure between the researcher and the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Because the primary goal of study is to understand interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict experiences from their own perspective, instead of systematically comparing their reports against Western standards of conflict management, the present study chose to use semi-structure interviews. A semi-structured interview combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the option

for additional or further questioning (Berg, 2009). Although semi-structured interviews tend not to result in standardized responses, they increase the ease for researchers to build rapport, with which quality data may more easily arise (Alvesson, 2003).

Besides providing opportunities for exploring rich data, in-depth interviews are associated with the following advantages. First, interview research can be conducted using various epistemological and methodological approaches (Kvale, 2007). This flexibility allows interviews to be strategically incorporated into a mixed methods study design. Second, interview is a process that simultaneously involves data collection and data analysis (Kvale, 1996). During the interview, researchers are given chances to verify whether their interpretations are consistent with respondents' constructed reality (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Third, interviews may be a useful tool to access subjugated knowledge by giving more agency to participants whose experiences have often been marginalized or distorted by large-scale research (Reinharz, 1992). Finally, the conversational or interactive nature of interviews often prompts researchers to practice reflexivity (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The ongoing perspective exchange between the researcher and the interviewees, or the co-researchers, often stimulates or requires the former to reflect on how his or her location in a particular social, political, cultural and linguistic context influences his or her normative beliefs and meaning-making.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the quality of interview data and/or research ethics of interview studies. Scholars point out that participants may evade certain questions, intentionally or unintentionally provide inaccurate information, be

inconsistent, or have incomplete knowledge to answer the questions thoroughly (e.g., Keats, 2000). In response, Mishler (1986) contended that these critiques were based on false epistemological assumptions and claimed that interview studies should be less concerned with discovering an absolute truth than providing credible reports and interpretations. Because this study seeks to understand participants' conflict experience from their perspective, I sought to follow Mishler's principle and provide undistorted reports. The present study utilized member checks to ensure study reports' credibility. Although the conversational nature of interviews has been praised for its ability to generate rich data through establishing rapport, many have been worried about the possibility that this intimacy might be taken advantage of or manipulated by researchers (Roulston, 2010). To ensure research ethics, in the beginning of each interview, participants were informed that they had rights to refuse answering any questions that made them uncomfortable.

Because of geographical constraints, the study utilized remote interviews. Upon receiving their informed consents of participation, participants were contacted by the researcher and were asked if they would like to be interviewed via telephone, Skype, or any other preferred internet phone services. Among 20 interviews completed, two interviews were conducted over the telephone and one was mediated via LINE⁴ phone service. The remaining interviews were all conducted over Skype. Despite their convenience, phone and internet-mediated interviews are associated with several limitations, including a decrease in the depth of data gathered, the loss of some nonverbal cues, and a greater difficulty to build rapport (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

⁴ LINE is a free call and message application popular in Taiwan.

To minimize these limitations, the researcher encouraged participants to turn on their web camera, if they felt comfortable doing so, and spent more time explaining the project and exchanging casual conversations prior to the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Participants were also asked if they would like to be interviewed in Mandarin Chinese or in English. All participants indicated that they preferred to have their interviews conducted in Mandarin Chinese. Interviews lasted from 60 minutes to 110 minutes. The average length of interviews was 82 minutes. Notes were taken during interviews, with additional attention given to participants' nonverbal expressions, emotions, and the researcher's impressions. All interviews were audio-recorded, with the permission of participants, and fully transcribed by the researcher to aid with data analysis. Verbatim transcription was carried out for all interviews and interview transcripts were typed in Mandarin Chinese. Participants' quotes that illustrated important codes and themes were first highlighted and then translated into English by the researcher, who is fluent in both Mandarin Chinese and English.

Participants

As this study seeks to understand interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict management experience within their intercultural romantic relationships, including what strategies they use to cope with their relational conflicts and how they perceive of these enacted strategies, the following criteria were used to select potential participants: (a) participants must have grown up in Taiwan, (b) participants must either be currently involved or have been involved in an intercultural romantic relationship (however, the recruitment script did not require participants to be in an interracial, interethnic, or international relationship), (c) participants must be at least

18 years old, and, in order to reduce confounds associated with relational dynamics unique to same-sex romantic relationships (e.g., the lack of conventional sex roles prescriptions within the relationship, Weiten, Dunn, & Hammer, 2017), (d) participants must be or were in a heterosexual intercultural relationship.

The current study utilized a purposive sampling strategy to recruit participants. The decision to use a purposive sampling strategy was based on its capability of selecting participants or cases that could provide rich information related to the phenomenon of interest (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Information about the present study and the researcher's contact information were posted on one of the forums of PTT⁵ that is designed for the discussion of intercultural romantic relationships. PTT is one of the most popular online bulletin board systems in Taiwan, with more than 1.2 million registered users and an average of 10,000 users online simultaneously (Huang, Chan, & Hyder, 2010). The forum chosen as the outlet to share recruiting information (CCRomance) is open to the public but is mostly taken advantage of by users who are or have been involved in intercultural romantic relationships to share experiences and/or seek social support.

A total of 24 people expressed interest in the current study. Despite some qualitative methodologists' recommendation that long interviews with up to 10 people should be sufficient to allow researchers to identify key themes (e.g., Boyd, 2001), data saturation (i.e., when the collection of new data does not provide additional insights, Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is more likely to be reached with a larger sample size. Therefore, an institutional review board (IRB)-approved consent form

⁵ PTT is not used as an acronym. It is the official name of the online bulletin board system.

was sent to each potential participant. Although all potential participants gave their consent, only 20 people actually participated in the interviews. The other four people could not participate because of scheduling conflicts.

All participants (4 males and 16 females) were currently involved in an intercultural romantic relationship at the time when interviews were conducted. In addition, all participants were in an international relationship. Partners' national identities, as described by participants, included: Russian, U.S. American, Korean, French, Italian, German, Peruvian-American, Egyptian, British, Canadian, Australian, and Czech. Among all participants, five were married and four were engaged, and one participant had a child. At the time when interviews took place, only eight participants resided in Taiwan and eight participants reported being in a long-distance relationship (i.e., they and their partners resided in different countries). Participants' current country of residence included: Taiwan, the United States, Italy, Canada, United Kingdom, Egypt, and France. Participants' age ranged from 22 to 37 ($M_{age} = 29$) (Please see Appendix D for a summary of participants' demographic information). All participants had at least a bachelor's degree, with 60% of them having received some post-graduate education. Countering the stereotype that individuals in intimate intercultural relationships often have ambiguous or problematic ingroup identification (e.g., Barron, 1972), most participants indicated that they either perceived of themselves as a typical Taiwanese or had experienced no difficulty fitting into Taiwanese society (Please see Appendix E).

Data Analysis Procedures

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process of thematic analysis was used to inform the present study's data analysis. The following section first describes thematic analysis and explains the rationale for choosing thematic analysis as the present study's analytic framework. Then, a brief discussion of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying this research is provided. Finally, it details how Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process was followed during data analysis.

Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative analytic method that involves searching, analyzing, and reporting themes within data (Alhojailan, 2012; Bruan & Clarke, 2006). A theme reveals important information about the data in relation to the research question(s) and it represents patterned responses found across the data set (Bruan & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis generally involves the progression from description of the data (e.g., showing patterns, providing summaries), to interpretation, where the analyst theorizes the significance and implications of themes in relation to other themes and to previous literature (Patton, 1990). Because themes emerge from data and through the analyst's interpretation, Bruan and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis could usefully offer a thick description of the data set, while allowing analysts to make social and psychological interpretations of data. Similarly, Alhojailan (2012) commented that "[t]hematic analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations" (p. 40). Because the present study seeks to discover how interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese experience and perceive their relational conflict management and to

interpret if, and how, culture and other non-cultural factors influence their conflict experience, thematic analysis appears to be a suitable analytical approach.

In addition to its ability to provide rich description and interpretation of data, thematic analysis has another important advantage: flexibility. Thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Alhojailan, 2012; Bruan & Clarke, 2006). However, qualitative methodologists advised that researchers should make their ontological and epistemological assumptions explicit in their reports (Bruan & Clarke, 2006; Holloway & Todres, 2003). Following this guideline, I briefly discuss this study's underlying assumptions.

The present study was conducted under postpositivism paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the ontological philosophy characterizing postpositivism is called critical realism. Critical realism, though assuming that Reality exists, acknowledges that Reality can never be perfectly apprehended due to flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the intractable nature of (social) phenomenon. That is, critical realism contends that "the way we perceive facts, particularly in the social realm, depends partly upon our beliefs and expectations" (Bunge, 1993, p. 231). In this respect, critical realists share similar views with constructionists in admitting an inherent subjectivity in the production of knowledge (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). Corresponding to critical realism's recognition of subjectivity in knowing, postpositivism views objectivity as a "regulatory ideal" and emphasizes on empirical replications and critics from critical community (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, the epistemological stance of postpositivism makes it applicable to guide a mixed methods study design. In terms of its methodological view, Guba and Lincoln (1994)

pointed out that when postpositivism was applied in social science, emphasis was placed on “soliciting emic viewpoints to assist in determining the meanings and purposes that people ascribe to their actions” (p. 110). Data analysis, which was informed by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) suggestions, was performed under these assumptions. Braun and Clarke’s guide to performing thematic analysis involves six steps, which are detailed in the following.

Familiarizing with the data. The first step in thematic analysis was to become familiar with the data. This phase involved transcribing, immersion, and initial note-taking. As mentioned above, the researcher fully transcribed all the interviews. Verbatim transcription was carried out for all interviews and interview transcripts were first typed in Mandarin Chinese. The step following transcription was data immersion. Immersion refers to “‘repeated reading’ of the data, and reading the data in an active way - searching for meanings, patterns and so on” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). In line with this principle, transcripts were read and re-read repeatedly throughout the data analytic process. Although Braun and Clarke (2006) advised researchers start taking notes during the data familiarization phase of thematic analysis, other qualitative methodologists (e.g., Rolls & Relf, 2006) suggest that the process of memoing and bracketing (i.e., a self-reflective process whereby researchers recognize and set aside their presumptions so as attend to the participants’ accounts with an open mind, Starks & Trinidad, 2007) should continue throughout the whole research project. Therefore, brief reflective and analytical memos were written prior to and after each interview, during transcription and data immersion, and when consulting literature. These memos were included into the following phases of

thematic analysis with the aims of mitigating biases and helping the researcher move toward a deeper engagement with the material (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Generating initial codes. This phase involved creating initial codes from the data. Codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56) and have been argued as the most basic segments of the raw data that capture something interesting or important to the research topics (Boyatzis, 1998). During this phase of data analysis, the researcher went through the data (i.e., interview transcripts, interview notes, and memos) line by line and iteratively to highlight significant concepts, statements, or quotes that seemed to capture participants’ lived experience. Along with this process, some first cycle coding methods (e.g., in vivo coding, attribute coding, and initial coding, for a detailed discussion of types of first cycle coding methods, see Saldaña, 2009) were performed to identify important features of the data and to organize data into meaningful groups. In line with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guideline, each data item was given equal attention in the coding process. After codes were generated, coded data extracts were then collapsed together within each code and were translated into English.

Searching for themes. This phase involved sorting codes into themes and collating relevant data extracts within the identified themes. First, codes were re-examined carefully to eliminate superficial or redundant codes. When a list of non-redundant codes was constructed, the researcher then examined if any of these codes contained relevant meanings and would cluster together naturally. Two principles, namely, internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, were followed to organize

codes into candidate themes (Patton, 1990). Coherent and relevant codes were integrated into common themes and/or sub-themes, whereas conceptual boundaries between themes were identified so that each emerged theme was conceptually distinctive in a meaningful way.

Reviewing themes. After candidate themes were generated, the researcher tried to refine these themes by applying the principles of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity once again. Data within themes were examined for their coherence and relevance; distinctions between themes were identified by examining their conceptual distinctions.

Defining and naming themes. This phase was the final refinement of themes, and it involved giving each theme a proper name and considering how themes relate to each other and to the research question. Another round of literature review was conducted during this analytical phase to ensure that identified themes were named in a way that (a) represented the essence of what each theme was about and (b) were meaningful to the line(s) of scholarship where the research question arose.

Producing the report. The final step of thematic analysis was to write the research report. The task of the write-up of a thematic analysis was to provide a valid and meaningful account of the story the data tell. In order to make sure that the themes and the write-ups remained true and meaningful to research participants, participants were invited to comment on the merits and the validity of the research output. Specifically, the researcher wrote up a summary of each interview and incorporated themes identified in previous steps into these summaries. According to Hycner (1999), returning these summaries to participants allows researchers to

conduct validity check and to examine if participants agree with researchers' interpretations or if there are uncaptured issues participants view as essential to the researched phenomenon. However, only two participants responded within the first two weeks after summaries were sent, commenting that they agreed with the researcher's analysis and were looking forward to reading the full report of the current study. The researcher followed up with other participants once again one month after the summaries were sent to them, and another four participants responded and agreed that the researcher's analysis was in line with their experiences. Final research reports were written after these participants' opinions were collected so as to ensure that the write-up could tell a convincing story.

Validity and Reliability

Research rigor is of great importance in both quantitative and qualitative research and is, to a large extent, determined by the validity and the reliability of a research (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Given that qualitative research values multiple interpretations and researchers' own reflexivity, some qualitative purists have argued that the quantitative concepts of reliability and validity are essentially incompatible with qualitative epistemologies (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Others recognize the need for certain criteria to assure a quality qualitative study and advocate a conceptual modification of reliability and validity for their appropriation into the qualitative paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that reliability be redefined as "dependability," which refers to consistency and transparency of research processes used throughout the project. In line with their recommendation, the researcher used

audit trails to keep records of decisions made in each research phase to achieve reliability. They also proposed “credibility” as an alternative to internal validity and “transferability” as an alternative to external validity. Credibility is determined by whether or not researchers’ accounts or descriptions match participants’ experience. The study utilized member checks in the attempt to maximize credibility. Although only six participants responded the researcher’s request for member checks, they appeared to concur the researcher’s interpretations, which provided some support for this study’s credibility. The researcher sought to enhance transferability by providing thorough but non-identifiable information about participants’ backgrounds and explaining assumptions underlying this study. These descriptions can help other researchers make judgments should they wish to transfer current findings to other contexts.

This chapter explained the utility of employing in-depth qualitative interviews to explore the present study’s research question and provided detailed descriptions regarding recruiting criteria, participant information, and steps taken in data analysis. The following chapter reports key themes emerging from data analysis.

Chapter 4: Study 1 Results

This chapter presents Study 1's findings. The research question proposed in Study 1 asks what strategies interculturally dating/married Taiwanese use to manage their relational conflict and how they perceive these enacted tactics. Inspired by past research findings that the constructiveness of a given conflict management behavior is appraised differently depending on one's culture (Brew et al., 2011; Ting-Toomey, 1994), the study seeks to understand how participants *themselves* interpret how certain conflict management strategies influence their individual wellbeing or their perceived relationship quality. Given that the goal of an in-depth qualitative research is to provide a comprehensive and detailed representation of participants' lived reality, what follows would be a descriptive analysis of what participants shared with me in terms of their conflict management experiences. To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the following report.

Seven themes of participants' reported use of conflict management tactics were identified: (a) competitive strategies, (b) avoidance-related approaches, (c) open communication and rational reasoning, (d) attributing conflict to cultural differences, (e) making mutual concessions, (f) deference to one's partner, and (g) living with an invisible line.

In line with the view that one's conflict management choices may be situationally dependent and vary depending on the importance of conflict issue at hand (Lawton, Foeman, & Braz, 2013), some participants mentioned that, although they had a general preference for certain conflict tactics, they did not use same type of conflict management behaviors across all conflict situations. For instance, Zi-Yu,

who was married to a Peruvian-American, commented that, while she tried to accommodate to her husband's requests whenever they had arguments, she became more demanding when dealing with conflicts related to financial matters. In addition, although most of the enacted conflict strategies were utilized in the hope of reducing a given conflict's detrimental influences on relational quality, some participants noted that these strategies were not ideal and that their utilization at times increased participants' distress. Therefore, the following analysis took note of how participants reflected on their feelings while enacting certain conflict management strategies.

Competitive Strategies

Although most participants, when asked how they dealt with conflict within their intercultural romantic relationships, described themselves using strategies they considered capable of de-escalating conflicts, three participants admitted that they generally resorted to tactics commonly categorized as "competitive" or "distributive" in Western conflict management literature, such as demands, attacks, and denial of personal responsibility (Sillars et al., 1982), when handling conflict with their partner.

According to these participants, competitive strategies were more in line with their personality. When asked to describe their personality, all of them told me that they considered themselves untraditional in some ways and somewhat critical of Chinese culture⁶. Hui-Min, a 28-year-old female living with her Czech husband in Taiwan, stated that she was a "rebellious" person who would often press her goals despite of others' opposition. Bo-Xun, a 33-year-old male participant studying in an

⁶ Though Taiwan was split from the People's Republic of China since 1949, many people in Taiwan still consider Chinese as their ethnic and/or cultural identity. Research suggests that Taiwanese society is deeply influenced by Chinese cultural values (Chang & Chan, 2007).

U.S. theological college and was engaged to his white American girlfriend when the interview took place, acknowledged that, before he went to the U.S., he actually preferred individualism and found many Chinese cultural values, such as Confucius doctrines and an emphasis on filial piety or obedience, disagreeable to his worldview. Nevertheless, he admitted that he still considered himself a typical Taiwanese. Yu-Jun, on the other hand, stated that she did not think of herself as a typical Taiwanese and shared with me how much she disliked Taiwanese people's indirect communication style. Although the small sample size prevented making claims of generalization, it appeared that a lower degree of identification with Taiwanese/Chinese culture might be associated with more frequent use of competitive conflict management strategies.

In agreement with past research findings that holding self-identity goals and a high concern for self is associated with increased use of competitive actions during conflict interaction (Keck & Samp, 2007; Rahim, 1983; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), these participants related their reliance on competitive strategies to handle relational conflict with ego involvement and a strong concern for self-face (i.e., concern for constructing and/or maintaining a favorable social image for oneself, Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). For instance, Yu-Jun, who was currently living in the U.K. with her British husband, acknowledged that her conflict management style was less apologetic, even when she knew that justice was not on her side or that she was responsible for the conflict at hand, because she "did not want to lose" and "was too proud to admit defeat."

Whereas cross-cultural conflict management research by and large suggests that people in collectivistic cultures prefer non-confrontation when it comes to conflict (Brew et al., 2011), Bo-Xun related his propensity to be defensive and verbally aggressive during conflict interaction not only to his personality but also to Chinese cultural influence:

I think that Chinese people, generally speaking, are not good at communicating. When we hear a different opinion . . . we tend to interpret it as a sign of rejection, and our ego gets hurt. Therefore, when we respond to other's different opinions, we resort to personal attacks . . . We like to take everything personally, because there is no such thing as discussion for discussion's sake in our culture.

Although Bo-Xun's statement contradicts many cross-cultural conflict scholars' proposition that collectivists prefer smoothing over conflict over direct confrontation, it nevertheless supports the view that a great concern for self increases one's tendency to resort to defensive, demanding, and competitive tactics during a conflict episode.

Interestingly, these participants, while acknowledging that Taiwanese society emphasizes attentiveness to one another's needs as a highly desired attribute, did not view high self-concern as inherently negative. For example, Yu-Jun commented, "There is nothing wrong about being self-centered. If you do not express what you want and compete for what you want, you are causing burden to both yourself and people who care about you in the long run."

Although conflict literature asserts that competitive tactics tend to increase the possibility of relationship dissolution and relational distress (Ridley et al., 2001),

these participants stated that they did not find their use of competitive conflict tactics negatively influencing *their own* relationship satisfaction. Yu-Jun and Hui-Min explained this counterintuitive phenomenon with two reasons. The first reason they provided was that their enacted tactics were in line with their personal principles and allowed them to achieve their desired goals (e.g., defending one's image). The second reason was that their husbands, who were from the U.K. and Czech, respectively, also considered their competitive tactics acceptable and seldom took their competitive behaviors personally. Yu-Jun and Hui-Min concluded that they were generally satisfied with their conflict management experience as well as their marriage. Compared with Yu-Jun and Hui-Min, Bo-Xun acknowledged that he sometimes felt guilty for his proclivity for retaliatory tactics in response to conflict and worried if his conflict behaviors would hurt his partner and their relationship. Nevertheless, he informed me that he and his girlfriend got married four months after his interview was conducted.

Avoidance-Related Approaches

Western literature on conflict management generally suggests that solution-oriented, integrative acts are the most frequently enacted conflict tactics; however, avoidance-related approaches emerged as the most widely used conflict behaviors in the present study. Ten participants reported using avoidance as their primary conflict management strategy. An additional four participants said that they used to resort to avoidance-related tactics before their partners complained about their non-confrontational conflict management style.

Roloff and Ifert (2000) proposed that conflict avoidance could take on three forms: withholding complaints, suppressing arguments, and declaring a topic as a taboo. However, participants in this study stated that they and their partners did not explicitly agree about which topics were off the table; instead, participants revealed that, over the course of their relationships, they had developed a sensitivity toward what topics might frustrate or irritate their partner. Therefore, they evaded these potential taboos as a way to maintain a positive relational environment. For instance, Xin-Yan, Jia-Yan, and Zi-Yu, whose partners were a Russian orthodox, an Egyptian Muslim, and a Peruvian-American Christian, respectively, stated that they would avoid bringing up conversations pertaining to homosexuality or same-sex marriage because they knew that their partners' religious backgrounds rendered these topics potentially controversial.

Although avoidance is conventionally categorized as a passive tactic and is often perceived as ineffective and inappropriate in Western conflict literature, participants who used topic avoidance looked at it as a *proactive* tactic effective in reducing preventable conflicts in their relationships. In addition, these participants seemed to suggest that this approach is also an appropriate one and related their enactment of topic avoidance to intercultural respect. Zi-Yu, when asked why she avoided discussion about same-sex marriage even though she was a LGBTQ (i.e., the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and queer community) supporter, commented:

He was brought up as a Christian and that's the main reason why he could not accept same-sex marriage. In this respect, it would be very hard to change his

mind without challenging his religion. I don't want to be disrespectful to his culture, so I would rather not initiate any conversation about same-sex marriage.

According to Roloff and Ifert (2000), withholding complaints is also a preventive conflict coping mechanism and is defined as an intended concealment of relational grievance. Many participants admitted that they had the tendency to refrain themselves from expressing relational discontent to their partners. Interestingly, participants attributed their proclivity for withholding complaints not only to cultural influences but also their *endorsed gender role ideology*. For example, Xin-Yan said that she seldom vocalized her complaints because she thought that women needed to respect their male partner. Ya-Wen, who met her German boyfriend while pursuing a post-graduate degree in Canada, explained why she tended to avoid conflict despite her boyfriend's insistence that she should be more expressive:

Traditional Chinese cultural values emphasize endurance and harmony . . . [In contrast,] German people are direct, and they expect straightforward responses, too. I remember that, when we just began dating . . . he often asked me if I had an opinion toward something and my typical response was no . . . And one day we had a serious fight, during which he complained about my inexpressiveness and asked if I would want to be myself or be someone's girlfriend. Not until then did I realize that I unconsciously applied Taiwan's gender norms to our relationship. In Taiwan, because of social pressure, women often have to censor themselves to please men.

Other participants, especially those who in a long-distance relationship, stated that withholding complaints was not particularly in line with their personality or gender ideology and that they chose this conflict tactic mainly out of relational concerns (i.e., concerns for gratifying relationship-oriented goals, such as intimacy, companionship, and relationship maintenance, Kumashiro, Rusbult, & Finkel, 2008). Yan-Xuan, recalled experiencing ongoing conflicts when she went to France to visit her boyfriend and stated:

I was very angry at him on several occasions. However, I chose not to disclose my complaints, [and I tried to tell myself that] they were no such a big deal. I felt that, since we only had two months to get together in person, it would be silly to spend our precious time on meaningless fights.

That is, the situational factor of being in a long-distance relationship seemed to increase Yan-Xuan's concern for maintaining relationship quality, and such a relational concern made her alter her conflict management approaches by motivating her to withhold complaints and avoid explicit conflict.

Participants also reported using argument suppression to manage conflict when a confrontation had been initiated. Argument suppression, according to Roloff and Ifert (2000), can take on three forms: synthetic agreement (i.e., ingenuine agreement with the view to ending a conflict), minimizing the importance of conflict, and withdrawal. No participants reported using synthetic agreement. Minimizing the seriousness of conflict was not enacted to trivialize their partner's complaints but to help participants themselves withhold their discontent, as shown in Yan-Xuan's example. More participants reported using withdrawal to suppress conflict. These

participants seemed to differentiate conflict resolution from conflict management, with many of them saying that they were less concerned of immediately solving the conflict issue than preventing the argument from intensifying. Some of them suggested that they withdrew from a conflict because they wanted to “wait for a more appropriate timing” or “wait until [they] feel more certain about the relationship” to handle the conflict issue they did not feel comfortable discussing at the current stage of their relationship.

Taken together, avoidance-related tactics were frequently used among participants in this study. These participants chose to avoid conflict either because this approach was their default conflict management style or because their relational concerns outweighed their desire to address complaints.

Despite their general reliance on avoidance to manage relational conflicts, several contrasting attitudes toward conflict avoidance emerged. Participants who said that they avoided conflict discussion mainly out of relational concerns suggested that avoidance was, *temporally* speaking, useful in achieving their short-term relational goals. However, some of them were uncertain if such an approach could be constructive, or even feasible, in the long run. And, this uncertainty negatively influenced their relationship quality. For instance, Xin-Yan, who was in a long-distance relationship with her Russian boyfriend, told me that she tried to neglect her boyfriend’s occasional racist remarks because she did not want arguments to ruin their limited time together. However, she confessed that she was bothered by her boyfriend’s racism and asserted that she would want to discuss it or else she would not consider forming a family with him.

Among participants who stated that they enacted avoidance-related tactics because these tactics were more in accordance with their internalized cultural and/or gender values, they formed different attitudes toward their reliance on avoidance. Some of these participants said that avoidance was the conflict management strategy they felt most comfortable using. Additionally, they found this tactic effective in dealing with what they thought as trivial, unnecessary, or preventable conflict, which, according to them, helped maintain their relationship quality. However, some of them, especially those whose partners were from Western countries, reported that their partners often criticized their avoiding conflict management style. Among these participants, some stated that they felt pressured by their partners' insistence on having them alter their conflict tactics, because they interpreted their partners' request for them to adopt non-avoidance approaches as a sign of forced assimilation. For instance, Xin-Yan recalled:

Russians are very direct. And, as Chinese, we tend to be equivocal when dealing with disputes . . . [My boyfriend] disliked the way I managed conflict because he thought that all discussion should be "to the point" . . . He thought I was difficult and insisted that I should be more direct. I was very angry at that moment. I felt that he did not respect me at all.

Other participants who also received complaints from their partner because of the non-confrontational way they dealt with conflict said that they had been striving to adjust their conflict management style in accordance to their partners' requests. These participants associated their continued reliance on avoidance with a sense of guilt and anxiety, as they felt that they failed to live up to their partners' expectations. These

negative feelings made some participants less optimistic about their relationship. For instance, Jia-Rong, a 31-year-old female doctoral student who had been dating her white American boyfriend for one year, shared with me that her boyfriend had been pressuring her to be more expressive about her discontent over the course of their relationship. During her interview, she expressed her frustration about “not making enough improvements” with regard to her conflict management skills.

Open Communication and Rational Reasoning

Eight participants mentioned that they used or had been trying to use open communication (i.e., openly discussing the conflict issue) and rational reasoning (i.e., resorting to logical reasoning to discover the causes and solutions to the conflict issue) to handle conflict. Some of these participants stated that they and their partners both preferred using these tactics to manage conflict. They commented that they and their partners both found open communication of concerns and discontent essential for successful conflict management and rational reasoning effective in de-escalating conflict negotiation. For example, Yi-Zhen, when reflecting how she and her French boyfriend managed conflict, recalled:

I would let him know that I am angry and why I am angry. Typically, he would apologize. Then he would want us to discuss what we are fighting about, whether it is necessary for us to continue fighting about this, and how this fight might influence our relationship . . . I really appreciate how he helps me deal with conflict rationally; it helps control my emotions.

Along with open communication and rational reasoning, other conflict management rules mentioned by participants include mutual apology before initiating opinion

exchange, collaborative analysis of causes to the experienced conflict, and “not leaving today’s arguments for tomorrow.” En masses, these participants reported enacting strategies conventionally categorized as active and constructive.

Some male participants whose partners were from other East Asian countries (e.g., Korea) stated that they preferred open discussion of relational problems as a constructive conflict tactic; however, they mentioned that open communication did not necessarily work in their intercultural relationships because their partners did not feel comfortable openly addressing their opinions or complaints. These male participants associated their partners’ resistance to openly discussing conflict issues with their partners’ more traditional gender ideology. Huang-Kai, when reflecting how his Korean girlfriend handled conflict, commented, “Korean society puts men in the first place . . . so she seems to believe that, as a woman, she needs to hold her feelings and opinions in herself.” However, even though he reasoned that his girlfriend’s indirect communication style was understandable given her enculturation experiences living in a patriarchal society, he still considered his girlfriend’s way of managing conflict to be wrong and unconstructive.

For participants who were working on increasing their use of open communication within conflict interactions, their partners were all from Western countries. These participants reflected that conflict avoidance or suppression used to be their default mode of conflict management. Some of them stated that they had learned to appreciate Western cultural values, including Western norms of conflict management, throughout the course of their relationships. That is, they experienced acculturation within their intimate intercultural relationships, through which process

they gradually agreed with their partners that their previous, more non-confrontational, conflict behaviors were not constructive. For instance, Cai-Wei, who and whose Italian fiancé were both working in the U.K., commented:

Gradually, I have become more capable of accepting my fiancé being blunt with his complaints of me. I now realize that he points out my mistakes for my own good . . . I used to hold all my feelings and opinions in myself. However, I now come to agree with my fiancé that it would be easier to work things out if both of us can be straightforward with our discontent.

Similarly, Yi-Zhen stated that she had learned from her French boyfriend that not holding negative feelings or thoughts to herself actually kept the relationship healthier.

However, some participants revealed that they felt stressed by their attempt to satisfy their partners' request for them to openly discuss conflict issues. Xin-Yan said that she had had many arguments with her Russian boyfriend because he was very dissatisfied with her inexpressiveness. In order to please her boyfriend, Xin-Yan tried to use more direct strategies to raise her worries or complains. Nevertheless, she told me that these tactics made her really uncomfortable, because they were inconsistent with her internalized cultural values. Additionally, she mentioned that having to adjust her conflict tactics made her feel that their relational structure was unbalanced. That is, although Western conflict literature generally suggests that open communication improves relationship quality, some participants in the current study actually reported feeling less satisfied with their relationship because of their enactment of open-communication-related strategies.

Attributing Conflict to Cultural Differences

While research on intercultural couple therapy contends that recognizing interpersonal similarities against the backdrop of cultural differences is an important strategy to manage differences and conflicts (e.g., Bustamante et al., 2011; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013), seven participants in this study revealed that attributing conflict to cultural differences increased their thresholds of tolerance, helped them manage their negative emotions, reduced their controlling behaviors, and motivated them to enact more accommodative tactics. Additionally, these participants suggested that paying attention to how other people from their partner's culture behave helped them figure out whether they should attribute certain conflict issues to cultural differences. Zi-Yu, whose husband was a Peruvian-American, commented:

At first, I found my husband's lack of financial plans unacceptable and I was very mad at him. As I gradually noticed that his family, his relatives, and his friends all had a similar attitude towards money, I began to understand that his more reckless spending habits were actually derived from his culture. Upon realizing this possibility, I became less irritated. I told myself, "It is his culture. It is how he was brought up. If you cannot change his culture, at least you can change your mindset and be more accommodative."

Similarly, Ya-Xin, after complaining about her Korean husband's unquestioning obedience to senior members of his ethnic group, stated, "At first, I could not understand why he could not reject his seniors' requests, and then I realized that this is part of his cultural norms . . . I understand that culture is important, so I would try to get over it." Yi-Zhen, who was living with her Italian boyfriend in Italy, said that

she had learned to attribute her partner's hot-temperedness to his Italian cultural background: "Then I realized that most Italian people are hotheaded. Well, I could not be annoyed at everyone here in Italy, right? Or else I would be exhausted. So, I told myself, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'" As shown in these transcript excerpts, an analysis of participants' responses revealed that respect and flexibility were two important co-occurring coping tactics that helped participants resolve conflict they considered to be influenced by cultural disparities.

In addition, framing conflict as arising from cultural differences motivated some participants to engage in cultural discussions. Zhe-Xuan, for instance, noted, "Without these conflicts, we did not know that there are so many cultural differences between us. Therefore, I think conflicts partially facilitate our cultural discussions." Cultural discussions served several functions. First, cultural discussion, in and of itself, worked as a conflict management tactic. Literature has suggested that attributing conflict to personal faults tends to escalate conflict discussion (e.g., Fincham & Beach, 1999). According to participants, engaging in cultural discussions inhibited this tendency to "personalize" relational conflict and reduced their use of personal attacks during conflict interactions. Second, cultural discussion functioned as a proactive mechanism that was capable of preventing future conflicts. Several participants noted that continued cultural discussion allowed them to become less ethnocentric and increased their self-awareness of what behaviors might violate their partners' cultural norms. Finally, participants stated that cultural discussions strengthened their relationships. As Xin-Yan explained:

I think discussions, cultural discussions in particular, facilitate relational development and help reduce interpersonal distance. I agree that cultural differences lead to some of our conflicts, but these conflicts prompt us to discuss our cultural differences more . . . Regardless how close we believe we are, cultural differences build an invisible wall separating us. And, cultural discussions help break down this wall.

Although most participants viewed attributing conflict to cultural factors as a constructive and active conflict management tactic, some participants revealed that they enacted this tactic because it was their last resort to cope with unresolvable conflicts. For instance, Yun-Han commented, “Those conflicts that we could not resolve or negotiate were ultimately attributed to cultural differences . . . Only by doing so can I make myself feel better.” That is, these participants were less optimistic regarding the effectiveness of this tactic in resolving conflicts; however, they agreed that re-attributing conflict to cultural differences helped them not become resentful of their partners or their relationships.

Making Mutual Concessions

Compromising involves give-and-take processes “whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision” (Rahim, 2002, p. 220). Rahim (2002) saw compromising as a less than ideal conflict management approach and argued that compromising indicated only intermediate concerns for self and others. Similarly, Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Masumoto, and Takai (2000) found that compromising, among other conflict management strategies conventionally categorized as active and positive, was rated as one of the two least appropriate and

effective tactics by both Japanese and American respondents. Despite these concerns for the constructiveness of compromising, compromising was found to be one of the most frequently enacted tactics in the present study.

Though the conflict literature often associates compromising with moderate self- and other-concerns, participants in this study seemed to suggest that their decision to make mutual concessions was actually based on high mutual concerns and respect for each other's culture. Participants stated that they made mutual concessions when they realized that both parties' positions were equally strong or reasonable, which was often a case when they attributed the cause of their conflicts to cultural differences. For instance, Jia-Yan, who was still negotiating with her Egyptian Muslim boyfriend about their incongruent gender role expectations, commented:

Though I could not completely accept his gender conservatism, I know where it is from. And, understanding that I am a foreigner and not a Muslim, he is more patient and tolerant . . . We are still negotiating. I try to make him understand that I need him to respect my autonomy, but I would also do my best not crossing his limits. For example, I will take his advice and try not to stay outside too late at night, as long as he does not prohibit me from hanging out with my friends.

Literature often focuses on the utility of using compromise to reach immediate and/or temporal solution to a single conflict episode. However, participants in this study took a long-term, or a holistic, viewpoint in their enactment of compromising tactics.

According to Ting-Toomey (1994), individuals with a long-term orientation toward conflict management "work at delicate facework moves of give and take –

reciprocating and compensating in different areas beyond the immediate conflict situation” (p. 62). In line with Ting-Toomey, participants suggested that, when they enacted compromising tactics, they were not necessarily seeking for the middle ground for a given conflict episode; instead, they sought to negotiate with their partners about in which areas they were willing to give in and how they expected to be compensated when conflicts about other issues occurred so as to ensure the overall quality of their relationships. Participants indicated that they would not mind making concessions, or even compliance, to cope with some conflicts, but they also mentioned that they would tell their partners what principles were unbreakable. As explained by Shu-Wei:

We all have some principles and bottom lines. I made clear what I insist on no matter what. I also let her know what areas I am pretty open to learn, to accommodate, and to give in. I also told her that I respect her principles as well and that I would never force her to change her rules to please me.

Though studies often suggest that people compromise because they reach an impasse in their negotiation process (Rahim, 2002), participants, by and large, remained optimistic about their enactment of compromise and viewed it as a critical step toward conflict resolution: “I don’t think our problems are unresolvable. We will find our balance as long as we both are willing to give in a bit.”

Deferring to the Partner

Seven participants said that they had a more assimilationist orientation and that they often tried to defer to their partners during their conflict interaction. Two important characteristics were noticed among these participants. First, all of them also

reported relying on avoidance-related tactics to handle conflict. Second, many of these participants were living in the partner's country when the interview was conducted ($n = 4$). In addition, for those who were currently in a long-distance relationship ($n = 2$), all of them expressed that they were considering moving to the partner's country in the future.

Several factors fueled these participants' decisions to make deference to the partner. Some participants stated that they were "accommodating person[s]" to whom the goal of wielding personal influence to change their partner was never salient. These participants seemed to hold a belief that arguments were inherently unnecessary. For instance, Yun-Han, who was married to an Asian-American and lived in the U.S., elaborated:

I don't have the motivation to argue with him, because changing another person is harder than reaching the sky. . . I am an easy-going person. If an argument is not inevitable, it would be the best if we do not fight. Fighting is useless and tiresome.

Several participants reflected that their internalized cultural values influenced their general tendency to be compliant to their partners' desires. Yan-Xuan, for example, commented, "I am the one who makes more accommodations. I think this is because I am Asian. You know, we Asian people tend to be meek." Other participants related their deference to relational concerns instead of personality or cultural factors. Xin-Yan, when reflecting how she tried to resolve conflicts with her Russian boyfriend with regards to their contrasting cultural preferences, stated:

I still identify with Taiwanese culture and this cultural identity is important to me. However, because I love him, I want to acculturate his culture. I would try to make myself identify with Russian culture and push myself to learn to see things from a Russian perspective.

The context in which they and their partner were currently living was another reason contributing to some participants' decisions to defer to their partner's cultural preferences. Yun-Han, when asked if she had ever been dissatisfied with the fact that she gave in more than her husband throughout their conflict negotiations, replied, "I think it is understandable [that I deferred more], because there is no practical reason for him to make changes. We are living in America, so there is no need for him to acculturate Taiwanese or Chinese culture." The final reason for participants' deference was a genuine appreciation of the partner's culture. These participants generally believed that the partner's culture was more correct or better and that assimilation appeared to be a reasonable strategy to resolve conflicts arising from cultural disparities. This attitude could be manifested in Jia-Rong's comment about how she coped with conflicts surrounding her partner's complaints for her not being independent and assertive:

I agree with him that I ought to know what I want and who I am. I think these individualistic values . . . are good. However, it is hard for me to live up to these individualistic principles . . . I am still trying hard to make more progress, but nowadays he does not need to remind me that I ought to be more assertive as often as he used to.

Two contrasting attitudes toward the enactment of deference were identified.

Contrasting Western research findings that compliance is viewed as a non-constructive conflict management tactic and is often negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (e.g., Kurdek, 1994), most participants who reported using deference viewed this tactic in a positive light. Among participants who deferred to their partner because they had gradually become appreciative of their partner's cultural values, deference was a voluntary decision. Therefore, they did not feel unfair, resentful, or worried about their unbalanced relationship structure.

Additionally, participants who make deliberate assimilation because they were trying to fit into a new cultural environment viewed cultural deference as an appropriate tactic with which they could fulfill their responsibility as immigrants. As for participants who reasoned that deference was more consistent with their personality or internalized cultural values, many of them expressed that they did not feel discontent with this conflict tactic or their relationship structure and that they were optimistic that their willingness to give in allowed room for their relationships to improve and grow.

However, some participants who said that they agreed to comply with their partners based on relational concerns confessed that they at times felt stressed with this conflict management tactic. Some of them complained that they felt more disturbed even when their conflicts were resolved; some expressed a frustrated hope for a more balanced relational structure in the future; some even stated that they had given up this hope. For instance, Xiao-Yin shared how her conflict with her Canadian boyfriend over proper relational boundaries was finally handled:

I really wanted us to spend more time together, but I knew this would make him really uncomfortable. And he made it clear that he would never want to sacrifice what he called “his autonomy.” Therefore, regardless how much I desired increased intimacy. . . [silence] . . . I just gave in and gave up. I am not happy with it, but I guess this is the best for our relationship.

Living with an Invisible Line

Participants noted that not every of their conflicts was resolvable. For these intractable conflicts, participants mentioned that they had learned to shift their attention from discovering the solution to finding ways that could prevent them from being absorbed in arguments and negative emotions. In these cases, participants stated that they acknowledged an existence of an invisible and uncrossable line and that, in order to maintain their relationships, they would manage to live with this division.

Although this conflict coping strategy did not carry an optimistic tone, the enactment of this strategy did not necessarily suggest that participants were not satisfied with their relationships. Some participants stated that “agreeing to disagree” was actually an agreed-upon coping tactic that allowed participants and their partners to be united, despite their unbridged differences. For example, Shu-Wei commented,

We agree that we could not solve or ignore these differences, so we accept this fact and rethink our different viewpoints as complementary. Although these differences are still there, an agreement to look past them transforms us from two fighting individuals to a couple again.

Other participants noted that, although they and their partners did not come up with explicit agreements to leave certain conflicts unresolved, an orientation toward living with incompatibilities prevented participants from being trapped in their ethnocentrism.

Interestingly, some participants mentioned that their decision to live with differences were rooted in their resistance to defer to their partners' cultural preferences and a recovery of their cultural identification. As Bo-Xun explained:

One source of our conflicts surrounds her individualistic and very American way of thinking, which I find very stupid . . . I used to think that I prefer individualism over Confucianism. However, being together with her actually made me more Taiwanese . . . I would not force her to change her values, but I am pretty certain that I would not want to assimilate into American culture and that I would never be able to truly appreciate individualism . . . Because I love her, I will accept to live with our different value systems.

Although living with an uncrossed line was used to manage a prolonged conflict, some participants indicated that an agreeing to disagree mentality actually increased their overall threshold of tolerance, which reduced the possibility for newly discovered differences to result in conflicts.

This chapter reported what tactics interculturally dating/married Taiwanese participants used to either resolve or manage their relational conflict and how these enacted conflict tactics were perceived from these participants' own perspective. The implications of these identified conflict management strategies and their influences on relationships will be further explored in the discussion chapter.

Chapter 5: Study 1 Discussion

The current project has several overarching goals. First, it seeks to help address the paucity of studies on intercultural couples' conflict management and extends this line of research to a non-Western sample. Second, it aims to understand when and how cultural influences on intercultural couples' choices of conflict tactics might be modified by non-cultural factors, such as contextual constraints or relational concerns. Finally, the present project aims to provide a non-Western-centric perspective to examine how different conflict management tactics influence intercultural couples' relational dynamics. Study 1 was designed to specifically address the first goal; in addition, it is hoped that the preliminary evidence provided in Study 1 would aid further exploration of the second and the third objectives of the current project.

To more closely examine intercultural couples' conflict management experiences and to better understand how intercultural couples themselves interpret the effects their enacted conflict tactics have on their relationship, 20 in-depth interviews with interculturally dating/married Taiwanese participants were conducted. The following section will discuss how findings of the present study verify, challenge, and complicate extant literature on conflict management and intercultural relationships. The chapter concludes with a final note on Study 1's limitations and how Study 1's findings inspire Study 2.

Conflict Management within Intercultural Romantic Relationships

Seven major conflict management approaches used by Taiwanese in intercultural relationships were identified in this study: competitive strategies,

avoidance-related approaches, open communication and rational reasoning, attributing conflict to cultural differences, making mutual concessions, deference to one's partner, and living with an invisible line. Though many of these conflict management approaches have already been identified in Western studies examining how intercultural couples cope with relational conflict and culture-related stressors (see Bustamante et al., 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013), several interesting discrepancies were noticed and deserved further discussion.

First, whereas Western interview studies with intercultural couples suggest that their participants infrequently mention using avoidance-related approaches or competitive strategies to cope with conflict (cf., Tili & Barker, 2015), avoidance-related approaches actually emerged as the most widely used conflict tactic in the current study. In addition, while only three participants reported relying on competitive behaviors as their primary conflict coping tactic, these participants, contradicting Western research findings that competitive acts during conflict interaction tend to increase relational grievance or the likelihood of relationship dissolution (e.g., Gill et al., 1999; Reznick et al., 2010), did not think that their conflict behaviors negatively influenced their relationship quality. These contrasts may be attributional to different sets of standards for constructive conflict management held by participants in current study and those in Western studies.

Although competitive tactics are generally interpreted as low in appropriateness in Western conflict literature, which often associates the enactment of these strategies with a low concern for the conflict partner's needs (e.g., Rahim, 2002), two of the three participants in current study who admitted using competitive

tactics seemed to suggest that competitive tactics were *more appropriate* for their relationships than non-confrontational behaviors. They mentioned that their partners, given that they were from Western countries, would be more appreciative and accepting of direct confrontation and that their enactment of competitive strategies were consistent with the norms and relational culture of their intercultural relationships. That is, these participants viewed competitive tactics as appropriate choices not only because these acts were in line with their personal principles but also because using competitive tactics reflected an attempt to *accommodate to their beliefs* of Western norms of constructive conflict management. If the assumption that Western cultures place more emphasis and have more reliance on confrontation holds true, individuals in Western cultures should be keener in distinguishing different types of confrontation and their respective effects. In this respect, when both spouses are from a Western background, they may be more able to differentiate competitive versus cooperative confrontation and be more aware of the possibility that competitive confrontation violates relational norms, which could potentially explain why participants in interview studies with Western intercultural couples (i.e., both partners are from Western countries) seldom report using competitive tactics during their conflict interaction.

Supporting past research findings that people in collectivistic cultures prefer smoothing over conflicts in order to maintain interpersonal harmony (e.g., Brew et al., 2011), a vast majority of participants in the current study stated that they resorted to avoidance-related approaches as a default way to handle conflict. Interestingly, besides concerns for relational quality and the partner's feelings, a greater emphasis

on conflict management over conflict resolution appeared as another reason why participants avoided conflict. In line with Roloff and Ifert (2000), participants agreed that not every conflict was resolvable or that it was not cost-efficient to confront some conflicts in their relationships. In addition, in accordance with cross-cultural conflict literature's proposition that individuals in a long-term-oriented culture may take a more holistic approach toward conflict resolution (Ting-Toomey, 1994), participants reported that deescalating conflicts or increasing relational certainty was their more proximal and salient goals, whose attainment would aid in future conflict resolution. These findings suggest that the definitions and standards used to evaluate the constructiveness of conflict avoidance may vary across culture. When judged as a conflict resolution tactic, which has often been done by Western scholars, avoidance-related approaches are deemed as unconstructive and ineffective in solving the immediate conflict issues. However, when viewed as a conflict management tactic, avoidance can actually satisfy its enactor's relational goals. In this regard, the constructiveness of conflict management strategies versus conflict resolution tactics should be evaluated with different sets of criteria. In addition, the relative importance of conflict resolution and conflict management may vary across culture and could determine how individuals from each culture interpret the effectiveness of a given conflict tactic.

A second interesting inconsistency between current study findings and results of existing Western research on intercultural couples' conflict experiences is the role of humor in conflict management. According to Overall et al. (2009), humor is an active and indirect tactic. Previous studies on intercultural couples' coping strategies

consistently suggest that humor is a positive and important mechanism to facilitate intercultural couples' negotiation of conflict issues and cultural differences (e.g., Bustamante et al., 2011; Donovan, 2004; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; Silva, 2009). However, few participants reflected using humor during their conflict interaction. Two reasons may account for this finding. First, according to Ting-Toomey (1994), conflicts in non-Western cultures are often perceived as a high-risk and anxiety-evoking phenomenon. When individuals are anxious or depressed, utilizing or appreciating humor may be more difficult (Levine, 1969). Second, because each culture has its own unwritten rules toward humor construction, what is funny in one culture may appear pointless, puzzling, inappropriate, or even offensive to foreigners who lack enough cultural knowledge to notice or appreciate the nuances behind these jokes (Nevo, Nevo, & Yin, 2001). Indeed, several participants stated that contrasting senses of humor was actually an area of their interpersonal conflict. For example, Zi-Yu and Yi-Zhen, whose partners were a Peruvian-American and an Italian, respectively, both complained that they found their partners' jokes meaningless and annoying. In this respect, although humor is generally considered a constructive conflict tactic in Western literature, it may lead to some counter-constructive effects to intercultural couples who have incongruent senses of humor.

While previous research reveals that intercultural couples at times attribute their conflict to cultural factors and that this attribution encourages intercultural couples to make some compromise and mutual concessions in their relationships (e.g., Silva, 2009), participants in the current and previous Western studies viewed compromising differently. For instance, Bustamante et al. (2011) equated

compromise with deference to one's partner. However, participants in the current study distinguished compromise from compliance. More specifically, participants understood compromising with a more holistic perspective, with which they saw occasional deference as acceptable as long as their partners were willing to reciprocate respect and consideration toward participants in other situations. That interpretation is in line with Ting-Toomey's (1994) argument that collectivists take a long-term view to deal with conflict. Participants in the present study did not see compromise as a conflict management tactic targeting single conflict episodes but rather viewed it in terms of a continuing process of relationship building. In this respect, the constructiveness of certain conflict tactics is evaluated based on their longitudinal effects in some collectivistic cultures. Therefore, judging a conflict strategy's constructiveness based on its immediate outcome may risk reflecting a solely Western-centric perspective.

Notwithstanding the above-discussed disparities, the present study found several important convergent findings consistent with extant qualitative research on intercultural couples' conflict management. First, as previously mentioned, participants in current and extant studies stated that they relied on cultural attribution to manage conflict and that this tactic encouraged them to be more flexible and use more accommodative acts within conflict interactions. These findings provide additional support that non-dispositional causal attribution of conflict motivates conflict parties to enact cooperative conflict responses (e.g., Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). Moreover, they present some evidence for the validity of an appraisal approach to studying conflict interaction in an intercultural context.

Second, in line with Bustamante et al. (2011) and Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013), results of the current study revealed that participants who deferred to one's partner to resolve conflict did not necessarily have lower relationship satisfaction. In addition, as Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) and Bystydzienski (2011) found that some intercultural couples preferred retaining their separate cultures when dealing with conflicts arising from cultural disparities, some participants in the current study also revealed that they at times handled conflict with a "agree to disagree" mentality. These convergent findings show that cultural separation or one partner's singular assimilation defines some intercultural couples' relationship culture (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013) and challenge the view that the formation of "a third-culture," which is characterized by equality and intercultural integration (Casmir, 1999; S. Lee, 2006), is necessary for a successful intercultural relationship. This implication indicates that intercultural relational scholars should extend their research foci to a wider array of relational cultures and examine if the same conflict management tactics will function differently depending on said relational cultures.

Finally, as previous research often suggests that intercultural couples cope with their relational difficulties with open discussion (e.g., Silva, 2009; Tili & Barker, 2015), open communication and rational reasoning emerged as the second most frequently reported conflict management tactic in the current study. Interestingly, among participants who stated that they sought to manage conflict by directly voicing their opinions, many of them reflected that they used to handle conflict with more avoidance-related strategies. That is, some intercultural couples engaged in open

discussion because they sought to adjust to their partners' conflict management approaches with a view to easing their conflict interactions. In this respect, what appeared as a more assertive communicative act might actually be a result of accommodation or compromise. This indicates a possibility that how a certain conflict tactic map onto the direct-indirect and the positive-negative dimensions may differ in an intracultural and an intercultural contexts.

In sum, participants in the current study reported using a wide array of tactics to manage their relational conflicts. The following section discusses what factors might be related to participants' choices of conflict strategies.

Culture, Gender Ideology, and Relational Concerns on Conflict Management

Extant literature on cross-cultural conflict management assumes that people in a collectivistic culture have a general tendency to deal with conflict with non-confrontational tactics, such as avoidance and compliance (see Chapter 6 for a more thorough review). Results of the present study showed that participants, though all born in Taiwan and raised in a collectivistic culture before their young adulthood, exhibited a wide range of orientations toward their relational conflict management. Although some participants reported that they were inclined to giving in to their partners' preferences or suppressing relational complaints, others stated that they preferred living with differences or competing for interpersonal influence to compromising and avoidance. These results point out that cultural-level analyses alone could not provide a comprehensive explanation for participants' divergent conflict responses (Oetzel, Dhar, & Kirschbaum, 2007), at least in an intimate interpersonal context.

One important factor that could complement cultural influences to explain individual variability in orientations toward conflict management is their endorsed gender role ideology. Some female participants reflected that they had internalized conservative gender ideologies, with which they developed a belief that women were obliged to avoid displeasing their partners, either through submission or suppressing complaints. This belief partially accounted for some female participants' greater proclivity for deference and avoidance-related approaches. Some male participants stated that they engaged in and encouraged their female partners, who were from other East Asian countries (e.g., Korea), to use more open communication to manage their relational conflict. These male participants associated their preference for their partners' expressiveness with their own gender egalitarianism and/or their partners' gender conservatism. Taken together, results of the present study imply that gender role ideologies could be a potential factor influencing some people's conflict management styles. In this respect, although previous literature only discusses incongruent gender ideologies as a frequently reported source of conflict in intimate intercultural relationships (Bustamante et al., 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Frame, 2004), intercultural couples' contrasting gender ideologies may make them enact conflicting conflict management tactics and complicate their conflict negotiation processes.

It is also important to note the potentially ironic effects of gender conservatism on successful conflict management and relationship maintenance. Among female participants who reported resorting to avoidance or compliance as their primary way to handle conflict because they wanted to please their partners,

many of them recalled being criticized by their Western male partners for their non-confrontational conflict management style. That is, these female participants' gender conservatism ironically intensified their relational conflict because it violated Western norms of constructive communication and gender egalitarianism (comparatively speaking).

This finding also reveals a dilemma some female Taiwanese whose partners are from Western countries may have to face. Their intersecting identities as a female member in a patriarchal society and as an Easterner dating a Westerner might make them struggle between two forms of disempowerment. According to Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality refers to a tendency that a person's multiple subjugated social identities simultaneously interact with one another to create a multidimensional form of oppression. Being a woman in a patriarchal society could make some female participants feel obliged to follow traditional gender role divisions. However, some of them confessed feeling guilty of their internalized gender conservatism, as it could be taken as a sign of their compliance in the oppressive patriarchal system. Being an Asian dating a Westerner in an era of Western-dominated globalization (Hogarth, 2013), some participants reflected feeling pressured to give up their more traditional Chinese values, including their gender conservatism, to assimilate Western norms and ideologies. However, this assimilation also resulted in some participants' uneasiness, as it implied their submission to Western cultural imperialism. That is, for some interculturally-dating/married female Taiwanese, their intersecting identities as a female member in Taiwan and a Westerner's romantic partner made them struggle between two contrasting gender role expectations and an adherence to either set of

gender ideology seemed to result in some dissonance. In addition, because gender ideology could be a potential factor influencing a person's choice of conflict tactics, uncertainty of the expected gender role might plausibly destabilize intercultural couples' conflict management experience and their relational dynamics.

Another critical factor influencing participants' strategic choices of conflict tactics is their concern for the relationship or the partner. Many participants admitted that their enacted conflict tactics were inconsistent with their internalized values and that they enacted these tactics because they wanted to satisfy their partners' communication needs, to show respect to their partner's face or image, and to meet their partners' expectations of them. Although intercultural conflict scholars (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) have proposed for some time that cultural influences on situational conflict behaviors could be affected by relational factors, such as the power differentials or the intimacy of the conflict parties, empirical studies have been slow to incorporate this proposition (cf., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Oetzel et al., 2001). Results of Study 1 present some evidence that a high concern for one's relational partner could motivate some individuals to modify their culturally-conditioned conflict management behaviors. Additionally, one's concern for the relational partner seemed to play an important role in determining intercultural couples' relational culture, with participants who had a higher concern for their partner having a tendency to show an assimilationist or integrative orientation toward their intimate intercultural relationship.

Taken together, results of Study 1 reveal that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese enacted a wide range of conflict tactics and that extant cross-cultural

conflict literature's proposition that people in collectivistic cultures rely on non-confrontational tactics to manage conflicts does not satisfactorily explain this found diversity. More importantly, results suggest that one's concern for his/her intercultural partner might modify his/her culturally-dictated conflict management style and could determine his/her orientation toward their intercultural romantic relationship (i.e., one's relational identity orientation). Although it is speculative, an individual's relational identity orientation, instead of his/her cultural identity, may be a stronger predictor of what tactics he or she would actually enact when handling relational conflicts. This possibility will be elaborated more thoroughly and tested in Study 2.

Conflict Management and Relationship Quality

Although participants reported using conflict tactics commonly interpreted as non-constructive, non-effective, and/or non-appropriate in Western literature, such as competitive acts, avoidance, and deference (e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Davis et al., 2004), findings suggest that an enactment of these strategies did not uniformly and negatively influence participants' subjective relationship satisfaction. For instance, although some participants, especially participants who agreed with their partners that confrontation was a more appropriate and effective conflict response, stated that they at times felt unsatisfied or even guilty when they unconsciously relied on avoidance to cope with relational conflict, other participants indicated that they found conflict avoidance capable of helping them reduce unnecessary arguments and maintain an overall positive relational environment. Similarly, among participants who primarily coped with their relational conflict through deference, those who

showed a sincere appreciation of partners' (cultural) ways of behaving and those who suggested that they had a more accommodating personality reported feeling content with this conflict management approach, whereas the remaining participants reported feeling stressed or frustrated. Interestingly, strategies commonly believed to be constructive, such as voice and engaged discussions, sometimes induced negative feelings among participants who found it uncomfortable to articulate their relational complaints.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the association between the so-called (non-)constructive coping strategies and relationship satisfaction is likely to be not linear (Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000). Therefore, it may be insufficient to solely focus on analyzing the face value of conflict responses. As revealed by the present findings, sometimes interculturally-dating/married individuals would enact conflict management strategies that are not in line with their endorsed values because of their concerns for the relational partner. Moreover, the discrepancy between enacted strategies and their conflict management preferences may create a sense of dissonance, which may negatively influence individuals' relationship satisfaction. This possibility will be elaborated more thoroughly and tested in Study 2.

Limitations and Inspiration for Study 2

Notwithstanding important implications of the present study's findings, some limitations must be noted. First, the sample of the present study was predominantly young and highly educated. In addition, a vast majority of the participants were female. Although these characteristics are in line with previous research findings suggesting that those who are young and have a higher education level are more

positive toward intercultural romantic relationships (e.g., Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, 1992) and that Asian women have a greater outmarriage rate with whites than their male counterparts (e.g., Heaton & Jacobson, 2000), a homogeneous sample limits a study's external validity. Second, despite the suggestion that studies examining intimate interpersonal relationships should use the dyad as their unit of analysis (e.g., Tili & Barker, 2015), language barriers prevented the researcher from conducting interviews with each of participants' partners. Indeed, dyadic analysis is more tenable for research that targets intercultural relationships consisted of partners from two specific cultural groups (e.g., intercultural relationship involving a European-American and an African American, Bell & Hastings, 2011) or when the study is conducted by a large research teams where co-researchers have knowledge of a variety of languages. Third, because of geographical restraints, all interviews were conducted via telephone or internet-mediated phone services, which ultimately resulted in some information loss (e.g., nonverbal cues) and a greater difficulty to develop rapport (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Moreover, because the researcher is not personally involved in an intercultural romantic relationship, her outsider status might have impacted participants' willingness to disclose information to the level of detail preferred. Nevertheless, the researcher had enacted several strategies, such as encouraging participants to turn on their web-cam or trying to build rapport before an interview took place, to minimize these potential limitations. Finally, although cultural collectivism (COL) and individualism (IND) were used as an explanatory framework to discuss participants and/or their partners' conflict management preferences, collectivism and individualism were not measured in the

current study. This post hoc explanation limits the researcher's confidence in attributing the study's findings to the COL-IND dimension. Study 2 will seek to address this limitation by directly measuring participants' endorsed collectivistic and individualistic values, as manifested in their interdependent and independent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The present study found two unexpected findings that could not be satisfactorily explained by extant literature. First, although cross-cultural research on conflict management suggests that individuals in a collectivistic culture have great inclination toward avoidance and/or compromising when dealing with conflicts, results reveal that some participants showed a stronger preference for confrontation or non-accommodation. Second, it was found that the so-called (non-)constructive coping strategies did not seem to have uniform influence on relationship satisfaction. That is, tactics that are conventionally categorized as constructive at times decreased some (but not all) participants' reported relationship satisfaction, whereas strategies that are often classified as nonconstructive were actually related to some (but not all) participants' relationship satisfaction. Potential explanations to these surprising findings were discussed in the previous sections. Study 2 will utilize a cross-sectional survey design to test hypotheses that might potentially explain these unexpected findings found in Study 1.

Chapter 6: Study 2 Literature Review

Cross-cultural research provides ample evidence that culture influences individuals' habituated modes of conflict management (e.g., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Cai & Fink, 2002; Kim-Jo et al., 2010; Oetzel et al., 2001; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). In other words, a culture's underlying values and norms influence its members' conflict expectations and general beliefs regarding how conflicts should be handled. These beliefs and expectations construct individuals' conflict management style. Despite important theoretical contributions advanced by this body of literature, some critics (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002; Oetzel et al., 2007) note that a great number of cross-cultural studies on conflict management style rely on a priori categorization of cultures based on some value dimensions (e.g., IND-COL, power distance) rather than directly measuring what cultural values individuals internalize.

Studies using a priori categorization of cultures to examine cultural effects on conflict management style have been criticized for the following reasons. First, they do not account for the fact that cultural values and norms are internalized to varying degrees by members of the same cultural group (Brumann, 1999; Saint-Jacques, 2012). Second, except a few exceptions (e.g., Kim-Jo et al., 2010), this line of literature tends not to take into consideration that individuals can incorporate more than one cultural value system (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000) through the influence of globalization and/or prolonged first-hand intercultural contact (Berry, 2008; Saint-Jacques, 2012). That is, research relying solely on cultural-level comparisons provide insufficient information regarding what conflict

management style(s) biculturals cultivate. Third, studies using a priori categorization of cultures may fail to address a possibility that, for some individuals, newly internalized cultural values could be more influential in determining their conflict styles than conflict management norms prescribed by their culture of origin. Finally, these studies are primarily cross-cultural in nature (Oetzel et al., 2007), with few actually examining how intercultural interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds influences one's conflict management behaviors (cf., Brew & Cairns, 2004). Therefore, these studies provide limited information regarding how prolonged intercultural interaction influenced individuals' internalized cultural system(s) and their conflict management behaviors.

These above-mentioned limitations restrict the power of extant (cross-cultural) conflict style theories in explaining or predicting intercultural couples' behaviors within their conflict interactions. Because romantic relationships are primarily interactive and interdependent in nature (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), both cultural and relational factors may simultaneously influence intercultural couples' choice of conflict tactics. That is, cultural-level analyses alone could not comprehensively explain intercultural couples' conflict behaviors. As Study 1 found, my interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese participants, though having the same national-cultural identity, enacted divergent conflict tactics, from competitive acts to deference, to deal with their relational conflict. In addition, intimate intercultural relationships involve prolonged first-hand intercultural contact; therefore, they can be viewed as a site where one can engage in acculturation and cultural (un)learning (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; P.-W. Lee, 2006). In this respect, it may be misleading to

assume that intercultural couples will invariantly adhere to their original culture's values throughout the course of their romantic relationships. Indeed, as results of Study 1 reveal, some people in an intimate intercultural relationship might choose to adjust their conflict management behaviors based on their partners' cultural norms or practices owing to a high concern for their partners and/or increased intercultural appreciation.

To overcome these limitations, the present study seeks to explore how cultural and relational factors may work in tandem to influence intercultural couples' conflict responses. To this end, a new concept— intercultural couples' relational identity orientations— is proposed. Drawing on insight derived from research on intercultural couples' relational culture (e.g., Gaines, 1995) and Berry's (1990) acculturation model, the present study theorizes that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational orientations (a) reflect their internalized cultural values as well as their concerns for self and the partner and (b) influence their orientations toward structuring their relational life in accordance to their and/or their partners' cultural principles. More specifically, the current study hypothesizes that interculturally-dating/married individuals' internalized cultural values, which are manifested by their self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), would predict their *preferred* conflict management styles, whereas their relational identity orientations would influence their *actual* conflict behaviors. Finally, inspired by literature on identity gaps (e.g., Jung & Hecht, 2004), the current study examines how discrepancies between one's conflict style preferences and the actual conflict behaviors might manifest the

existence of personal-enacted identity gaps, which could negatively influence his/her relationship satisfaction.

The goals of the present study are to understand how cultural and relational identity orientations influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' responses to relational conflict and, hence, their relationship satisfaction. Because past research has consistently documented that people from collectivistic and individualistic cultures tend to have different conflict management styles (e.g., Kim & Leung, 2000; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003), an examination of conflict behaviors exhibited by individuals in a COL-IND intercultural relationship can shed light on how cultural effects on people's conflict responses are modified by relational factors (e.g., Brew & Cairns, 2004). Therefore, the present study will examine conflict management within COL-IND relationships. Because the present study intends to examine working hypotheses inspired by Study 1's findings, the sample of Study 2 was composed of Taiwanese whose partner is from an individualistic culture.

Conflict Management Styles

Conflict management style refers to individuals' habitual inclination for using similar conflict management tactics across various conflict situations (Cupach et al., 2009; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Unlike studies on conflict management tactics, which tend to focus on classifying and assessing conflict tactics actually enacted during conflict interactions (see Chapter 2), research on conflict management styles is more concerned with exploring factors that shape or modify individuals' habitual conflict management modes. Sternberg and colleagues' fundamental studies (i.e., Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Sternberg & Soriano, 1984) showed that individuals

exhibited strong preferences for certain conflict management tactics over others and that these preferences were consistent across different relationship types and conflict domains. Sternberg and Dobson (1987) conducted three experiments to empirically examine people's consistency in their styles of resolving interpersonal conflicts. In the first experiment, they employed a within-subject design and had participants recall recent conflicts with a same-sex peer, an opposite-sex peer, and a parent; participants were then asked to describe how they *actually* resolved these conflicts and how they *ideally* would have had resolved these conflicts. Results revealed that participants' preferences for resolution styles were correlated (r s ranging from .84 to .98), both across the three types of interpersonal relationships and across the actual and ideal modes of conflict resolution. Their second experiment replicated and extended the first experiment. Specifically, they had participants report actual conflicts they had with parents, teachers, roommates, and romantic partners and described how they resolved these conflicts. Participants were then presented with eight hypothetical situations and were asked to describe how they would handle these situations. Results revealed that correlations between conflict resolution styles across all interpersonal relationships were significant in real conflict situations. Since Sternberg and colleagues' seminal studies, research has gathered consistent support that people tend to manage conflicts in a persistent manner (e.g., Canary et al., 2001).

Many conflict researchers classify individuals' conflict management styles based on a two-dimensional framework (Cupach et al., 2009; Holt & Devore, 2005). Blake and Mouton (1964) applied a two-dimensional framework to develop a dual concern model of conflict management in an organizational setting. Their model

suggests that how an organizational conflict is managed is based on an organizational manager's concern for productivity and his or her concern for people. Building on Blake and Mouton's (1964) model, Thomas (1976) theorized that individuals' orientations toward assertiveness (i.e., attempting to satisfy one's own concerns) and cooperativeness (i.e., attempting to satisfy the other party's concerns) determined their conflict management styles. Integrating these models and Pruitt's (1983) dual concern theory, Rahim (1983; 2002) differentiated individual's conflict management styles on two independent dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. Because cross-cultural conflict scholars often draw on Rahim's model as an analytic framework to explain cross-culture differences in conflict styles (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002; Kim, Lee, Kim, & Hunter, 2004; Kim, Wang, Kondo, & Kim, 2007; Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-Jung, 2001), the present study utilizes Rahim's model as its main theoretical grid of conflict management styles.

Rahim's dual concern model of conflict management styles is based on the assumption that the two basic dimensions (i.e., concern for self and concern for others) can reliably predict how an individual would typically handle a conflict issue at hand. Crossing these two dimensions results in five conflict management styles: integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising. According to Rahim (2002), integrating is a conflict management style characterized by a high concern for self and a high concern for the conflict partner. Individuals with an integrating style are theorized to have a greater focus on finding an optimal solution that could potentially satisfy both parties' interests. Dominating style is assumed to reflect high self-concern and low other-concern and is associated with greater use of distributive

tactics, such as threats and demands, to “win” the conflict situation. An obliging style is defined by a low concern for self and a high concern for the other party and is associated with a tendency to manage conflict by giving in to the other’s desires. Compromising involves making mutual concessions to reach a middle ground acceptable to both parties. Based on Rahim’s model, compromising reflects moderate self- and other-concerns⁷. Finally, Rahim defined avoiding as a style characterized by withdrawal. Cross-cultural studies have found that avoiding functions differently for individualists and collectivists (Kim & Leung, 2000; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Although individualists tend to view avoiding as reflecting low concerns for self and the conflict partner (Rahim, 1983), collectivists often see avoiding as an approach to protect interpersonal harmony and/or the face of one’s interactant (Ting-Toomey, 1994). Indeed, empirical evidence supports the view that other-face is positively associated with an avoiding conflict style (e.g., Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Peng & Tjosvold, 2011). Following Ting-Toomey’s suggestion, the present study assumes that, for collectivists, an avoidance style is associated with a high degree of concern for the conflict partner.

Cultural Influences on Conflict Management Styles

Research generally suggests that one’s conflict management style is learned through the process of socialization (Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Socialization is an ongoing process of adjustment as a result of one’s interaction with his or her cultural and social environment (Camilleri & Malewska-

⁷ Though Rahim conceptualized compromising style as reflecting intermediate concerns for self and other, some participants in Study 1 suggested that their use of compromising-related tactics was based on high concern for their partner and a great respect for the partner’s culture.

Peyre, 1997). Hence, the role of cultural influences on individuals' conflict management styles is emphasized by many cross-cultural psychologists and communication scholars (for a review, see Kim & Leung, 2000). A great number of these cross-cultural studies rely on Hofstede's cultural dimensions to examine cultural differences in conflict styles (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Oetzel et al., 2007). Among Hofstede's proposed cultural dimensions, power distance and IND-COL are two value orientations most commonly used to explain or predict individuals' conflict styles (e.g., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Merkin, 2006; Oetzel et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

Power distance (PD) is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 61). That is, people in a small PD culture prefer equal rights and symmetrical relational structures, whereas individuals in a large PD culture tend to accept asymmetrical, or even hierarchical, relationships and may adjust their degree of assertiveness depending on the status of their interactants (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

Incorporating the dimension of PD into her face-negotiation theory, Ting-Toomey and colleagues (Oetzel et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) proposed that individuals in small PD cultures, because of their greater preferences for horizontal-based facework interaction (i.e., informal interaction seeking to simultaneously maintain/restore communicators' public images and minimize their power differentials), would be more likely to use dominating conflict management style than members in large PD cultures. On the contrary, because large PD cultures emphasize

conformity and submissiveness to authorities, members of a large PD culture would have greater acceptance of vertical facework (i.e., formal interaction seeking to simultaneously maintain/restore communicators' public images and respecting their power differentials) and non-confrontational conflict management styles. To empirically examine how the PD dimension influences interpersonal facework, Merkin (2006) recruited respondents from six countries with different levels of PD, evaluated by Hofstede's (1994) Value Survey Module (VSM 94), and measured their responses to a hypothetical, face-threatening situation (i.e., knocking over a glass of red wine to creating a scene in an upscale restaurant). Partially supporting Ting-Toomey and colleagues' propositions, Merkin (2006) found that individuals from high PD cultures were more likely to prefer non-confrontational and/or cooperative strategies than people from small PD cultures. However, Merkin's study revealed that members of large PD cultures were also more likely to respond to a conflict situation with confrontational strategies. Similarly, Oetzel et al. (2001) found that PD was positively associated with both avoiding and dominating styles. These results suggest that, besides examining the main effect of PD, researchers should also consider how PD might interact with the one's status vis-à-vis his/her interactants' to influence his/her conflict management responses (e.g., Brew & Cairns, 2004).

Although PD has served as an important conceptual grid for many cross-cultural conflict studies, support for the effects of PD on conflict styles primarily comes from studies that investigate conflict in an organizational or workplace setting (e.g., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Kim et al., 2007; Oudenhoven, Mechelse, & de Dreu, 1998). Studies examining conflict within close interpersonal relationships, however,

suggest that power distance only had small effects on individuals' conflict management styles (Oetzel et al., 2001; Oetzel et al., 2003). For example, Oetzel et al. (2003) studied conflict within family interaction and hypothesized that endorsement of power distance should predict the use of dominating facework strategies (i.e., aggression, expression, and defend). However, power distance only predicted one dominating facework and the effect size was small (aggression, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$). In this respect, as romantic relationships are typically characterized by a high level of interpersonal intimacy (Moss & Schwebel, 1993), intercultural couples' endorsement of PD may not be a particularly useful predictor of their tactics in response to relational conflicts. Given that individual-level collectivism and individualism, as manifested by ones' self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), are consistently found as stronger predictors of individuals' conflict management styles in interpersonal relational contexts (e.g., Gudykunst et al., 1996; Oetzel et al., 2001; Oetzel et al., 2003), the present study will focus on examining how self-construals influence intercultural couples' conflict management styles.

Numerous cross-cultural studies have provided theoretical and empirical evidence that value orientations of individualism and collectivism are associated with individuals' conflict management styles (for a review, see Kim & Leung, 2000). Individualism refers to broad value tendencies that emphasize independence over interdependence, a unique personal identity over group memberships, and personal goals over group goals, whereas collectivism is a social pattern consisting of closely-linked individuals who give priority to interpersonal harmony, group loyalty, and collective goals over their individual interests (Triandis, 1995). That is, it is assumed

that collectivists would place more emphasis on the “we” identity and would show a great concern for others, while individualists would be more likely to stress the importance of the “I” identity and self-concern (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Building on the work of cultural IND-COL, studies analyzing the effects of an internalization of individualistic and/or collectivistic values show that a relative orientation toward self and/or interpersonal relationships places great influence on individuals’ cognition and social interaction (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In sum, cross-cultural literature on IND-COL suggests that people in collectivistic cultures have great concerns for their ingroup members; in comparison, people from an individualistic background are assumed to possess a greater concern for self and a lesser concern for others. Rahim’s dual concern model of conflict management styles proposes that individuals with high self-concern would be more likely to develop a direct and competitive conflict management style, whereas those who with a high concern for their partner are posited to be more oriented to handling conflict with non-confrontational styles. Integrating these two lines of reasoning, cross-cultural conflict researchers (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) contend that people from individualistic cultures use more dominating conflict style than members of collectivistic cultures and that people from collectivistic cultures use more avoiding and obliging styles than their counterparts in individualistic cultures when dealing with conflict with ingroup members. Although some studies occasionally reveal surprising findings that individualists may prefer avoiding more so than collectivists (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002; Lee & Rogan, 1991), results of empirical studies

have provided general support to these predictions (e.g., Holt & DeVore, 2005; Kim-Jo et al., 2010; Oetzel et al., 2001; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). For instance, Kim-Jo et al. (2010) conducted a cross-national survey and compared Koreans' and European-Americans' conflict management styles. They found significant main effects of culture on competing and avoiding styles, such that European-Americans reported significantly more use of competing style and that Koreans reported significantly more use of avoiding style. Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) recruited 768 respondents from China, Japan, Germany, and the United States to participate in their survey study. Results of their study revealed that culture had a direct effect on avoiding style. Respondents from collectivistic cultures reported using more avoiding than respondents from individualistic cultures.

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, solely relying on cultural-level of IND-COL to explain people's conflict management styles can be criticized for its inability to address within-culture individual variability (e.g., Fiske, 2002; Saint-Jacques, 2012) and for its limited utility to explain or predict biculturals' (i.e., individuals who internalize more than one set of cultural value system, Hong et al., 2000) conflict responses (Kim & Leung, 2000; Kim-Jo et al., 2010). Therefore, some scholars advise measuring IND-COL at an individual level (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002). Self-construal is theorized as an individual-level cultural orientation that explains or mediates the effects of IND-COL on people's cognition, emotion, and social behaviors (Levine et al., 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). As a concept developed by Markus and Kitayama (1991), self-construals concern "what [people] believe about the relationship between the self and others

and, especially, the degree to which they see themselves as *separate* from others or as *connected* with others” (p. 226). More specifically, they theorized that an individual’s self-schemata encompasses two co-existing aspects of the self-concept: the interdependent and independent self-construals. The independent self-construal refers to a view of self as autonomous and separable from others and their environment, and it is assumed that members of individualistic cultures tend to emphasize this aspect of their self-concept (Levine et al., 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). On the contrary, the interdependent self-construal is characterized by an emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and a heightened sensitivity to situations and social contexts; therefore, it is argued to represent collectivistic cultures’ notion of self (Levine et al., 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994).

Studies have found that the relative influence or strength of independent and interdependent self-construals on a person is not fixed and can change along the process of acculturation (Chen, Wagner, Kelley, & Heatherton, 2015; Yamada & Singelis, 1999). One context where acculturation occurs is globalization (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008). According to Saint-Jacques (2012), one’s cultural identity/ies and the set(s) of cultural values he or she endorses are not fixed in the age of globalization. That is, globalization provides ever-increasing intercultural contact opportunities, both face-to-face and mediated, during which process a person can alter his/her cultural identification and diversify his/her cultural group memberships. Therefore, it is likely that a person from a collectivistic culture could also acculturate individualistic values and possess a high independent self-construal, and vice-versa, in today’s globalized world. In this sense, it is plausible that self-construals may be

better able to capture within-culture individual variability and account for the influences of globalization and acculturation on individuals' internalized value systems than cultural-level IND-COL.

Integrating the concepts of self-construals and conflict management styles, Ting-Toomey and colleagues (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003) proposed that an independent self-construal should be predictive of people's preference for dominating conflict management style. They also contended that an interdependent self-construal should be positively related to obliging and/or avoiding conflict style(s). Empirical results have provided some support to these predictions (e.g., Oetzel, 1998; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed. Among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese:

H1: Those who with a higher independent self-construal will have a greater preference for dominating conflict management style than those who with a lower independent self-construal.

H2: Those who with a higher interdependent self-construal will have a greater preference for (a) avoiding and (b) obliging conflict management styles than those who with a lower interdependent self-construal.

Although self-construals are argued to be reliable predictors of people's habituated or preferred conflict management styles, some scholars also argue that contextual (e.g., time constraints) as well as relational factors (e.g., relational closeness) will influence individuals' strategic decision about which conflict strategy they would actually utilize (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). For instance, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) stated that

“relational commitment may outweigh conflict style preference issue” (p. 53) in influencing people’s actual conflict behaviors. Study 1 provides some evidence for these claims. Some participants in Study 1 mentioned that, although they were more oriented to conflict avoidance as their default style to manage conflict, they sought to satisfy their partner’s request by increasing their use of confrontational tactics during conflict negotiations. Therefore, it seems that relationship-related factors may potentially modify a person’s conflict style preference to influence his/her actual choice of conflict strategy. The following section will examine how intercultural couples’ relational identity orientations may influence their actual responses when dealing with a relational conflict. More specifically, the present study seeks to incorporate Berry’s acculturation model (1990; 2000) into the conceptualization of relational identity orientations.

Intercultural Couples’ Relational Identity Orientations

As two individuals form an intimate interpersonal relationship, they are in the process of building their relational culture and their relational identity (e.g., Baxter, 1987; Cools, 2006; Wood, 1982). Intercultural relational scholars have suggested that relational culture and a strong relational identity help intercultural partners navigate their cultural differences and maintain their relationships (e.g., Bustamante et al., 2011; Gaines & Brennan, 2001; Gaines & Liu, 2000; P.-W. Lee, 2006). Despite their significance in influencing the dynamics of an intimate intercultural relationship, the concepts of relational culture and relational identity have not been clearly defined and are often used interchangeably in the current literature (e.g., P.-W. Lee, 2006;

Sorrells, 2013). The following section will review prior conceptualizations of these two constructs and will discuss their limitations.

Relational culture. Relational culture, as defined by Wood (1982), refers to “a unique, private world constructed and sustained by partners in a relationship . . . [that] becomes an increasingly central influence on individual partners’ way of knowing, being, and acting in relation to each other” (p. 75). Similarly, Baxter (1987) conceived of relationships as “mini-cultures” that facilitate the development of a coordinated meaning system through ritual enactments and shared stories or symbols. In other words, Baxter and Wood understood relational culture as a constructed relationship-organizing system that provides principles guiding relational partners’ behaviors and sense-making within their relationship. Instead of conceptualizing relational culture as a dynamic entity influencing relational norms, Pasick et al. (2009) defined relational culture as a dialectical process of developing interdependence and connectedness. Taken together, a relational culture can be understood as a dynamic, privately transacted value and meaning system that is simultaneously shaping and shaped by relational partners’ interactions.

Although a relational culture is co-constructed by relational partners, the above-cited scholars do not make any explicit claim that a relational culture is characterized by an equal distribution of relational power or an equal degree of relational commitment between two parties. However, some intercultural relational scholars equate relational culture with the concept of “a third-culture” (e.g., Bustamante et al., 2011; P.-W. Lee, 2006; Tili & Barker, 2015). A third-culture, as defined by Casmir (1999), refers to “a mutually beneficial interactive environment”

(Casmir, 1999, p. 92) that is marked by equality and commonality between the intercultural partners as well as a transcendence of their cultural differences (S. Lee, 2006). Though this mutual appreciation and accommodation is desirable, findings from several qualitative studies reveal that “a third-culture,” or a relational culture characterized by equality and transcendence of differences, does not represent every intercultural couple’s lived reality. For instance, Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013), based on their interview study with 17 intercultural couples, contended that there were four main intercultural relational structures: integrated (i.e., couples appreciate each other’s culture and seek to meld both cultures), co-existing (i.e., couples retain two separate value systems and each partner structures his/her life based on values or norms imparted from his/her culture of origin), singularly-assimilated (i.e., one partner is more assimilated to the partner’s culture than the other partner), and unresolved (i.e., couples suffer from unresolved conflicts and tensions around cultural differences). Similarly, as found in Study 1 as well as in Bustamante et al.’s (2011) study, conflicts within an intimate intercultural relationship are often resolved by one party’s deference to his/her partner. Taken together, these findings suggest that a more fine-grained conceptual distinction between a third-culture and relational culture is warranted, because a third-culture could be but one possible configuration of relational culture.

Relational identity. Wood (1982) theorized that a relational culture not only helped partners establish shared interpretations, it also influenced an individual’s self-concept. Similarly, Aron and colleagues have suggested that individuals often included representations of a close relationship into their mental representation of self

(Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). Specifically, Aron emphasized that, in close relationships, individuals viewed themselves as having communal resources, perspectives, and characteristics with their partner. According to Brewer and Gardner (1996), the self-concept derived from a sense of connection and role relationships with significant other(s) constitutes one's relational identity. In addition, they stated that, when individuals' relational identity became salient, they would be motivated to meet the relational partner's needs, even at their own expense. Because of this characteristic (i.e., an emphasis on the relational partner's interests and on the relationship), several scholars argue that relational identity corresponds closely with the concept of interdependent self-construal (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000).

As cross-cultural psychologists suggest that interdependent and independent self-construals can co-exist within an individual, Brewer and Gardner (1996) also contended that three distinct levels of identity orientation existed within one's mental representation of self: personal identity (i.e., a self-definition derived from one's sense of uniqueness), relational identity (i.e., a self-definition derived from a sense of connection and role relationships with significant others), and social identity (i.e., a self-definition derived from one's social group membership). Because Brewer and Gardner conceptualized these three levels of self-representation based on self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), they argued that there were discontinuities among these three levels of self-representation and that, generally speaking, only one level of identity orientation would be more salient in a given context and at a given point in time. Following this line of

reasoning, when individuals' relational identity is salient, they would define themselves primarily based on their relational roles and would be mainly concerned with fulfilling their relational role requirements and/or realizing the relational partner's needs. Other concerns, such as following cultural norms or showing individual uniqueness, would be less of their interests (for a similar argument, see Brickson, 2000).

Although Brewer and Gardner's argument that only one level of self-concept would be more dominating at any given moment follows logically from self-categorization theory, many intercultural relational scholars have pointed out that intercultural couples are constantly negotiating a dialectic between their relational commitment and concerns for being truthful to their cultural identification throughout the course of their relationship development (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; Crohn, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1994). For example, Crohn (1998) used the metaphor of "waking up from cultural amnesia" (p. 302) to discuss how couples might struggle between minimizing cultural differences to ease their relationship development and the (re)emergence of cultural loyalty. Gaines (1995) suggested that a relational culture was sculpted by partners' concerns for each other as well as by an exchange and negotiation of values imparted from each other's ethnic culture. Taken together, these scholars argue that both cultural and relational identities can be simultaneously salient for some intercultural couples when developing their relational culture. If this argument is valid, intercultural couples' orientations toward building/maintaining a relational culture (i.e., their relational identity orientations) should reflect both their relational concerns as well as their internalized cultural values.

A recognition that intercultural couples' relational identity orientations could possibly encompass both relational and cultural factors points to a potential need for researchers to think outside of Brewer and Gardner's (1996) framework when theorizing intercultural partners' relational identity. The present study proposes that Berry's acculturation model (1990; 2000) could serve as a useful theoretical underpinning of a new conceptualization of intercultural couples' relational identity orientation.

Acculturation and Intercultural Couples' Relational Identity Orientations

The decision to integrate insights from Berry's acculturation model to propose a new conceptualization of intercultural couples' relational identity orientations is based on two reasons. First, because acculturation occurs when individuals from different cultures come into first-hand contact (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936), intercultural romantic relationships can be viewed as a site where acculturation can take place. That is, intercultural couples' ongoing negotiations of cultural differences provide them with abundant opportunities to familiarize themselves with a different cultural value system and to modify their cultural identification (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011). The extent to which interculturally dating/married individuals internalize their partner's cultural value system should influence and be reflected in their relational orientations. Second, as discussed previously, interculturally dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations are influenced, in part, by concern for the relational partner as well as by concern about retaining and/or adjusting their cultural principles within their intimate intercultural relationship. These dual concerns bear a

great resemblance to Berry's bi-dimensional model of acculturation, which will be reviewed in detail in the next section.

Berry's acculturation framework. Early scholars (e.g., Gordon, 1964) conceived of acculturation as a unidimensional phenomenon (i.e., the acculturating individual can only identify with either the host or the heritage culture) ending in the minorities' assimilation to the host society or to the dominant group's culture. However, Berry (1990) proposed an alternative, bi-dimensional framework and argued that an individual's acculturation attitudes are based on two major concerns: the extent to which one wishes to retain his/her original culture and the extent to which he/she desires connection with members of other cultural groups. Crossing these two dimensions results in four acculturation orientations: integration (i.e., a strong intention to retain one's original culture and a strong desire for connection with the host culture), assimilation (i.e., a low intention to retain one's original culture and a strong desire for connection with the host culture), separation (i.e., a strong intention to retain one's original culture and a low desire for connection with the host culture), and marginalization (i.e., a low intention to retain one's original culture and a low desire for connection with the host culture). Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) conducted three studies to compare unidimensional and bi-dimensional models of acculturation. Results revealed that the two dimensions implied in a bi-dimensional model were independent, could be reliably measured, and showed satisfactory convergent, concurrent, and content validity. Based on these findings, Ryder et al. concluded that a bi-dimensional model received more empirical support than a unidimensional model.

The above-mentioned dimensions are concerned with acculturating individuals' motivation toward cultural maintenance and/or intercultural adjustment. However, scholars have noticed that several contextual factors, such as the context in which acculturation is taking place and perceived discrimination from the dominant group, would also influence an individual's acculturation attitudes (e.g., Berry, 1990; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Castro, 2003). For instance, Berry et al. (2006) found that immigrant youths who adopted a separation or a marginalization orientation toward acculturation reported more perceived discrimination from the host culture. Similarly, Castro (2003) found that, for African American respondents, perceived discrimination was positively associated with their intention to retain their ethnic culture during the process of acculturating the mainstream American culture. There is also some evidence showing that the ethnic composition of one's immediate neighborhood is predictive of his/her acculturation orientations (Berry et al., 2006; Neto, 2001). Berry et al. (2006) conducted a large international study with immigrant youths who came from 26 different cultural backgrounds and lived in 13 countries. Results revealed that living in a neighborhood consisting predominantly of one's ethnic-cultural ingroup was associated with a separation orientation, whereas residing in a neighborhood with a larger proportion of outgroups was found to be related to a greater likelihood of forming an assimilation attitude.

Although Berry's acculturation model has been widely researched and generally supported, it is not without criticisms. Some scholars have questioned if all of the four acculturation attitudes identified in Berry's model exist across population (e.g., Rudmin, 2003; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

Specifically, these critics have questioned if marginalization is viable for migrants (see Schwartz et al., 2010). Others have argued that Berry's model does not consider the possibility that individuals' acculturation strategies may be domain- and context-specific (e.g., Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003). Indeed, Berry's model is mostly employed to explain an individual's overall acculturation orientation to the whole host or the dominant culture. To the author's knowledge, the present study is the first attempt to apply Berry's framework to study one's acculturation orientation within a particular intercultural relationship. The following section will discuss what modifications should be made in applying Berry's model to an interpersonal context.

Integrating Berry's acculturation model with relational identity

orientations. Berry's model indicates that one's global acculturation orientation is shaped by his/her desires to retain his/her ethnic culture's value system and/or to maintain close connection with members of the host culture. As the desire for connection and interdependence reflects greater concern for others (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), when Berry's model is applied to an interpersonal context, these two dimensions correspond closely with two underlying factors, as described previously, shaping intercultural couples' orientations toward their relationships (i.e., their relational identity orientation): (a) relative internalization of values imparted from each other's culture and (b) their respective concerns for self and the relational partner. Following Berry's model, four types of interculturally-dating/married individuals' identity orientation can be identified by crossing these factors: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. An integration relational identity orientation indicates that one seeks to incorporate both parties'

cultural frames of reference when interacting with his/her relational partner. An assimilation-orientated relational identity is marked by a willingness and/or readiness to adopt the partner's cultural values and practices so as to minimize cultural differences within the relationship. A separation-oriented relational identity is characterized by a desire to structure one's relational life based on his/her own ethnic culture's value system. Finally, a marginalization-based relational identity orientation reveals that one does not adhere to either party's cultural organizing principles when living his/her relational life. As previously mentioned, some critics have questioned if marginalization is viable for migrants (see Schwartz et al., 2010). However, Berry et al.'s (2006) study suggests that marginalization is not less frequently endorsed by immigrant youths than separation and assimilation orientations, thereby providing some evidence for the validity of marginalization as an acculturation approach. In addition, because some acculturating individuals are motivated to assimilate the receiving country's national culture (Berry, 1990), intercultural couples who reside in neither partner's country of origin may be more oriented toward incorporating the host culture, instead of either partner's ethnic culture, into their relational life. In this respect, marginalization can still be a valid relational identity orientation for certain intercultural couples. The following sections will explain how these four relational identity orientations are associated with interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational and cultural concerns.

The first factor influencing interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientation is their respective concerns for self and for the relational partner. Based on insights derived from the dual concern model (e.g., Rahim, 1983)

and the face negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), a high concern for other will increase one's willingness to cooperate and/or to accommodate, whereas a high concern for self will lower one's willingness to make concessions. Therefore, intercultural couples with a high concern for their partner should be more motivated to make some adjustments to accommodate their partner's cultural preferences in their relationship. Intercultural couples with a high concern for self, on the other hand, will have a higher desire to structure at least some aspects of their relational lives based on their own cultural organizing principles. To test this line of reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed. Among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese:

H3: Those who with a higher concern for the relational partner will have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) assimilation compared with those with a lower concern for the relational partner.

H4: Those who with a higher concern for self will have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) separation compared with those with a lower concern for self.

As previously discussed, interculturally-dating/married individuals' endorsement of marginalization-oriented relational identity may be based on some contextual concerns (i.e., they are residing in neither partner's country of origin and may be more motivated to incorporate the host culture into their relational life). Research to date provides limited information regarding how a marginalization relational identity orientation should be associated with intercultural couples' concerns for self and/or

their partner. To better understand the potential relationships among marginalization, concern for self, and concern for the partner, the following research question is posed:

RQ1: How, if at all, do concerns for self and for the partner relate to a relational identity orientation toward marginalization?

The second factor shaping interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientation is concerned with the relative internalization of values imparted from each other's culture. Because of the influence of globalization, some interculturally-dating/married individuals may have established some level of identification with the partner's culture prior to their involvement in an intercultural romantic relationship, a phenomenon that is termed globalization-based acculturation (Chen et al., 2008). Indeed, some studies find that level of acculturation is predictive of individuals' willingness to enter an intercultural romantic relationship (e.g., Hwang, Saenz, & Aguirre, 1997; Lou, Lalonde, & Wong, 2015; Mok, 1999; Uskul, Lalonde, & Cheng, 2007). For instance, using a cross-sectional survey design, Lou et al. (2015) found that Chinese Canadians' acculturation into mainstream Canadian culture positively predicted their openness toward interracial dating. Similarly, Hu, Pan, Chen, Liu, and Yang (2016), also employing a cross-sectional design, found that Chinese respondents' self-reported level of globalization-based acculturation toward American culture was positively associated with their acceptance of intercultural marriage. Besides globalization-based acculturation, acculturation can also occur within an intercultural romantic relationship (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011). During an ongoing process of negotiating cultural differences, intercultural couples may become appreciative of their partner's culture (e.g., Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013) and/or

strengthen their identification with their culture of origin (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; Crohn, 1998). Changes in terms of the relative identification with ones' own and/or the relational partner's cultures are both influenced by and are influencing one's relational identity orientation.

The relative identification with one's own and/or the relational partner's cultures can be reflected by one's self-construals (Shim, Freund, Stopsack, Kammerer, & Barnow, 2014). Research suggests that self-construals may be related to acculturation (Chen et al., 2015; Shim et al, 2014; Ryder et al., 2000). For instance, Chen et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study in the U.S. to assess self-construal changes during the process of acculturation. Chen et al. measured newly arrived Chinese-speaking immigrants' self-construals within the first two months of their arrival in the U.S. (Time 1) and six months after their initial screening (Time 2) and they found significant changes in participants' interdependent self-construal. They conjectured that Chinese-speaking immigrants whose level of interdependent self-construal increased at Time 2 might endorsed a separation strategy and that those who showed a declined level of interdependent self-construal at Time 2 might employ an assimilation strategy. Shim et al.'s (2014) cross-sectional study examined the association between self-construals of East Asian immigrants who settled in Germany and their acculturation attitudes toward German culture. They hypothesized and found support that East Asian immigrants with a higher level of independent self-construal, because the cultural values they internalized (i.e., individualistic values, as manifested in their higher level of independent self-construal) were more in line with those associated with the host culture, endorsed an assimilation or an integration

acculturation orientation. Similarly, they found that East Asian immigrants with a higher level of interdependent self-construal were more likely to be separation- or integration-oriented and they conjectured that this pattern was due to the fact that those who with a higher level of interdependent self-construal had a higher identification with their ethnic culture. Based on insights derived from these studies, the following hypotheses are proposed to examine the influence of self-construals on one's relational identity orientation. Among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese whose partner is from an IND culture:

H5: Those who with a greater independent self-construal will have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) assimilation compared with those with a lower independent self-construal.

H6: Those who with a greater interdependent self-construal will have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) separation compared with those with a lower interdependent self-construal.

Because there is not enough research on how self-construals might influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' decision to adopt a marginalization-oriented relational identity, the second research question is concerned with the potential relationships among marginalization, interdependent self-construal, and the independent self-construal:

RQ2: How, if at all, do interdependent and independent self-construals relate to a relational identity orientation toward marginalization?

As each intimate relationship is embedded in a given sociocultural context, contextual factors could also influence couples' orientations toward their

relationships. Acculturation research has found that the ethnic composition of one's immediate neighborhood is an important factor influencing how one balances the relative importance of his/her ethnic culture and the new culture he/she is acculturating. For instance, Berry et al.'s (2006) study revealed that residing in a neighborhood with a larger proportion of one's ethnic ingroup was related to a separation orientation, whereas living in a neighborhood with a larger proportion of members of the host culture was associated with an assimilation attitude. Tili and Barker (2015) interviewed Asian-Caucasian couples living in the U.S. and found that Asian spouses often felt pressure to assimilate into the U.S. culture. They concluded that country of residence had great influences on intercultural couples' respective acculturation experiences. Similarly, some participants in Study 1 also stated that living in, or expecting to move to, their partner's culture was an important factor that motivated them to assimilate their partner's culture. Based on these findings, two hypotheses are proposed. Among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese:

H7: Those who live in a neighborhood that has a higher proportion of their cultural ingroup (i.e., Chinese and Taiwanese) will have a greater relational identity orientation toward separation compared with those living in a neighborhood with a lower proportion of their ethnic ingroup.

H8: Those who live in a neighborhood that has a higher proportion of members from the partner's cultural group will have a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation compared with those living in a neighborhood with a lower proportion of members from the partner's cultural group.

In sum, the present study theorizes that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations are shaped by a dialectic between their relational commitment and their cultural loyalty. Integrating insights from Berry's acculturation model, the present study proposes that there are four types of relational identity orientations reflecting different degrees of willingness or readiness to structure one's relational life according to one's and/or the partner's ethnic cultural value systems. In addition, it is hypothesized that intercultural couples' relational identity orientations are predicted by (a) their concerns for each other, (b) their self-construals, and (c) the ethnic compositions of their immediate neighborhood. It is important to note that, although the current conceptualization of intercultural couples' relational identity orientations is inspired by Berry's acculturation framework, it is plausible for individuals in an intercultural romantic relationship to possess a relational identity orientation distinct from their global acculturation orientation. As previously mentioned, several scholars have noticed that one's global acculturation attitude does not have a uniform effect on all domains of his/her life (e.g., Berry, 1990) and can be modified depending on the context(s) in which acculturation is taking place (e.g., Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003). Because intercultural couples' relational identity orientations represent their attitudes toward the acculturation process taking place within their intercultural romantic relationship, which can be greatly influenced by relationship-specific factors, their relational identity orientations may not necessarily represent their overall acculturation attitudes toward their partners' culture. That is, based on the current conceptualization of intercultural couples' relational identity orientations, it may be possible that some

interculturally dating/married individuals' willingness to adopt the partner's cultural norms and practices when interacting with the partner (i.e., assimilation-based relational identity orientation) is motivated more by their concern for the partner than by a genuine internalization of their partner's cultural values. The following section will discuss how interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientation could influence their choices of conflict tactics.

Relational Identity Orientations and Enacted Conflict Tactics

Cross-cultural conflict research has provided ample evidence that one's psycho-cultural orientation (e.g., self-construals) influences his/her preference for certain conflict management styles (Kim & Leung, 2000). However, culturally-dictated conflict management style may not decisively determine what conflict negotiation tactics one would actually enact (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Drake, 2001; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). For instance, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) argued that relational commitment could at times have a greater influence in determining what conflict strategies an individual would employ than his/her conflict style preferences. Oetzel et al. (2001) asked participants to recall their conflict experiences with someone to which they had or did not have a close relationship. They found that relational closeness interacted with one's cultural identity to influence his/her actual conflict behaviors. Specifically, among participants from collectivistic cultures, those who were in the non-close condition reported using less defending, less expression, and more giving in than those in the close condition. As for participants from individualistic cultures, those who were in the non-close condition reported having more self-face concern and using less

expression than those in the close condition. Taken together, these studies suggest that both relational factors and cultural orientation simultaneously influence people's actual responses to conflict within an intimate intercultural relationship.

Because interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations are shaped by their internalized cultural values as well as by their concerns for each other, an examination of one's relational identity orientation should be more informative of what coping strategies he/she would *actually* utilize in response to her relational conflicts than self-construals. As defined previously, a relational identity orientation toward assimilation is characterized by a willingness to adapt oneself to the partner's culture during relational interaction; therefore, those who possess such a relational identity orientation should be more likely to respond to their relational conflicts using strategies more often utilized in their partner's culture. On the contrary, those who are more separation-oriented prefer to structure their relational life based on their own cultural organizing principles; hence, they would be more likely to rely on their own culturally-dictated conflict management style to handle their relational conflicts. Because empirical studies generally suggest that individualists have a greater tendency to adopt a dominating style to deal with conflicts than collectivists and that the opposite pattern occurs for avoiding and obliging strategies (e.g., Kim-Jo et al., 2010; Oetzel et al., 2001; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003), among collectivists in an IND-COL relationship, those who with a higher assimilation orientation may use dominating strategies more often than those with a lower assimilation orientations. In contrast, those who with a higher separation orientation may use avoiding and/or obliging more often than those with a lower

separation orientation. To test this line of reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed. Among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese:

H9: Those who with a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation will utilize dominating strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward assimilation.

H10: Those who with a greater relational identity orientation toward separation will utilize (a) avoiding and (b) obliging strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a greater relational identity orientation toward separation.

Based on the current conceptualization of intercultural couples' relational identity orientation, intercultural couples having a higher relational identity orientation toward integration seek to incorporate each other's cultural value systems when interacting with his/her relational partner. In this respect, integration-oriented individuals in a COL-IND relationship should have a wider repertoire of conflict tactics, consisted of dominating-, obliging-, and avoiding-related tactics. In addition, cross-cultural conflict research has provided some evidence that integrating conflict management style is considered appropriate by both collectivists and individualists (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002). Therefore, those who have a higher relational identity orientation toward integration should also be likely to enact integrating conflict management strategies when dealing with their relational conflicts. To better explore these possibilities, the following research question is posed:

RQ3: How, if at all, does a greater relational identity orientation toward integration influence interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's utilization of conflict strategies in response to their relational conflicts?

A marginalization-based relational identity orientation is characterized by non-adherence to either party's cultural norms and practices. Hence, it is unclear how this relational identity orientation will influence intercultural couples' choice of conflict strategies. To better understand the association between a marginalization relational identity orientation and conflict management, another research question is posted:

RQ4: How, if at all, does a greater relational identity orientation toward marginalization influence interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict strategies in response to their relational conflicts?

Thus far, the present study has proposed that interculturally-dating/married individuals' preferred conflict management style is influenced by their self-construals, whereas their actual relational conflict behaviors are better predicted by their relational identity orientations. In addition, it is hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations are shaped by (a) their concerns for self and the partner, (b) their self-construals, and (c) the ethnic compositions of their immediate neighborhood. This proposed conceptual model is summarized in Figure 1.

Re-visiting Conflict Management and Relationship Satisfaction

Conflict management has been identified as one of the most important factors determining a person's relationship quality (Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000; Rosen-Grandon, Myers, & Hattie, 2004). In addition, Western literature has often assumed

that there is one-to-one association between (non-)constructive conflict management strategies and relationship satisfaction (for a more thorough review, see Chapter 2). Specifically, studies analyzing Western couples' conflict behaviors often find that one or both spouses' reliance on avoiding-, obliging-, and/or dominating-related conflict strategies has negative associations with their marital satisfaction (e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000). However, Study 1 found that an enactment of these conflict management strategies did not uniformly and negatively influence participants' relationship satisfaction. Moreover, despite a general agreement among Western relational scholars that solution-focused conflict management behaviors, such as exchanging concerns with one's partner, would be positively associated with relationship satisfaction (e.g., Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000; Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988), some participants in Study 1 revealed feeling pressured or uncomfortable when they used these so-called constructive conflict responses upon their Western partners' request, especially when they noticed that these strategies did not correspond to their habituated modes of conflict management (e.g., avoiding or suppressing conflicts). That is, whether or not a conflict management is constructive or beneficial to one's relationship quality may to some extent depend on its (non)congruency with one's internalized values. Taken together, these findings suggest that researchers should re-examine if conflict management strategies have uniform effects on relationship satisfaction across all relational types (e.g., intracultural relationships between two individualists, intracultural relationships between two collectivists, and intercultural relationships) and relational cultures.

Inspired by insights from research on identity gap (Jung & Hecht, 2004, 2008; Kennedy-Lightsey, Martin, Weber, & LaBelle, 2015; Wadsworth et al., 2008), the present study proposes that discrepancies between one's conflict management styles and actual conflict behaviors indicate a tension between one's frames of identity and that these discrepancies would be negatively associated with one's relational satisfaction. Identity gap, a construct developed by Jung and Hecht (2004), is derived from the communication theory of identity (CTI, Hecht, 1993). According to CTI, identity not only refers to one's sense of self; identity also involves how self is constructed, negotiated, reflected, or preserved through communication. More specifically, CTI asserts that individuals have four interdependent frames of identity: personal, relational, communal, and enacted. The personal frame of identity is a sense of individual uniqueness. The relational frame refers to a self-concept constructed by an internalization of one's relational role as well as by a perception of how one's relational partner views him or her. That is, the relational frame is a self-concept cultivated in a specific relational culture. The communal frame transcends individuals and refers to a group's collective identity. The enacted identity is an identity expressed or performed through communication. According to Jung and Hecht (2004), identity gaps occur when there are discrepancies between or among these frames of identity.

Although identity gaps, being a comparatively newer area of study, have not yet been widely and systematically explored, existing empirical studies have generally found that identity gaps, the personal-enacted identity gap in particular, have negative influences on individuals' psychological wellbeing, communication

satisfaction, and levels of satisfaction with a given relationship (e.g., Jung & Hecht, 2004, 2008; Kam & Hecht, 2009; Kennedy-Lightsey et al., 2015; Wadsworth et al., 2008). For instance, Kennedy-Lightsey et al. (2015) examined how couples may experience personal-enacted and couple-enacted identity gaps when their joint public performance (i.e., how they jointly present themselves as a couple to relational outsiders) did not match how they thought of themselves and their relationships. Their results revealed that husbands' and wives' personal-enacted identity gaps were negative predictors of their own, as well as the partner's, relationship commitment and that their couple-enacted identity gaps were negatively associated with their own ratings of commitment. Similarly, Kam and Hecht (2009) studied young adults' perceived identity gaps (i.e., personal-relational, personal-enacted, and relational-enacted gaps) when interacting with their grandparents. They found that a perceived personal-enacted identity gap was positively associated with topic avoidance and negatively associated with both communication and relationship satisfaction.

Applying this logic to the current context, when individuals experience discrepancies in their conflict management style preferences and actual conflict behaviors, it indicates that they express themselves in a way that is incongruent with their own view of self. Theoretically speaking, a discrepancy between the level of preference and the frequency of actual enactment can exist for each conflict management style, and each of these discontinuities can result in a personal-enacted identity gap. Based on previous research findings regarding the negative impacts a personal-enacted identity gap may have on one's relationship quality, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H11: Discrepancies in interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict management style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors (hereafter referred to as conflict management discrepancies) are (a) positively associated with personal-enacted identity gap and (b) negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.

H12: Conflict management discrepancies have an indirect effect on relationship satisfaction through interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's personal-enacted identity gap.

The proposed relationships among conflict management discrepancies, the personal-enacted identity gap, and relationship satisfaction are summarized in Figure 2.

Chapter 7: Study 2 Method

The present study consisted of one pilot study and one main study, with each employing an online, cross-sectional survey design. The pilot study was conducted to develop and validate instruments to be used in the main study. The main study entailed use of an online survey to test the proposed hypotheses and to answer the research questions. All studies were conducted under the approval of the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Pilot Study

This section reports the purpose, procedures, and results of the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted between the period of August and September, 2017. IRB approval was received on August 4th, 2017.

Purpose and overview. The present study proposes a new conceptualization of interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations, and there is no existing scale that could be used to measure this new theoretical construct. In addition, to the author's knowledge, there is no existing scale designed to measure individuals' concerns for self and for the relational partner⁸. Therefore, the goal of the pilot study is to validate new instruments for these constructs.

The pilot study examined the psychometric properties of two scales developed by the author. The first scale intended to measure interculturally-dating/married individuals' four different relational identity orientations. This scale was comprised

⁸ Sorenson, Morse, and Savage (1999) designed a scale to measure people's concerns for self and the conflict partner. However, their scale used two opposite-worded items to measure concern for self (i.e., "it would be extremely important to get the outcome I desire" and "It would not be important to get the outcome I desire") and concern for other, which might limit the psychometric properties of their scale. Their items are integrated into the concerns for self and partner scale developed in the present study.

of four subscales, with each subscale measuring one dimension of interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational orientations (i.e., integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization). Scale items were generated by the researcher from literature on acculturation (e.g., Barry, 2001; Berry et al., 2006) and intercultural romantic relationships (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; Cools, 2006) as well as from Study 1's interview findings. A total of 11 items were generated for each relational identity orientation subscale. These items covered several domains of intercultural couples' relational life, including their language choice, sources of entertainment, food choice, and the like. For each domain, different statements reflecting each of the four relational identity orientations were created and respondents were asked to report the extent to which they agree with each of these statements on a scale from 1 to 9 (for a similar scale construction procedure, see Berry et al., 2006). The second scale was designed to measure interculturally-dating/married individuals' concerns for self and the partner, and it consisted of two subscales: concern for self (8 items) and concern for the partner (8 items). Items were created by the researcher based on a conceptualization that concerns for self and/or the relational partner are often manifested by individuals' desires to satisfy the self's and/or the partner's needs and expectations (e.g., Sorenson et al., 1999). Please see Appendix G for the whole list of items generated for these two scales.

Respondents and procedures. Because the pilot study was designed to examine the reliability and the validity of the two instruments discussed above, the following criteria were used to select potential respondents: (a) respondents must have lived in Taiwan before their adulthood, (b) they must be currently involved in an

intercultural romantic relationship, (c) they must be at least 18 years old, and, in order to reduce confounds associated with relational dynamics unique to same-sex romantic relationships, (d) respondents must be in a heterosexual intercultural relationship.

To recruit respondents, the researcher posted information about the pilot study (in both English and Mandarin Chinese) on various websites and online discussion boards (see Appendix H) that are designed for interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese to share their experiences and concerns about their intercultural romantic relationships. As an incentive, respondents were informed that they would be included in a lottery with a chance to win \$30 US dollars upon completion of their participation in the current study. Five lottery winners were randomly chosen after data collection was completed in the end of August, 2017 and were each compensated with \$30 US dollars. The pilot study costed \$150 US dollars in total.

Respondents who were interested in participating in the pilot study were provided with a link that directed them to an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in Mandarin Chinese. Respondents read and signed the online informed consent form before the study started. They were then asked to think about their current intercultural romantic relationship while completing the questionnaire.

A total of 253 respondents participated in the pilot study. About 81% of the respondents were females ($n = 205$). Respondents' age ranged from 19 to 60 ($M = 32.98$, $SD = 6.98$). Among all participants, 53% of them were married ($n = 134$). The sample was highly educated, with 97% of respondents having at least a bachelor's degree. Partners' national identities, as described by respondents, are summarized in Table 1.

Instruments. The questionnaire included a multidimensional scale that measured interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations, a bi-dimensional scale that measured their concerns for self and the partner, and questions about participants' demographic information. To control potential participation fatigue or order effects, scales were counterbalanced and items were randomly ordered within scales. Each instrument was originally written in English but was later translated into Mandarin Chinese by the author. Another bilingual graduate student fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese backtranslated each Chinese-version scale into English to ensure conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1970). Challenges arising from cultural and linguistic differences between the source and the target language were discussed until agreement was achieved.

The relational identity orientation scale. Based on its conceptualization, interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientation is a multidimensional construct and is defined by the degree to which they are oriented toward integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization within their intercultural romantic relationships. The relational identity orientation scale was designed to reflect this conceptualization and consisted of four subscales, with each subscale representing one dimension of relational identity orientation (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization). Items for this measurement included: "I hope that, when my partner and I are spending our time together, we can consume media from each other's culture to an equal degree" (integration); "When my partner and I are spending our time together, I feel fine if we consume more media from my partner's culture than media from my culture" (assimilation); "When

my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture" (separation); and "When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media that are not from either my partner's or my own culture" (marginalization). Respondents were asked to evaluate these statements on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Concerns for self and the partner scale. This scale was comprised of two subscales (i.e., concern for self and concern for the partner). Items for this measurement included: "My happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship" and "My partner's happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship." Respondents were instructed to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with these statements on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Demographics. Respondents provided basic demographic information, including their age, educational attainment, sex, and current country of residence. Respondents were also asked to provide their partners' basic demographic information, such as their age, educational attainment, sex, nationality, and current country of residence. Finally, respondents were asked to describe their relationship, including their marital status and length of relationship.

Factor analysis. The goal of the pilot study is to assess the reliability and construct validity of two newly-developed scales. Kenny's (1979) rule of thumb regarding the number of indicators per factor suggests that "[t]wo *might* be fine, three is better, four is best, and anything more is gravy" (p. 143; emphasis in original).

Similarly, Hinkin, Tracey, and Enz (1997) also commented that “a quality scale comprised of four to six items could be developed for most constructs or conceptual dimensions” (p. 103). Therefore, four-to-six item measures were set as the target for each subscale when developing the relational identity orientation scale and concerns for self and the partner scale. To this end, a series of exploratory factor analysis were performed.

Exploratory factor analysis was chosen based on its functionality to reduce the set of items in a developing scale that could more parsimoniously measure the conceptual dimension of interest (Hinkin et al., 1997). The analytical procedures carried out in this pilot study are described in the following. First, responses for all items on each subscale (e.g., the integration subscale from the relational identity orientation scale) were factor analyzed using the principle component analysis (PCA) and principle axis factoring (PAF) in SPSS. Bartlett’s tests of sphericity were significant for all subscales, which suggested that no subscale’s correlation matrix was an identity matrix and that it was proper to perform PCA and PAF with current data. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy was used to assess if there was a sufficient sample size relative to the number of items on each of the subscale. For all subscales, the KMO statistics were greater than .70, which indicated that the sample size was sufficient. Taken together, results of Bartlett’s tests and the KMO statistics suggested that performing factor analyses was appropriate. Results of Bartlett’s tests of sphericity, KMO statistics, and factor loadings from the unrotated component matrix for each subscale are summarized in Table 2 to Table 7.

The second step involved combining six items that had the most substantial factor loadings on the primary factor within each subscale (e.g., the integration subscale) into a single multidimensional scale (e.g., the relational identity orientation scale). This decision was based on previous research suggestion that four to six carefully-designed items could comprise a scale of satisfactory psychometric properties for most conceptual dimensions (Hinkin et al., 1997). Items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 from the integration subscale⁹, items 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, and 21 from the assimilation subscale, items 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, and 32 from the separation subscale, and items 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, and 43 from the marginalization subscale were selected during this step to form the relational identity orientation scale. With the same procedure, items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 from the concern for self subscale and items 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16 from the concern for the partner subscale were chosen to be combined into a single multi-dimensional scale to measure interculturally-dating/married individuals' concerns for self and for the partner. Please see Appendix G for a complete list of measurement items.

After the relational identity orientation scale and concerns for self and the partner scale were developed using the retained items, PCA and PAF were performed to determine the number of factors to extract. Pett, Lackey, and Sullivan (2003) suggested that this decision should be made before conducting rotated factor analysis. Eigenvalues, the scree plots, and percent of variance explained were used as criteria

⁹ PCA and PAF showed different results for the integration subscale. PCA showed that six items having the most substantive loadings on the primary component were items 1, 7, 8, 3, 9, and 11, whereas PAF suggested that six items having the most substantive loadings on the primary component were items 1, 3, 8, 7, 4, and 11. Therefore, seven items were selected from the integration subscale during this step of analysis.

for factor extraction (Hinkin et al., 1997; Pett et al., 2003). For the relational identity orientation scale, results of both PCA and PAF revealed that there were seven factors with an eigenvalue greater than one. However, examination of the scree plot and variance explained suggested that a four-factor solution could represent the data adequately, because (a) eigenvalues on the scree plot started to level off after four factors and (b) only the first four factors met the 5% criterion (i.e., each retained factor explains at least 5% of the variance, Pett et al., 2003). Therefore, the number of extracted factors was set at four for the relational identity orientation scale. For the concerns for self and the partner scale, results of both PCA and PAF revealed that there were two factors with an eigenvalue greater than one, and that these two factors, cumulatively, explained more than 60 percent of variance. Taken together, it was decided that the number of extracted factors be set at two for the concerns for self and the partner scale.

PCA and PAF with both direct oblimin and varimax rotations were performed to assess the two developing scales' dimensionality and to identify potential problematic items (i.e., items that loaded poorly on their corresponding factor or loaded on an uninterpretable factor). According to Pett et al. (2003), factor rotation, a process of turning the reference axes of the factor about their origin, helps researchers derive a simple structure with which a theoretically more meaningful factor solution can be achieved. For the relational identity orientation scale, results of oblique rotation, using direct oblimin with delta ranging from -.5 to .5, showed that the extracted factors did not have strong correlations (all $r_s < |0.2|$). Therefore, orthogonally rotated solutions (i.e., results from PCA and PAF with varimax rotation)

were used to examine factor structures of the relational identity orientation scale, as suggested by Pett et al. (2003). Bartlett's tests of sphericity were significant for the relational identity orientation scale, and the KMO measure was greater than .70, which indicated that a factor analysis model was appropriate to analyze responses to items on the relational identity orientation scale. Results of Bartlett's tests of sphericity, KMO statistics, and the factor loadings for the orthogonally rotated four-factor solution of the relational identity orientation scale are shown in Table 8 and Table 9. Following Hinkin et al.'s (1997) and Pett et al. (2003)'s suggestion, this study used the .40 criterion (i.e., an appropriate loading ought to be greater than .40) to determine if any item should be eliminated. Factor analytical results revealed that each item loaded properly on its corresponding factor and that there were no high multiple-loading items. Therefore, every item was retained in the relational identity orientation scale during this step of analysis.

For the concerns for self and the partner scale, PCA and PAF with direct oblimin rotation revealed that the two extracted factors were moderately correlated ($0.3 < r_s < 0.5$); accordingly, oblique solutions were used to examine the relational identity orientation scale, as suggested by Pett et al. (2003). Bartlett's tests of sphericity were significant and the KMO measure was greater than .70, suggesting that it was appropriate to conduct factor analysis with the concerns for self and the partner scale. The factor loadings for the obliquely rotated two-factor solution of the concerns for self and the partner scale are presented in Table 10 and Table 11. Results showed that each item loaded properly on its corresponding factor and that there were

no high multiple-loading items. Based on these findings, every item was retained in the concerns for self and the partner scale during this step of analysis.

Factor analysis revealed a four-factor solution of the relational identity orientation scale and a two-factor solution of the concerns for self and the partner scale. Each factor was then subjected to reliability testing and results are summarized in Table 12. Cronbach's alpha, Revelle's omega total, and the greatest lower bound (GLB) were used to examine internal consistency of each subscale (McNeish, 2018). Nunnally's (1978) suggestion that reliabilities at or above .70 could be deemed as adequate was used to evaluate each factor's reliability. When Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate reliability, except for marginalization ($\alpha = .65$), all factors of the relational identity orientation scale demonstrated an acceptable degree of internal consistency. Reliability tests using Revelle's omega total and the GLB suggested that all factors of the relational identity orientation scale had a reliability estimate greater than .70. Of the concerns for self and the partner scale, the values of all reliability estimates were greater than .90 for both factors. Because a more parsimonious scale is generally preferred if items removed from the original scale do not seriously affect the scale's internal consistency (Pett et al., 2003), the two items that had lowest factor loadings on their corresponding factor were dropped from the concern for self subscale and the concern for the partner subscale¹⁰, respectively. Reliability tests

¹⁰ Items removed from the concern for self subscale were "I would be disappointed if I cannot get outcomes that I want" and "I would feel unsatisfied if my partner cannot fulfill my expectations." Items removed from the concern for the partner subscale were "It would distress me if my partner cannot get outcomes that he/she wants" and "I would feel unsatisfied if I cannot fulfill my partner's expectations."

indicated that both the reduced concern for self subscale and the reduced concern for the partner subscale had good internal consistency.

Discussion. The goal of this pilot study was to provide initial evidence for construct validity and reliability of the two new scales to be used in the main study. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to examine the factor structures of these scales and the interrelationships among items on each subscale as an effort to establish construct validity. Cronbach's alpha, Revelle's omega total, and the greatest lower bound (GLB) were used as measures of reliability estimates.

The data from this pilot study suggested that the relational identity orientation scale could be adequately represented with a four-factor structure, with each factor reflecting one acculturation orientation (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) an interculturally-dating individual develops within the relationship. Separation was the strongest factor and explained the greatest percentage of variance, followed by integration, assimilation, and marginalization. The integration subscale consisted of seven items, and the assimilation, separation, and marginalization subscales each contained six items. Except for the item "If we encounter any cultural differences, I think both my partner and I should make mutual adjustment to negotiate these differences" on the integration subscale, most items had corresponding items on other subscales. Because an orientation toward integration is conceptually defined as demonstrating an intention to incorporate both cultures' values and practices (Berry, 1990), this item appeared to have high face validity. Factor analytical results also supported that this item had a satisfactory loading. Therefore, it was considered theoretically important to include this item in the integration subscale.

For the concerns for self and the partner scale, factor analyses with oblique rotation resulted in a two-factor solution, with the first factor corresponding to concerns for self and the second factor representing concerns for the partner. Correlation between these two factors was positive and moderate, suggesting that these two constructs were reasonably distinct.

This pilot study used three internal consistency estimates (i.e., Cronbach's alpha, Revelle's omega, and the GLB) to evaluate each subscale's reliability. Methodological research has suggested that Cronbach's alpha, the most commonly reported reliability measure in behavioral science, often results in underestimate of true reliability when certain assumptions are violated (see McNeish, 2018). The assumptions of Cronbach's alpha are (a) that the scale adheres to the essentially tau-equivalent measurement model, (b) that the scale uses continuous items whose scores and errors are normally distributed, and (c) that the errors of the items do not covary. The essentially tau-equivalent model assumes that each item in a multiple-item scale measures the same latent variable, on the same scale but with possibly different degrees of precision. Unlike the more restrictive parallel model, the (essentially) tau-equivalent model allows for possibly different error variances (for a more detailed discussion of assumptions associated with different measurement models, see Graham, 2006). Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed to assess if each subscale followed the essentially tau-equivalent model. According to Widhiarso and Kožený (2013), for the (essentially) tau-equivalent model, "indicators of a given factor allow exhibit equal loadings but differing error variances" (p.81). The measurement model associated with each of the subscales was specified based on this

guideline. Model fit was assessed using three major model evaluation indices (see Hu & Bentler, 1999): Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and the value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Fit indices of CFA results showed that the essentially-tau equivalent measurement model did not fit the observed data very well (integration subscale: $\chi^2(20, N = 253) = 103.46, p < .001$, RMSEA = .13, CFI = .73, SRMR = .21; assimilation subscale: $\chi^2(14, N = 253) = 64.28, p < .001$, RMSEA = .12, CFI = .79, SRMR = .09; separation subscale: $\chi^2(14, N = 253) = 19.42, p = .15$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99, SRMR = .04; marginalization: $\chi^2(14, N = 253) = 101.18, p < .001$, RMSEA = .16, CFI = .60, SRMR = .11; concern for self subscale with 6 items: $\chi^2(14, N = 253) = 62.51, p < .001$, RMSEA = .12, CFI = .95, SRMR = .11; concern for the subscale with 6 items: $\chi^2(14, N = 253) = 87.86, p < .001$, RMSEA = .14, CFI = .93, SRMR = .14). That is, except for the separation subscale, other subscales likely violated the tau-equivalence assumption. When the assumption of tau-equivalence is violated, the true reliability value will be underestimated (Raykov, 1997; Graham, 2006) by an amount varying between 0.6% and 11.1%, depending on the gravity of the violation (Green & Yang, 2009). According to McNeish (2018), Revelle's omega and the GLB are conceptually similar to Cronbach's alpha but make less strict assumptions. In this respect, in addition to Cronbach's alpha, this pilot study reported these two alternative reliability measures¹¹ due to their flexibility to accommodate scales where the assumption of tau equivalence is not met.

¹¹ McNeish (2018) discussed four alternative reliability measures: omega total, Coefficient H, Revelle's omega total, and the GLB. Omega total was not included in the report of reliability tests because Revelle's omega total uses more sophisticated variance decomposition. Coefficient H was not used as a reliability estimate in this pilot study because the scales under evaluation were unit-weighted.

Except for the marginalization subscale, all of the other subscales demonstrated acceptable to good reliability using the common guideline from Nunnally's (1978). For the marginalization subscale, the coefficient alpha did not meet the .70 cutoff. However, Nunnally (1978) suggested that a reliability estimate greater than .60 could be considered acceptable for new developed scales. Some scholars (e.g., Churchill & Peter, 1984; Kline, 1986) also commented Cronbach's alpha of .60 was the lower limit of acceptability. Moreover, given that items on the marginalization subscale showed varying factor loadings, reliability measures that did not assume tau equivalence might provide more accurate reliability estimates than Cronbach's alpha. Results of Revelle's omega total and the GLB suggested that the internal consistency of the marginalization subscale was acceptable. Taken together, these findings indicated that all of the subscales developed in this pilot study did not signal severe reliability problems.

To conclude, the pilot study examined the construct validity and the reliability of two scales developed by the author. Results of factor analyses and reliability tests revealed that the psychometric properties of these two scales were satisfactory. Items showed sufficient loadings on their corresponding factor, and items loaded on the same factor reflected a common theme that was in line with the theoretical model upon which the subscale was developed. Each subscale demonstrated acceptable reliability. Based on these results, it was concluded that both the relational identity scale and the concerns for self and the partner scale were reliable and valid. Therefore, these two scales would be included in the main study questionnaire.

Main Study

The main study employed a cross-sectional survey design to test the proposed hypothesis and answer the research questions. This section provides a description of the respondents, procedures, and a review of instruments. The main study was conducted between the period of October and December, 2017. IRB approval was received on September 22, 2018.

Respondents and procedures. The goal of the main study is to examine how interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese whose partners are from individualistic cultures develop their relational identity orientations and handle their relational conflicts. The following criteria were used to select potential respondents: (a) respondents must have lived in Taiwan before their adulthood, (b) their partners must be from an individualistic culture (see Appendix I for a complete list of countries with high IND factor scores based on IBM data, Hofstede et al., 2010) , (c) they must be at least 18 years old, (d) they did not participate in the pilot study, and, in order to reduce confounds associated with relational dynamics unique to same-sex romantic relationships, (e) respondents must be in a heterosexual intercultural relationship.

To recruit respondents, the researcher posted information about the main study (in both English and Mandarin Chinese) on various Facebook groups (see Appendix H) whose primary members are either interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese or Taiwanese living in individualistic countries. As an incentive, respondents were informed that they would be included in a lottery with a chance to

win \$50 US dollars upon completion of their participation in the current study¹². Ten lottery winners were randomly chosen after data collection was completed in the end of December, 2017 and were each compensated with \$50 US dollars. The main study costed \$500 US dollars in total.

Respondents who were interested in participating in the main study were provided with a link that directed them to an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in Mandarin Chinese. Respondents read and signed the online informed consent form before the study started. They were then asked to think about their current intercultural romantic relationship while completing the questionnaire.

A total of 416 respondents participated in the main study. Among all the respondents, four respondents reported that their partners were from East Asian countries (e.g., Korea, Japan, and Vietnam). Because these four respondents did not fully meet the respondent selection criteria, they were excluded from all of the analyses. After removing these cases, the remaining sample was composed of 412 respondents. About 79% of the respondents were females ($n = 325$). Respondents' age ranged from 20 to 59 ($M = 31.42$, $SD = 7.26$). Among all respondents, 47% of them were married ($n = 194$). The sample was highly educated, with about 95% of respondents having at least a bachelor's degree ($n = 391$). Partners' national identities, as described by respondents, are summarized in Table 13.

Instruments. The questionnaire included several close-ended questions measuring respondents' self-construals, concerns for self and the partner, relational

¹² Because the time required to complete the questionnaire used for the main study is longer, the reward for participating in the main study is higher than the reward for the pilot study.

identity orientations, conflict management style preferences, their actual conflict management behaviors, perceived identity gap, their relationship satisfaction, and their demographic information. The following section only lists some example items for each scale. Please refer to Appendix G for the complete list of items for each of the following instruments.

To control potential participation fatigue or order effects, instruments were counterbalanced in the questionnaire and items were randomly ordered within instruments. Each instrument was originally written in English and later translated into Mandarin Chinese by the author. The questionnaire translation procedures were the same as the pilot study.

Relational identity orientations. Interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations were measured with the relational identity orientation scale developed in the pilot study. Each item was anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 9 (*strongly agree*).

Concerns for self and the partner. The 8-item, bi-dimensional concerns for self and the partner scale developed in the pilot study was used to assess respondent's dual concerns for self and the partner within their intercultural romantic relationships. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Self-construals. Gudykunst et al.'s (1996) Self Construals Scale was used to measure respondents' self-construals. In this 28-item instrument¹³, 14 items measured individuals' independent self-construal (e.g., "I should be judged on my own merit")

¹³ Gudykunst et al.'s (1996) original self-construal scale originally contains 29 items. However, Gudykunst & Lee (2003) later suggested that one item (i.e., I help acquaintances, even if it is inconvenient) should be removed from the scale due to its lack of face validity.

and the other 14 items measured their interdependent self-construal (e.g., “I consult others before making important decisions”). Respondents were instructed to rate each statement based on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Neighborhood’s ethnic composition. Neighborhood’s ethnic composition was measured with two items: “What percentage of your neighborhood is comprised of Chinese and Taiwanese?” and “What percentage of your neighborhood is comprised of members of your partner’s cultural group?” Similar items have been used in previous research (e.g., Atwell Seate, Zuganelli, Chien, & Ma, 2016; Berry et al., 2006). Each item was anchored by 1 (*0-10 %*) and 10 (*91-100%*).

Actual conflict management behaviors. A modified Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II; Rahim, 1983) was used to assess respondents’ actual coping behaviors in response to conflict that happened within their intercultural romantic relationships. The original ROCI-II was designed to measure five distinct styles (i.e., integrating, dominating, obliging, compromising, and avoiding) to manage interpersonal conflicts within an organizational setting; therefore, modifications were made to ROCI-II by changing one’s conflict interactant from one’s supervisor to one’s romantic partner to make this instrument more applicable to a romantic context. Sharir (1996) found that Rahim’s conflict inventory, though designed for organizational conflict management, was effective in assessing conflict management strategies in spousal relationships.

When completing the above-mentioned scale, respondents were instructed to recall conflicts they have had within their intercultural romantic relationships. They were then asked to rate the extent to which each of the listed conflict management

strategies (e.g., “I try to discuss a problem with my partner to find a solution acceptable to us,” “I generally try to satisfy the needs of my partner,” and “I try to keep my complaints with my partner to myself”) characterized how they actually handled their relational conflicts on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Conflict management style preferences. Preferences for each of the conflict style were also assessed with the modified ROCI-II. Respondents were instructed to recall conflicts they have had within their intercultural romantic relationships and to rate the extent to which they felt comfortable using each of the conflict management strategies listed in the modified ROCI-II. Respondents were reminded that conflict strategies they felt comfortable with may or may not correspond to the same way they actually handled conflict with their partner. All the items were anchored by 1 (*extremely uncomfortable*) and 9 (*extremely comfortable*).

Past studies have used a similar instruction to assess people’s ideal and actual conflict styles (e.g., Reich, Wagner-Westbrook, & Kressel, 2007; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987) and found that participants could discriminate their actual and ideal conflict responses. For instance, Reich et al. (2007) asked participants to fill out the same conflict management scale twice, once according to the way they typically responded to conflict and once for the way they would ideally respond. Their results showed that participants’ ratings of actual and ideal conflict responses differed and that participants viewed their ideal conflict style as more competitive, less collaborative, and more avoidant than their actual conflict style.

Conflict management discrepancies. Conflict management discrepancies, which refer to discrepancies between conflict management style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors, were constructed through the following procedures. First, for each conflict management style sub-scale (e.g., integrating, dominating, and obliging), one's average rating of the actual conflict management behaviors (which will be referred to as $X_{.a1}$) and conflict management style preference (which will be referred to as $X_{.a2}$) were computed. Second, a discrepancy score for each conflict management style was created by subtracting $X_{.a1}$ from $X_{.a2}$ and by taking its absolute value.¹⁴ For instance, an individual's discrepancy score for integrating was constructed first by subtracting his/her average rating of actual unitization of integrating strategies from his/her average rating of preference toward integrating and then by taking this discrepancy score's absolute value.

Personal-enacted identity gap. Personal-enacted identity gap was measured with an 11-item instrument developed by Jung and Hecht (2004). Scale items (e.g., "I do not express the real me when I think it is different from my partner's expectation") assessed respondents' sense of discrepancies between their real selves and the expressed selves in communication. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). A higher score indicated a higher level of perceived personal-enacted identity gap.

¹⁴ Higgins, Shah and Friedman, (1997) used similar, but not identical, procedures to create a measurement assessing discrepancy between one's ideal and actual self. Specifically, they presented their participants a list of attributes and asked them to rate (a) the extent to which they would like ideally to possess each of the attribute and (b) the extent to which they believed that they actually possess these attribute. Respondents' actual-self extent rating for each attribute was subtracted from that attribute's ideal-self extent rating. These discrepancy scores were then summed to create an actual-ideal discrepancy index. The present study modifies their procedure by subtracting the *average* of preference rating from the *average* of actual extent rating to construct an actual-ideal discrepancy index for conflict management.

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was assessed with Hendrick's (1988) Relationship Assessment Scale. Respondents were asked to respond to seven items, such as "How well does your partner meet your needs" and "How good is your relationship compared to most," on a scale from 1 to 9. A higher score indicated a higher level of perceived relationship satisfaction.

Covariates.

Gender role ideology. As results of Study 1 revealed, individuals' endorsement of gender role ideologies might be related to their conflict management behaviors. Therefore, the present study treated participants' endorsement of gender role ideologies as a potential control variable. The Equalitarian Roles subscale from the ENRICH inventory (Olson, Fournier, & Druckman, 1987) was used to assess participants' gender role ideologies. The Equalitarian Roles subscale contained 10 items. Items focused on individuals' attitudes toward proper occupational, household, sex and parental roles for each gender (e.g., "The husband should have the final word in most of the important decision in our family"). Each item was anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated a lower endorsement of gender equalitarianism.

Relationship length. S. Lee (2006) found that the length of a relationship was significantly and positively related to intercultural couples' development of a third-culture (i.e., a relational culture that is characterized by a greater degree of intercultural integration between couples). Therefore, the present study treated relationship length as a potential control variable that might influence respondents' relational identity orientation. Relationship length was measured with a single item:

“How many year(s) and month(s) have you and your partner been together?”

Respondents’ answers were later transformed into relationship length in months.

Demographics. Respondents provided basic demographic information, including their age, educational attainment, sex, and current country of residence. Respondents were also asked to provide their partners’ basic demographic information, such as their age, educational attainment, sex, nationality, and current country of residence. Finally, respondents were asked to describe their relationship, including their marital status and cohabiting status.

This chapter reviewed the following elements of the methods for Study 2: the development and pilot testing results of the relational identity orientation scale and the concerns for self and the partner scale, main study recruitment procedures, and the operationalization of main study variables. The following chapter reports the results of the analyses.

Chapter 8: Study 2 Results

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part provides an overview of statistical analyses performed for research question investigation and hypothesis testing. This section also explains the rationale for the chosen statistical methods employed. The second section presents preliminary analyses, including the examination of missing data, reliability, descriptive statistics of the study's variables, and assumptions checks. The third part presents the results of primary statistical analyses used to investigate research questions and hypotheses.

Overview of Primary Statistical Analyses

Three separate multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs) were conducted to test H1-H10 and to answer RQ1-RQ4. Pearson's correlation tests and Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro were used to examine the relationships among discrepancies between preferred and actual conflict management behaviors, identity gap, and relationship satisfaction that were proposed in H11 and H12.

The decision to use MANCOVA for statistical testing was based on its ability to assess if there are significant mean differences between independent groups on more than one continuous and moderately correlated dependent variables, while simultaneously controlling for covariates (Bray & Maxwell, 1985). Unlike separate univariate tests, MANOVA and MANCOVA procedures can control the family-wise error rate when some degree of intercorrelation among dependent variables is present (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Past research has provided some evidence that conflict management style preferences, which are dependent variables in H1-H2 and H9-H10, are correlated (Ma, 2007; Morita, 2003; Munduate, Ganaza, Peiró, &

Euwema, 1999). For instance, Morita (2003) found that, for American participants, (a) integrating and compromising were positively associated, (b) obliging and avoiding were positively associated, (c) integrating and avoiding were negatively associated, and (d) dominating and avoiding were negatively associated. In addition, scholars have found that acculturation orientations may be correlated as well. For example, Barry (2001) examined acculturation data from 150 East Asian immigrants in the U.S. and found a negative association between assimilation and separation, a negative association between integration and separation, and a positive association between assimilation and integration. Because interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations, which are the dependent variables in H3-H8, reflect their acculturation orientations within their intercultural romantic relationships, there is a high probability that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations may also be correlated in a similar fashion. Given the probability for the present study's dependent variables to be correlated and the goal of reducing the risk of Type I error, MANCOVA was chosen as an appropriate statistical tool to assess independent variables' multivariate main effects.

The choice of utilizing PROCESS macro (model 4) was based upon its ability to assess both the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables and the intervening variables in one model¹⁵. Moreover, the PROCESS macro uses

¹⁵ This study incorporated gender role ideology as a covariate in MANCOVA models, because Study 1 results suggested that gender role ideology could influence people's conflict style preferences (dependent variables in the first MANCOVA model) and their actual conflict behaviors (dependent variables in the third MANCOVA model). Because conflict management discrepancies were independent variables in the PROCESS models, no covariate was included in the PROCESS analyses.

bootstrapping techniques, which is the most appropriate way to estimate standard errors and confidence intervals because it requires no assumptions regarding the shape of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect (Hayes, Preacher, & Myers, 2011).

The above section explains the rationale for using MANCOVAs and PROCESS macro to perform primary statistical analyses. The following provides a brief overview of procedures taken for hypothesis testing and answering research questions.

Hypotheses 1-2. H1 hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese who have a higher independent self-construal would have a greater preference for a dominating conflict management style than those who with a lower independent self-construal. H2 hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese who have a higher interdependent self-construal would have a greater preference for avoiding and obliging conflict management styles than those who with a lower interdependent self-construal. The analyses of H1 and H2 included the following steps. Because MANCOVA requires categorical independent variables with two or more groups, the first step involved performing two median splits onto respondents' scores of interdependent and independent self-construals, respectively. Second, a 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA was conducted, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables.

Hypotheses 3-8 and RQ 1-2. Hypotheses 3 to 8 were concerned with how interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's concerns for the partner and self (H3-H4),

their independent and interdependent self-construals (H5-H6), and the proportions of ingroup members and members of their partner's cultural group in their immediate neighborhood (H7-H8) related to their relational identity orientations. RQ1 and RQ2 asked how concerns for self and the partner as well as one's self-construals related to interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientation toward marginalization. To test H3 to H8 and to answer RQ1 and RQ2, the following procedures were conducted. First, four median splits were performed on respondents' scores in terms of their concern for self, concern for the partner, the proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group, and the proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group, respectively. A 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA was then conducted, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables.

Hypotheses 9-10 and RQ 3-4. Hypothesis 9 predicted that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese who have a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation would utilize dominating strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward assimilation. Hypothesis 10 predicted that those who with a greater relational identity orientation toward separation would utilize obliging and avoiding strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward separation. RQ3 and RQ4 asked whether a greater relational identity orientation

toward integration and marginalization would influence interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's utilization of conflict strategies, respectively.

To test H9 to H10 and to answer RQ3 and RQ4, the following procedures were followed. First, four median splits were performed on respondents' scores in terms of their relational identity orientations toward integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, respectively. Second, a 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward marginalization) MANCOVA was conducted, with actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables. In addition, given that Study 1 found that people's gender role ideology could potentially influence their conflict behaviors, gender role ideology was used as a covariate in this MANCOVA analysis.

Hypotheses 11-12. Hypothesis 11 proposed that discrepancies in interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict management style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors (i.e., conflict management discrepancies) should be (a) positively associated with a perception of personal-enacted identity gap and (b) negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. This hypothesis was examined with Pearson's product-moment correlation tests. Hypothesis 12 predicted that conflict management discrepancies would have an indirect effect on relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap. Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (model 4) was used to test this hypothesis, with conflict management discrepancies as the independent variables, perceived personal-enacted

identity gap as the intervening variable, and relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Before primary statistical analyses were performed, preliminary analyses were conducted to transform missing data and to examine if assumptions for MANCOVA and PROCESS analyses were satisfied. The following section reports the results of these preliminary analyses.

Preliminary Analyses

Missing data. Ten out of 412 respondents had missing values on study variables. A total of 28 items had missing data. Because the number of respondents with missing data and the number of items missing were 20% or less, each of the missing values was replaced with the grand mean of its associated variable (Downey & King, 1998). Separate MANCOVA and PROCESS analyses, using pairwise deletion to remove missing data, were conducted to examine if analyses using mean replacement and analyses using pairwise deletion yielded different findings. Results indicated that both sets of analyses produced similar test statistics, *p* values, and effect sizes. This chapter reported results of analyses using mean replacement.

Descriptive statistics and reliability. After mean replacement was performed onto each of the missing values, the mean, standard deviation, and reliability coefficients were computed for each study variable. Reliability coefficients were estimated using Cronbach's alpha, Revelle's omega total, and the GLB. Except for the scale of relational identity toward marginalization ($\alpha = .67$, Revelle's omega total = .74, GLB = .71), all the measures had acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha varying from .71 to .92, Revelle's omega total varying from .74 to .93, and the GLB

ranging from .71 to .93. Please refer to Table 14 and Table 15 for a summary of descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients associated with each of the study variables. Please also see Table 16 for the correlation matrix for study variables.

MANCOVA assumption tests. Statistical assumptions of MANCOVA require (a) multivariate normality of dependent variables, (b) correlations among dependent variables, (c) homogeneity of variance, (d) equality of variance-covariance matrices, and (e) homogeneity of regression slopes (Bray & Maxwell, 1985; Garson, 2015; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). The following section describes test results of these assumptions.

Multivariate normality of dependent variables. Kline (2005) pointed out that, for analyses with more than three variables, examining all aspects of multivariate normality could be challenging, and he suggested researchers examine the univariate normality for each variable to detect problems in multivariate normality. Because the Shapiro-Wilk test for univariate normality is sensitive to even slight departures from a normal distribution, the skewness and kurtosis statistics are commonly used to examine whether the population assumption of normality for individual variables is satisfied (Lix & Keselman, 2010). However, relying on the significance level of skewness and kurtosis to evaluate normality could be problematic because the standard error for these two statistics is sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2005). Instead, Kline proposed using the absolute value of skewness and kurtosis to assess univariate normality. Several researchers have suggested that skewness and kurtosis statistics within the absolute value of 2 can be considered acceptable departure from

normality (see Hancock & Mueller, 2010). Therefore, this rule was adopted to examine potential violation of the normality assumption.

Dependent variables of the proposed MANCOVA analyses included interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's conflict management style preferences (dependent variables in the first MANCOVA test), their relational identity orientations (dependent variables in the second MANCOVA test), and their actual conflict management behaviors (dependent variables in the third MANCOVA test). Descriptive statistics were obtained for all measured dependent variables to examine univariate normality. At the univariate level, all dependent variables had skewness and kurtosis values smaller than the absolute value of 2 (see Table 14). Therefore, original scores were used without transformation.

Correlations among dependent variables. MANOVA and MANCOVA tests are appropriate when researchers seek to examine if groups exhibit significant differences on a set of correlated dependent variables. If no correlation exists among dependent variables, univariate general linear models, such as ANOVA and regressions, are recommended (Garson, 2015; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). Bartlett's test of sphericity, which tests the null hypothesis that correlations of dependent variables are all zeros, were conducted to determine if the use of MANCOVAs was warranted with the present data. Results indicated that Bartlett's tests of sphericity were significant for all of the three MANCOVA analyses (see Table 17), suggesting that the correlation matrices were not identity matrices and that there was sufficient variability in the correlation matrices to proceed with MANCOVAs (Garson, 2015).

Homogeneity of variance. The assumption of homogeneity of variance, also known as the homoscedasticity assumption, requires that the error variance of each dependent variable should be the same across each group formed by the categorical independent variables. Violation of this assumption is likely to attenuate effect size measures (e.g., partial eta-squared), inflate standard errors, and increase both Type I and Type II error rates (Garson, 2015; Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined using Levene's tests of equality of error variances. Results indicated that Levene's tests were not significant for all of the dependent variables in MANCOVAs (see Table 18), suggesting that the homoscedasticity assumption was satisfied.

Equality of variance-covariance matrices. This assumption requires that the variance-covariance matrices are equal across the cells formed by the categorical independent variables. Examination of the equality of variance-covariance matrices was performed using Box's M-test (Garson, 2015; Hair et al. 2009, Rencher & Christensen, 2012). Box's M-test uses the F distribution and assumes multivariate normality. It has been noticed that Box's M-test is a conservative test and that it is sensitive to sample size and even small departure from normality (Garson, 2015; Hair et al. 2009). Therefore, some researchers suggest a more conservative α value, such as .01 or smaller, to assess significance (Garson, 2015; Hair et al. 2009, Pallant, 2007). Box's M tests were performed with all three MANCOVA analyses. Results yielded significance values larger than .01, indicating that this assumption was not violated. Please see Table 19 for Box's M test results.

Homogeneity of regression slopes. The assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes means that the covariate coefficients are the same for each group formed by independent variables. A violation of this assumption could yield biased adjusted group means and a misleading b coefficient for the covariate, making the interpretation of MANCOVA results problematic (Garson, 2015). Homogeneity of regression slopes was tested by examining if there was any significant interaction effect between a covariate and each of the independent variables (Garson, 2015; Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). Analyses revealed that all such interactions were not significant (see Table 20), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met.

Taken together, the above analyses suggested that assumptions in MANCOVAs were satisfactorily met. Therefore, it was concluded that it was appropriate to conduct MANCOVA tests with present data.

PROCESS path analysis assumption checks. Analyses using Hayes' PROCESS macro are "done using OLS regression-based path analysis, which assumes fixed effects, continuous outcomes, and the absence of random measurement error" (Hayes, 2013, p. 21). The present study treated the effects of predictor variables as fixed. In addition, analyses conducted with PROCESS macro had a continuous dependent variable (i.e., relationship satisfaction). Therefore, the first two assumptions were met. Although it is impossible to assume that the present study's measurements were without errors, using reliable instruments could reduce biases resulting from the violation of this assumption. Reliability analyses suggested that, except for the scale of relational identity toward marginalization ($\alpha = .67$, Revelle's

omega total = .74, GLB = .71), all the measures had acceptable reliability. Although the Cronbach's alpha for the scale of relational identity toward marginalization was below the conventional threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), results of Revelle's omega total and the GLB indicated that the internal consistency of the marginalization subscale was acceptable.

Hypothesis Testing and Research Question Investigation

Effects of self-construals on conflict management style preferences. To test the assertion that the independent self-construal influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's preference toward the dominating style of conflict management (H1) and the prediction that the interdependent self-construal influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's preferences toward the avoiding (H2a) and the obliging (H2b) styles, a 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables, was conducted. As predicted, the multivariate main effects for both the independent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .94$, $F(5, 404) = 5.40$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .056$, and the interdependent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(5, 404) = 2.91$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$, were significant. The multivariate covariate effect for gender role ideology was also significant, Wilk's $\lambda = .9$, $F(5, 404) = 8.97$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .099$.

Because the multivariate main effects for independent and interdependent self-construals were statistically significant, univariate analyses were conducted to assess the effects of the two independent variables on each of the dependent variables (Bray & Maxwell, 1985). Given that follow-up univariate tests could not take into

consideration the intercorrelation among the dependent variables and could not provide protection over family-wise Type I error rate, using ANCOVA as the only type of follow-up univariate tests gains no additional advantage at the cost of losing some statistical power (some information was lost because of median splits); therefore, OLS multiple regressions with independent and interdependent self-construals as continuous independent variables were performed as complementary follow-up univariate tests.

According to Olejnik (2010), univariate tests following the significant MANOVA test offers no protection from the family-wise Type I errors rate. Therefore, the Bonferroni procedure was performed to adjust Type I error rate for multiple comparisons (McDonald, 2009). Given that there were five dependent variables, it was determined that the univariate test results were significant if the p value was .01 or smaller ($.05/5 = .01$).

A follow-up 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) ANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate, indicated that independent self-construal significantly influenced three conflict style preferences: integrating, $F(1, 408) = 20.11, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, avoiding, $F(1, 408) = 7.87, p < .01, \eta^2 = .012$, and compromising, $F(1, 408) = 11.81, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .024$. Specifically, those who with a higher independent self-construal had a greater preference toward the integrating style ($M = 7.93, SE = .08$, 95% CI [7.77, 8.10]) than those with a lower independent self-construal ($M = 7.46, SE = .08$, 95% CI [7.30, 7.61]), a higher preference toward the compromising style ($M = 7.36, SE = .09$, 95% CI [7.18, 7.55]) than those with a lower independent self-

construal ($M = 6.95$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [6.78, 7.12]), as well as a lower preference toward avoiding ($M = 3.64$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [3.42, 3.86]) than those with a lower independent self-construal ($M = 3.98$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [3.78, 4.19]¹⁶). However, the univariate main effect of the independent self-construal on a preference toward the dominating style was not significant, $F(1, 408) = 1.95$, $p > .05$. Therefore, univariate ANCOVA results did not support H1.

The univariate main effect of the interdependent self-construal was only significant for the obliging conflict style preference, $F(1, 408) = 7.21$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$. In line with H2(b), those who with a greater interdependent self-construal ($M = 4.24$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [4.01, 4.46]) showed a greater preference toward the obliging conflict management style than those with a lower interdependent self-construal ($M = 3.95$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [3.74, 4.15]). Please see Table 21 for all the estimated mean differences for conflict management style preferences as a function of independent and interdependent self-construals.

The covariate, gender role ideology, was significant for three conflict style preferences: integrating, $F(1, 408) = 11.14$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$, obliging, $F(1,$

¹⁶ Although the confident intervals associated with the mean estimates for high and low independent self-construal groups' respective level of preference for the avoiding style overlapped, it should not be taken that there was no significant group difference. According to Schenker and Gentleman (2001), "rejection of the null hypothesis by the method of examining overlap implies rejection by the standard method, whereas failure to reject by the method of examining overlap does not imply failure to reject by the standard method" (p. 182). That is, the method of examining overlaps between confidence intervals was more conservative and could mistakenly fail to reject the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false. Similarly, Cumming and Finch (2005) suggested that, if the proportion of overlap is less than 0.5 (i.e., the overlap of the 95% CIs is less than half the average margin of error), the means of two independent groups are significantly different at the .05 level. Because the average margin of error in the given case is $[(3.86 - 3.42) + (4.19 - 3.78)] \times 1/2 = 0.425$ and the overlap of the 95% CIs is $3.86 - 3.78 = 0.08$, the proportion of overlap is $0.08 / 0.425 = 0.19$, which is less than 0.5. Based on Cumming and Finch's rule, it is concluded that the mean estimates for high and low independent self-construal groups' respective level of preference for the avoiding style were statistically different.

408) = 28.79, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .066$, and avoiding, $F(1, 408) = 25.6$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .059$.

Taken together, results of follow-up ANCOVA tests showed empirical support for H2(b), but not for H1 and H2(a). Interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher interdependent self-construal were more likely to prefer handling relational conflicts with obliging-related approaches than those who with a lower interdependent self-construal. However, a higher independent self-construal did not significantly increase interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's preference toward the dominating style, nor did a higher interdependent self-construal significantly increase their preference toward the avoiding style.

Given the problem of the loss of information and, hence, reduced power associated with median split procedures, OLS multiple regressions using interdependent self-construal, independent self-construal, and gender role ideology as predictors of each of the conflict style preferences were performed as alternative follow-up univariate tests. All the independent variables, the covariate, and the dependent variables in OLS regression models were continuous variables (i.e., no median splits were performed).

Results of OLS multiple regressions suggested that independent self-construal, independent self-construal, and gender role ideology, taken together, significantly predicted conflict style preference toward integrating, $F(3, 408) = 9.51$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .065$, obliging, $F(3, 408) = 13.72$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .092$, dominating, $F(3, 408) = 4.35$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .031$, avoiding, $F(3, 408) = 13.67$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .091$, and compromising, $F(3, 408) = 6.37$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .045$.

More specifically, it was found that independent self-construal positively predicted a greater preference toward integrating ($b = .21, \beta = .18, p < .001$), dominating ($b = .28, \beta = .16, p = .001$), and compromising ($b = .21, \beta = .16, p = .001$) conflict management styles. Interdependent self-construal only positively predicted a preference for the obliging style ($b = .21, \beta = .13, p < .01$). Finally, gender role ideology was a significant predictor of conflict style preferences for integrating ($b = -.12, \beta = -.16, p = .001$), obliging ($b = .24, \beta = .24, p < .001$), and avoiding ($b = .23, \beta = .23, p < .001$). Because a higher score of gender role ideology represented a higher level of endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism, these results suggested that a higher endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism was associated with a greater preference toward obliging and avoiding, as well as a lower level of preference toward integrating. Taken together, results of multiple regressions provided empirical support for H1 and H2(b). However, H2(a) was not supported. Interdependent construal was not significantly associated with interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's preference toward an avoiding conflict management style.

Effects of concerns for self and the partner, self-construals, and neighborhood compositions on relational identity orientations. To examine how concerns for self and the partner influence relational identity orientations, H3 predicted that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher concern for the relational partner would have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) assimilation compared with those with a lower concern for the relational partner. H4 asserted that those who with a higher concern for self would have a greater relational identity orientation toward (a) integration and (b) separation

compared with those with a lower concern for self. RQ1 was proposed to better understand how concerns for self and the partner related to a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. Following past research findings that self-construals could affect a person's acculturation orientations, the present study hypothesized that those who with a greater independent self-construal would have a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (H5a) and assimilation (H5b) compared with those with a lower independent self-construal. It was also predicted that those who with a greater interdependent self-construal would have a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (H6a) and separation (H6b) compared with those with a lower interdependent self-construal. RQ2 asked how self-construals related to a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. Finally, H7 and H8 were proposed to explore how neighborhood compositions (i.e., the proportion of one's cultural ingroup in the immediate neighborhood and the proportion of the partner's cultural group in the immediate neighborhood) influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational orientations. H7 predicted that those who lived in a neighborhood with a higher proportion of their cultural ingroup (i.e., Chinese and Taiwanese) would have a greater relational identity orientation toward separation compared with those living in a neighborhood with a lower proportion of their ethnic ingroup. In a similar vein, H8 hypothesized that those who lived in a neighborhood with a higher proportion of members of the partner's cultural group would have a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation compared with those living in a neighborhood with a lower proportion of members of the partner's cultural group.

To test the above hypotheses, a separate 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables, was conducted.

The multivariate main effects for independent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .98$, $F(4, 401) = 2.53$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$, interdependent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .92$, $F(4, 401) = 9.34$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .085$, concern for self, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(4, 401) = 3.30$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .032$, concern for the partner, Wilk's $\lambda = .93$, $F(4, 401) = 7.92$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .073$, the proportion of ingroup in the neighborhood, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(4, 401) = 3.10$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, and the proportion of partner's group in the neighborhood, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(4, 401) = 2.63$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$, were all significant. The multivariate covariate effect for relationship length was also significant, Wilk's $\lambda = .96$, $F(4, 401) = 4.72$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .045$.

Because the multivariate main effects for all the independent variables were statistically significant, follow-up univariate tests were conducted. Bonferroni procedure was carried out to adjust the significance value of the follow-up univariate tests. Given that there were four dependent variables, the univariate test results were considered significant if the p value was .0125 or smaller ($.05/4 = .0125$).

Four separate 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) ANCOVAs, with relationship length as a covariate, were conducted as follow-up tests. Results showed that concern for the relational partner had significant univariate main effects on a relational orientation toward assimilation, $F(1, 404) = 13.00, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .031$, and separation, $F(1, 404) = 12.46, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. In line with H3(b), those with a higher concern for the partner ($M = 5.70, SE = .11, 95\% \text{ CI } [5.49, 5.91]$) reported a higher relational orientation toward assimilation than those with a lower level of partner-concern ($M = 5.10, SE = .12, 95\% \text{ CI } [4.87, 5.32]$). In addition, they also reported a lower degree of relational orientation toward separation ($M = 3.38, SE = .10, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.19, 3.57]$) than those with a lower level of partner-concern ($M = 3.91, SE = .10, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.71, 4.12]$). However, the univariate main effect of concern for the partner on a relational identity toward integration failed to reach statistical significance, $F(1, 404) = .16, p > .05$, indicating that H3(a) did not receive empirical support. Supporting H4(b), concern for self was shown to significantly influence a relational identity orientation toward separation, $F(1, 404) = 7.43, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$. Interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher level of self-concern ($M = 3.85, SE = .11, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.64, 4.06]$) expressed a greater tendency to develop a relational identity toward separation than their low self-concern counterparts ($M = 3.44, SE = .09, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.26, 3.63]$). However, the univariate main effect of concern for self on a

relational identity toward integration was not significant, $F(1, 404) = 3.98, p = .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. That is, H4(a) was not supported.

ANCOVA analyses yielded no significant univariate main effect for independent self-construal on any of the four relational identity orientations, indicating that H5 did not received empirical support. Those with a higher independent self-construal did not show a greater tendency to foster a relational identity orientation toward integration, $F(1, 404) = 2.06, p > 0.05$, or assimilation, $F(1, 404) = 0.10, p > 0.05$. The univariate main effect of interdependent self-construal was significant for two relational identity orientations: integration, $F(1, 404) = 25.51, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .059$, and assimilation, $F(1, 404) = 6.73, p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$. Providing support to H6(a), results indicated that those with a higher interdependent self-construal had a greater orientation toward integration ($M = 7.86, SE = .07, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.71, 8.00]$) than those with a lower interdependent self-construal ($M = 7.36, SE = .07, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.23, 7.49]$). However, unlike what was hypothesized in H6(b), interdependent self-construal significantly predicted a relational identity orientation toward assimilation, instead of separation. Those with a higher interdependent self-construal had a greater orientation toward assimilation ($M = 5.58, SE = .11, 95\% \text{ CI } [5.38, 5.79]$) than those with a lower interdependent self-construal ($M = 5.21, SE = .10, 95\% \text{ CI } [5.03, 5.40]$).

Finally, both variables concerning one's immediate neighborhood composition revealed no significant univariate effects. These results suggested that the proportion of one's cultural ingroup in one's immediate neighborhood did not significantly influence an interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational

identity orientation toward separation, $F(1, 404) = 2.42, p = .12$. The effect of the proportion of the partner's cultural group in one's immediate neighborhood on a relational identity orientation toward assimilation, $F(1, 404) = 5.12, p = .02$, failed to reach statistical significance using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125.

Therefore, H7 and H8 were not supported. Please see Table 22.1 to Table 22.3 for estimated mean differences for relational identity orientations as a function of self-construals, concerns for self and the partners, and the two neighborhood composition variables.

The covariate, relationship length, influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientation toward assimilation, but this finding only approached statistical significance, $F(1, 404) = 6.25, p = .013$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125. Taken together, results of these follow-up ANCOVA analyses only provided empirical support for H3(b), H4(b), and H6(a). H3(a), H4(a), H5(a), H5(b), H6(b), H7 and H8 were not supported.

OLS multiple regressions using interdependent self-construal, independent self-construal, concern for the partner, concern for self, proportion of ingroup in the neighborhood, proportion of the partner's group in the neighborhood, and relational length as predictors, with each measured at the interval or ratio level, were performed as alternative follow-up univariate tests. Findings of OLS multiple regressions suggested that the independent variables and the covariate collectively predicted a relational identity orientation toward integration, $F(7, 404) = 11.52, p < .001, R^2 = .166$, assimilation, $F(7, 404) = 6.13, p < .001, R^2 = .096$, separation, $F(7, 404) = 3.71, p = .001, R^2 = .06$, and marginalization, $F(7, 404) = 2.07, p < .05, R^2 = .035$.

Results also revealed that concern for the partner was positively associated with an orientation toward assimilation ($b = .14, \beta = .14, p = .012$) and negatively associated with separation ($b = -.23, \beta = -.25, p < .001$). Concern for self also significantly predicted an orientation toward separation ($b = .23, \beta = .24, p < .001$). Independent self-construal significantly predicted an orientation toward integration ($b = .18, \beta = .18, p < .001$). Interdependent self-construal was a significant predictor for three relational identity orientations: integration ($b = .11, \beta = .30, p < .001$), assimilation ($b = .26, \beta = .18, p < .001$), and marginalization ($b = -.18, \beta = -.13, p = .011$). The proportion of members from the partner's cultural group in the neighborhood was significantly associated with a relational orientation toward assimilation ($b = .07, \beta = .17, p < .01$). The proportion of one's cultural ingroup in the neighborhood was not a significant predictor for any of the relational orientations. Relationship length was associated with a relational orientation toward integration; however, this finding only approached statistical significance ($b = -.002, \beta = -.12, p = .014$). Taken together, results of multiple regressions provided empirical support for H3(b), H4(b), H5(a), H6(a), and H8. H3(a), H4(a), H5(b), H6(b), H7 were not supported.

RQ1 asked how concerns for self and the partner related to a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. Because results of both univariate ANCOVAs and OLS multiple regressions indicated that neither concern for self nor concern for the partner was a significant predictor of a relational identity orientation toward marginalization, the present data did not reveal any relationship between a relational identity orientation toward marginalization and concern for self or the

partner. RQ2 was concerned with the relationships between a relational identity orientation toward marginalization and self-construals. ANCOVA tests yielded no significant main effects for independent and interdependent self-construals on a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. However, regression results indicated that interdependent self-construal was a significant predictor for a relational identity orientation toward marginalization ($b = -.18, \beta = -.13, p = .011$). Taken together, the present study found some empirical evidence that a greater interdependent self-construal was associated with a lower development of a marginalization-oriented relational identity.

Effects of relational identity orientations on actual conflict management behaviors. H9 and H10, as well as RQ3 and RQ4, were concerned with the effects of relational identity orientations on interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's actual conflict management behaviors. H9 predicted that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher relational orientation toward assimilation would utilize dominating strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward assimilation. H10, on the other hand, asserted that those with a higher relational orientation toward separation would utilize (a) avoiding and (b) obliging strategies to manage their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward separation. RQ3 and RQ4 sought to explore the relationships between conflict management behaviors and a relational identity toward integration and marginalization, respectively.

A 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation

toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low marginalization) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables, was conducted. The multivariate main effects for an integration relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .95$, $F(5, 402) = 4.27$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$, an assimilation relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .9$, $F(5, 402) = 8.98$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, and a separation relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(5, 402) = 2.92$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$, were significant. However, results revealed no significant multivariate main effect for a relational orientation toward marginalization, Wilk's $\lambda = .993$, $F(5, 402) = .56$, $p > .05$, indicating that the present study did not find empirical support that a marginalization-oriented relational identity had a significant impact on interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's actual conflict management behaviors. The multivariate covariate effect for gender role ideology was significant, Wilk's $\lambda = .96$, $F(5, 402) = 3.62$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .043$.

Because the multivariate main effect for a relational orientation toward marginalization on actual conflict management behaviors was not significant, relational orientation toward marginalization was not entered as a predictor in follow-up univariate tests. Bonferroni procedure was carried out to adjust the significance value of the follow-up univariate tests. Because there were five dependent variables, it was determined that the univariate test results were significant if the p value was .01 or smaller ($.05/5 = .01$).

A series of 2 (high versus low relational orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low relational orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low relational orientation toward assimilation) ANCOVAs, with gender role ideology as a

covariate, were conducted. It was found that an orientation toward integration had significant effects on the reported use of integrating, $F(1, 407) = 17.96, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .042$, and compromising, $F(1, 407) = 12.69, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, conflict strategies. Interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher relational orientation toward integration ($M = 7.86, SE = .09, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.69, 8.03]$) reported a higher level of agreement that they typically handled their relational conflicts with integrating strategies than those with a lower level of relational orientation toward integration ($M = 7.36, SE = .08, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.20, 7.51]$). Similarly, they also reported a greater use of compromising strategies ($M = 7.27, SE = .10, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.09, 7.46]$) than those with a lower level of relational orientation toward integration ($M = 6.81, SE = .09, 95\% \text{ CI } [6.64, 6.99]$). An orientation toward integration did not predict the reported use of obliging, $F(1, 407) = 0.21, p > .05$, dominating, $F(1, 407) = 0.01, p > .05$, and avoiding, $F(1, 407) = 0.05, p > .05$, conflict strategies. Please see Table 23 for estimated mean differences and standard errors for actual conflict management behaviors as a function of relational identity orientations.

Results also showed that the univariate main effect for an assimilation relational orientation was significant for the reported use of integrating, $F(1, 407) = 7.45, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$, obliging, $F(1, 407) = 28.80, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .066$, and compromising strategies, $F(1, 407) = 15.70, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$. Findings suggested that those who with higher level of relational orientation toward assimilation used more integrating strategies ($M = 7.77, SE = .09, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.60, 7.94]$) than those with a lower level of assimilation ($M = 7.44, SE = .08, 95\% \text{ CI } [7.28, 7.60]$), more obliging strategies ($M = 5.48, SE = .11, 95\% \text{ CI } [5.27, 5.70]$) than

those with a lower level of assimilation ($M = 4.68$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [4.49, 4.88]), and more compromising strategies ($M = 7.30$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [7.12, 7.49]) than those with a lower level of assimilation ($M = 6.78$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [6.61, 6.96]). However, findings revealed no significant univariate main effect for an assimilation relational orientation on the actual utilization of dominating, $F(1, 407) = 0.30$, $p > .05$, and avoiding strategies, $F(1, 407) = 0.98$, $p > .05$. Therefore, H9 was not empirically supported.

The univariate main effect for a relational orientation toward separation was only significant for the reported use of dominating strategies, $F(1, 407) = 10.01$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .024$, suggesting that those with a higher level of relational orientation toward separation ($M = 5.60$, $SE = .12$, 95% CI [5.37, 5.83]) were more likely to manage their relational conflicts using dominating strategies than those with a lower level of relational orientation toward separation ($M = 5.09$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [4.87, 5.31]). When a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .01 was used to assess statistical significance, an orientation toward separation failed to predict the reported use of integrating, $F(1, 407) = 3.92$, $p = .05$, obliging, $F(1, 407) = 0.38$, $p > .05$, avoiding, $F(1, 407) = 0.20$, $p > .05$, and compromising, $F(1, 407) = 5.16$, $p = .024$, conflict strategies. Therefore, both H10(a) and H10(b) was not supported by ANCOVA test results.

The covariate, gender role ideology, had significant effects on reported use of obliging, $F(1, 407) = 10.89$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$, and avoiding strategies, $F(1, 407) = 12.92$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .031$. In sum, follow-up ANCOVA analyses provided no empirical support for H9 and H10.

OLS multiple regressions using gender role ideology and three relational orientations (i.e., integration, assimilation, and separation) as predictors¹⁷, with each measured at the interval level, were performed as alternative follow-up univariate tests. Results showed that the three relational identity orientations and gender role ideology collectively predicted the reported use of integrating strategies, $F(4, 407) = 14.52, p < .001, R^2 = .125$, obliging strategies, $F(4, 407) = 15.93, p < .001, R^2 = .135$, dominating strategies, $F(4, 407) = 6.68, p < .001, R^2 = .062$, avoiding strategies, $F(4, 407) = 4.63, p = .001, R^2 = .044$, and compromising strategies, $F(4, 407) = 14.86, p < .001, R^2 = .127$.

Supporting ANCOVA findings, results of OLS multiple regressions also revealed that an orientation toward integration was significantly associated with the use of integrating ($b = .35, \beta = .30, p < .001$) and compromising ($b = .31, \beta = .24, p < .001$) strategies. An orientation toward assimilation was found to be significantly associated with the use of integrating ($b = .16, \beta = .19, p < .001$), obliging ($b = .34, \beta = .31, p < .001$), and compromising ($b = .24, \beta = .25, p < .001$) strategies. A separation relational orientation was a predictor for the reported use of integrating ($b = -.11, \beta = -.11, p = .017$), dominating ($b = .30, \beta = .23, p < .001$), and compromising strategies ($b = -.18, \beta = -.17, p < .001$); however, the association between a separation relational orientation and actual use of integrating strategies only approached statistical significance using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .01. Taken together, multiple regression results did not support H9 and H10, either.

¹⁷ A relational identity orientation toward marginalization was not used as a predictor in OLS multiple regression analyses because results of the MANCOVA test revealed no significant multivariate main effect for a relational orientation toward marginalization on actual conflict management behaviors.

Finally, gender role ideology was a significant predictor for the reported use of obliging ($b = .12, \beta = .13, p = .01$) and avoiding ($b = .18, \beta = .17, p = .001$) strategies. Because a higher score of gender role ideology represented a higher level of endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism, these results suggested that a higher endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism was associated with a greater use of obliging and avoiding strategies.

RQ3 asked how a relational identity orientation toward integration influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's utilization of conflict strategies in response to their relational conflicts. Results of both ANCOVA and regression analyses revealed that a higher orientation toward integration predicted a greater reported use of integrating- and compromising-related conflict management strategies. RQ4 explored the effect of a relational identity orientation toward marginalization on interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's actual conflict management behaviors. Given that the multivariate main effect for a relational identity orientation toward marginalization on the reported use of conflict strategies was not significant, the present study did not find any empirical evidence that a marginalization-oriented relational identity had an impact on what strategies intercultural-dating/married individuals actually enacted to handle relational conflicts.

Associations among conflict management discrepancies, the personal-enacted identity gap, and relationship satisfaction. Conflict management discrepancies referred to discrepancies between conflict management style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors. H11 predicted that conflict management discrepancies should be (a) positively associated with personal-enacted

identity gap and (b) negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. This hypothesis was examined with Pearson's product-moment correlation tests. It is advised that Bonferroni procedure be applied to correct experiment-wise Type I error rate when multiple correlation tests were performed (see Armstrong, 2014). Because ten bivariate correlation tests were conducted to examine the associations among relationship satisfaction, perceived identity gap, and the discrepancy scores for each of the conflict management types, the significance level was adjusted to .005 (.05/10). For a summary of correlation test results, please see Table 24. Correlation tests indicated that the perception of personal-enacted identity gap was positively correlated with a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of integrating strategies ($r = .31, p < .001$) and a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of avoiding strategies ($r = .15, p < .01$). Findings also revealed that relationship satisfaction was negatively related to a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of integrating strategies ($r = -.26, p < .001$) and a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of avoiding strategies ($r = -.14, p < .01$). These findings provide partial support for H11(a) and H11(b).

H12 further hypothesized that conflict management discrepancies would have an indirect effect on relationship satisfaction through interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's personal-enacted identity gap. Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (model 4), using 5000 bootstrapped samples, was used in SPSS to examine the proposed direct and indirect effects. Five separate PROCESS analyses were conducted to examine how each of the five conflict management discrepancies influenced perceived personal-enacted identity gap and relationship satisfaction, respectively.

This section only reported unstandardized coefficients, because the use of standardized data produced improper bootstrap confident intervals for the standardized effects (Hayes, 2017).

With regards to a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of integrating strategies, results indicated that there were direct effects of discrepancy on perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = .60, p < .001$) and relationship satisfaction ($b = -.28, p < .01$). Results also demonstrated that perceived personal-enacted identity gap was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction ($b = -.47, t = -9.29, p < .001$) and that there was a significant negative indirect effect from discrepancy to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = -.28, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.44, -.16]$).

As for a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of avoiding strategies, results showed a significant direct effect of discrepancy on perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = .22, p < .01$). Although correlation results indicated that a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of avoiding strategies was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction ($r = -.14, p < .01$), it was found that, when perceived personal-enacted identity gap was entered as an intervening variable into the model, discrepancy was no longer a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction ($b = -.12, p > .05$). Perceived personal-enacted identity gap, on the other hand, was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction ($b = -.51, p < .001$). Results also revealed a significant negative indirect effect from a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of avoiding strategies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = -.11, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.21, -.04]$).

A discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of obliging strategies was not associated with perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = .08, p > .05$). When perceived personal-enacted identity gap was entered as a potential intervening variable between a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of obliging strategies and relationship satisfaction, it was found that perceived personal-enacted identity gap significantly predicted relationship satisfaction ($b = -.51, p < .001$); however, discrepancy between the preferred and actual use of obliging strategies did not have a significant direct effect on relationship satisfaction ($b = -.07, p > .05$). The indirect effect from a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of obliging strategies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap was not significant ($b = -.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.12, .03]$).

The indirect effect from a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of dominating strategies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap was not statistically significant ($b = .03, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.05, .11]$). This conflict management discrepancy score was not significantly associated with either perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = -.06, p > .05$) or relationship satisfaction ($b = -.13, p > .05$). A perception of personal-enacted identity gap, however, significantly predicted relationship satisfaction ($b = -.52, p < .001$).

A discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of compromising strategies was not associated with perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = .06, p > .05$). When perceived personal-enacted identity gap was entered as a potential intervening variable between a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of compromising strategies and relationship satisfaction, it was found that relationship satisfaction was

predicted by perceived personal-enacted identity gap ($b = -.52$, $p < .001$), but not by discrepancy ($b = .02$, $p > .05$). The indirect effect from a discrepancy in the preferred and actual use of compromising strategies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap was not significant ($b = -.03$, 95% CI $[-.12, .04]$).

In sum, analyses using PROCESS macro yielded significant indirect effects from discrepancies in actual and preferred use of (a) integrating and (b) avoiding strategies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap. These findings provided partial support for H12.

Post-Hoc Analyses

As previously mentioned, the present study proposed that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations were stronger predictors of their actual conflict management behaviors than self-construals. To further explore this proposition, post-hoc analyses were conducted to compare the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) values of two multivariate models: The first multivariate model used self-construals as predictors of interculturally-dating/married individuals' actual conflict management behaviors, and the second multivariate model used relational identity orientations as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors. The AIC method can be used to compare both nested and non-nested models (Posada & Buckley, 2004). By examining AIC differences (i.e., $\Delta_i = \text{AIC}_i - \text{AIC}_{\min}$, where $\text{AIC}_{\min}$ is the smallest AIC value among all candidate models), the AIC approach allows a strength-of-evidence comparison and ranking of candidate models. Burnham and Anderson (2004) proposed a rule of thumb that models having Δ_i smaller than 2

received substantial support and that models having Δ_i greater than 10 received no support. That is, based on Burnham and Anderson's suggestion, a candidate model has an inferior model fit (i.e., it fits the data significantly worse than the model that has the smallest AIC value) if its Δ_i is greater than 10.

Two candidate models were compared in post-hoc analyses. The first multivariate model used independent and interdependent self-construals as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors, with gender role ideology as a covariate. MANCOVA results suggested that the multivariate main effects for the independent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .92$, $F(5, 404) = 7.22$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .082$, and the interdependent self-construal, Wilk's $\lambda = .95$, $F(5, 404) = 4.38$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .051$, were both significant. The multivariate covariate effect for gender role ideology was also significant, Wilk's $\lambda = .95$, $F(5, 404) = 4.50$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .053$. The second multivariate model used relational identity orientations as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors, with gender role ideology as a covariate. The multivariate main effects for an integration relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .95$, $F(5, 402) = 4.27$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$, an assimilation relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .9$, $F(5, 402) = 8.98$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, and a separation relational orientation, Wilk's $\lambda = .97$, $F(5, 402) = 2.92$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$, were significant. However, results revealed no significant multivariate main effect for a relational orientation toward marginalization, Wilk's $\lambda = .99$, $F(5, 402) = .56$, $p > .05$. The multivariate covariate effect for gender role ideology was significant, Wilk's $\lambda = .96$, $F(5, 402) = 3.62$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .043$.

The AIC values of the two candidate multivariate models were computed using the “extractAIC” function in R 3.4.3. Analyses revealed that the model with self-construals as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors had an AIC value of 4919.12, whereas the model with relational identity orientations as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors had an AIC value of 4901.89. The AIC difference between these two candidate models ($\Delta\text{AIC} = 17.23$) exceeded 10, suggesting that the second model fit the data better. Taken together, post-hoc analytical results provided empirical support that interculturally-dating/married individuals’ relational identity orientations were stronger predictors of their actual conflict management behaviors than their self-construals.

Chapter 9: Study 2 Discussion

This chapter consists of four parts. The first part provides a summary of the study's objectives and procedures. The second part summarizes the results and interprets their implications. Limitations of the study and directions for future research are then discussed. This chapter ends with a discussion of the theoretical and practical significance of the study.

Summary of the Study

The current study sought to achieve two goals. First, although intercultural conflict scholars (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) have proposed for some time that cultural influences on individuals' actual conflict behaviors could be affected by relational factors and contextual constraints, empirical studies have been slow to incorporate these propositions. This study aimed to present an initial attempt to empirically examine how cultural, contextual, and relational factors might work in tandem to influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational conflict management. To this end, this present study proposed that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations might effectively predict their relational conflict management behaviors. Specifically, drawing on Berry's (1990) acculturation model and relational identity literature (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Wood, 1982), this study theorized that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations were influenced by (a) their self-construals, (b) their concerns for self and the partner, and (c) the ethnic composition of their immediate neighborhood.

It was further hypothesized that, while interculturally-dating/married individuals' internalized cultural values, as manifested by their self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), would predict their *preferred* conflict management styles, their *actual* conflict behaviors would be better explained by their relational identity orientations because this construct simultaneously took into consideration the effects of cultural, relational, and contextual factors.

The second goal of this study was to provide a less Western-centric approach to examining the links between enacted conflict management tactics and intercultural couples' relational dynamics. Extant conflict management literature is largely based on research conducted in Western contexts and may rely on Western standards to assess the constructiveness of conflict management tactics. Western scholars mostly agree that integrating tactics have positive effects on conflict parties' relational quality, whereas avoiding, obliging, and dominating tactics are theorized in Western conflict literature to negatively influence relationship satisfaction (see Chapter 2). However, Study 1's findings revealed that the so-called (non-)constructive conflict management strategies did not have uniform effects on relationship satisfaction across participants with different relational cultures. These findings suggested that a new approach might be needed to better understand how different conflict tactics influence intercultural couples' relationships. Inspired by literature on communication theory of identity and identity gaps (Jung & Hecht, 2004), the current study proposed that discrepancies between one's conflict style preferences and the actual conflict behaviors (i.e., conflict management discrepancies) might manifest the existence of

personal-enacted identity gaps, which could negatively influence his/her relationship satisfaction.

The above hypotheses were tested in the main study, which employed an online, cross-sectional survey with interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to develop and test the psychometric properties of the measures of two main study variables: (a) interculturally dating individuals' relational identity orientations, and (b) their concerns for self and the partner. Because results of factor analyses and reliability tests revealed that the psychometric properties of these two scales were satisfactory, the instruments resulted from the pilot study were used in the main study.

A total of 416 respondents participated in the main study. Responses from four respondents were removed from analyses because these respondents did not fully meet the respondent selection criteria (see Chapter 7). MANCOVAs and Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (model 4) were used to test hypotheses and to explore research questions. Preliminary analyses revealed that the assumptions of MANCOVA and PROCESS path analyses were satisfactorily met. ANCOVAs and OLS regressions were used as follow-up univariate tests when an independent variable's multivariate main effect was found to be significant. Post-hoc analyses were done to further explore if relational identity orientations indeed functioned as better predictors of interculturally-dating/married individuals' actual conflict behaviors than self-construals.

Summary and Interpretation of the Results

H1 and H2: Effects of self-construals on conflict management style

preferences. Findings from past cross-cultural conflict research suggest that independent self-construal is associated with a greater preference for the dominating style, while interdependent self-construal is positively associated with a greater preference for avoiding and obliging styles (e.g., Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2010; Oetzel, 1998; Oetzel et al., 2001). Therefore, it was expected that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher independent self-construal would have a greater preference for dominating conflict management style than those with a lower independent self-construal (H1). It was also hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher interdependent self-construal would have a greater preference for avoiding (H2a) and obliging (H2b) styles than those with a lower interdependent self-construal.

The current study found mixed findings regarding the association between independent self-construal and a preference for the dominating style of conflict management. Results from MANCOVA analysis revealed that independent self-construal significantly influenced conflict style preferences. However, follow-up ANCOVA tests indicated that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher level of independent self-construal did not show a stronger preference toward the dominating style than those with a lower level of independent self-construal. Instead, ANCOVA analyses found that a greater independent self-construal predicted a stronger preference toward integrating and compromising styles, as well as a lower preference toward the avoiding style. Results of multiple regression, on the contrary,

showed that independent self-construal was positively associated with a preference toward the dominating style. Supporting ANCOVA test results, regression analyses also suggested that independent self-construal positively predicted a greater preference for integrating and compromising styles.

These mixed findings regarding the link between independent self-construal and a preference for the dominating style could be attributed to both statistical and theoretical reasons. From a statistical perspective, these mixed findings could be explained through the loss in power associated with median split(s). Given that ANCOVA analyses required categorical independent variables, a median split was performed on respondents' scores of independent self-construal. Because the median split procedure may increase the likelihood of Type II errors and, hence, adversely affects power and effect sizes (Iacobucci, Posavac, Kardes, Schneider, & Popovich, 2015; McClelland, Lynch, Irwin, Spiller, & Fitzsimons, 2015), statistical tests relying on the median split procedure are more conservative. In this respect, ANCOVA analyses might fail to capture the effect of independent self-construal on a preference for the dominating style because of the reduced power associated with the median split.

From a theoretical perspective, the modest support for the association between independent self-construal and a preference for the dominating style found in the current study points out a potential need for researchers to (re)theorize the effects of self-construals on conflict management in a context of an intact, intimate, interpersonal relationship. Although research generally suggests that independent self-construal ought to be associated with a greater preference for both active-

constructive (i.e., integrating) and active-destructive (i.e., dominating) strategies (Cross et al., 2010; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), empirical evidence regarding the link between independent self-construal and the dominating style often comes from studies on workplace or organizational conflicts (e.g., Oetzel, 1998; Oetzel et al., 2003). Whether, and how, conflict contexts influence the effects of self-construals on different dimensions of conflict management has not been widely investigated. Nevertheless, some initial evidence suggests that, in the context of close interpersonal relationships, the effects of self-construals on the passive-active dimension may be stronger than their effects on the constructive-destructive dimensions. For example, Sinclair and Fehr (2005) conducted two studies to examine how couples dealt with dissatisfaction in romantic relationships. They found that a greater independent self-construal was positively associated with constructive-active responses (i.e., voice) and that a greater interdependent self-construal was positively associated with constructive-passive responses (i.e., loyalty). That is, in Sinclair and Fehr's studies, both independent and interdependent self-construals were only associated with constructive responses to relational dissatisfaction, and self-construal differences were manifested in the active-passive dimension of conflict management. Similarly, although the present study found mixed findings regarding the relationship between independent self-construal and a preference for an active-destructive style of conflict management (i.e., dominating style), it provided consistent evidence that independent self-construal positively influenced a preference for active-constructive conflict management styles (i.e., integrating and compromising styles), suggesting that the effects of independent self-construal on romantic relational conflict management

were most evident by its association with a greater preference for active strategies. Future research could consider extending these findings to further explore how conflict contexts and relationship types might influence the effects of self-construals on different dimensions of conflict management. Such information can improve the nuances and the predictive power of extant cross-cultural conflict management theories.

Although a preference for conflict avoidance was originally conceptualized as reflecting little concern for conflict parties and conflict outcomes (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983, 2002), conflict researchers have challenged this view and proposed that avoidance can be motivated by relational protection as well as by high concern for the conflict partner's face and/or for mutual face (Caughlin & Golish, 2002; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Because people with a higher interdependent self-construal have a greater concern for other's face and relationship maintenance, it was therefore hypothesized that interdependent self-construal should predict a higher preference for the avoiding conflict management style (H2a).

Findings of the present study suggested that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher level of interdependent self-construal did not show a stronger preference toward the avoiding style than those with a lower level of interdependent self-construal. Although MANCOVA analysis revealed that interdependent self-construal influenced conflict style preferences, both follow-up ANCOVA and regression analyses indicated that interdependent self-construal did not significantly increase interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's preference for avoidance. One possible explanation for this finding is that not all types of conflict

avoidance are motivated by relational protection and concern for others (Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2012). Wang et al. (2012) developed a typology of avoidance strategies, and they proposed that avoidance strategies could be categorized based on two dimensions: issue-avoidance and person-avoidance. Based on Wang et al.'s typology, outflanking (e.g., working through a third party to resolve the conflict) and passive dominance (e.g., silent resistance) are strategies to avoid the person but not the issue; yielding and pretending are strategies to avoid the issue but not the person; withdrawal and exit are strategies to avoid both the person and the issue. Wang et al. found that greater salience of enmity goals (i.e., goals to compete for socioemotional superiority or to make the other feel inferior) increased the likelihood of using person-avoidance strategies (i.e., withdrawal, passive domination, outflanking); on the contrary, greater salience of support goals was found to increase the likelihood of using strategies marked by high issue-avoidance and low person-avoidance. Given that interdependent self-construal is associated with a greater concern for interpersonal ties, interdependent self-construal, theoretically speaking, should only be positively associated with issue-avoidance strategies and not with person-avoidance strategies. The scale used in the present study to measure preference for the avoiding style included both person-avoidance (e.g., I avoid an encounter with my partner) and issue-avoidance (e.g., I try to stay away from disagreement with my partner) items. Therefore, it is plausible that the present study failed to find a positive association between interdependent self-construal and a preference for the avoiding style because this study did not differentiate issue-avoidance from person avoidance.

Future research could benefit from a closer examination of the links between self-construals and different types of conflict avoidance.

Because interdependent self-construal is characterized by a greater emphasis on interpersonal harmony and social obligations, it was proposed that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher interdependent self-construal would report a greater preference for the obliging style (H2b). This hypothesis was supported. Both ANCOVA and regression results showed that greater interdependent self-construal increased one's preference for the obliging style. In line with past cross-conflict research findings (e.g., Oetzel, 1998), this study provides additional empirical support for the association between interdependent self-construal and the obliging conflict management style.

Taken together, these findings suggest that an individual's preference for different conflict management styles, to some extent, can be predicted by his/her endorsed cultural values, as manifested by his/her self-construals. However, it should be noted that, although the effect sizes of self-construals on conflict management style preferences found in the current study were consistent with those documented in past empirical literature (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002; Oetzel et al., 2001; Yum, 2004), these effect sizes were small. These small effect sizes suggest that inter/cross-cultural communication scholars should expand their research focus beyond self-construals to investigate what factors may more effectively explain cross-cultural differences in conflict management style preferences.

H3-H8, RQ1, and RQ2: Effects of concerns for self and the partner, self-construals, and neighborhood compositions on relational identity orientations.

Applying Berry's (1990) acculturation model to the context of intercultural romantic relationships, this study proposed that concerns for self and the partner, self-construals, and neighborhood compositions would influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations.

Given that high concern for others indicates a greater motivation to adjust one's behaviors so as to fulfill other people's need (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), it was hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher concern for the relational partner would have a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (H3a) and assimilation (H3b). On the other hand, because higher self-concern implies a stronger desire to act in accordance with one's will and his/her habituated way of behaving (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), those with a higher concern for self were predicted to have a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (H4a) and separation (H4b). Because research to date provides limited information regarding the causes to a marginalization relational identity orientation, RQ1 was proposed to explore if, and how, concerns for self and the partner might affect a relational identity orientation toward marginalization.

Results suggested that, when operating alone, neither a greater self-concern nor a stronger partner-concern significantly increased interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity toward integration. One possible explanation for these findings is that an integration orientation is developed when *both* ethnic-culture maintenance and involvement with the partner's culture are *concurrently* sought (Berry et al., 2006). In this respect, those with a strong relational identity orientation toward integration should be simultaneously high on both self- and partner-concerns.

It is therefore advisable to investigate if mutual concern (i.e., concern for both parties' interests in the relationship) would function as a better predictor of an integration orientation than either self-concern or partner-concern.

Concerns for self and the partner were shown to significantly influence an individual's relational identity orientations towards separation and assimilation, respectively. Supporting the proposition that a greater concern for the partner should increase one's willingness to adopt the partner's cultural values and practices to cope with cultural differences within the relationship, interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a higher concern for the relational partner were found to develop a stronger relational identity orientation toward assimilation than those with a lower partner-concern. In addition, it was also found that concern for the partner negatively predicted a relational identity orientation toward separation. In line with the view that a greater concern for self ought to increase one's desire to structure his/her relational life based on his/her ethnic culture's value system, results revealed that respondents with a higher concern for self reported a greater relational identity orientation toward separation than those with a lower self-concern. By presenting evidence for the utility of self- and partner-concerns in predicting relational identity orientations, findings of the present study extend and provide quantitative support to Study 1's proposition that relational factors could influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational structure and how much intercultural accommodation they are willing to make within their intercultural relationship.

Present findings showed that concern for self and concern for the partner did not significantly predict a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. As

discussed in Chapter 5, a relational identity orientation toward marginalization is likely formulated due to contextual or situational constraints. For instance, some couples may choose not to adhere to either party's cultural organizing principles to structure their relational lives because they are living in a third culture. Although extant research suggests that some intercultural couples' relational culture is indeed characterized by a marginalization orientation (e.g., Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013), empirical evidence regarding the causes to a relational identity toward marginalization is scarce. Results of the present study suggest that relational factors alone, such as concern for self and the partner, may not decisively influence interculturally-dating/married individuals' decision to adopt a marginalization-oriented relational identity. This finding may tentatively suggest that the effects of relational factors on a relational identity orientation toward marginalization are either small or can depend on structural/context factors (e.g., current country of residence). Future research can consider exploring how relational factors and structural/contextual variables might interact to influence relational identity orientations.

As for the link between self-construals and relational identity orientations, this study proposed that, among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese in a COL-IND relationship, those with a greater independent self-construal would have a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (H5a) and assimilation (H5b) because of their intrinsic high identification with their partner's culture. Those with a greater interdependent self-construal were predicted to develop a stronger relational identity orientation toward integration (H6a) and separation (H6b) due to a high

identification with their heritage culture. RQ2 was proposed to explore how, if at all, self-construals might affect a relational identity orientation toward marginalization.

Findings of the present study revealed that independent self-construal only modestly predicted interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations. Although MANCOVA analysis indicated that independent self-construal had a significant multivariate main effect on relational identity orientations, ANCOVA analyses yielded no significant univariate main effect for independent self-construal on any of the four relational identity orientations. On the other hand, regression analyses found that independent self-construal was a positive predictor of a relational identity orientation toward integration, but not assimilation. That is, H5(b) was not supported, and H5(a) was only supported by regression analyses. Taken together, these findings suggested that the associations among independent self-construal and interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations were weaker than hypothesized. Although it is speculative, it is plausible that, for members of a collectivistic culture, the association between (relational) acculturation and self-construal changes is more manifested in their interdependent self-construal. If the argument that the self-concept of an individual from a collectivistic cultural background is more represented by his/her interdependent self-construal than his/her independent self-construal is true (Levine et al., 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994), for a collectivist, his/her interdependent self-construal should be more sensitive to and reflective of changes to his/her identity orientation. While this proposition is conjectural, Chen et al.'s (2015) study provided initial empirical support to this view. Chen et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal

study to assess the relationship between self-construal changes and Chinese-speaking immigrants' acculturation. They measured newly arrived Chinese-speaking immigrants' self-construals within the first two months of their arrival in the U.S. (Time 1) and six months after their initial screening (Time 2) and they found significant changes only in participants' interdependent self-construal. Those who adopted an assimilation attitude were observed to become less interdependent, while those who were more separation-oriented became even more interdependent. That is, findings of both Chen et al.'s (2015) research and the present study indicate that the strength of a collectivistic member's independent self-construal might not be a powerful predictor of his/her acculturation orientations. Nevertheless, this interpretation should be examined with more future empirical analyses on the respective effects of independent and interdependent self-construals on individuals' global, as well as relational, acculturation orientations.

Results showed that interdependent self-construal significantly influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations. However, its effects were not exactly in the same direction as hypothesized. Supporting H6(a), it was found that interdependent self-construal significantly predicted a greater relational identification toward integration. Respondents with a higher interdependent self-construal reported a stronger relational identification toward integration than those with a lower interdependent self-construal. However, contrary to H6(b), interdependent self-construal was shown to significantly predict a stronger relational identity orientation toward assimilation, instead of separation. Given that past research on the association between self-construals and global acculturation attitudes

generally suggests that, among collectivistic immigrants in an individualistic society, those who possess a greater interdependent self-construal are more likely to be separation-oriented (e.g., Chen et al., 2015; Shim et al., 2014), the current finding is intriguing. One plausible explanation to this finding is that one's global acculturation attitudes and his/her acculturation orientations within a specific intercultural relationship are likely predicted by different aspects of interdependent self-construal. According to Cross et al. (2010), interdependent self-construal is often considered in extant literature as a superordinate category with two subcomponents: a collective or group-oriented component and a relational component. Cross et al. (2010) labelled the former component as collective-interdependent self-construal and the latter as relational-interdependent self-construal. Those with a stronger collective-interdependent self-construal tend to define themselves in terms of important social group membership(s) and are theorized to be more motivated to adhere to ingroup norms and value systems. Those with a stronger relational-interdependent self-construal are believed to be more motivated to assimilate themselves to a close relational partner (see Cross et al., 2010). According to this line of reasoning, collective-interdependent self-construal should increase one's global acculturation orientation toward separation, whereas relational-interdependent self-construal is likely to increase one's relational acculturation orientation toward assimilation. Because most existing measures of interdependent self-construal assess both types of interdependence (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Cross et al., 2010), it is less surprising that the current study found that interdependence self-construal increased a relational identity orientation toward assimilation, while past studies examining the link

between self-construals and global acculturation show that interdependent self-construal is positively associated with separation.

RQ2 was concerned with the effect of self-construals on a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. ANCOVA results revealed no significant univariate main effects for independent and interdependent self-construals on a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. However, regression analyses showed that interdependent self-construal was negatively associated with a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. If the above argument regarding different types of interdependence is valid, a higher collective-interdependent self-construal should increase one's ethnic ingroup identification and, hence, increase one's desire to structure some aspects of his/her relational life based on his/her ethnic cultural system. On the other hand, a higher relational-interdependent self-construal might increase one's willingness to assimilate to his/her relational partner and, hence, increase one's motivation to structure some aspects of his/her relational life in accordance with his/her partner's cultural values and practices. Given that a marginalization relational identity orientation is conceptualized as non-adherence to either party's cultural systems, a global measure of interdependent self-construal (i.e., a global measure that includes both collective-interdependent and relational-interdependent self-construal items) ought to be negatively associated a relational identity orientation toward marginalization. The present findings provide modest support to this line of reasoning. Nevertheless, this interpretation should be further explored with future empirical investigation.

Taken together, the current findings not only reveal a possibility that one's global acculturation attitudes and his/her acculturation orientations within a specific intercultural relationship may be predicted by different aspects of interdependent self-construal, they also support the view that one's global acculturation attitudes does not have a uniform effect on all domains of his/her life (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; Berry, 1990). In addition, this study points out a continuing need for cross-cultural researchers to more clearly delineate between different types of interdependence, because they have very different implications and predict different outcomes.

Past research studying immigrants' global acculturation attitudes finds that immigrants living in a neighborhood predominantly inhabited by members of the host culture tend to develop an assimilation orientation, while those living in a neighborhood largely composed of members of their ethnic culture are more likely to adopt a separation orientation (Berry et al., 2006). Therefore, it was proposed that (H7) those who live in a neighborhood that has a higher proportion of their cultural ingroup would have a greater relational identity orientation toward separation and that (H8) those who live in a neighborhood that has a higher proportion of members from the partner's cultural group would have a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation.

Current findings showed that two neighborhood composition variables only modestly influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations. Although MANCOVA analysis revealed significant multivariate main effects for the two neighborhood compositions variables, follow-up ANCOVA tests

did not support either H7 or H8. Regression analyses, on the other hand, supported H8 but not H7. Taken together, these results suggested that the effects of neighborhood compositions on interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientations might be weak, if exists at all. These findings, again, implicate that insights derived from global acculturation research may not be readily applicable to predict an individual's acculturation orientations within a specific intercultural relationship. That is, factors shaping an interculturally-dating/married individual's relational identity orientation are likely to differ from those influencing his/her global acculturation attitude. Future research should either utilize domain-specific acculturation scales or prime participants' focus on different life domains (e.g., specific relationship, work, religion) to empirically examine if individuals indeed adopt different acculturation strategies across different domains and/or contexts.

H9, H10, RQ3, and RQ4: Effects of relational identity orientations on actual conflict management behaviors. Intercultural conflict scholars (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) have proposed for some time that cultural influences on individuals' actual conflict behaviors could be affected by relational factors and contextual constraints. Following this line of argument, this study hypothesized that interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations should be more predictive of their actual conflict behaviors than self-construals, because this construct simultaneously took into consideration the effects of cultural, relational, and contextual factors. Specifically, it was predicted that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation would utilize dominating strategies to manage

their relational conflicts more than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward assimilation (H9). Those with a greater relational identity orientation toward separation were hypothesized to enact more (H10a) avoiding and H10(b) obliging strategies. Two research questions were proposed to investigate how a greater relational identity orientation toward integration (RQ3) and a greater relational identity orientation toward marginalization (RQ4) might influence interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's utilization of conflict strategies in response to their relational conflicts.

Except for marginalization, relational identity orientations significantly influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's actual conflict management behaviors. As discussed above, a relational identity orientation toward marginalization might be developed due to situational or contextual constraints, many of which have not been identified in extant literature. These unknown factors shaping the development of a marginalization-based relational identity may not have uniform effects on conflict management. Therefore, a better understanding of how a relational identity toward marginalization is formulated is needed before a theoretical model of its effect on conflict management can be established. Future research should consider employing qualitative methods to closely explore how interculturally-dating/married individuals with a marginalization-based relational identity understand the causes of their relational identity orientation.

Current results indicated that a greater relational identity orientation toward assimilation did not increase respondents' reported use of dominating strategies during their relational conflict management. Instead, an assimilation relational

orientation was found to positively predict the reported use of integrating, obliging, and compromising strategies. As showed in the results above, an assimilation relational orientation is developed based on a greater concern for the relational partner as well as a greater (relational-) interdependent self-construal. Because both (relational-) interdependent self-construal and concern for the partner have been found to be positively associated with integrating, obliging, and compromising conflict management styles (e.g., Oetzel, 1998; Oetzel, Meares, Myers, & Lara, 2003; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Zhang, Ting-Toomey, & Oetzel, 2014), it appears to be logical that an assimilation relational orientation increased the enactment of integrating, obliging, and compromising strategies.

However, given that some past studies also document an association between a greater acculturation of individualism and increased use of dominating strategies (e.g., Holt & DeVore, 2005; Komarraju, Dollinger, & Lovell, 2008; Oetzel, 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991), the non-association between an assimilation relational identity orientation and the reported use of dominating strategies is intriguing. Two explanations to this finding are proposed. First, the effects of individualism on dominating may deserve more empirical scrutiny. Although cross-cultural conflict researchers generally assume that individualists prefer and/or enact dominating strategies more than collectivists, this proposition receives inconclusive empirical support. For instance, Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin (1991) examined conflict style differences between Taiwan and the United States. Their result suggested that, while individualism-collectivism influenced obliging, avoiding, integrating, and compromising styles, it did not significantly affect the dominating style. Similarly,

Cai and Fink (2002), in a study with 188 graduate students from 31 different countries residing in the U.S., found that individualists did not differ from collectivists in their preference for the dominating conflict style. Analyses of H1 also provided mixed support for the effect of independent self-construal on a preference for the dominating style. Therefore, it is advised that cross-cultural researchers should re-examine the link between individualism/independent self-construal and dominating conflict management.

Second, if individualism indeed increases the likelihood of enacting dominating strategies, an assimilation relational orientation may fail to predict more use of dominating strategies because it is harder for an individual to change his/her habituated conflict management behaviors through acculturation. Hofstede et al. (2010) proposed that culture could be understood with an onion diagram, with symbols (e.g., language, gestures, and objects) locating at the outermost layer and values representing its core. Heroes (i.e., people who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture) and rituals were theorized to lie in between symbols and values. According to Hofstede et al., while cultural change could be fast for the outer layers of the onion diagram, change in values is more difficult. Because people's habituated conflict styles are deeply influenced by cultural values, it could be harder for one to get assimilated to another culture's conflict management rules than to its language, food and eating habits, or entertainment. In this respect, a willingness for assimilation alone might not be adequate to generate significant changes in one's conflict management behaviors. Such changes require deep internalization of the assimilating culture's values and can take time and effort to develop. Future research

could utilize a longitudinal design to examine how interculturally-dating/married individuals with an assimilation relational identity orientation manifest acculturation changes in different domains across time.

Current findings also showed that interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese with a greater relational orientation toward separation did not report using more avoiding or obliging strategies to manage their relational conflicts than those with a lower relational identity orientation toward separation. Instead, it was found that a greater relational identity orientation toward separation increased the reported use of dominating strategies. Analyses examining the formation of relational identity orientations suggested that a separation relational identity orientation was predicted by a greater self-concern but was not associated with interdependent self-construal. Therefore, the present findings were consistent with (cross-cultural) conflict researchers' proposition that a greater concern for self would increase the likelihood of using dominating tactics (e.g., Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Rahim, 2002; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

A relational identity orientation toward integration was found to predict greater use of integrating and compromising strategies. As showed in previous results, an integration relational identity orientation was positively predicted by a greater interdependent self-construal and was modestly associated with a greater independent self-construal. In one study that explored the effect of self-construal types on conflict styles among four different ethnic groups in the U.S., Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) categorized their participants into four self-construal types: biconstrual (high on both independent and interdependent construals), independent,

interdependent, and ambivalent (low on both independent and interdependent construals). Their results showed that (a) biconstruals reported the highest mean score on integrating among the four construal types, and that (b) biconstruals reported the highest mean score on compromising among the four construal types. Similarly, Cai and Fink (2002) found that integrating was preferred by both individualists and collectivists. In addition, results of Cai and Fink's multidimensional scaling analysis indicated that integrating and compromising were conceptually and functionally similar, and that compromising represented great concerns for both conflict parties and should not be viewed merely as an expedient way to resolve conflict. These past research results are congruent with the current finding regarding the link of an integration relational identity orientation and greater enactment of integrating and compromising strategies. In addition, if Rahim's (1983; 2002) dual concern model of conflict management is valid, these results suggest that biculturals, or people who are integration-oriented, are more motivated to enact conflict strategies that could simultaneously satisfy both conflict parties' concerns and needs.

Taken together, findings from the current study appeared to suggest that the effects of relational identity orientations on interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's actual conflict management behaviors were in the opposite direction than hypothesized. Instead of predicting greater use of dominating strategies, a relational identity orientation toward assimilation was found to increase respondents' reported enactment of integrating, obliging, and compromising strategies. A relational identity orientation toward separation failed to increase respondents' enactment of either obliging or avoiding strategies; instead, it was positively associated with

greater use of dominating strategies. Nevertheless, post-hoc model comparison analyses showed that a multivariate model with relational identity orientations as predictors of actual conflict management behaviors fit the present data better than the one using self-construals as predictors. This finding provides empirical evidence to the proposition that models that take into consideration the effects of cultural, relational, and contextual factors provide better prediction than the ones based on cultural-level variables alone (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). In addition, it also provides some preliminary support for the utility of relational identity orientations in explaining/predicting intercultural couple's relational conflict negotiations. Future research could consider examining different cultural-level (e.g., masculinity-femininity and power distance), relational-level (e.g., relationship power or reciprocity), and contextual-level (e.g., couple proximity or society's attitudes toward intergroup intimacy) factors into the theoretical framework of interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientation so as to develop a more sophisticated understanding of its formation and effects.

H11 and H12: Associations among conflict management discrepancies, the personal-enacted identity gap, and relationship satisfaction. Inspired by communication theory of identity and research on identity gap (Jung & Hecht, 2004), this study theorized that discrepancies between conflict management style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors (i.e., conflict management discrepancies) could manifest an existence of personal-enacted identity gap, which might negatively influence one's relationship satisfaction with his/her conflict partner. That is, given that one's conflict management is associated with his/her cultural values and self-

concepts (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), if one's enacted conflict management behaviors are not in line with his/her habituated conflict management style, it indicates that one's enacted self does not match his/her personal frame of identity (i.e., a personal-enacted identity gap), and this dissonance could adversely influence one's relationship satisfaction with his/her interactant. Therefore, H11 predicted that conflict management discrepancies would be (a) positively associated with personal-enacted identity gap and (b) negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. H12 further hypothesized that conflict management discrepancies would have an indirect effect on relationship satisfaction through interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's personal-enacted identity gap.

Results showed partial support for these hypotheses. Correlation tests revealed that only conflict management discrepancies in integrating and avoiding were positively correlated with personal-enacted identity gap. Likewise, only discrepancies in integrating and avoiding were found to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. For other three conflict management types (i.e., obliging, dominating, and compromising), discrepancies between the degree of preference and the level of their actual enactment were not significantly correlated with either personal-enacted identity gap or relationship satisfaction. Supporting past research findings regarding the negative influences of identity gap on relationship quality (e.g., Jung & Hecht, 2004, 2008; Kam & Hecht, 2009; Kennedy-Lightsey et al., 2015; Wadsworth et al., 2008), correlation analyses indicated that perceived personal-enacted identity gap was strongly and negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = -.46, p < .001$),

suggesting that those who communicated with their partner in a way that was not consistent with their self-concepts were less satisfied with their relationship.

Similar to the pattern showed in correlation tests, path analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) suggested that the hypothesized indirect effects from conflict management discrepancies to relationship satisfaction through perceived personal-enacted identity gap were only significant for integrating and avoiding.

The pattern found in both correlation tests and path analyses is interesting. It seems that conflict management discrepancies might not have uniform effects across different conflict types. Discrepancies in integrating and avoiding appeared to have more impact on individuals' perceived identity gap and, hence, how relationally satisfied they are with their conflict partner. Because conflict management discrepancies are a newly developed construct, extant literature does not provide a complete explanation for the unexpected pattern regarding the inconsistent effects associated with different types of conflict management discrepancies. Nevertheless, Jung's (2011) study may provide a good starting point for discussion and future research. Because communication apprehension and assertiveness influence one's ability to communicate his/her self-view accurately, Jung proposed and found support that these two communicative variables functioned as predictors of personal-enacted identity gap. Given that communication apprehension has been associated with an unwillingness for, avoidance of, and withdrawal from communication (McCroskey, 1977), it is logical to assume that communication apprehension might be related to conflict avoidance. Assertiveness refers to one's ability to make requests or express personal rights without attacking others (Richmond & Martin, 1998; Richmond &

McCroskey, 1995); therefore, assertiveness might be associated with conflict integration. In this respect, Jung's (2011) study and the present study provide consistent findings.

Because of the communicative nature of identity gaps, identity gaps are likely influenced by communicative variables, such as communication competence, willingness for self-disclosure, or emotion regulation. Jung (2011) suggested that identity gap could mediate effects of communication input variables on communication outcomes, including one's relational satisfaction with the communication partner. The indirect effects from conflict management discrepancies in integrating and avoiding to relationship satisfaction through personal-enacted identity gap found in the current study provide some empirical support for this proposition. In addition, these significant indirect effects also point out the utility for conflict management discrepancies and identity gap to be included in the theoretical mix to understand the constructiveness of conflict management strategies. This new approach may be advantageous because it does not rely on Western standards of constructiveness to evaluate conflict tactics. Instead, this new approach emphasizes that the effects of a given conflict management act should be assessed by its influences on the congruency of the enactor's self-concepts. As long as congruency in self-concepts is a universal and essential need for well-being (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2011), this new approach may have a great cross-cultural validity. Nevertheless, future research should examine the validity and utility of this new theoretical framework in more conflict situations and in different cultural contexts.

Covariate 1: Effects of gender role ideology on conflict management.

MANCOVA analyses indicated that gender role ideology had significant multivariate main effects on both conflict style preferences and actual conflict behaviors.

Univariate follow-up tests showed that gender role ideology significantly predicted greater preferences for avoiding and obliging styles and that it was associated with lower preference for the integrating style. Gender role ideology also positively predicted greater utilization of avoiding and obliging strategies. Because a higher score of gender role ideology represented a higher level of endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism, these results suggested that respondents with a higher endorsement of gender non-egalitarianism were more likely to prefer and to actually utilize obliging and avoiding strategies to deal with their relational conflicts. In addition, these respondents felt less comfortable using integrating strategies during their relational conflict negotiations.

Supporting Study 1's proposition that internalized gender (non-)egalitarianism may influence one's conflict management approaches, the current findings provide quantitative evidence that respondents with conservative gender ideologies showed greater proclivity for deference and avoidance-related approaches. Likewise, Cheng (2010) studied 201 couples consisting of Taiwanese husbands and their foreign spouses from Southeast Southeastern Asia and China. Cheng argued and found support that Taiwanese husbands would report using more avoiding strategies than their foreign wives due to their traditional gender beliefs. However, Falbo and Peplau (1980) studied both heterosexual and homosexual men and women in the U.S. They found that respondents who gave great importance to equality of power between

intimate partners preferred unilateral strategies (e.g., withdrawal), while those who de-emphasized the importance of equal power were more likely to report using bilateral strategies, such as bargaining, persuasion, and reasoning. Zvonkovic, Schmiede, and Hall's (1994) study, whose sample was composed of 61 married couples in the U.S., showed that a more traditional gender role ideology was associated with greater use of direct influence strategies, such as reward influence and bargaining, during their conflict negotiation. Taken together, these results appear to suggest that gender role ideologies play an important, albeit inconsistent role, in couples' conflict interactions. Nevertheless, findings of these studies implicate that incongruent gender ideologies may not only function as a source of conflict in intimate intercultural relationships (Bustamante et al., 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Frame, 2004). Intercultural couples' contrasting gender ideologies may make them enact conflicting conflict management tactics and complicate their conflict negotiation processes.

Covariate 2: Effects of relationship length on relational identity

orientations. Intercultural couples often find themselves constantly negotiating their relational and cultural identities (e.g., Gaines, 1995; Moriizumi, 2011). In this respect, interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations are likely to change across or along with time. Indeed, S. Lee (2006) found that the length of a relationship was significantly and positively related to intercultural couples' development of a third-culture (i.e., a relational culture that is characterized by a greater degree of intercultural integration between couples). Therefore, relational length was treated as a potential covariate in current analyses.

MANCOVA results revealed a significant multivariate main effect of relationship length on relational identity orientations. Follow-up univariate analyses showed that relationship length positively influenced interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese's relational identity orientation toward assimilation, but this finding only approached statistical significance. Nevertheless, findings of the present study and Lee's (2006) research point out that both the quantity (i.e., the length of the relationship) and the quality of interaction could be influential in shaping intercultural couples' relational culture.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Notwithstanding important implications of the present study's findings, several limitations must be noted: (a) the representativeness of the sample, (b) the quality of instruments, (c) the level of analysis, (d) limitations associated with a cross-sectional survey design, and (e) the overlook of the effect of power on relational identity orientations. I discuss these each in more detail below.

Representativeness of the sample. The sample of the present study was predominantly young and highly educated. In addition, a vast majority of the respondents were female. As pointed out in Study 1's discussion, these characteristics are in consistent with previous research findings that individuals who are young and have a higher level of education are more positive toward intercultural romantic relationships (e.g., Todd et al., 1992) and that Asian women have a greater outmarriage rate with whites than their male counterparts (e.g., Heaton & Jacobson, 2000; Pew Research Center, 2017). Nevertheless, a homogeneous sample limits a study's external validity. The models proposed in the present study need to be tested

with broader populations and in different cultural contexts to examine (a) if the four relational identity orientations exist across intercultural couples with different racial/ethnic/cultural compositions, (b) if the effects of relational identity orientations on conflict management vary depending on the racial/ethnic/cultural composition of an intercultural relationship, and (c) whether the theoretical framework that conflict management discrepancies influence relational quality through personal-enacted identity gap has cross-cultural validity.

Quality of instruments. The quality of instruments used in the present study could be improved upon. In particular, reliability coefficients of relational identity orientation subscales showed that these measures only had modest reliability (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .67 to .77), indicating that the dimensionality and the internal consistency of these scales could be improved. The present relational identity orientation subscales need to be tested by future studies using multiple samples to identify problematic items. In addition, qualitative research exploring how interculturally-dating/married individuals experience and perceive of their relational identities and their relational cultures can provide valuable insights to generate useful items to be included in relational identity orientation subscales. Future studies should also assess the reliability and the dimensionality of (revised) relational identity orientation subscales using confirmatory factor analyses.

Self-construal subscales had only modest reliability (Cronbach's alpha for independent self-construal subscale = .71; Cronbach's alpha for interdependent self-construal subscale = .73). Although these reliability coefficients are comparable to those reported in past research (see Cross et al., 2011), these results, nevertheless,

suggest that extant self-construal scales need to be improved. Specifically, as discussed above, most existing measures of interdependent self-construal assess both relational-interdependent self-construal and collective-interdependent self-construal. Because these two types of interdependence have very different implications and predict different outcomes, they need to be clearly delineated in interdependent self-construal instruments. Similarly, future research should also assess the dimensionality of independent self-construal and to assess its cross-cultural validity.

Although reliability coefficients indicated that scales measuring preference for and actual enactment of avoiding conflict management had acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha for preference for avoiding = .77; Cronbach's alpha for actual enactment of avoiding = .79), items in these instruments might assess different types of avoidance. Wang et al.'s (2012) typology of conflict avoidance proposed that avoidance strategies could be categorized based on two dimensions: issue-avoidance and person-avoidance. Empirical evidence suggests that these two dimensions of conflict avoidance are associated with different motivational goals and could have different effects on conflict outcomes. Future research may consider applying Wang et al.'s typology to refine extant measures of conflict avoidance.

A need for dyadic-level analysis. Scholars have suggested that studies examining intimate interpersonal relationships should use the dyad as their unit of analysis (e.g., Campbell & Kashy, 2002; Tili & Barker, 2015). Close interpersonal relationships often involve high level of mutual influence and interdependence. One consequence of interdependence is that attributes and behaviors of one dyad member can impact the outcomes of the other dyad member. In this respect, information about

the partner can help explain an individual's relational attitudes and his/her relational behaviors. This line of reasoning indicates that a theoretical model that simultaneously considers both dyad members' influences on an intercultural dating/married individual's relational identity orientations and his/her actual conflict behaviors may provide greater predictive and explanatory power than the one proposed in the present study. The actor-partner interdependence model (Kashy & Kenny, 1999), which proposes that a person's independent variable score affects both his/her own dependent variable score (i.e., the actor effect) and the partner's dependent variable score (i.e., the partner effect), may serve as a useful conceptual framework toward the development of such a dyadic model. Past research has demonstrated that the actor-partner interdependence model can be effectively implemented in dyadic research to more closely investigate the dynamics within a close interpersonal relationship (e.g., Campbell & Kashy, 2002; Kulik, Walfisch, & Liberman, 2016).

However, language barriers prevented the researcher from collecting dyadic data in the present study. Indeed, dyadic analysis is more tenable for research that targets intercultural relationships consisted of partners from two specific cultural groups (e.g., intercultural relationship involving a European-American and an African American) or when the study is conducted by a large research teams where co-researchers have knowledge of a variety of languages. If conditions permit, future research may consider implementing the actor-partner interdependence model to refine the present theoretical understandings.

Limitations of a cross-sectional survey design. The use of cross-sectional survey design prevents the present study from making causal interpretations. Therefore, longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to shed further light on the causal effects among the present study's variables. For example, although the present theoretical model proposes that one's self-construals and concerns for self and the partners shape his/her relational identity orientation, it is possible that the directions of causal relationships among these variables are actually bi-directional or in the opposite than hypothesized. It is plausible that an individual's determination to take an assimilationist orientation to manage his/her intercultural relationship encourages him/her to think from the partner's perspective, and increased perspective-taking leads to changes in self-construals or the levels of self- and partner-concerns. Future studies can use a longitudinal design to track changes in interculturally-dating/married individuals' self-construals and strengths of self- and partner-concerns to examine how these changes relate to their relational identity orientations across time. Experimental researchers can also consider priming interculturally-dating/married individuals' self-construals and strengths of self- and partner-concerns to examine if these factors indeed have causal effects on relational identity orientations.

A need to include the role of power in the proposed model. Another important limitation involves a failure to integrate the role of "power" to the proposed model regarding the antecedents and the influences of relational identity orientations. Both intergroup-level and interpersonal-level power differentials likely influence

intercultural couple's relational dynamics (Rosenblatt, 2011), including their relational identity orientations.

One measure of intergroup power differential that receives growing attention in the acculturation literature is perceived group vitality (Ehala, 2010; Giles, Bonilla, & Speer, 2011; Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977). Group vitality "refers to the amount of social advantages a group has or has not attained in terms of pride in its history, membership numbers, and visibility of its culture and communicative codes within society" (Giles et al., 2011, p. 253). That is, a group's local (i.e., how a given group performs in the host culture) and global sociostructural features, including its status (e.g., economic, social, sociohistorical, and language status), demography, and institutional support (e.g., representation in mass media, education, and politics) influence a group's objective vitality within an intergroup relationship (Currie & Hogg, 1994). Objective vitality is in turn reflected, more or less accurately, in its members' subjective perceptions (i.e., subjective/perceived group vitality). Scholars have proposed that subjective vitality could be predictive of people's acculturation orientations and their adaptation outcomes (e.g., Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Currie & Hogg, 1994; Ehala, 2010). Specifically, it is postulated that individual with a lower subjective vitality assessment would have a greater tendency to assimilate or to marginalize and that individuals with a higher subjective vitality assessment would have better social and/or psychological adaptation (Currie & Hogg, 1994; Suanet-Galchenko & van de Vijver, 2008), though these propositions have not been fully investigated in empirical studies. Nevertheless, given that relational identity orientations reflect interculturally-dating/married individuals' acculturation

orientations within their intercultural romantic relationships, extant theoretical framework regarding the relationship between group vitality and acculturation/adaptation suggests that it might be advantageous to examine how one's subjective perception of intergroup power differentials on both local and global levels might influence his/her relational identity orientations.

Interpersonal power differential between the couple can also have a strong influence on the structure and the dynamics of an intercultural romantic relationship (Rosenblatt, 2011). At the interpersonal level, power is defined as the potential to exert influence on one's interactional partner (e.g., French & Raven, 1959; Rollins & Bahr, 1976). A review of interpersonal power literature reveals that power is often determined by relative access to important or valued resources, including socioeconomic (e.g., income, occupational status, education), affective (e.g., affection, love), expressive (e.g., understanding, social support), companionship (e.g., social, leisure), sexual, and service (e.g., housekeeping, childcare) resources (for a review of different theories on interpersonal power, see Simpson, Farrell, Oriña, & Rothman, 2015). In this respect, intercultural couples' respective access to these macro-level structural resources and micro-level interpersonal resources likely influences the extent to which they can influence each other's values and behaviors within their relationship, hence affecting each other's relational identity orientations.

Taken together, research suggests that intergroup and interpersonal power differentials can have substantial influence on interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations, above and beyond relational factors or

cultural orientations. It is advised that future research should integrate the role of power into the current model to enhance its explanatory and predictive utility.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The current study contributes to intercultural relationship scholarship and communication research in four ways. First, it provides a theory-based typology of relational identity orientations, which helps reconcile several bodies of literature on the structures and functionality of intimate intercultural relationships. Past research often theorizes that a successful intercultural relationship is developed upon a relational structure characterized by mutuality and integration (Casmir, 1999; S. Lee, 2006; Tili & Barker, 2015). Other types of relational cultures or relational identity orientations are viewed as dysfunctional and are assumed to be associated with greater relationship dissatisfaction and/or psychological distress (e.g., Nemoto, 2009). Nevertheless, Seshadri and Knudson-Martin's (2013) interview study with married interracial couples found that their participants developed four different relational structures to organize cultural differences: integrated, singularly assimilated, co-existing, and unresolved, with each corresponding closely to the four relational identity orientations proposed in the present study. Results of Seshadri and Knudson-Martin's study showed that, except for the unresolved groups, participants reported that they were satisfied with their relationship. Therefore, Seshadri and Knudson-Martin concluded that "[it] is less important what the relationship structure is than that a couple have a relationship structure that works for them" (p. 52). Supporting Seshadri and Knudson-Martin's research, the current study provides quantitative evidence that at least four distinctive relational orientations exist among

interculturally-dating/married individuals. In addition, the current study adds to extant literature of intercultural couples' relational culture by demonstrating that the functionality of a given relational identity orientation/relational structure, to some extent, depends on whether such a relational identity orientation/relational structure allows an individual to interact with his/her partner in a way genuine to his/her self-view. In addition to these theoretical contributions, this typology of relational identity orientations has important practical implications for clinical psychologists working with interculturally-dating/married individuals. Results of this study suggest that it might be useful to first help interculturally-dating/married individuals identify their relational identity orientations. Interculturally-dating/married individuals can then compare their current relational identity orientations with their ideals and with their partner's expectations of them. This information serves as an important starting point for understanding and choosing appropriate strategies to facilitate intercultural couples' management of cultural differences and relational conflicts.

Second, supporting the proposition that intimate intercultural relationship is a context where acculturation can occur, the current study demonstrates that Berry's acculturation model provides a useful theoretical framework to conceptualize interculturally-dating/married individuals' relational identity orientations. In addition, the present study found that the effect of a same factor (e.g., interdependent self-construal) on an individual's global acculturation attitude may differ from its effect on this given individual's relational identity orientation. This result reveals a possibility that individuals in an intercultural romantic relationship might possess a relational identity orientation distinct from their global acculturation orientation.

These findings add more nuance to the acculturation literature by providing support to the view that individuals' acculturation strategies may be domain- and context-specific (e.g., Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003).

Third, the current study contributes to intercultural conflict management literature by providing a more complete understanding of how cultural, relational, and contextual factors could work in tandem to influence a given individual's actual conflict behaviors. Although intercultural conflict scholars (e.g., Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) have proposed that cultural influences on situational conflict behaviors could be affected by relational and situational variables, this proposition has rarely been empirically examined (cf., Brew & Cairns, 2004; Oetzel et al., 2001). The present study provides preliminary empirical evidence that a model simultaneously taking into consideration the effects of cultural, relational, and contextual influences provides a more complete picture of the process of intercultural conflict management, which allows better prediction of the use of actual conflict strategies than models that focus on only cultural-level analysis. This multivariate model can have important practical implications for intercultural conflict mediation practitioners and for programs that seek to increase individuals' intercultural conflict management efficacy.

Finally, this study proposes a non-Western centric approach to understanding the effects of conflict management strategies. Extant conflict literature often assesses a given conflict management tactic based on Western standards of constructiveness, such as the extent to which a tactic could lead to immediate resolution of conflict problem or the effectiveness of a tactic in achieving instrumental goal (see Chapter

2). However, given that different cultures may have different conflict management norms and that the evaluations of a given conflict strategy's constructiveness can vary across culture, extant conflict literature may fail to satisfactorily explain cross-cultural differences in the associations between different conflict strategies and their resulting relational outcomes. The model proposed in the present study does not rely on cultural-specific standards to examine the effects of conflict management. Therefore, it may function as a useful framework for cross/inter-cultural conflict research.

This chapter summarizes and interprets the results of Study 2. It also provides a detailed discussion of Study 2's limitations and contributions. The following chapter concludes the major takeaways of the dissertation project.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Globalization has increased the opportunity for intercultural exchange. As a result of increased intercultural interaction, romantic relationships between culturally diverse individuals are becoming more common (Frame, 2004; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Research has suggested that intercultural couples encounter unique challenges. Interculturally-dating/married individuals not only need to manage relational concerns, they also often need to reconcile cultural differences. During this process, some of interculturally-dating/married individuals may find themselves struggling between maintaining loyalty to their ethnic culture and strengthening connection to their partner's culture (Crohn, 1998; Gaines, 1995). However, the intersection of intercultural communication, acculturation, and relational conflict communication remains to be researched and theorized. This dissertation was conducted to explore this widely ignored area of communication research. In addition, most extant research on intercultural couple's conflict management is conducted in Western contexts and with Western samples. Studies with other cultural groups are limited in the literature. In this respect, insights and conclusions from this line of scholarship may risk reflecting a Western-centric understanding of conflict management rules. To complement this line of scholarship, this dissertation studied conflict management experiences among interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese.

To more closely understand how interculturally-dating/married Taiwanese perceive the causes and effects of their conflict behaviors, Study 1 conducted 20 semi-structured qualitative interviews. Study 1 results revealed that some participants

chose to enact conflict tactics that were not congruent with their internalized cultural values due to relational and situational concerns, such as a strong desire to satisfy the partner's need or uncertainty in long-distance relationships. Results of Study 1 also showed that there was no one-to-one association between the so-called (non-)constructive strategies, as categorized in Western conflict literature, and relationship satisfaction. Enacting conflict tactics that were conventionally categorized as constructive or positive in Western conflict literature at times was linked to lower perceived relationship quality for some participants, whereas the so-called destructive conflict tactics did not necessarily reduce one's relationship satisfaction. These unexpected findings challenged some aspects of Western conflict management literature, and they indicated that a theoretical framework that could (a) take into the consideration of cultural, relational, and contextual influences on conflict management and (b) avoid using Western standards of constructiveness to assess the effects of enacted conflict strategies on relational dynamics might more accurately represent how interculturally-dating/married individuals experience relational conflict management.

Study 2 sought to build on insights derived from Study 1. Two models were developed and tested. The first model proposed that relational identity orientations, a construct that was theorized to be reflective of one's willingness to adopt one's own and/or the partner's cultural values and practices to structure his/her relational life, influenced an interculturally-dating/married individual's actual conflict management behaviors. Results showed that concerns for self and the partner, self-construals, and the proportion of the partner's cultural group in one's neighborhood, to some extent,

predicted an interculturally-dating/married individual's relational identity orientations. In addition, analyses suggested that relational identity orientations were stronger predictors of actual conflict management behaviors than cultural-level variables (i.e., self-construals). The second model tested if relationship satisfaction was negatively predicted by discrepancies between preferred and enacted conflict tactics through personal-enacted identity gap. Results indicated that conflict management discrepancies did not have uniform effects on relationship satisfaction across conflict management types. Discrepancies in preference for and actual utilization of (a) integrating and (b) avoiding appeared to be more strongly associated with identity gap and indirectly with relationship satisfaction. Nevertheless, this model provided a new approach to theorizing the link between enacted conflict management and post-conflict relational dynamics.

The findings from both Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that a model simultaneously taking into consideration the effects of cultural, relational, and contextual influences provides a more complete picture of the process of intercultural conflict management, which allows better prediction of the actual use of conflict strategies than models that focus on only cultural-level analysis. These two studies also provide convergent results that inter/cross-cultural conflict research could benefit from non-Western centric approaches to theorizing the associations between enacted conflict tactics and their resulting relational outcomes. Through the convergence and corroboration of both qualitative and quantitative findings, it is hoped that this mixed methods dissertation research provides more valid study conclusions. Taken together, results of this dissertation project suggest that a better understanding of the respective

effects of cultural identity orientations and relational identity orientations on intercultural couples' interactive dynamics is an important starting point for facilitating effective intercultural conflict management and for fostering a more satisfying intercultural relationship.

Appendix A: Study 1 Semi-structured In-depth Interview Protocol

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this study, which aims to explore what conflicts intercultural couples experience as well as how they cope with these conflicts. I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. The interview is part of my dissertation project. I am interested in examining how conflicts and conflict management influence intercultural couples' relational dynamics. There are no direct benefits to participants. However, some potential benefits include a better understanding of the roles of culture, race, and ethnicity play in conflict management within an intercultural romantic relationship. Your participation is voluntary. You can decline to answer specific questions during the interview, and you can terminate your participation at any time without penalty.

The study is an interview study. Your interview will take approximately 60 minutes. Interview questions will focus on what major conflicts you have experienced in your intimate intercultural relationship as well as how you cope with these conflicts. Example questions include: "Please share with me what major relational conflicts you have experienced," "How did you attribute the causes of these conflicts?" You can refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable during the interview process.

As indicated in the consent form, any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time. Only the investigator and the project supervisors will have the access to your name.

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subject. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact University of Maryland IRB office or me. The contact information is listed in the consent form.

Interview

Although you have given me consent to participate in the study, I want to verify that you are still interested in being interviewed. Can you please tell me if you agree to participate in the research? (If yes, continue. If no, stop.)

The interview will last for about 60 minutes. I would like to ask for your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will be available only to me and the project supervisors. Your identity will be kept confidential and will not be revealed in any reports. If your words are to be included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Do you agree for me to audio record this interview? (If yes, turn on the recorder.)

[Preliminary Questions]

Questions about the characteristics of the participant and his/her partner and how they met each other:

1. Demographic characteristics: age, level of education, nation of citizenship, racial identity
2. Relational status (e.g., dating, cohabiting, engaged, married...), how they met each other, relationship length

3. Participant will be encouraged to describe his/her and his/her partner's personality if he/she wishes to.

(Participant could avoid responding to any of the above listed)

[Interview Questions]

1. Can you tell me what cultural or social group you identified with prior to your engagement in intercultural romantic relationship? (Prompts following each question may not all be asked. They will be used as needed.)
 - (1) Which social groups (e.g., national group, family or extended family, occupational group, religious affiliation, etc.) did you value or identify the most prior to your engagement in intercultural romantic relationship?
 - (2) Did you identify with your national culture? Why or why not? Do you think of yourself as a typical member of your nation? How did you feel when interacting with people of your national group?
 - (3) Did you identify with your family culture? Why or why not? Do you think of yourself as a typical member of your family? How did you feel when interacting with your family members?
2. Can you share with me how you thought of cultural differences before your engagement in intercultural romantic relationship?
 - (1) Did you have any intercultural interactions before your engagement in your current intercultural romantic relationship?
 - (2) Can you tell me (a) how comfortable you were communicating with people outside of your cultural group(s), (b) how comfortable you were communicating in another language, and (c) how open you were to learn a

foreign culture before your engagement in intercultural romantic relationship?

- (3) Were you interested in dating cross-culturally prior to your current relationship? Why and why not?
3. What was it that attracted you to your spouse? What personality factors and/or cultural factors were attractive to you?
4. How similar you think you and your partner are? In what aspects (e.g., interests, attitudes toward money, etc.) do you think you and your partner are most similar? In what aspects do you think you and your partner are different? Do you think these differences are due to different cultural backgrounds?
5. Think about your interaction with your partner in general, please describe how you and your partner communicate.
 - (1) In what language do you typically speak? How do you think of this decision? Do you switch the language you speak in different occasions?
 - (2) Has code-switching (i.e., speakers alternating between two or more languages/dialects) ever occurred in your interaction? Can you describe when and in what occasions code-switching occurs?
 - (3) Do you have trouble making yourself understood or understanding your partner? What do you think are the causes for these communication difficulties (e.g., cultural differences, language barriers, etc.)?
 - (4) Are there any topics that you or your partner think are taboos? Are they (i.e. the topics you deem as taboos and the topics your partner avoid talking about) the same or different?

- (5) How has your ways of communicating with each other changed over time?
What are those changes? Can you give me some examples? What prompted these changes?
6. Please think about major relational conflicts you have encountered so far.
- (1) Please describe these conflicts.
- (2) Please tell me how you attributed the causes of these conflicts?
- (3) How often do you attribute the causes of your relational conflicts to personal factors? What criteria do you use to help you judge if a conflict is due to personal factors??
- (4) How often do you attribute the causes of your relational conflicts to cultural differences? What criteria do you use to help you judge if a conflict is due to cultural differences?
- (5) How often do you attribute the causes of your relational conflicts to race/ethnicity-related factors? What criteria do you use to help you judge if a conflict is due to race/ethnicity-related factors?
7. What strategies have you used to cope with these conflicts?
- (1) What conflict management strategies you use most often?
- (2) What conflict management strategies you feel more comfortable using?
- (3) Do your conflict management style changes depending on the content of your conflicts?
- (4) How does your partner think of your conflict management style?
- (5) Do you and your partner have a similar conflict management style? Can you tell me how your partner typically does in response to a conflict?

- (6) How do you think of your partner's conflict management style?
8. Have someone seemed to disapprove your engagement in an intercultural relationship? If yes,
 - (1) What disapprovals have you experienced? What do you think might be the reasons of their disapprovals?
 - (2) How did you feel when encountering these approvals? How did you interpret their disapprovals?
 - (3) Did you try to respond to these disapprovals? Why or why not?
 - (4) Can you describe how you responded to these approvals and what were you thinking/feeling then?
 - (5) Do these episodes you just describe influence how you think of your own cultural/racial/ethnic group and how you think of the cultural/racial/ethnic group your partner is associated with? If yes, can you tell me what these influences are?
 - (6) Do these episodes influence your relationship with your partner? If yes, can you tell me what these influences are?
9. Can you tell me how your engagement of intercultural romantic relationship influences your (1) cultural identification, (2) racial identification, (3) ethnic identification, and (4) national identification?

The interview will end here. Before ending the interview, Participant will be thanked and provided opportunity to make clarifications/modifications, add other comments, and ask any questions he/she has. Participant will also be asked if he/she is willing to be contacted again should the researcher has further questions.

Notes: Participant could avoid responding to any of the above-listed questions. The above listed questions are just guiding questions. The actual questions asked in interview might be modified so as to yield more detailed answers.

Appendix B: Study 1 Script for Interview Request

Dear all,

My name is Hsin-Yi Chien, and I am a doctoral candidate of the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland. I am now working on my dissertation that aims to explore how intercultural couples deal with internal and external relational conflicts, and how intercultural couples' conflict management influences their relationship.

If you are currently or have been engaged in a heterosexual intercultural romantic relationship and are older than 18-year-old, you are invited to participate in this research project. Your experience of how you manage conflict with your partner within your intimate intercultural relationship will be a great help to the study. The research project involves face-to-face in-depth interviews or interviews via skype or your preferred internet phone service. You will be asked to participate in an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will focus on what internal and external relational conflicts you have experienced within your intercultural romantic relationship and what strategies you and your partner used to manage these conflicts. You can refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable during the interview process.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by assigning you with a pseudonym to protect your identity and by removing any identity markers. Only my advisors and I will have access to your data. The current research is supervised by my advisors, Dr. Anita Atwell Seate (aseate@umd.edu) and Dr. Sahar Khamis (skhamis@umd.edu).

Will you be willing to participate in this study and share your experiences? I will be pleased to have an interview with you at a time that is convenient and comfortable for you. My email is hchien@umd.edu. My phone number is 1-240-475-2046. Please feel free to contact me either way.

Appendix C: Study 1 Consent Form

Project Title	Conflict Management within Intercultural Romantic Relationship
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Hsin-Yi Chien under the supervision of Dr. Atwell Seate and Dr. Khamis at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you're or have been involved in an intercultural romantic relationship. How you manage conflict with your partner within your intimate intercultural relationship will be a great help to the study. The purpose of this research project is to explore how conflict management within intercultural romantic relationship influences intercultural couples' relationship maintenance.
Procedures	You will be asked to participate in an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will focus on what internal and external relational conflicts you have experienced within your intercultural romantic relationship and what strategies you and your partner used to manage these conflicts. Example questions include: "Please think about major relational conflicts you have encountered so far." "What strategies have you used to cope with these conflicts" "What role do you think cultural differences play in your relationships" You can refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable during the interview process. You will also be inquired whether you consent to the researcher's wish to audiotape the interview for purpose of accuracy. However, you have the right to decline being audio recorded. Your participation will be voluntary, and you may withdraw from participation at any time. _____ I agree to be audio-taped. _____ I disagree to be audio-taped.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	Because you may be audio recorded in the interview, this project may present some risks. Moreover, the topic of intercultural intimacy may acquire participants to reveal some private information. These risks would be minimized by ensuring confidentiality. To ensure confidentiality, audio files would be named in a way that mask your real identity and I will assign you a pseudonym while I am analyzing your data. The identity markers such as your job title or the specific location where you reside in will be removed unless you indicate otherwise. Your identity will remain unknown to other participants. You can decline to answer any specific questions or to end your participation at any time without penalty. Another potential risk is the possibility of disclosing your personal information by transmitting the consent form via emails,

	for emails may be accessed by third parties. To reduce the risk, the emails containing the consent form and your information will be deleted immediately once the consent form is made into hard copies and securely stored in the investigator's home office.
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits to participants. But some potential benefits include a better understanding of how intercultural communication within relationships and how certain conflict coping strategies influence intercultural couples' relationship maintenance.
Confidentiality	Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by assigning you with a pseudonym to protect your identity and by removing any identity markers. Data will be securely stored on the student investigator's home office computers and several hard disks. Computer and hard drives will be password-protected. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
Medical Treatment	The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Hsin-Yi Chien Department of Communication University of Maryland 0109 Skinner Building College Park, MD 20742-7635 1-(301) 405-8077 hchien@umd.edu
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

	University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 1-301-405-0678 This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.	
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a digital copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.	
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

Appendix D: Study 1 Summary of Participants' demographic Information

Participant	Participants' age and gender		Partner's identity	Relational Status	Where they met	Participant's current country of residence	Partner's current country of residence
Xin-Yan	28	F	Russian	Dating	Taiwan	Taiwan	Russia
Bo-Xun	33	M	American	Engaged	USA	USA	USA
Yun-Han	31	F	American	Married	USA	USA	USA
Huang-Kai	25	M	Korean	Dating	Taiwan	Taiwan	Korea
Wan-Ting	25	F	French	Dating	USA	Taiwan	France
Yi-Zhen	25	F	Italian	Dating	Internet	Italy	Italy
Ya-Xin	33	F	Korean	Married	USA	USA	USA
Yan-Xuan	22	F	French	Dating	Internet	Taiwan	France
Ya-Wen	32	F	German	Dating	Canada	Canada	Canada
Yu-Jun	31	F	British	Married	UK	UK	UK
Zhe-Xuan	23	M	Korean	Dating	Taiwan	Taiwan	Korea
Jia-Rong	31	F	American	Dating	USA	USA	USA
Rou-Yi	37	F	British	Dating	Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan
Cai-Wei	32	F	Italy	Engaged	UK	UK	UK
Zi-Yu	31	F	Peruvian-American	Married	USA	USA	USA
Hui-Min	28	F	Czech	Married	Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan
Jia-Yan	28	F	Egyptian	Engaged	Egypt	Egypt	Egypt
Xiao-Yin	27	F	French-Canadian	Dating	Canada	Taiwan	Canada
Shu-Wei	32	M	Australian	Engaged	China	USA	Australia
Zhi-Xiao	24	F	German	Dating	France	France	Germany

Appendix E: Study 1 Participants Descriptive Portraits

Participant 1: Xin-Yan

Xin-Yan is a 28-year-old female Taiwanese and is a full-time educational administrator. Xin-Yan has a degree in Western literature and has many friends from other countries; however, she states that she perceives of herself as a typical Taiwanese and has a high degree of national identification.

Xin-Yan's boyfriend is a 33-year-old Russian male who is currently working in Russia. She met her boyfriend 7 years ago in Taiwan when Xin-Yan's friend introduced them to each other. At that time, Xin-Yan did not know much about Russian culture and she was interested in exploring Russian culture better; therefore, they gradually became close through cultural exchange and started dating. Xin-Yan and her boyfriend are currently in a long-distance relationship and they plan to live in Taiwan together when they get married. However, according to Xin-Yan, her boyfriend plans to have Xin-Yan move to Russia once Russia's economic and political status becomes stable.

According to Xin-Yan, her boyfriend has taken several courses of Mandarin Chinese while he was studying for his master's degree in Taiwan and is fairly fluent in Mandarin Chinese. Although Xin-Yan has been learning Russian since she met her boyfriend, she thinks that her Russian is still not fluent enough. Therefore, Xin-Yan and her boyfriend mostly communicate in Mandarin Chinese and English. However, Xin-Yan admits that they have experienced several conflicts as a result of language barriers. For instance, Xin-Yan reflects that her boyfriend's fluency in Mandarin Chinese often makes her forget that he is not speaking in his mother tongue;

therefore, she feels that she is less forgiving of her boyfriend occasional language mistakes. Xin-Yan also states that, although they both speak fluent English, they sometimes find it difficult to choose the right vocabulary to truly describe their thoughts or feelings and that they at times feel misunderstood by each other.

Based on Xin-Yan's impression, although her boyfriend has a good understanding of Taiwanese culture, he does not like Taiwan enough to be willing to become a Taiwanese. Xin-Yan, on the other hand, becomes appreciative of Russia's rich culture and is interested in learning more about Russian history and cultural practices. Xin-Yan mentions that her boyfriend wishes her to become more Russianized, which sometimes makes her feel uncomfortable. She thinks that her boyfriend does not show a same degree of interest or effort in trying to get assimilated into Taiwanese culture. However, Xin-Yan says that she respects her boyfriend's cultural preference and would not insist on having him assimilated into Taiwan.

Xin-Yan reflects that the conflicts she has with her boyfriend majorly surround their discrepant communication styles and her boyfriend's occasional racist remarks. Xin-Yan recalls that her boyfriend sometimes would speak little of Black people or Chinese immigrants in Russia. Although Xin-Yan feels disturbed by these remarks, Xin-Yan says that she only expresses her discomfort about his racist attitudes in an implicit way. Xin-Yan confesses that she tends to communicate in an indirect and roundabout way, which her boyfriend finds ineffective and annoying, but she states that she often feels hurt by her boyfriend's directness. Xin-Yan believes that she has sought to adjust her communication style in accordance to her

boyfriend's expectations over the course of their relationship; however, Xin-Yan feels that her boyfriend has not made significant changes to his communication style.

According to Xin-Yan, her cultural identification has changed throughout the course of their relationship. Although she still highly identifies with her culture of origin, she has tried to assimilate to her partner's culture and community. Despite of relational conflicts, Xin-Yan is optimistic of this intercultural romantic relationship. She comments that, although cultural differences can generate conflicts, resolving these conflicts allows them to build a stronger relationship.

Participant 2: Bo-Xun

Bo-Xun is a 33-year-old male Taiwanese and identifies himself as a Christian. Bo-Xun left Taiwan in his late twenties and went to America to receive doctoral education. However, he later decided to drop his graduate program to pursue a seminary degree in the U.S. Bo-Xun, though identifying himself as a typical Taiwanese, confesses that he finds many of Chinese values, such as Confucius doctrines and power hierarchy, disagreeable. Bo-Xun also comments that he used to believe that he preferred individualism over collectivism before he came to the U.S.; however, having stayed in the U.S. for five years, he now becomes discontented with individualistic values and mainstream American cultures.

Bo-Xun's fiancée is a 28-year-old American female who is currently working as a college lecturer in the U.S. Bo-Xun met his fiancée four years ago in the U.S. At that time, Bo-Xun's fiancée joined the Chinese church that Bo-Xun regularly went to, and they started dating a year after. According to Bo-Xun, his fiancée has always been interested in intercultural learning. Before they started dating, Bo-Xun's fiancée

had already showed great respect to the Chinese community that their church served and could speak basic Chinese. However, Bo-Xun and her fiancée mostly communicate in English.

Bo-Xun says that his fiancée was brought up in a very traditional Southern American family. Her family members value national patriotism and political conservatism, which Bo-Xun finds annoying. Bo-Xun comments that his fiancée's endorsement of Southern cultural values and her American nationalism are two frequent sources of their relational conflicts. Bo-Xun confesses that he often tells his fiancée that many American values she identifies with are stupid, which makes his fiancée feel hurt and disappointed. Nevertheless, Bo-Xun notices that these conflicts have made him more resistant to get assimilated into American culture. On the other hand, Bo-Xun believes that these conversations about differences in Taiwanese and American values have made his fiancée more appreciative of Taiwanese culture.

In spite of Bo-Xun's dislike of American values, Bo-Xun believes that cultural differences do not cause significant problems in their relationship. According to Bo-Xun, his fiancée's parents warned her of potential relational challenges cultural differences could cause when the couple started dating. Therefore, Bo-Xun and his fiancée have regular discussions of cultural differences throughout the course of their relationship. These conversations have made them agree to look past differences and focus on commonalities. Indeed, Bo-Xun states that most of their conflicts are actually caused by personality-related problems. Bo-Xun comments that he and his fiancée have disparate approaches to handling conflicts. Bo-Xun reflects that he usually deals with conflicts with two extreme tactics. He either avoids talking about

the problems that give rise to conflicts or uses retaliatory tactics, such as resorting to personal attacks, to win the arguments. As for Bo-Xun's fiancée, she is more in favor of openly discussing conflict issues when they are having some disagreements. Bo-Xun realizes that his fiancée sometimes gets hurt by his dominating conflict management style. However, Bo-Xun does not make any remarks about trying to change the way he deals with relational conflicts.

According to Bo-Xun, his Taiwanese identity and his identification with Taiwanese culture have become strengthened throughout the course of their relationship. Although he and his fiancée decide to live in the U.S. after they get married, Bo-Xun expresses no interest in getting assimilated into the mainstream American culture. Despite their disparate cultural identifications, Bo-Xun comments that he is highly satisfied with this relationship and is optimistic about their future marriage.

Participant 3: Yun-Han

Yun-Han is a 31-year-old female Taiwanese and is currently a housewife living in the U.S. Yun-Han was married to an Asian-American five years ago. Yun-Han met her husband seven years ago via a dating website while she was pursuing her master's degree in the U.S. According to Yun-Han, before she came to the U.S., she had been rather "Westernized" through globalization-based acculturation. She reflects that she has never felt that she fits into Taiwanese society. She thinks that Taiwanese cultural doctrines "force everyone to abide by a same set of rules and to follow a same path of life," and she says that she could not agree with many of Taiwanese values. She states that she feels more at ease in the U.S and that she assimilates well

to American culture and society. Yun-Han also mentions that her husband once commented that she was “the whitest Asian girl [he had] ever met.” Therefore, Yun-Han feels that she and her husband do not encounter a lot of cultural differences in their relationship.

Although Yun-Han assimilates into American culture well, she addresses that she at times feels stressed when her husband asks her to be more “Americanized” or when he asks her to give up some Taiwanese cultural practices. Yun-Han reflects that they often have arguments about her flying back to Taiwan for important Taiwanese cultural holidays. Yun-Han remembers her husband saying that she should not go back to Taiwan too often because she has “been married to America.” The fact that she makes more sacrifice and accommodation gives Yun-Han an impression that this relationship is imbalanced. However, she comments that it is reasonable that she gives in more when they have culture-related conflicts, and she agrees with her husband that there is no need for him to make cultural accommodation because they are living in America.

Yun-Han mentions that most of their conflicts surround issues about house-chore distributions and her husband’s patriarchal ideologies. However, Yun-Han says that she seldom disputes with her husband about her discontent. She reasons that her conflict avoidance is based on her belief that arguments are unfruitful. She also states that it is impossible to have another person change his ways; therefore, she would rather make herself more accommodative or tolerant.

When asked if her cultural identification has changed throughout the course of the relationship, Yun-Han replies that she has always felt like an outcast in Taiwan

and that she finds herself a foreigner in the eyes of many Americans. Yun-Han says that she is not bothered by her cultural uncertainty and has chosen to focus on her personal life. Because she does not think that culture plays an important role in her life and her relationship, she finds her intercultural marriage not distinct from intracultural marriages.

Participant 4: Huang-Kai

Huang-Kai is a 25-year-old male Taiwanese, who currently works as a full-time engineer in Taiwan. Huang-Kai met his Korean girlfriend three years ago through a language exchange program. They started dating after his girlfriend finished the language exchange program and went back to Korea. They have been in a long-distance relationship for three years. Huang-Kai's girlfriend could speak fluent Mandarin Chinese; therefore, Huang-Kai and his girlfriend mostly communicate in Mandarin Chinese. Huang-Kai says that he has been learning Korean after he met his girlfriend, but he considers his Korean not fluent enough for daily conversation.

Huang-Kai admits that he used to have some negative stereotypes about Korean people and Korean culture before he met his Korean girlfriend. However, he states that his perceptions of Korea have been changed throughout the course of the relationship. Huang-Kai also mentions that he has been trying to learn more about Korean culture because he is considering moving to Korea in the future. Huang-Kai believes that, based on what he has learned about Korea, Korean culture is not very different from Taiwanese culture, and he states that he and his girlfriend do not encounter many culture differences in the relationship.

According to Huang-Kai, the major source of conflicts in their relationship is not about culture-related stressors. Instead, their conflicts mostly arise from uncertainty about the future. Huang-Kai says that he feels very uncertain about his decision to move to Korea, because he is worried about Korean society's anti-foreigner attitude. Huang-Kai explains that expressing these concerns to his girlfriend often results in arguments, because his girlfriend often interprets these concerns as his reluctance to be more committed to their relationship. Huang-Kai notices that cultural differences do occasionally result in minor conflicts. Huang-Kai recalls having arguments with his girlfriend about his discontent of Korean's drinking and clubbing culture. He also mentions that he sometimes could not fully understand his girlfriend's Chinese, which could make her feel frustrated and belittled. However, Huang-Kai believes that these cultural issues are not unsolvable problems and that they do not significantly influence their relationship quality.

When asked how he and his girlfriend typically manage their relational conflicts, Huang-Kai explains that, when they started dating, he and his girlfriend made an agreement to openly discuss about their concerns and discontent, because they both viewed open discussion as a rational and desirable conflict management tactic. Huang-Kai believes that he has been following this agreement well, and he thinks that his girlfriend appreciates his willingness to genuinely express his feelings and thoughts. However, Huang-Kai notices that, in spite of their agreement to openly discuss relational conflicts, his girlfriend tends to be inexpressive about her feelings. Huang-Kai associates his girlfriend's inexpressiveness to Korea's patriarchal culture. Even though he thinks that his girlfriend's indirect communication style is

understandable given her enculturation experiences living in a patriarchal society, he still considers his girlfriend's way of managing conflict unconstructive.

Huang-Kai believes that his relationship with his girlfriend is very balanced and that they both try their best to integrate and respect each other's culture. Huang-Kai says that he cherishes his Taiwanese identity and that he would not give up his culture of origin to be assimilated into Korean culture; nevertheless, he would keep learning Korean culture, including the language, customs, and values, to show his love and respect to his girlfriend and her ethnic community. Huang-Kai also mentions that he appreciates his girlfriend's genuine interest in Taiwanese culture. Huang-Kai concludes his interview by expressing a desire to keep integrating each party's culture to enrich the relationship.

Participant 5: Wan-Ting

Wan-Ting is a 25-year-old Taiwanese female and a law school student. Wan-Ting identifies herself as a typical Taiwanese, but she says that she has always been interested in exploring different cultures. Wan-Ting met her French boyfriend three years ago in the U.S. through an international student exchange program. After the international exchange program ended, both Wan-Ting and her boyfriend went back to their own countries, and they have been in a long-distance relationship for three years. According to Wan-Ting, her boyfriend is currently pursuing his Ph.D. degree in France and plans to move to Taiwan after he gets his degree. Wan-Ting says that her boyfriend's decision to move to Taiwan is based on two reasons. First, both Wan-Ting and her boyfriend believe that, because of their majors, it is easier for Wan-Ting's boyfriend to find a job in Taiwan than it is for Wan-Ting to find a desirable

job in France. Second, according to Wan-Ting, her boyfriend has always been interested in living abroad. Wan-Ting says that her boyfriend has been taking Mandarin Chinese classes after he decides to move to Taiwan in the future. As for Wan-Ting, she explains that, because she has always been interested in French culture, she had been taking French classes long before she met her boyfriend. Wan-Ting says that she could speak fluent French; therefore, she and her boyfriend mostly communicate in French and sometimes in English. Wan-Ting states that, although the current language choice in their relationship is fine to her, she would want her boyfriend to be able to speak fluent Chinese in the future.

Wan-Ting says that one reason why she is attracted to her boyfriend is that they are both interested in intercultural learning. Both Wan-Ting and her boyfriend like to share their own culture to each other, and both of them enjoy learning about each other's culture, including cultural practices, values, and viewpoints. Wan-Ting says that, after they started dating, she and her boyfriend both voluntarily try to gain a deeper knowledge of each other's culture by actively reading history books, watching French/Taiwanese news, and asking each other about culture-related questions. Wan-Ting reflects that these intercultural discussions actually make her become more appreciative of not only French but also Taiwanese cultures. She reasons that, in the process of trying to explain certain Taiwanese practices or values to her boyfriend, she has a better understanding of the meanings behind these cultural customs and becomes more aware of the richness of Taiwanese culture.

According to Wan-Ting, their relational conflicts are mostly caused by their disparate communication styles. Wan-Ting says that she has a more indirect and

implicit communication style. She explains that she has the tendency to “read between the lines,” and she expects her boyfriend to develop the ability to “understand what is *not* said.” She states that she sometimes gets frustrated by her boyfriend’s insensitivities. Wan-Ting also admits that, although she understands that her boyfriend’s communication style is more direct, she still finds herself trying to guess if he says something but means another. She notices that her boyfriend interprets her habit to read between lines as her being paranoid, which he sometimes complains about. Wan-Ting also confesses that she at times views her boyfriend’s direct communication as a sign of him being impatient. Wan-Ting says that they try to solve problems arising from their disparate communication styles by attributing these conflicts to cultural differences. Wan-Ting says that recognizing the role that culture plays in shaping their respective communication styles helps them normalize these discontents and accept their differences. Because of this coping strategy, both she and her boyfriend have not made significant changes to their communication styles throughout the relationship.

Wan-Ting believes that her relationship with her boyfriend is very balanced and that they both try their best to learn more about each other’s culture. Wan-Ting says that, although she becomes more and more interested in French culture, she does not identify less with Taiwanese culture. Instead, Wan-Ting states that she has developed a greater understanding and appreciation of Taiwanese culture because of her intercultural relationship. She emphasizes that she appreciates the differences between French and Taiwanese cultures and that immersing herself into two cultures really enriches her perspective.

Participant 6: Yi-Zhen

Yi-Zhen is a 25-year-old female Taiwanese. Yi-Zhen has a bachelor's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language and has a keen interest in learning languages. Yi-Zhen met her Italian boyfriend about two years ago through a language exchange app. After a few months since they started dating, Yi-Zhen decided to temporally move to Italy to learn Italian. The couple have been dating for one year and two months. Yi-Zhen considers her Italian level to be intermediate. She says that she and her boyfriend mostly communicate in English and sometimes in Italian. When asked about her cultural identification before she was engaged in this intercultural relationship, Yi-Zhen states that she used to consider herself an atypical Taiwanese. Yi-Zhen explains that she used to find Taiwanese culture putting too much emphasis on order, politeness, and discipline and that she preferred a culture of independence, freedom, and optimism. In this respect, Yi-Zhen finds Italian culture appealing to her. However, Yi-Zhen reflects that living abroad has actually strengthened her identification with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture.

Yi-Zhen's boyfriend is a 21-year-old college student with a major in Foreign Languages. According to Yi-Zhen, her boyfriend had been learning Mandarin Chinese and Asian culture before they met each other. Yi-Zhen says that her boyfriend has always been interested in Chinese culture. He especially appreciates Chinese cultural values of politeness, discipline, and future orientation. Yi-Zhen recalls her boyfriend saying that he considers himself an atypical Italian because he is discontent with Italy's carefree culture. However, Yi-Zhen says that she actually does not view her boyfriend as an atypical Italian. She explains that her boyfriend shares

many Italian characteristics, such as optimism and a sense of humor. Because of her boyfriend's genuine appreciation of Chinese cultural values and Taiwan's great living amenities, the couple have agreed to move to Taiwan if they get married.

Yi-Zen says that she and her boyfriend share similar personalities and interests; therefore, their relational conflicts are mostly caused by cultural differences, including differences in senses of humor, concepts of time, and, in particular, communication styles. Yi-Zen explains that, because her boyfriend, like many Italian people, has a tendency to speak at a loud volume and with animated gesticulation, she often feels that her boyfriend is impatient or is angry at her. Yi-Zen also states that she and some of her family members sometimes feel uncomfortable by her boyfriend's directness. On the other hand, Yi-Zen says that her boyfriend finds her indirect communication style and her inexpressiveness of discontent unconstructive and ineffective. Although Yi-Zen once explained to her boyfriend that Taiwanese people tend not to explicitly express their complaints in order to show respect to the other party, her boyfriend still emphasizes that they need to openly discuss the cause(s) to their relational conflicts in a rational manner to manage these conflicts. Yi-Zen reflects that, although she is not very comfortable explicitly voicing her discontent, she agrees with her boyfriend that these rational discussions of relational problems are effective conflict management tactics and help their relationship stay healthy. Yi-Zen comments that she has become more appreciative of her boyfriend's direct way of communication and that she has sought to make some accommodations to her communication style by trying to be more explicit. In addition to direct and rational discussion of relational problems, Yi-Zen reflects that she and her boyfriend

sometimes manage their conflicts by attributing the causes of these conflicts to cultural differences. Yi-Zen says that cultural attribution helps her manage her emotions, increases her willingness to be more accommodative, and motivates her to engage in the acculturation process.

Yi-Zen concludes her interview by stating that both she and her boyfriend try to respect and integrate each other's culture into their relationship. Yi-Zen reflects that they both have become more assimilated to each other's culture throughout the course of their relationship. Nevertheless, Yi-Zen notices that, in this process of acculturation, her identification with Taiwanese culture has also been strengthened. Yi-Zen comments that she wishes to combine Italian values of independence and freedom with Taiwanese culture's emphasis on interpersonal respect to enrich their intercultural relationship.

Participant 7: Ya-Xin

Ya-Xin is a 33-year-old female Taiwanese. Ya-Xin met her Korean husband three years ago when both of them were pursuing their master's degrees in the U.S. Ya-Xin says that she was born into an intercultural family. Her father is a Taiwanese while her mother was born and raised in Hong Kong. Because Ya-Xin grew up in Taiwan, she considers herself a Taiwanese and she identifies with Taiwanese culture. In addition, because of her parents' intercultural marriage, Ya-Xin says that she has been very open to intercultural relationships. Nevertheless, Ya-Xin had not dated interculturally before she met her Korean husband.

According to Ya-Xin, both she and her husband did not have a good understanding of each other's culture of origin before they met. Ya-Xin confesses that

she used to have negative attitudes toward Korea “because Taiwanese media often portray Korea in a negative way.” However, Ya-Xin states that her perceptions of Korea have gone through some positive changes throughout the course of the relationship. Since they started dating, Ya-Xin has tried to learn more about Korean culture. Ya-Xin reflects that, as she gains a better understanding of Korea’s history and culture, she finds Korea less objectionable. Ya-Xin explains that her decision to make herself better acquainted with Korean culture is a voluntary choice, because she believes that a better knowledge of her husband’s culture would help her understand and predict her husband’s behaviors. Ya-Xin also states that her husband has never pressured her to get assimilated into Korean culture. Despite her efforts to familiar herself with Korean culture, Ya-Xin admits that she still does not have a genuine appreciation of Korean cultural values or practices and that she has little interest in Korean popular culture, either. Ya-Xin also notices that she and her husband seldom discuss differences between Taiwanese and Korean cultures. Instead, their conversations primarily focus on their daily lives in the U.S. As for their language choice in the relationship, although Ya-Xin and her husband have sought to learn each other’s native language, they communicate in English. Ya-Xin explains that, because they are living in the U.S., she does not feel an urgent need to get acquainted with Korean. For the same reason, Ya-Xin says that she would not force her husband to gain proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, nor would she want her husband to have a good understanding or interest in Taiwanese culture.

Although Ya-Xin and her husband do not engage in intercultural discussions very often, Ya-Xin believes that many of their relational problems are caused by

cultural differences. Ya-Xin says that, although she understands that showing respect for elders and seniors is a core value in Korean culture, she is often annoyed by her husband's "blind adherence to the pecking order." Ya-Xin thinks that Korean culture emphasizes collectivism more than Taiwanese culture, and she often wishes that her husband could be more independent of his elders and peers. Ya-Xin also thinks that, because Korean culture emphasizes ingroup-favoritism, Koreans tend to form exclusive social groups. Ya-Xin says that many of her husband's friends would not talk to her in English in their social gatherings, which makes her feel excluded and unwelcomed. Ya-Xin says that she complained this issue to her husband; however, her husband has not taken any action to solve this problem. Instead, he justifies his friends' behaviors by telling her that his friends feel weird not communicating in Korean in a situation where most people in the group are Koreans. Ya-Xin says that she now tries to avoid hanging out with her husband's friends. In fact, Ya-Zin states that she would prefer it if she and her husband could keep their respective social circles separate.

When asked to share about their relational conflict management experience, Ya-Xin says that she and her husband agree not to "leave today's arguments for tomorrow." Therefore, they make their best to openly and immediately discuss about their relational discontent. A second tactic that Ya-Xin believes to play an important role in their conflict negotiation is attributing the cause of their conflicts to cultural factors. Ya-Xin explains that, because she understands that culture has critical influences on one's values and beliefs, she would "try to get over it" if she thinks that their conflicts are caused by cultural differences. Ya-Xin says that cultural attribution

helps them respect each other's points of view and control their emotions. However, she admits that it is challenging to figure out whether a conflict results from personality problems or cultural differences. Ya-Xin believes that a greater intercultural competency could help them better manage their relational conflicts.

According to Ya-Xin, although she and her husband both have made some efforts to learn more about each other's culture, both of them are not very motivated to integrate each other's culture to their current relational life. Ya-Xin explains that this situation is due to two reasons. First, they are living in the U.S.; therefore, both Korean and Taiwanese cultural practices/values/customs do not have immediate influence on their current life. Second, although the couple have sought to learn more about each other's culture, they are both not genuinely interested in each other's culture. To them, being able to show empathy and cultural understanding is enough to keep their relationship healthy. In this respect, despite her intercultural relationship, Ya-Xin states that she has not made significant changes to her cultural identification throughout the course of the relationship.

Participant 8: Yan-Xuan

Yan-Xuan is a 22-year-old female Taiwanese, who is currently working as a social worker in Taiwan. One and a half year ago, Yan-Xuan met her French boyfriend through a language learning app. The couple started dating 10 months ago and they have been in a long-distance relationship. Yan-Xuan's boyfriend is a 23-year-old student who is currently pursuing a graduate degree in France. Yan-Xuan says that they mostly communicate in French and sometimes in English.

According to Yan-Xuan, she and her boyfriend have had a lot of conflicts in the relationship. The causes of their conflicts include differences in time orientations, disparate attitudes toward money, different relational expectations, and perceived inequality, with the latter two being the major sources of Yan-Xuan's relational discontent. Yan-Xuan confesses that she could not appreciate individualism and that she often interprets her French boyfriend's individualistic thinking and his request of her being more independent as a sign of selfishness: "I think he is kind of self-centered. He keeps saying that I should be more independent and more self-responsible. However, I cannot understand his thinking. I mean, we are a couple, why can't we count on each other?" Yan-Xuan states that she has expressed her desire for them to increase their relational closeness to her boyfriend several times; however, her desire has not yet been satisfied. According to Yan-Xuan, her boyfriend resists to adjust his relational rules to accommodate hers. Yan-Xuan recalls her boyfriend asking her to be content with their current relational state because he thinks that he has spent more time with her than most French guys would do with their girlfriends. Although Yan-Xuan is still not satisfied with this response, she chooses not to further express her discontent because she thinks these arguments would harm their relationship. Yan-Xuan also states that she often feels pressured by her boyfriend's forcing her to assimilate into French culture. She confesses that she feels pressured when her boyfriend complains about her not being as independent as French people and when her boyfriend blames her for not making enough progress to her French proficiency. His forced assimilation makes Yan-Xuan feel that their relationship is unbalanced. Yan-Xuan explains that, although her boyfriend could only speak basic

Mandarin Chinese and does not have a good understanding of Taiwanese culture, she has never felt disappointed by his intercultural (in)competency and would not ask him to get assimilated into Taiwanese culture, unless he wishes so. However, in spite of Yan-Xuan's dissatisfaction with her boyfriend's forced assimilation, she states that she feels obliged to be more fluent with French and be more familiar with French culture.

Despite her discontent with relational problems, Yan-Xuan says that she seldom expresses her complaints to her boyfriend and that she tends to give in to her boyfriend whenever they have verbal arguments. She attributes her reliance on avoiding- and obliging-related conflict management approaches to two reasons. First, Yan-Xuan explains that, because she and her boyfriend are in a long-distance relationship, she wants to cherish every minute they spend with each other and would try to avoid "meaningless fights" for the sake of maintaining their relationship quality. Second, Yan-Xuan believes that culture also influences her conflict management style. She explains, "I am the one who make more accommodation. I think this is because I am Asian. You know, we Asian people tend to be meek." Yan-Xuan also notices that attributing the causes of relational conflicts to cultural influence helps her manage conflicts. However, she states that she and her boyfriend seldom try to understand each other's behaviors or points of view from the other person's cultural perspective when having arguments. Yan-Xuan reasons that, when they are emotional, their intercultural empathy becomes compromised. Yan-Xuan reflects that she and her boyfriend usually engage in cultural discussions after having

verbal arguments and that these cultural discussions allow them to rationally analyze the causes to their conflicts.

Yan-Xuan states that she is thinking about moving to France in the future, because her boyfriend does not plan to move to Taiwan. Because of this decision, Yan-Xuan tries to get more acquainted with French culture and more advanced with her French ability. Nevertheless, Yan-Xuan expresses concerns about her ability to fit into French society because she does not have a genuine appreciation of French culture. Yan-Xuan also reveals a lack of confidence in her intercultural relationship due to uncertainties about the future and the imbalanced relational structure.

Participant 9: Ya-Wen

Ya-Wen is a 32-year-old female Taiwanese and is pursuing a doctoral degree in Canada. Ya-Wen met her German boyfriend two and a half years ago in Canada because they joined the same research lab. The couple live in Canada when the interview is conducted and has been cohabiting for 10 months.

Although Ya-Wen considers herself a typical Taiwanese and identifies with most Taiwanese cultural values, she states that she actually prefers individualism over collectivism. According to Ya-Wen, Taiwanese society does not respect individuality and tends to put people into categories. Ya-Wen explains that if a person does not really fit into the category he or she is ascribed to, that person will be viewed as an alien, and Ya-Wen finds this cultural practice unfair. In addition to her disapproval of Taiwanese culture's lack of respect to individual differences, Ya-Wen also finds Taiwanese society's patriarchal values disagreeable. She thinks that Taiwan's patriarchal ideology requires women to be submissive and dependent. Ya-Wen

reflects that, because she could not conform to these patriarchal values, she was not popular among Taiwanese men. Ya-Wen confesses that she had thought about dating interculturally before she met her German boyfriend.

According to Ya-Wen, she and her boyfriend knew little about each other's culture of origin and seldom engaged in intercultural discussions before they started dating. However, Ya-Wen says that, as the relationship progresses, she has become more motivated to learn about her partner's culture and to discover cultural differences between them. Ya-Wen states that, although she could feel that her boyfriend would like her to gain a deeper understanding of German culture, her boyfriend never gives her assimilation pressure. Nevertheless, Ya-Wen says that the more she knows about German culture, the more she appreciates it. Ya-Wen especially appreciates German culture's work ethics, gender egalitarianism, and direct communication style. Ya-Wen says that she sometimes would joke about her "Germanization" with her friends, but she holds a positive attitude toward her acculturation. Ya-Wen notices that her boyfriend is not particularly interested in learning about Taiwanese culture, but she is not troubled by it. Ya-Wen mentions that she and her boyfriend have been trying to learn each other's native language, but none of them really pushes the other person to acquire proficiency. According to Ya-Wen, the couple mostly communicate in English.

Ya-Wen recalls that most of their relational conflicts are related to their discrepant communication styles. Ya-Wen says that, when she and her boyfriend just began dating, her boyfriend criticized about her inexpressiveness. Interestingly, Ya-Wen associated her communication style with her internalized gender ideology:

Traditional Chinese cultural values emphasize endurance and harmony . . . [In contrast,] German people are direct, and they expect straightforward responses, too. I remember that, when we just began dating . . . he often asked me if I had an opinion toward something and my typical response was no . . . And one day we had a serious fight, during which he complained about my inexpressiveness and asked if I would want to be myself or be someone's girlfriend. Not until then did I realize that I unconsciously applied Taiwan's gender norms to our relationship. In Taiwan, because of social pressure, women often have to censor themselves to please men.

Ya-Wen says that, after she realized that her subconscious performance of traditional femininity did not work in her relationship, she has tried to adjust her communication style by being more direct and expressive. Ya-Wen believes that differences in communication styles have become less problematic in their relationship. Although both Ya-Wen and her boyfriend agree that direct discussion of relational discontent is a constructive conflict management style, Ya-Wen says that they tend not to engage in immediate confrontation when they are having some disagreements. They are more in favor of avoiding the conflict situation until they feel that they are calm enough to discuss their thoughts rationally.

Ya-Wen states that she is highly satisfied with her current relationship. She notices that she has become increasingly Germanized throughout the course of the relationship, and she is happy with this change to her cultural identification. Ya-Wen reveals that, after she and her boyfriend graduate, she plans to move to German. Ya-Wen explains that this decision is due to two reasons. First, she is not sure if her

boyfriend can fit into Taiwanese society. Second, Ya-Wen has a genuine appreciation of German culture.

Participant 10: Yu-Jun

Yu-Jun is a 31-year-old female Taiwanese. Yu-Jun is currently working as a project manager in the United Kingdom and she has been married to her British husband for two years. Yu-Jun met her husband in 2013 while she was pursuing her master's degree in the UK. Yu-Jun's husband is a doctoral student and is a white British. Yu-Jun comments that, before she left Taiwan to pursue a postgraduate degree, she had seldom considered herself to be a typical Taiwanese. She explains that she disagrees with many Taiwanese cultural values, including Confucius doctrines, patriarchal ideologies, and the habituated reliance on indirect communication.

Yu-Jun says that she is attracted to her husband because she finds him very direct and honest. Yu-Jun believes that she and her husband have more similarities than differences. Yu-Jun explains that she and her husband have similar habits, political stances, and attitudes toward money. In this respect, Yu-Jun does not think that she experiences a lot of cultural differences in this relationship. Yu-Jun complements that her husband has been actively learning Taiwanese culture and history after they started dating. Yu-Jun also states that she has sought to be more assimilated into British society when they decided to get married. Yu-Jun comments that she finds the United Kingdom a very racially-integrated society; therefore, she does not feel alienated or not fitting in. Although Yu-Jun's husband has been learning Mandarin Chinese, the couple mostly communicate in English.

Despite the fact that Yu-Jun and her husband share many similarities, Yu-Jun admits that they have divergent preferences for food and different approaches to conflict management. Yu-Jun reflects that their relational conflicts are mostly about daily trifles, such as food choices and distribution of household chores. Yu-Jun states that, although she and her husband both directly voice their relational discontent, they have different conflict management styles. According to Yu-Jun, her husband usually tries to manage conflict with resolution-oriented tactics. He prefers to propose practical solutions that could immediately resolve the conflict at hand. However, Yu-Jun is not very appreciative of her husband's conflict management style. Yu-Jun says that sometimes she just wants to have in-depth discussions about the problem that gives rise to their conflict and that she is not necessarily looking for a closure in their conflict negotiations. Yu-Jun also confesses that she is impatient and often interrupts her husband during their conflict negotiations. Yu-Jun acknowledges that her conflict management style is more competing and less apologetic, even when she knows that justice is not on her side, because she doesn't want to lose the fight. Yu-Jun says that her husband has never complained about her conflict management style, and she is mostly satisfied with their past conflict negotiation experiences. In addition, Yu-Jun states that she seldom attributes the cause(s) of her relational conflicts to cultural differences. She explains that, "Although we are from different cultures, we are also unique individuals."

Yu-Jun comments that her cultural identification has changed throughout the course of the relationship. Although she had not considered herself a typical Taiwanese before she was engaged in this intercultural relationship, Yu-Jun says that

she feels less Taiwanese nowadays. She also states that she has become less tolerant of other people's negative attitudes toward the United Kingdom. Interestingly, although Yu-Jun becomes less identified with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture, Yu-Jun's husband finds himself increasingly "Taiwanized," according to Yu-Jun. That is, the couple have developed a greater level of identification with each other's nation and culture throughout their intercultural relationship.

Participant 11: Zhe-Xuan

Zhe-Xuan is a 23-year-old male Taiwanese and is a medical school student. Zhe-Xuan met his Korean girlfriend seven months ago via a couch-surfing app. At that time, Zhe-Xuan's girlfriend was visiting Taiwan and Zhe-Xuan volunteered to be her tour guide. They decided to start dating after Zhe-Xuan's girlfriend went back to Korea. The couple have been in a long-distance relationship for seven months. Because both of them could not speak each other's native language fluently, the couple communicate in English.

Zhe-Xuan considers himself to be a typical Taiwanese, but he says that he loves traveling and that he has had rich intercultural experiences and has made friends with people from different cultures through international travels. However, Zhe-Xuan confesses that he had no interest in visiting Korea before he met his Korean girlfriend. Zhe-Xuan explains that he used to have hostile feelings toward Korea, and he used to think of Korea as a very conservative and exclusive society. Nevertheless, Zhen-Xuan says that he now thinks more positively of Korean people, but he still finds some aspects of Korean culture, such as its drinking culture and clubbing

culture, disagreeable. These cultural differences have sometimes resulted in relational conflicts.

According to Zhe-Xuan, another major source of experienced relational conflicts arises from his girlfriend's communication style. Zhe-Xuan explains that his girlfriend tends to communicate in a very roundabout way and that she is hesitant to express disagreement or discontent. In addition, she prefers having Zhe-Xuan speak for her or make decisions on her behalf. Zhe-Xuan associates his girlfriend's communication style with her endorsement of conservative gender ideologies:

Korean society puts men in the first place . . . so she seems to believe that, as a woman, she needs to hold her feelings and opinions in herself. And this is another reason that leads to our conflicts . . . I think that Taiwanese society is more appreciative of feminist values and the concept of gender equality than Korean society.

Although Zhe-Xuan finds his girlfriend's communication style understandable, given her cultural background, Zhe-Xuan still wishes that his girlfriend could make some changes to her communicating habits, because he finds independent and assertive women more attractive. Zhe-Xuan says that he and his girlfriend have had several discussions about their disparaging communication style preferences and gender role ideologies throughout their relationship. And Zhe-Xuan notices that his girlfriend has made accommodations to her communicating style by being more willing to articulate her thoughts. On the other hand, Zhe-Xuan believes that he does not change his habituated ways of communicating in this relationship.

Zhe-Xuan reflects that he and his girlfriend often try to manage their relational conflicts by engaging in intercultural discussions. Zhe-Xuan believes that understanding the cultural roots of their disagreements actually helps increase their intercultural awareness: “Without these conflicts [and the follow-up discussions], we did not know that there are so many cultural differences between us.” Zhe-Xuan states that both he and his girlfriend enjoy intercultural discussions. Topics of their intercultural discussions include, but are not limited to, family structures, definitions of filial piety, gender role ideologies, attitudes toward money, Taiwanese society’s hostility against Korea, and East Asian politics. The couple have also been trying to learn more about each other’s native language and ethnic culture. According to Zhe-Xuan, his girlfriend is very fond of Taiwanese culture, especially the cultural values of hospitality and interpersonal harmony. Zhe-Xuan’s girlfriend even expresses a desire to move to Taiwan if they decide to get married. Although Zhe-Xuan is also more inclined to having his girlfriend move to Taiwan, he feels that such a decision might be unfair to his partner. Therefore, Zhe-Xuan states that he is considering moving to a third country if they get married in the future.

Zhe-Xuan comments that, although his intercultural relationship with his Korean girlfriend makes him re-examine his biases against Korean society, this relationship does not influence his cultural identification. He still identifies with Taiwanese culture and considers himself a typical Taiwanese. Zhe-Xuan notices that he has not made many cultural accommodations in this relationship because his girlfriend is more influenced by him than he is influenced by his Korean girlfriend.

Participant 12: Jia-Rong

Jia-Rong is a 31-year old female Taiwanese and is a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in the U.S. Jia-Rong describes herself as typical Taiwanese who was born into a traditional Taiwanese family. Jia-Rong says that her family places a great emphasis on traditional Taiwanese cultural values, such as patriarchal values, self-imposed constraints, filial piety, and social obligations. Jia-Rong states that she had tried her best to fulfill her “ascribed duties” and act as a perfect daughter when she was in Taiwan. According to Jia-Rong, although she sometimes disagrees with her parents’ conservative ideologies, she still tries to stand in their shoes and she seldom disobeys their wishes. Jia-Rong confesses that, although she realizes that those traditional Taiwanese values her parents ask her to abide by are against liberal principles, she has internalized them and that these values have great influence on her behaviors.

Jia-Rong met her American boyfriend three months ago through an online dating app. Jia-Rong’s boyfriend is a 34-year-old white American who is currently working as a college lecturer. According to Jia-Rong, before she and her boyfriend started dating, she used to feel uncomfortable socializing with English native speakers because she was afraid of making linguistic mistakes and she did not know what topics to talk about. Therefore, Jia-Rong did not expect that she would engage in an intercultural romantic relationship with an American. Jia-Rong confesses that she was actually hoping to date someone also from Chinese or Taiwanese background when she decided to use the online dating app where she met her current boyfriend. Jia-Rong and her boyfriend communicate in English. According to Jia-Rong, her boyfriend does not express an interest in learning Mandarin Chinese. Jia-Rong

comments that, although she would be touched if her boyfriend decides to learn Chinese for her, she does not really care whether her boyfriend can speak her native language.

Jia-Rong says that she is attracted to her boyfriend because they have similar political stances. They both care about LGBTQ communities and consider themselves to be liberals. However, they have encountered many conflicts arising from cultural differences. Their major culture-related conflicts include divergent relational rules, different attitudes toward filial piety, individualistic versus collectivistic thinking, and Jia-Rong's indirect communication style. Jia-Rong explains that, because she was brought up in a sexually conservative society, she has learned to associate overt intimate behaviors in public with a sense of immorality. Therefore, she finds that her boyfriend's public display of physical intimacy makes her feel uncomfortable. Jia-Rong also recalls having ongoing conflicts with her boyfriend over her obedience to her parents:

He couldn't understand why I still have to listen to my mother . . . I once explained to him that my parents did not have a chance to study abroad so they were not familiar with individualistic values or the concept of autonomy. However, he is still discontent and keeps asking me why I do not want to fight.

Not only does Jia-Rong relate conflicts over family influences to conflicts between individualistic versus collectivistic values, she also believes that her indirect communication style and her inexpressiveness are also caused by her endorsement of collectivistic values:

I was raised to be a model daughter. I've always tried to do what I am supposed to do to make my parents or other people happy. In the long run, I have forgotten how to express what I want or how I feel. Therefore, I often keep quiet when my boyfriend asks me what I want to do, which really frustrates him.

Jia-Rong notices that her inexpressiveness of her relational discontent and her habituated reliance on conflict avoidance sometimes escalate their relational conflicts. Jia-Rong says that she agrees with her boyfriend that being more expressive of what she wants and how she feels is a more effective conflict management approach and that she really appreciates these individualistic values. Jia-Rong reflects that she has sought to adjust her communicate and conflict management style to accommodate that of her boyfriend's. However, Jia-Rong expresses her frustration about not making enough progress in terms of her communication accommodation, and she reveals that she often feels guilty when she resorts to avoiding-related strategies to deal with her relational conflicts.

Jia-Rong concludes her interview by expressing that her intercultural relationship has made her feel ambiguous about her cultural identification. On the one hand, Taiwanese values and collectivism have a deep and indelible influence on her, and the experience of living in a foreign nation makes her more aware of her cultural identity. On the other hand, her relationship with her boyfriend makes her become appreciative of American culture and more critical of some Taiwanese cultural values. Jia-Rong also reveals that she feels torn by her desire to get more assimilated into American culture and her realization that she could never truly fit in.

Nevertheless, Jia-Rong believes that this intercultural relationship helps broaden her views.

Participant 13: Rou-Yi

Rou-Yi is a 37-year-old female Taiwanese who is currently working as an engineer in Taiwan. Rou-Yi met her British boyfriend in a language exchange social event held in Taiwan in October 2014. Rou-Yi states that she is attracted to her boyfriend because, unlike Rou-Yi's ex Taiwanese boyfriends, her romantic partner never tries to control her, and he shows great respect to her individuality.

According to Rou-Yi, she had an ambivalent identification with Taiwanese culture before she met her boyfriend. Rou-Yi reflects that, before she entered her thirties, she used to follow traditional Taiwanese cultural values and had sought her best to behave like a typical Taiwanese female. She used to respect and follow authorities, censor herself to meet group norms, and be demure and submissive to cater to the needs of others. However, Rou-Yi says that she gradually became tired of playing the role of a prototypical Taiwanese female because she found Taiwanese society's emphasis on conformity and women's submission oppressive and against her independent nature. After she decided to disassociate herself from Taiwanese culture and to discover her true self, Rou-Yi has been actively seeking opportunities to interact with people from Western cultures and has had a great interest in intercultural dating. Rou-Yi states that she feels more comfortable socializing with people from Western cultures than interacting with Taiwanese. Before she met her current boyfriend, Rou-Yi had dated more than fifty men from Western countries, according to Rou-Yi.

Rou-Yi states that she and her boyfriend often engage in intercultural discussions. After Rou-Yi discovered her discontent with Taiwanese culture, she has tried to acquaint herself with Western cultural values and practices. Therefore, she enjoys exploring if she and her boyfriend approach a same issue with different perspectives and discussing if culture plays a role in shaping their viewpoints. Rou-Yi's boyfriend also appreciates intercultural discussion, because he is often confused by some of Taiwanese practices, such as the custom of giving betrothal gifts to the bride's family and the concept of filial piety. Because her boyfriend could only speak basic Mandarin Chinese, Rou-Yi and her boyfriend communicate in English. Rou-Yi states that she is satisfied with their linguistic choice, because she also desires more opportunities to practice her English.

According to Rou-Yi, she and her boyfriend have not yet had significant conflict in their relationship. Rou-Yi says that they only have some occasional disputes over daily trivia and that she can hardly remember the causes to their relational conflicts. However, Rou-Yi stresses that both she and her boyfriend approach conflicts through rational discussions. Rou-Yi says that they never resort to distributive or defensive tactics and that they do not force the other person to agree with his/her views. Rou-Yi and her boyfriend both try their best not to resolve a conflict issue with arguments. Interestingly, although Rou-Yi and her boyfriend often engage in intercultural discussions, Rou-Yi seldom attributes the cause of their relational conflicts to cultural differences, because she believes that one's will has more influence on his behaviors than his cultural upbringing.

When asked whether or not her involvement in this intercultural romantic relationship changes her cultural or national identification, Rou-Yi replies that, although she appreciates British culture a lot and she wishes to get more assimilated to British culture, she understands that she could not fully fit in. Rou-Yi comments that she still has ambivalent feelings toward Taiwanese society. On the one hand, she disagrees with many Taiwanese cultural values; on the other hand, she doesn't think that she could ever discard her Taiwanese identity. As for her boyfriend, Rou-Yi states that he did not come to Taiwan because he loves Taiwanese culture. Even though he is now in an intercultural romantic relationship with a female Taiwanese, he still does not identify with Taiwanese culture. Despite her cultural uncertainty and her boyfriend's lack of identification with her ethnic culture, Rou-Yi reflects that her current relationship is satisfying and that it facilitates her journey of self-discovery.

Participant 14: Cai-Wei

Cai-Wei is a 32-year-old female Taiwanese. Cai-Wei met her Italian fiancé two years ago when she was pursuing her master's degree in the U.K. The couple currently live together in the U.K., but they plan to move to either Italy or Taiwan after getting married. The couple primarily communicate in English.

Cai-Wei considers herself a typical Taiwanese. She says that she has internalized many Taiwanese cultural values, especially its patriarchal gender norms. Cai-Wei states that she tends to believe that, being a woman, it is her responsibility to take care of household chores even if her romantic partner does not require her to do those work. Cai-Wei also states that she used to feel uncomfortable interacting with

people from different countries and that she had never thought about dating interculturally before she met her fiancé.

Cai-Wei is attracted to her partner because he has a good sense of humor and a keen sense of responsibility. Cai-Wei attributes these characteristics to her fiancé's personality instead of his cultural upbringing. However, Cai-Wei notices that culture plays an important role in their relationship and that cultural differences sometimes result in relational conflicts. Cai-Wei recalls having experienced conflicts because of their different money attitudes, food preferences, attitudes toward drinking, awareness of environmental protection, and communication styles. Among these causes, different money attitudes and different communication styles are particularly challenging. Cai-Wei comments that she often worries about her fiancé's frivolous spending habits and that her fiancé is often troubled by her indirect communication style. Interestingly, Cai-Wei mentions that, in the beginning of their relationship, she tended to view personality differences as causes to these conflicts. It was not until she began to learn more about Italian culture that she realizes that cultural differences might play a role in their relational conflicts.

According to Cai-Wei, she and her fiancé used to approach conflict negotiation very differently. Cai-Wei's fiancé is inclined to explicitly express his discontent, point out Cai-Wei's mistakes, and to openly discuss conflict issues when the couple has some disagreements. As for Cai-Wei, she states that she used to resort to avoidance-related tactics during conflict negotiations at the beginning of their relationship. However, Cai-Wei's fiancé was dissatisfied with her avoiding conflict management style and insisted that she should be more expressive of her thoughts and

feelings. Cai-Wei then tries to accommodate her conflict style in accordance to her fiancé's expectations and she becomes appreciative of a more confrontational conflict style. She comments:

Gradually, I have become more capable of accepting my fiancé being blunt with his complaints of me. I now realize that he points out my mistakes for my own good . . . I used to hold all my feelings and opinions in myself. However, I now come to agree with my fiancé that it would be easier to work things out if both of us can be straightforward with our discontent.

Another conflict management tactic that Cai-Wei finds effective in managing relational conflict is attributing the causes of their conflicts to cultural differences. Cai-Wei notices that this tactic increases her willingness to be more accommodative. She explains,

If our conflicts are caused by cultural differences, it would be unreasonable of me to force him to change. Therefore, the only thing I can do is to make myself more tolerant and accommodating . . . This way of thinking also helps calm me down during conflicts.

Cai-Wei admits that many of her previously-held values and concepts have been changed over the course of the relationship and that she has become increasingly interested in learning more about Italian culture. Cai-Wei says that she has been actively taking Italian courses even though her fiancé doesn't ask her to get assimilated to Italian culture. Nevertheless, Cai-Wei comments that her Taiwanese identity is still precious to her in terms of her cultural and national identification. Cai-Wei also mentions that she would appreciate it if her fiancé can develop a greater

interest in learning Taiwanese culture after they enter the next stage of their relationship.

Participant 15: Zi-Yu

Zi-Yu is a 31-year-old female Taiwanese who is currently working as a translator in the U.S. Zi-Yu met her Peruvian-American husband six years ago when she was assigned to work in the U.S. Zi-Yu's husband was born in Peru and moved to the U.S. in his young adulthood. Zi-Yu's husband is a religious Christian and Yi-Zu is an atheist. The couple primarily communicate in English. However, Zi-Yu has been actively learning Spanish, because she would like to be able to communicate with her husband's family members. Zi-Yu's husband also expresses an interest in learning Mandarin Chinese so as to have better interaction with Zi-Yu's family. Yi-Zu comments that she is very appreciative of her husband's willingness to learn Mandarin Chinese. She believes that being able to communicate in each other's native language has a positive impact on their relationship quality.

Yi-Zu says that she is attracted to her husband because he is family-oriented and is optimistic. Yi-Zu believes that these characteristics are partially influenced by his cultural upbringing. However, cultural differences also cause many of their relational conflicts. Yi-Zu recalls having conflicts over divergent money attitudes, religious beliefs and practices, attitudes toward the LGBTQ community, senses of humor, concepts of time, food preferences. Yi-Zu states that, at the beginning of their relationship, they often had serious fights because of these cultural differences. However, as their relationship develops, the couple have realized that cultural differences are normal and inevitable. Yi-Zu explains that they now have fewer fights

over cultural differences and that they have learned to be adaptive to and tolerant of their differences.

According to Yi-Zu, she takes different conflict management approaches depending on the topic of their conflicts. Yi-Zu states that, among their relational conflicts, she finds her husband's reckless spending the most troublesome. Therefore, she insists that her husband adhere to her financial plan and she is not hesitant to use dominating tactics when they have an argument over financial matters. As for other conflicts, Yi-Zu says that she is more obliging and, in some situations, conflict-avoidant. Yi-Zu explains that she often tries to avoid discussing topics related to LGBTQ rights because she knows that her partner's religious background renders these topics controversial. Yi-Zu also mentions that she tries to accommodate to her husband's taste and to learn to appreciate her husband's jokes to reconcile their differences in food preferences and senses of humor. Yi-Zu explains that she does not mind making compromises as long as her principles and core values are not violated.

Yi-Zu states that understating the cultural roots of their relational conflict is an effective approach to managing their relational conflicts, especially conflicts arising from different spending habits and concepts of time. Attributing conflict to cultural differences increases Yi-Zu's tolerance of and her willingness to adjust to differences. Knowing the cultural roots of their conflicts also allows Zi-Yu to shift her focus from conflict resolution to conflict management:

We now understand that many of our differences are caused by our cultural upbringing, so we do not attempt to assimilate each other. What we can do is to make mutual adjustments so as to accommodate each other. If we cannot

reconcile our differences, we just keep our original ways of doing and we respect each other.

According to Yi-Zu, this mindset allows her and her husband to live with their differences and maintain a stable relationship despite these frictions.

Participant 16: Hui-Min

Hui-Min is a 28-year-old female Taiwanese. She is currently a housewife living with her Czech husband in Taiwan. Hui-Min met her Czech husband five years ago when they were pursuing their master's degrees in Taiwan. According to Hui-Min, her husband can speak fluent Chinese. The couple communicate partially in English and partially in Mandarin Chinese. Hui-Min says that her husband used to ask her to learn Czech; however, Hui-Min confesses that she does not feel motivated to pick up Czech. Gradually, Hui-Min's husband no longer gives her pressure to learn Czech language.

Hui-Min describes herself as a “rebellious” person who often presses her goals despite of others' opposition. In this respect, she considers individualistic values more in line with her personality than collectivistic values. Nevertheless, Hui-Min still identifies herself as a typical Taiwanese, and she appreciates many aspects of Taiwanese culture, especially its emphasis on hospitality and kindness. She also states that she has never felt alienated or not fitting in when interacting with other Taiwanese.

According to Hui-Min, she and her husband seldom discuss about cultural differences. In addition, Hui-Min believes that most of their relational conflicts are caused by personality differences, instead of cultural differences. Hui-Min states that

she is quick-tempered; therefore, she sometimes reads too much into and gets irritated by her husband's unintentional remarks. Hui-Min mentions that another major cause to their relational conflicts is her husband's insistence that Hui-Min should socialize with his friends. Hui-Min states that she does not feel comfortable hanging out with strangers, but her husband believes that integrating each other into their respective social networks is important to their relational quality. Hui-Min states that they still have arguments regarding their attitudes about couple social integration every now and then.

Hui-Min notices that she has a tendency to approach conflict with a competitive attitude and that she often resorts to dominating behaviors, such as demanding, rejecting her husband's viewpoints, and elevating her arguments and interests. Hui-Min attributes her conflict management style to her quick-tempered personality. Despite her reliance on dominating conflict management tactics, Hui-Min states that she is generally satisfied with their conflict management experiences and their relational quality. Hui-Min explains that she finds these tactics effective in expressing her viewpoints. Hui-Min also believes that her husband, because he was brought up in a more individualistic culture, accepts her confrontational conflict management behaviors and that he also enacts competing tactics in their conflict negotiation from time to time. According to Hui-Min, their conflicts do not negatively influence their relationship because they seldom take each other's complaints or criticisms as personal attacks. This mindset helps them view their conflicts and each other's conflict behaviors in a positive light.

Participant 17: Jia-Yan

Jia-Yan is a 28-year-old female Taiwanese and is currently an Egyptian language center student. Jia-Yan met her Egyptian fiancé about half a year ago when she was traveling to Egypt. Her fiancé was her tour guide at that time. According to Jia-Yan, her fiancé is a devoted Muslim and can speak basic Mandarin Chinese. The couple began dating when Jia-Yan went back to Taiwan from her trip to Egypt. However, Jia-Yan got dissatisfied with their long-distance relationship status; therefore, she decided to move to Egypt to get closer to her partner and to evaluate if she could get adjusted to Egyptian culture. Although Jia-Yan has been actively learning Egyptian, the couple mostly communicate in Mandarin Chinese. Jia-Yan states that, although her fiancé would love to see her making improvement to her Egyptian ability, he has never pressured her to speak in Egyptian. The couple got engaged in March, 2015, and they plan to get married in August, 2015.

Jia-Yan states that she and her fiancé have encountered many cultural differences, including differences in their religious beliefs, gender role ideologies, and relational rules. These cultural differences have led to their relational conflicts. Jia-Yan explains that, although she could understand that her fiancé internalizes conservative gender ideologies because he was brought up in a patriarchal Muslim community, equality and freedom are important values to her; therefore, she gets discontented when her fiancé asks her to follow conservative gender rules. Jia-Yan recalls having arguments with her fiancé when he said that she should not have a career after they get married and when he asked her not to go outside without his company. In addition to divergent gender role ideologies, inconsistent relational rules are also one major cause to their relational conflicts. Jia-Yan states that the Muslim

community has strict dating rules. Under the Muslim faith, single men and women can't see each other without a chaperon present. However, being able to have private contact is one of the normative dating rules in Taiwan. Jia-Yan finds Muslim dating rules disagreeable.

According to Jia-Yan, she rarely uses dominating strategies in their conflict negotiations because many of their conflicts are caused by cultural differences. Jia-Yan explains that, although she does not agree with many of Muslim doctrines, it is unreasonable to force her fiancé to change his cultural practices and internalized beliefs. Instead, she primarily manages their relational conflicts with avoiding- and compromising-oriented tactics. Jia-Yan resorts to topic avoidance (a) when she sees that these topics are potential taboos in the Muslim society and (b) if accepting these cultural differences would not violate her core values. For instance, Jia-Yan says that she avoids bringing up conversations pertaining to homosexuality or same-sex marriage. For cultural differences that challenge each other's principles, Jia-Yan states that she and her fiancé usually make mutual concessions. Jia-Yan notices that compromising-related strategies are most often used when they are negotiating conflicts arising from differences in gender role ideologies. For example, Jia-Yan recalls having continuing discussions about how to balance her need for autonomy and her fiancé's patriarchal beliefs:

Though I could not completely accept his gender conservatism, I know where it is from. And, understanding that I am a foreigner and not a Muslim, he is more patient and tolerant . . . We are still negotiating. I try to make him understand that I need him to respect my autonomy, but I would also do my

best not crossing his limits. For example, I will take his advice and try not to stay outside too late at night, as long as he does not prohibit me from hanging out with my friends.

According to Jia-Yan, being able to recognize the cultural root of their relational conflicts greatly increases her and her fiancé's willingness to make mutual accommodation. Jia-Yan concludes her interview saying, "I understand that there are many cultural differences to be resolved and that many of them may never be resolved. However, I have confidence in our relationship if we respect and learn to appreciate each other's culture."

Participant 18: Xiao-Yin

Xiao-Yin is a 27-year-old female Taiwanese who currently works as a full-time business specialist in Taiwan. Xiao-Yin met her French-Canadian boyfriend 10 months ago when she participated in a work and travel program in Canada. Xiao-Yin's boyfriend is a 30-year-old white French-Canadian living in a French-speaking city in Canada. The couple have been in a long-distance relationship for 10 months. Xiao-Yin states she plans to move to Canada in the future; therefore, she has been actively learning French. According to Xiao-Yin, both she and her boyfriend have expressed a desire to have each other learn their native languages. However, her boyfriend has not yet taken any action to learn Mandarin Chinese. Xiao-Yin comments that she finds her boyfriend's lack of motivation to learn Chinese understandable, given that Chinese is of little practical use in the place he lives. The couple communicate primarily in English.

Xiao-Yin states that her boyfriend has little interest in and knowledge of Asian culture and that he seldom initiates discussions about cultural-related topics. On the contrary, Xiao-Yin is interested in exploring cultural differences between them, and Xiao-Yin also wishes to make her boyfriend more familiar with Taiwanese cultural customs, values, and rules. Xiao-Yin notices that her boyfriend has limited intercultural competency and that he sometimes makes culturally- and racially-insensitive remarks. Her boyfriend's racist remarks at times lead to their relational conflicts. For instance, Xiao-Yin recalls feeling bothered upon hearing her boyfriend joking with his friends about the Asian-mail-order-bride stereotype:

He once told me some ingroup jokes he made with his friends. Because he was from a small town which was primarily resided by White people, his friends were curious about how come he could find an Asian girlfriend. And he replied saying that he met me via some mail-order-brides websites. He told me that they were just kidding and that it should not be taken too seriously. I was not sure if I find it funny, but I certainly felt very uncomfortable.

Besides her boyfriend's cultural insensitivity, their incongruent conceptualizations of appropriate boundaries with opposite-sex friends and their different orientations toward the autonomy-connection dialectics are other common causes to their relational conflicts. Xiao-Yin confesses that she is very bothered by the fact that some of her boyfriend's female friends stay at his place frequently, but her boyfriend insists that he is just helping his friends out and refuses to change how he handles his opposite-sex friendships. Xiao-Yin also states that she has ongoing conflicts with her boyfriend because of their respective emphasis on intimacy versus

autonomy, “I really wanted us to spend more time together, but I knew this would make him really uncomfortable. And he made it clear that he would never want to sacrifice what he called his autonomy.”

Xiao-Yin reveals that she typically manages relational conflicts either by suppressing her discontent or by giving in to her partner. Xiao-Yin explains that, although her boyfriend’s occasional racist remarks make her uncomfortable, she tries to minimize the seriousness of these offenses to avoid verbal arguments. As for conflicts related to their incongruent relational rules, Xiao-Yin notices that she gives in more because her boyfriend refuses to make any accommodation. Xiao-Yin confesses that she feels disturbed while enacting these compliance-related tactics, because it makes her realize that their relational structure is unbalanced. However, she believes that being obliging is her best choice if she wants to maintain this relationship. Because long-distance dating involves high level of relational uncertainty, Xiao-Yin states that she would probably not change her conflict management tactics as long as they are still in a long-distance relationship.

When asked whether her current intercultural relationship changes her cultural identification, Xiao-Yin replies that she has not noticed any significant changes to her cultural identity. Xiao-Yin explains that the physical distance between them limits the breadth and depth of their intercultural exchanges, which may be a reason why her cultural identification stays the same throughout the course of this relationship.

Participant 19: Shu-Wei

Shu-Wei is a 32-year-old male Taiwanese who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the U.S. Shu-Wei met his Australian fiancée in 2012 when they

participated in a seminar held in China. The couple got engaged about half a year ago. According to Shu-Wei, his fiancée is also a Ph.D. student with a specialization in Chinese Studies. Shu-Wei thinks that his fiancée is not a typical Australian, because she has internalized some of Chinese cultural values, such as an emphasis on family, interpersonal harmony, as well as the quality of being restrained and reversed. The couple mostly communicate in English, and sometimes in Mandarin Chinese. However, Shu-Wei reveals that his fiancée is actually more in favor of increasing the use of Mandarin Chinese in their communication.

Because Shu-Wei and his fiancée are both very appreciative of the concept of multiculturalism, they have often engaged in intercultural discussions and intercultural exchange throughout their relationship. Shu-Wei states that he and his fiancée are particularly interested in exploring cultural differences in terms of attitudes toward child discipline, educational practices, the concepts of family and familial duty, as well as differences in lifestyles and living habits. Shu-Wei says that his fiancée is very interested in Taiwanese culture and has often asked Shu-Wei to recommend her some Taiwanese novels and TV shows. Shu-Wei confesses that he did not know much about Australian culture before he and his fiancée started dating; hence, he decided to focus his doctoral research on Australia's immigration policy, and he moved to Australia for one year to collect research data and to make himself more familiar with Australian culture. Shu-Wei believes that intercultural discussions help them become more intimate:

I sometimes feel that our relationship develops because we engage in intercultural discussion. When we just began dating, we did not have many

earnest discussions about our beliefs or core values. We did not share too much serious personal stuff. We talked about cultural stuff, because these topics were safer and less serious. However, through these discussions, we got a deeper understanding of each other's worldviews, values, and personalities.

And our conversations got more and more intimate afterward.

Nevertheless, despite ongoing intercultural discussions, Shu-Wei comments that they still experience cultural-related conflicts. Shu-Wei states that he and his fiancée still have conflicts over their inconsistent emotional expression styles. Shu-Wei reveals that he is rather restrained in expressing emotions, negative emotions in particular, but his fiancée insists that he should share his emotions with her honestly, or else she would feel confused and hurt. Shu-Wei relates his emotional expression style to Taiwanese culture's emphasis on emotional moderation and emotional suppression and his fiancée's insistence on emotional expressiveness to Western cultural value of honesty. Shu-Wei states that he has been trying his best to be more emotionally expressive so as to resolve this conflict. Shu-Wei also recalls having cultural-related conflicts over divergent attitudes toward money and different conceptualizations of social boundaries.

As far as Shu-Wei is concerned, most of their recent conflicts are not related to cultural differences. Instead, uncertainties about future plans and personality differences are more common causes to their recent relational conflicts. Shu-Wei explains that, as conversational topics change when the relationship develops, relational problems alter along with the stage of the relationship, as well. Shu-Wei states that, because cultural differences are more easily noticeable and more

comfortable pointing out, most cultural-related conflicts arose and have been reconciled at the earlier stage of their relationship. Therefore, personality differences, practical problems, mundane arguments are most common areas of their relational conflicts now.

According to Shu-Wei, both he and his fiancée are willing to make accommodations and concessions to resolve their conflicts. However, Shu-Wei states that it is important to keep in mind of each other's principles when negotiating what adjustments should be made to manage a conflict problem:

We all have some principles and bottom lines. I will make clear what I insist on no matter what. I will also let her know what areas I am pretty open to learn, to accommodate, and to give in. I also tell her that I respect her principles as well and that I would never force her to change her rules to please me.

As for conflict issues that are irreconcilable, Shu-Wei and his fiancée agree to live with and look beyond their difference:

We agree that we could not solve or ignore these differences, so we accept this fact and rethink our different viewpoints as complementary. Although these differences are still there, an agreement to look past them transforms us from two fighting individuals to a couple again.

Generally speaking, Shu-Wei is satisfied with past conflict management experiences and the current relationship. Shu-Wei comments that these conflict management tactics work for them because both he and his fiancée respect each other's culture as well as individual differences.

When asked if his engagement in an intercultural romantic relationship influences his cultural identification, Shu-Wei responds that he is still proud of his Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese culture. However, Shu-Wei notices that he is now more aware of and critical of Taiwanese bad customs, such as the tendency of self-abasement, because of increased intercultural exchange.

Participant 20: Zhi-Xiao

Zhi-Xiao is a 24-year-old female Taiwanese. Zhi-Xiao met her German boyfriend two and a half years ago when they were both pursuing their master's degrees in France. After they finished their postgraduate education in France, they both went back to their own countries. The couple have been in a long-distance relationship for two months. According to Zhi-Xiao, she and her boyfriend primarily communicate in English because they cannot speak each other's native language. Zhi-Xiao states that both she and her boyfriend have been actively learning each other's native language after they went back to their home countries. Zhi-Xiao comments that demonstrating one's willingness to learn and respect the other party's culture is a necessary step to building a successful intercultural relationship.

Zhi-Xiao considers herself a typical Taiwanese. Zhi-Xiao states that she agrees with and has internalized many Taiwanese cultural values. Zhi-Xiao says that she emphasizes interpersonal harmony, follows orders and authorities, and tries to think from other's perspectives. Zhi-Xiao also mentions that she had little intercultural experience before she went to France to pursue her master's degree and that she had never thought about dating interculturally before she met her boyfriend.

According to Zhi-Xiao, both she and her boyfriend had little knowledge of each other's culture when they started dating. Therefore, they had experienced many cultural shocks, and some of these cultural differences did give rise to relational conflicts. For example, Zhi-Xiao recalls that, because drinking and smoking are two stigmatized activities in Taiwan, she used to feel bothered seeing her boyfriend drink or smoke too much. After hearing her complaints, Zhi-Xiao's boyfriend explained to her that drinking and smoking are normal and important socializing activities among German. After they shared how these two activities were perceived in their respective countries, Zhi-Xiao and her boyfriend made mutual concessions; Zhi-Xiao decided not to force her boyfriend to quit smoking and drinking, and her boyfriend promised that he would not smoke or drink when he is with Zhi-Xiao. Zhi-Xiao also recalls having ongoing conflicts over their communication styles. Zhi-Xiao states that her boyfriend doesn't feel hesitant to make direct and harsh comments when she makes some mistakes, which often hurts her feelings. Zhi-Xiao states that she understands that different cultures prefer different communication styles, but she needs time to make herself more accustomed to her boyfriend's directness. Zhi-Xiao says that, although her boyfriend still does not fully understand why "his kind suggestions" might hurt her feelings, her boyfriend has been making efforts to use gentler words when they have difficult conversations. In addition to divergent communication styles and different attitudes toward drinking and smoking, Zhi-Xiao states that they also encounter conflicts about different needs of autonomy versus connectedness, inconsistent preferences of leisure activities, and daily trivia.

Zhi-Xiao notices that understanding the cultural roots of some of their relational conflicts and making mutual compromises are two major conflict management strategies that she and her boyfriend resort to. Zhi-Xiao comments that these two strategies may not really resolve their conflicts; however, enacting these strategies demonstrates that they respect each other's cultural as well as their individual differences. Therefore, although these strategies may not lead to immediate conflict resolution, it cultivates a positive relational culture, which could facilitate future conflict negotiations. As Zhi-Xiao explains, "I don't think our problems are unresolvable. We will find our balance as long as we both are willing to give in a bit."

When asked if her current intercultural relationship influences her cultural identification, Zhi-Xiao replies that she and her boyfriend are just at the beginning stage of intercultural exploration. Zhi-Xiao believes that Germany has a rich culture and she barely explores even the surface elements of German culture. Therefore, she does not think that her cultural identity has gone through significant changes. Nevertheless, Zhi-Xiao states that she is very interested in seeing how much she might change and grow from this intercultural relationship.

Appendix F: Tables and Figures

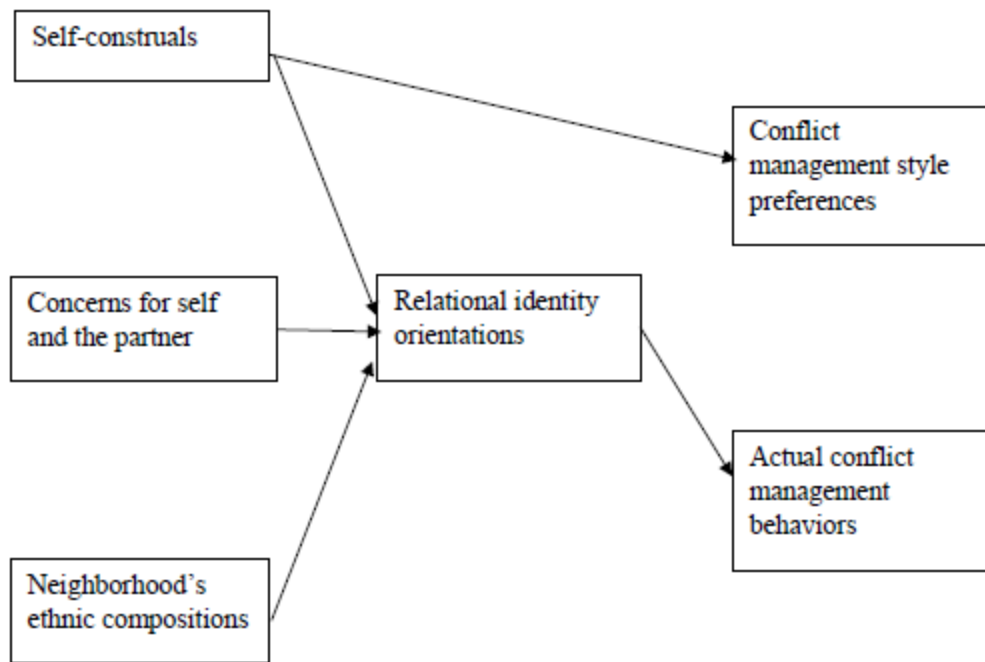


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model for the associations among self-construals, concerns for self and the partner, immediate neighborhood compositions, relational identity orientations, conflict style preferences and actual conflict management behaviors.

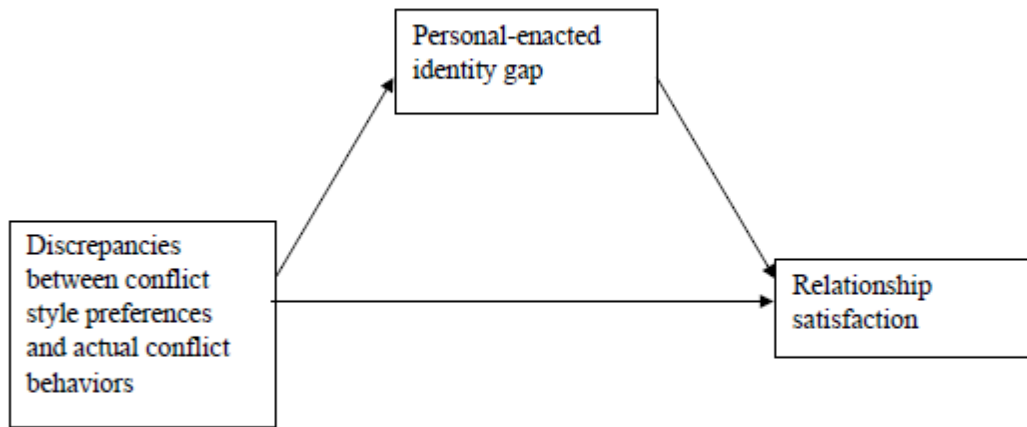


Figure 2. Proposed relationships among conflict style discrepancies, the personal-enacted identity gap, and relationship satisfaction.

Table 1

Study 2 Pilot Study Partners' Nationalities as Indicated by Respondent

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Australia	9	3.6
Austria	1	0.4
Belgium	1	0.4
Brazil	1	0.4
Canada	14	5.5
Denmark	1	0.4
Finland	1	0.4
France	4	1.6
Gambia	1	0.4
Germany	9	3.6
Greece	2	0.8
Guatemala	1	0.4
Honduras	1	0.4
Hong Kong	5	2
Hungary	1	0.4
India	5	2
Iran	1	0.4
Ireland	2	0.8
Italy	5	2
Japan	8	3.2
Lebanon	1	0.4
Lithuania	1	0.4
Malaysia	5	2
Mexico	2	0.8
Nepal	3	1.2
Netherland	1	0.4
New Zealand	3	1.2
Norway	1	0.4
Philippines	1	0.4
Poland	1	0.4
Portugal	1	0.4
Saudi Arabia	1	0.4
Singapore	1	0.4
South Korea	4	1.6
Spain	1	0.4
Switzerland	1	0.4
Thailand	3	1.2
Tunisia	1	0.4
Turkey	1	0.4
UK	9	3.6

Ukraine	1	2.4
USA	132	52.2
Vietnam	1	0.4
Information not provided	5	2

Table 2

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to Items on the Integration Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
1. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, both my partner and I should try to adapt to each other's culture.	.64	.58
2. It is important to me that both my partner and I can show respect to the cultural values held by each other.	.55	.51
3. It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to learn each other's native language, regardless our language ability.	.62	.58
4. I hope that, one day, when my partner and I are communicating, we can have a balanced use of each other's native language.	.57	.55
5. I hope that, when my partner and I are spending our time together, we can consume media from each other's culture to an equal degree.	.55	.49
6. When my partner and I are having meals together, I hope we can both be willing to have food from each other's culture.	.40	.34
7. It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to hang out together with friends from each other's cultural group.	.63	.57
8. I feel that we should celebrate each other's cultural holidays together to an equal degree.	.58	.52
9. If we encounter any cultural differences, I think both my partner and I should make mutual adjustment to negotiate these differences.	.62	.57
10. I prefer to integrate both my partner's and my cultural beliefs or practices to structure our relational life.	.59	.52
11. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area that is widely resided by members from both my and my partner's cultural groups.	.53	.46
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 570.9; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.83	

Table 3

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to

Items on the Assimilation Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
12. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to adapt to my partner's culture than to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving.	.60	.54
13. It is more important for me to adopt my partner's cultural values than to have my partner accept my cultural values.	.60	.57
14. It is more important for me to be fluent in my partner's language than to have my partner be fluent in my native language.	.66	.60
15. I am willing to have most of our communication spoken in my partner's native language.	.51	.45
16. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I feel fine if we consume more media from my partner's culture than media from my culture.	.60	.59
17. When my partner and I are having meals together, I am more willing to have food from my partner's culture than to persuade my partner's to try food from my own culture.	.54	.48
18. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I am fine if most of the friends we hang out with are from my partner's cultural group.	.44	.38
19. I feel fine if we celebrate my partner's cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my cultural holidays.	.55	.49
20. If we encounter any cultural differences, I am willing to adjust myself to my partner's culture to minimize these differences.	.54	.48
21. I prefer to structure our relational life based on my partner's cultural beliefs or practices.	.58	.51
22. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I am willing to live in an area that is primarily resided by members from my partner's cultural group.	.45	.37
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$X^2 = 546.3; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.82	

Table 4

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to Items on the Separation Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
23. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adapt to my partner's culture.	.73	.69
24. I think it is more important for me to maintain my cultural values than to adopt my partner's cultural values.	.59	.54
25. I think it is more important to have my partner become fluent in my native language than to have myself become fluent in my partner's native language.	.66	.61
26. I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in my native language.	.65	.60
27. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture.	.72	.68
28. When my partner and I are having meals together, I prefer to have food from my culture than to try food from my partner's culture.	.53	.47
29. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with are from my cultural group.	.68	.64
30. I prefer if we can celebrate my cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my partner cultural holidays.	.67	.63
31. If we encounter any cultural differences, I am more willing to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adjust myself to my partner's culture.	.59	.54
32. I prefer to structure our relational life based on my own cultural beliefs or practices.	.74	.71
33. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area that is primarily resided by members from my own cultural group.	.64	.59
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 881.8; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.91	

Table 5

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to Items on the Marginalization Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
34. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is not important for me either to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving or to adapt to my partner's culture.	.62	.58
35. I think it is not important for me either to maintain my cultural values or to adopt my partner's cultural values.	.56	.53
36. I think it is not important to me if neither my partner nor I can speak each other's native language fluently.	.59	.54
37. I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in a language that is neither my partner's nor my native language.	.50	.50
38. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media that are not from either my partner's or my own culture.	.30	.22
39. When my partner and I are having meals together, I prefer to have food that is not from either my partner's or my own culture.	.27	.21
40. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with do not belong to either my or my partner's cultural group.	.52	.45
41. It is not important to me to celebrate either my or my partner's cultural holidays together.	.43	.33
42. If we encounter any cultural differences, I prefer not to adhere to either my or my partner's culture.	.41	.31
43. I prefer not to structure our relational life based on either my own or my partners' cultural beliefs or practices.	.61	.49
44. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area in which most residents are not from either my or my partner's cultural group.	.43	.36
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$X^2 = 380.7; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.70	

Table 6

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to Items on the Concern for Self Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
1. I am concerned with having my expectations met within the relationship.	.80	.76
2. It is important to me that my partner can fulfill my needs.	.83	.81
3. One of my primary concerns within the relationship is my personal well-being.	.58	.52
4. My happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship.	.62	.55
5. It is important for me to get outcomes I desire.	.85	.83
6. I would be disappointed if I cannot get outcomes that I want.	.81	.78
7. It would distress me if my desires are not satisfied.	.83	.81
8. I would feel unsatisfied if my partner cannot fulfill my expectations.	.78	.74
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 1099.2; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.91	

Table 7

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings for Unrotated Factor Matrix from Responses to Items on the Concern for the Partner Subscale

Items	Item loadings on PC1	
	PCA	PAF
9. I am concerned with meeting my partner's expectations.	.81	.78
10. It is important to me to fulfill my partner's needs.	.83	.80
11. One of my primary concerns within the relationship is my partner's well-being.	.72	.67
12. My partner's happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship.	.71	.65
13. It is important for me that my partner can get outcomes he/she desires.	.87	.85
14. I would be disappointed if my partner cannot get outcomes that he/she wants.	.82	.79
15. It would distress me if my partner's desires are not satisfied.	.83	.80
16. I would feel unsatisfied if I cannot fulfill my partner's expectations.	.83	.81
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 1298.9; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.92	

Table 8

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings from the Rotated Factor Structure Matrix for the Relational Identity Orientation Scale: PCA with Varimax Rotation

Items	Factor Loadings			
	1	2	3	4
Integration				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, both my partner and I should try to adapt to each other's culture.	.01	.66	.03	.03
• It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to learn each other's native language, regardless our language ability.	.24	.65	-.11	-.06
• I hope that, one day, when my partner and I are communicating, we can have a balanced use of each other's native language.	.32	.60	-.11	.02
• It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to hang out together with friends from each other's cultural group.	-.12	.59	-.03	-.05
• I feel that we should celebrate each other's cultural holidays together to an equal degree.	.17	.56	-.10	-.04
• If we encounter any cultural differences, I think both my partner and I should make mutual adjustment to negotiate these differences.	-.26	.61	-.03	-.01
• I prefer to integrate both my partner's and my cultural beliefs or practices to structure our relational life.	-.17	.63	.19	-.04
Assimilation				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to adapt to my partner's culture than to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving.	.16	.15	.63	.25
• It is more important for me to adopt my partner's cultural values than to have my partner accept my cultural values.	.29	.07	.62	.17
• It is more important for me to be fluent in my partner's language than to have my partner be fluent in my native language.	-.05	-.07	.73	-.16
• When my partner and I are spending our time together, I feel fine if we consume more media from my partner's culture than media from my culture.	-.19	-.08	.60	-.25
• I feel fine if we celebrate my partner's cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my cultural holidays.	-.20	-.11	.56	.10

• I prefer to structure our relational life based on my partner's cultural beliefs or practices.	.17	-.05	.62	.11
Separation				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adapt to my partner's culture.	.67	-.02	-.05	-.16
• I think it is more important to have my partner become fluent in my native language than to have myself become fluent in my partner's native language.	.72	.14	-.02	.13
• When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture.	.75	-.01	-.08	-.10
• When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with are from my cultural group.	.70	-.03	.06	-.12
• I prefer if we can celebrate my cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my partner cultural holidays.	.68	.04	.15	.01
• I prefer to structure our relational life based on my own cultural beliefs or practices.	.76	-.10	.05	-.10
Marginalization				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is not important for me either to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving or to adapt to my partner's culture.	-.06	-.35	.06	.49
• I think it is not important for me either to maintain my cultural values or to adopt my partner's cultural values.	.13	-.33	-.16	.46
• I think it is not important to me if neither my partner nor I can speak each other's native language fluently.	-.13	-.18	.08	.68
• I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in a language that is neither my partner's nor my native language.	-.14	.04	-.01	.60
• When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with do not belong to either my or my partner's cultural group.	.11	.04	.14	.55
• I prefer not to structure our relational life based on either my own or my partners' cultural beliefs or practices.	-.17	.12	-.01	.58
Extracted sum of squares loadings (% variance)	14. 7	12. 6	10. 1	8.8
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$X^2 = 1680.1; p < .001$			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.77			

Table 9

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings from the Rotated Factor Structure Matrix for the Relational Identity Orientation Scale: PAF with Varimax Rotation

Items	Factor Loadings			
	1	2	3	4
Integration				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, both my partner and I should try to adapt to each other's culture.	.01	.58	.02	.01
• It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to learn each other's native language, regardless our language ability.	.22	.59	-.10	-.07
• I hope that, one day, when my partner and I are communicating, we can have a balanced use of each other's native language.	.29	.55	-.10	.01
• It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to hang out together with friends from each other's cultural group.	-.10	.51	-.03	-.05
• I feel that we should celebrate each other's cultural holidays together to an equal degree.	.15	.48	-.09	-.05
• If we encounter any cultural differences, I think both my partner and I should make mutual adjustment to negotiate these differences.	-.23	.55	-.03	-.01
• I prefer to integrate both my partner's and my cultural beliefs or practices to structure our relational life.	-.14	.60	.16	-.04
Assimilation				
• I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to adapt to my partner's culture than to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving.	.15	.14	.56	.23
• It is more important for me to adopt my partner's cultural values than to have my partner accept my cultural values.	.27	.06	.55	.16
• It is more important for me to be fluent in my partner's language than to have my partner be fluent in my native language.	-.04	-.06	.67	-.14
• When my partner and I are spending our time together, I feel fine if we consume more media from my partner's culture than media from my culture.	-.16	-.07	.50	-.19
• I feel fine if we celebrate my partner's cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my cultural holidays.	-.17	-.10	.45	.10

- I prefer to structure our relational life based on my partner's cultural beliefs or practices. .15 -.05 **.52** .10

Separation

- I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adapt to my partner's culture. **.61** -.01 -.05 -.15
- I think it is more important to have my partner become fluent in my native language than to have myself become fluent in my partner's native language. **.67** .13 -.02 .12
- When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture. **.71** -.01 -.07 -.10
- When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with are from my cultural group. **.64** -.02 .06 -.12
- I prefer if we can celebrate my cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my partner cultural holidays. **.62** .04 .13 .01
- I prefer to structure our relational life based on my own cultural beliefs or practices. **.72** -.10 .05 -.10

Marginalization

- I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is not important for me either to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving or to adapt to my partner's culture. -.06 -.31 .06 **.43**
- I think it is not important for me either to maintain my cultural values or to adopt my partner's cultural values. .11 -.29 -.13 **.40**
- I think it is not important to me if neither my partner nor I can speak each other's native language fluently. -.12 -.18 .07 **.61**
- I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in a language that is neither my partner's nor my native language. -.13 .01 -.01 **.47**
- When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with do not belong to either my or my partner's cultural group. .09 .01 .12 **.41**
- I prefer not to structure our relational life based on either my own or my partners' cultural beliefs or practices. -.15 -.01 .01 **.44**

Extracted sum of squares loadings (% variance)	12.7	10	7.6	6.1
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$X^2 = 1680.1; p < .001$			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.77			

Table 10

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings from the Rotated Factor Pattern Matrix for the Concerns for Self and the Partner Scale: PCA with Oblimin Rotation

Items	Factor Loadings	
	1	2
Concern for Self		
• I am concerned with having my expectations met within the relationship.	-.11	.87
• It is important to me that my partner can fulfill my needs.	.09	.79
• It is important for me to get outcomes I desire.	.02	.83
• I would be disappointed if I cannot get outcomes that I want.	.21	.72
• It would distress me if my desires are not satisfied.	.08	.80
• I would feel unsatisfied if my partner cannot fulfill my expectations.	.13	.75
Concern for the Partner		
• I am concerned meeting my partner's expectations.	.83	-.01
• It is important to me to fulfill my partner's needs.	.82	.03
• It is important for me that my partner can get outcomes he/she desires.	.89	-.03
• I would be disappointed if my partner cannot get outcomes that he/she wants.	.81	.08
• It would distress me if my partner's desires are not satisfied.	.75	.17
• I would feel unsatisfied if I cannot fulfill my partner's expectations.	.78	.11
Extracted sum of squares loadings (% variance)	55.6	14.8
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 2128.4; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.91	

Table 11

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Loadings from the Rotated Factor Pattern Matrix for the Concerns for Self and the Partner Scale: PAF with Oblimin Rotation

Items	Factor Loadings	
	1	2
Concern for Self		
• I am concerned with having my expectations met within the relationship.	-.06	.78
• It is important to me that my partner can fulfill my needs.	.11	.75
• It is important for me to get outcomes I desire.	.04	.78
• I would be disappointed if I cannot get outcomes that I want.	.21	.69
• It would distress me if my desires are not satisfied.	.09	.77
• I would feel unsatisfied if my partner cannot fulfill my expectations.	.14	.70
Concern for the Partner		
• I am concerned meeting my partner's expectations.	.77	.02
• It is important to me to fulfill my partner's needs.	.76	.06
• It is important for me that my partner can get outcomes he/she desires.	.85	-.02
• I would be disappointed if my partner cannot get outcomes that he/she wants.	.77	.09
• It would distress me if my partner's desires are not satisfied.	.71	.18
• I would feel unsatisfied if I cannot fulfill my partner's expectations.	.74	.13
Extracted sum of squares loadings (% variance)	52.7	11.8
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 2128.4; p < .001$	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.91	

Table 12

Study 2 Pilot Study Factor Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Revell's omega total	GLB
Relational identity orientation scale					
• Integration	7.54	1.13	.73	.79	.79
• Assimilation	5.43	1.39	.71	.80	.79
• Separation	3.63	1.41	.82	.85	.84
• Marginalization	4.66	1.53	.65	.77	.74
Concern for self and the partner scale					
• Concern for self (6 items)	7.33	1.34	.91	.94	.92
• Concern for the partner (6 items)	7.35	1.36	.92	.94	.95
• Concern for self (4 items)	7.45	1.30	.87	.89	.89
• Concern for the partner (4 items)	7.51	1.33	.89	.89	.90

Table 13

Study 2 Main Study Partners' Nationalities as Indicated by Respondents

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Australia	27	6.6
Belgium	8	1.9
Canada	12	2.9
Czech Republic	3	0.7
Denmark	1	0.2
Estonia	1	0.2
Finland	1	0.2
France	28	6.8
Germany	56	13.6
Greece	2	0.5
Hungary	5	1.2
Ireland	5	1.2
Israel	2	0.5
Italy	15	3.6
Lithuania	2	0.5
Netherland	13	3.2
New Zealand	6	1.5
Norway	3	0.7
Poland	17	4.1
Romania	1	0.2
Russia	3	0.7
Slovakia	2	0.5
Slovenia	2	0.5
South Africa	2	0.5
Spain	14	3.4
Sweden	4	1
Switzerland	4	1
Turkey	2	0.5
UK	20	4.7
USA	141	34.2
Information not provided	10	2.4

Table 14

Study 2 Main Study Variable Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>M^a</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness ^b	Kurtosis ^c
Independent self-construal	7.04	1.01	-0.64(0.12)	0.52(0.24)
Interdependent self-construal	6.66	1.00	-0.27(0.12)	0.34(0.24)
Concern for self	7.27	1.36	-1.04(0.12)	1.27(0.24)
Concern for the partner	7.33	1.42	-1.01(0.12)	1.25(0.24)
Relational identity orientation: integration	7.54	1.03	-0.78(0.12)	0.55(0.24)
Relational identity orientation: assimilation	5.36	1.45	-0.33(0.12)	0.06(0.24)
Relational identity orientation: separation	3.61	1.29	0.16(0.12)	-0.34(0.24)
Relational identity orientation: marginalization	4.87	1.35	0.05(0.12)	-0.37(0.24)
Actual conflict management behaviors: integrating	7.58	1.23	-0.81(0.12)	0.15(0.24)
Actual conflict management behaviors: obliging	5.05	1.55	-0.05(0.12)	-0.21(0.24)
Actual conflict management behaviors: dominating	5.33	1.64	-0.14(0.12)	-0.37(0.24)
Actual conflict management behaviors: avoiding	4.16	1.79	0.25(0.12)	-0.61(0.24)
Actual conflict management behaviors: compromising	7.01	1.34	-0.50(0.12)	-0.05(0.24)
Conflict management style preference: integrating	7.67	1.20	-0.95(0.12)	0.82(0.24)
Conflict management style preference: obliging	4.08	1.61	0.33(0.12)	-0.18(0.24)
Conflict management style preference: dominating	4.87	1.72	0.09(0.12)	-0.44(0.24)
Conflict management style preference: avoiding	3.81	1.62	0.37(0.12)	-0.36(0.24)
Conflict management style preference: compromising	7.14	1.32	-0.49(0.12)	-0.31(0.24)
Personal-enacted identity gap	2.17	1.34	1.31(0.12)	1.20(0.24)
Relationship satisfaction	7.14	1.50	-1.18(0.12)	1.28(0.24)
Gender role ideology	2.49	1.61	1.16(0.12)	0.91(0.24)

Conflict management discrepancy: integrating	0.64	0.69	1.75(0.12)	3.95(0.24)
Conflict management discrepancy: obliging	1.32	1.10	1.52(0.12)	3.00(0.24)
Conflict management discrepancy: dominating	1.03	0.85	1.41(0.12)	2.89(0.24)
Conflict management discrepancy: avoiding	0.98	0.91	1.60(0.12)	3.29(0.24)
Conflict management discrepancy: compromising	0.85	0.85	1.65(0.12)	3.22(0.24)
Neighborhood composition: Taiwanese/Chinese	3.82	3.62	0.89(0.12)	-0.97(0.24)
Neighborhood composition: Partner's cultural group	5.52	3.72	-0.11(0.12)	-1.73(0.24)
Relationship length	53.53	54.25	2.15(0.12)	6.00(0.24)

Notes.

^a Except for conflict management discrepancy scores, neighborhood composition variables, and relationship length, all variables were measured on a 9-point scale.

^b Standard deviations are included in the parenthesis

^c Standard deviations are included in the parenthesis

Table 15

Study 2 Main Study Scale Reliability Coefficients

Variable	α	Revell's omega total	GLB
Independent self-construal	.71	.77	.77
Interdependent self-construal	.73	.74	.74
Concern for self	.86	.88	.87
Concern for the partner	.92	.93	.93
Relational identity orientation: integration	.70	.78	.77
Relational identity orientation: assimilation	.74	.80	.78
Relational identity orientation: separation	.77	.87	.81
Relational identity orientation: marginalization	.67	.74	.71
Actual conflict management behaviors: integrating	.84	.87	.87
Actual conflict management behaviors: obliging	.80	.82	.81
Actual conflict management behaviors: dominating	.80	.83	.83
Actual conflict management behaviors: avoiding	.79	.83	.84
Actual conflict management behaviors: compromising	.78	.81	.81
Conflict management style preference: integrating	.88	.89	.90
Conflict management style preference: obliging	.84	.86	.86
Conflict management style preference: dominating	.85	.87	.87
Conflict management style preference: avoiding	.77	.83	.83
Conflict management style preference: compromising	.80	.83	.83
Personal-enacted identity gap	.86	.92	.91
Relationship satisfaction	.89	.93	.91
Gender role ideology	.83	.86	.87

[illegible]

Variable	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Independent self-construal	.15**	.20***	-.09	.16**	-.15**	.17***	-.13*	.00	-.14**	.00	-.02	-.05
2. Interdependent self-construal	.17***	.03	.18***	-.02	.16**	.04	-.05	.07	.22***	-.06	.07	.12*
3. Concern for self	.11*	.13**	-.03	.27***	-.06	.08	-.04	-.07	-.07	.11*	-.13**	-.09
4. Concern for the partner	.23***	.22***	.24***	.02	-.01	.20***	-.10*	.23***	-.03	.09	-.12*	-.04
5. Relational identity orientation: integration	.21***	.26***	-.07	-.01	-.05	.16**	-.15**	.04	-.02	.18***	-.14**	-.13**
6. Relational identity orientation: assimilation	.20***	.09	.23***	.02	.12*	.05	.07	.08	.30***	-.03	.12*	.13**
7. Relational identity orientation: separation	-.14**	-.20***	.07	.25***	.09	-.23***	.12*	-.21***	.20***	.05	-.01	-.10*
8. Relational identity orientation: marginalization	.02	-.02	.06	.00	.05	-.04	.11*	.01	.04	-.01	-.08	-.06
9. Actual conflict management behaviors: integrating	.64***	.70***	-.05	-.16**	-.27***	.55***	-.44***	.37***	-.09	-.01	.01	.01
10. Actual conflict management behaviors: obliging	.17***	-.05	.60***	-.10*	.34***	.01	.30***	.04	.21***	.03	-.01	.02

11. Actual conflict management behaviors: dominating	-.21***	-.12*	-.07	.72***	-.06	-.20***	-.01	-.25***	.06	.01	-.02	.02
12. Actual conflict management behaviors: avoiding	-.06	-.41***	.32***	-.02	.72***	-.24***	.42***	-.14**	.19***	.02	-.05	.03
13. Actual conflict management behaviors: compromising	—	.51***	.12*	-.24**	-.05	.59***	-.17***	.23***	-.01	.00	.03	-.04
14. Conflict management style preference: integrating		—	-.08	-.16**	-.39***	.72***	-.37***	.33***	-.17***	-.01	.02	.04
15. Conflict management style preference: obliging			—	.01	.42***	.03	.24***	.12*	.27***	-.02	-.02	-.03
16. Conflict management style preference: dominating				—	.02	-.23***	.01	-.25***	.05	-.06	.05	.01
17. Conflict management style preference: avoiding					—	-.16***	.36***	-.09	.27***	-.03	.00	.04
18. Conflict management style preference: compromising						—	-.27***	.30***	-.12*	-.04	.07	.04

19. Personal-enacted identity gap	—	-.46***	.20***	-.02	-.09	-.12*
20. Relationship satisfaction		—	-.07	-.13**	.17***	.11*
21. Gender role ideology			—	-.02	-.02	.13**
22. Neighborhood composition: Taiwanese/Chinese				—	-.70***	-.21***
23. Neighborhood composition: Partner's cultural group					—	.22***
24. Relationship length						—

Notes. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

Table 17

Study 2 Bartlett's Tests of Sphericity for Proposed MANCOVA Models

Model	Likelihood Ratio	X^2	df	p -value
Model 1 ^a	<.001	524.71	14	<.001 ^{***}
Model 2 ^b	<.001	144.95	9	<.001 ^{***}
Model 3 ^c	<.001	476.35	14	<.001 ^{***}

Notes. *** $p < .001$

^a Model 1: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables

^b Model 2: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables

^c Model 3: 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward marginalization) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables

Table 18

*Study 2 Levene's Tests of Equality of Error Variances for Proposed MANCOVA**Models*

Model	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Model 1 ^a				
Conflict management style preference: integrating	2.08	3	408	.10
Conflict management style preference: obliging	0.55	3	408	.65
Conflict management style preference: dominating	0.64	3	408	.59
Conflict management style preference: avoiding	1.26	3	408	.29
Conflict management style preference: compromising	0.64	3	408	.59
Model 2 ^b				
Relational identity orientation: integration	1.02	54	357	.44
Relational identity orientation: assimilation	1.20	54	357	.17
Relational identity orientation: separation	0.89	54	357	.69
Relational identity orientation: marginalization	1.03	54	357	.42
Model 3 ^c				
Actual conflict management behaviors: integrating	.93	15	396	.53
Actual conflict management behaviors: obliging	1.59	15	396	.08
Actual conflict management behaviors: dominating	1.31	15	396	.19
Actual conflict management behaviors: avoiding	0.77	15	396	.71

Actual conflict management behaviors: compromising	1.50	15	396	.10
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^a Model 1: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables

^b Model 2: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables

^c Model 3: 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward marginalization) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables

Table 19

*Study 2 Box's Tests of Equality of Covariance Matrices for Proposed MANCOVA**Models*

Model	Box's M	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Model 1 ^a	53.66	1.17	45	377249	.21
Model 2 ^b	450.21	1.09	320	11018	.15
Model 3 ^c	287.59	1.16	225	48033	.05

^a Model 1: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables

^b Model 2: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables

^c Model 3: 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward marginalization) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables

Table 20

Study 2 Multivariate Tests Results of Interaction Effects between the Covariate and the Independent Variables

Model	Wilks ' λ	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i> - valu e
Model 1 ^a					
Independent self- construal*gender role ideology	.99	0.57	5	402	.76
Interdependent self- construal*gender role ideology	.98	1.62	5	402	.15
Model 2 ^b					
Independent self- construal*relationship length	.99	0.59	4	395	.67
Interdependent self- construal*relationship length	.99	1.49	4	395	.20
Concern for self*relationship length	.99	0.38	4	395	.82
Concern for the partner*relationship length	.99	1.32	4	395	.26
Proportion of ingroup in the neighborhood *relationship length	.99	0.70	4	395	.59
Proportion of the partner's group in the neighborhood *relationship length	.98	2.40	4	357	.06
Model 3 ^c					
Relational identity orientation toward integration*gender role ideology	.98	1.42	5	398	.22
Relational identity orientation toward assimilation*gender role ideology	.98	1.62	5	398	.15
Relational identity orientation toward separation*gender role ideology	.99	0.34	5	398	.89
Relational identity orientation toward	.99	0.92	5	398	.47

marginalization*gender role
ideology

^a Model 1: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and conflict management style preferences as dependent variables

^b Model 2: 2 (high versus low interdependent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low independent self-construal) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for self) $\times$ 2 (high versus low concern for the partner) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from one's cultural group) $\times$ 2 (high versus low proportion of neighbors from partner's cultural group) MANCOVA, with relationship length as a covariate and relational identity orientations as the dependent variables

^c Model 3: 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward integration) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward assimilation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward separation) $\times$ 2 (high versus low identity orientation toward marginalization) MANCOVA, with gender role ideology as a covariate and actual conflict management behaviors as the dependent variables

Table 21

Study 2 Estimated Mean Differences for Conflict Management Style Preferences as a Function of Independent and Interdependent Self-Construal

	Independent self-construal		Interdependent self-construal	
	Low	High	Low	High
Conflict manage style preference: integrating				
M^a	7.46	7.93	7.58	7.80
SE	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09
Lower limit confidence interval	7.30	7.77	7.43	7.64
Higher limit confidence interval	7.61	8.10	7.74	7.97
Conflict manage style preference: obliging				
M^a	4.07	4.12	3.95	4.24
SE	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	3.86	3.90	3.74	4.01
Higher limit confidence interval	4.28	4.34	4.15	4.46
Conflict manage style preference: dominating				
M^a	4.75	5.01	4.91	4.85
SE	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13
Lower limit confidence interval	4.52	4.76	4.68	4.60
Higher limit confidence interval	4.98	5.25	5.14	5.10
Conflict manage style preference: avoiding				

M^a	3.98	3.64	3.69	3.93
SE	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	3.78	3.42	3.49	3.71
Higher limit confidence interval	4.19	3.86	3.90	4.16
Conflict manage style preference: compromising				
M^a	6.95	7.36	7.07	7.24
SE	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10
Lower limit confidence interval	6.78	7.18	6.90	7.06
Higher limit confidence interval	7.12	7.55	7.24	7.43

^a The covariate in the model (gender role ideology) was evaluated at the value of 2.49

Table 22. 1

Study 2 Estimated Mean Differences for Relational Identity Orientations as a Function of Self-Construals

	Independent self-construal		Interdependent self-construal	
	Low	High	Low	High
Relational identity orientation: integration				
M^a	7.54	7.68	7.36	7.86
SE	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Lower limit confidence interval	7.40	7.54	7.23	7.71
Higher limit confidence interval	7.67	7.82	7.49	8.00
Relational identity orientation: assimilation				
M^a	5.42	5.38	5.21	5.58
SE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	5.23	5.17	5.03	5.38
Higher limit confidence interval	5.61	5.58	5.40	5.79
Relational identity orientation: separation				
M^a	3.72	3.58	3.62	3.67
SE	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10
Lower limit confidence interval	3.54	3.39	3.45	3.48
Higher limit confidence interval	3.89	3.76	3.80	3.86
Relational identity orientation: marginalization				
M^a	4.72	4.98	4.95	4.75
SE	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.10
Lower limit confidence interval	4.53	4.78	4.77	4.55
Higher limit confidence interval	4.90	5.17	5.13	4.95

^a The covariate in the model (relationship length) was evaluated at the value of 53.53

Table 22. 2

Study 2 Estimated Mean Differences for Relational Identity Orientations as a Function of Concerns for Self and the Partner

	Concern for self		Concern for the partner	
	Low	High	Low	High
Relational identity orientation: integration				
M^a	7.49	7.72	7.58	7.63
SE	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.07
Lower limit confidence interval	7.35	7.56	7.43	7.49
Higher limit confidence interval	7.63	7.88	7.74	7.77
Relational identity orientation: assimilation				
M^a	5.49	5.31	5.10	5.70
SE	0.10	0.12	0.12	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	5.29	5.08	4.87	5.49
Higher limit confidence interval	5.69	5.53	5.32	5.91
Relational identity orientation: separation				
M^a	3.44	3.85	3.91	3.38
SE	0.09	0.11	0.10	0.10
Lower limit confidence interval	3.26	3.64	3.71	3.19
Higher limit confidence interval	3.63	4.06	4.12	3.57
Relational identity orientation: marginalization				
M^a	4.93	4.76	4.82	4.88
SE	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10
Lower limit confidence interval	4.74	4.55	4.60	4.68
Higher limit confidence interval	5.12	4.98	5.03	5.08

^a The covariate in the model (relationship length) was evaluated at the value of 53.53

Table 22. 3

Study 2 Estimated Mean Differences for Relational Identity Orientations as a Function of Neighborhood Compositions

	Proportion of ingroup in the neighborhood		Proportion of members of the partner's group in the neighborhood	
	Low	High	Low	High
Relational identity orientation: integration				
M^a	7.45	7.77	7.63	7.59
SE	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.09
Lower limit confidence interval	7.31	7.59	7.48	7.42
Higher limit confidence interval	7.59	7.94	7.77	7.76
Relational identity orientation: assimilation				
M^a	5.24	5.56	5.19	5.60
SE	0.10	0.13	0.11	0.12
Lower limit confidence interval	5.04	5.30	4.98	5.36
Higher limit confidence interval	5.44	5.81	5.41	5.84
Relational identity orientation: separation				
M^a	3.52	3.78	3.58	3.71
SE	0.09	0.12	0.10	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	3.34	3.55	3.39	3.49
Higher limit confidence interval	3.70	4.01	3.77	3.93
Relational identity orientation: marginalization				
M^a	4.93	4.77	5.00	4.70
SE	0.10	0.12	0.10	0.12
Lower limit confidence interval	4.73	4.52	4.79	4.47
Higher limit confidence interval	5.12	5.01	5.20	4.93

^a The covariate in the model (relationship length) was evaluated at the value of 53.53

Table 23

Study 2 Estimated Mean Differences for Actual Conflict Management Behaviors as a Function of Relational Identity Orientations

	Integration		Assimilation		Separation	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Conflict manage style preference: integrating						
M^a	7.36	7.86	7.44	7.77	7.72	7.49
SE	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.09
Lower limit confidence interval	7.20	7.69	7.28	7.60	7.56	7.32
Higher limit confidence interval	7.51	8.03	7.60	7.94	7.89	7.66
Conflict manage style preference: obliging						
M^a	5.05	5.12	4.68	5.48	5.04	5.13
SE	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.11
Lower limit confidence interval	4.86	4.91	4.49	5.27	4.84	4.92
Higher limit confidence interval	5.25	5.33	4.88	5.70	5.24	5.34
Conflict manage style preference: dominating						
M^a	5.34	5.35	5.30	5.39	5.09	5.60
SE	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12
Lower limit	5.12	5.12	5.08	5.15	4.87	5.37

	confidence interval Higher limit	5.55	5.58	5.52	5.62	5.31	5.83
	confidence interval						
Conflict manage style preference: avoiding							
M^a		4.15	4.19	4.09	4.26	4.13	4.21
SE		0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13
	Lower limit	3.92	3.42	3.85	4.01	3.89	3.97
	confidence interval						
	Higher limit	4.39	3.86	4.32	4.52	4.37	4.46
	confidence interval						
Conflict manage style preference: compromising							
M^a		6.81	7.27	6.78	7.30	7.19	6.90
SE		0.09	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.09
	Lower limit	6.64	7.09	6.61	7.12	7.02	6.72
	confidence interval						
	Higher limit	6.99	7.46	6.96	7.49	7.37	7.08
	confidence interval						

^a The covariate in the model (gender role ideology) was evaluated at the value of 2.49

Table 24

Correlations among Relationship Satisfaction, Perceived Identity Gap, and the Discrepancy Scores for each of the Conflict Management Types

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Conflict management discrepancy: integrating	-						
2. Conflict management discrepancy: obliging	.18***	-					
3. Conflict management discrepancy: dominating	.06	.18***	-				
4. Conflict management discrepancy: avoiding	.21***	.33***	.11*	-			
5. Conflict management discrepancy: compromising	.29**	.17**	.17**	.19***	-		
6. Perceived personal-enacted identity gap	.31***	.06	-.04	.15**	.04	-	
7. Relationship satisfaction	-.26***	-.08	-.06	-.14**	-.01	-.46***	-

Notes. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

Appendix G: Measurements for Study 2 (English Version)

Relational Identity Orientation Scale

Instruction: Research has generally suggested that culture plays a role in an intercultural romantic relationship. How intercultural couples negotiate their cultural differences and similarities can influence various domains of their relational life, such as the language(s) they speak and the holiday(s) they celebrate. Please read each of the following statements carefully and rate the extent to which it reflects your attitudes toward your and your partner's cultures when you are interacting with your partner. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements, so please answer as honestly as possible.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

Integration

1. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, both my partner and I should try to adapt to each other's culture.
2. It is important to me that both my partner and I can show respect to the cultural values held by each other.
3. It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to learn each other's native language.
4. I hope that, one day, when my partner and I are communicating, we can have a balanced use of each other's native language.
5. I hope that, when my partner and I are spending our time together, we can consume media from each other's culture to an equal degree.

6. When my partner and I are having meals together, I hope we can both be willing to have food from each other's culture.
7. It is important to me that both my partner and I are willing to hang out together with friends from each other's cultural group.
8. I feel that we should celebrate each other's cultural holidays together to an equal degree.
9. If we encounter any cultural differences, I think both my partner and I should make mutual adjustment to negotiate these differences.
10. I prefer to integrate both my partner's and my cultural beliefs or practices to structure our relational life.
11. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area that is widely resided by members from both my and my partner's cultural groups.

Assimilation

12. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to adapt to my partner's culture than to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving.
13. It is more important for me to adopt my partner's cultural values than to have my partner accept my cultural values.
14. It is more important for me to be fluent in my partner's language than to have my partner be fluent in my native language.
15. I am willing to have most of our communication spoken in my partner's native language.

16. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I feel fine if we consume more media from my partner's culture than media from my culture.
17. When my partner and I are having meals together, I am more willing to have food from my partner's culture than to persuade my partner's to try food from my own culture.
18. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I am fine if most of the friends we hang out with are from my partner's cultural group.
19. I feel fine if we celebrate my partner's cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my cultural holidays.
20. If we encounter any cultural differences, I am willing to adjust myself to my partner's culture to minimize these differences.
21. I prefer to structure our relational life based on my partner's cultural beliefs or practices.
22. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I am willing to live in an area that is primarily resided by members from my partner's cultural group.

Separation

23. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is more important for me to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adapt to my partner's culture.
24. I think it is more important for me to maintain my cultural values than to adopt my partner's cultural values.
25. I think it is more important to have my partner become fluent in my native language than to have myself become fluent in my partner's native language.
26. I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in my native language.

27. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture.
28. When my partner and I are having meals together, I prefer to have food from my culture than to try food from my partner's culture.
29. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with are from my cultural group.
30. I prefer if we can celebrate my cultural holidays together more than we celebrate my partner cultural holidays.
31. If we encounter any cultural differences, I am more willing to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving than to adjust myself to my partner's culture.
32. I prefer to structure our relational life based on my own cultural beliefs or practices.
33. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area that is primarily resided by members from my own cultural group.

Marginalization

34. I feel that, within this intercultural relationship, it is not important for me either to maintain my own cultural ways of behaving or to adapt to my partner's culture.
35. I think it is not important for me either to maintain my cultural values or to adopt my partner's cultural values.
36. I think it is not important to me if neither my partner nor I can speak each other's native language fluently.
37. I prefer to have most of our communication spoken in a language that is neither my partner's nor my native language.

38. When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media that are not from either my partner's or my own culture.
39. When my partner and I are having meals together, I prefer to have food that is not from either my partner's or my own culture.
40. When my partner and I are hanging out together with friends, I prefer if most of the friends we hang out with do not belong to either my or my partner's cultural group.
41. It is not important to me to celebrate either my or my partner's cultural holidays together.
42. If we encounter any cultural differences, I prefer not to adhere to either my or my partner's culture.
43. I prefer not to structure our relational life based on either my own or my partners' cultural beliefs or practices.
44. If I can choose where my partner and I will live in the future, I prefer to live in an area in which most residents are not from either my or my partner's cultural group.

Concerns for Self and the Partner Scale

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements represent your feelings about your current romantic relationship.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

Concern for self

1. I am concerned with having my expectations met within the relationship.
2. It is important to me that my partner can fulfill my needs.
3. One of my primary concerns within the relationship is my personal well-being.
4. My happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship.
5. It is important for me to get outcomes I desire.
6. I would be disappointed if I cannot get outcomes that I want.
7. It would distress me if my desires are not satisfied.
8. I would feel unsatisfied if my partners cannot fulfill my expectations.

Concern for the partner

9. I am concerned with meeting my partner's expectations.
10. It is important to me to fulfill my partner's needs.
11. One of my primary concerns within the relationship is my partner's well-being.
12. My partner's happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship.
13. It is important for me that my partner can get outcomes he/she desires.
14. I would be disappointed if my partner cannot get outcomes that he/she wants.
15. It would distress me if my partner's desires are not satisfied.

16. I would feel unsatisfied if I cannot fulfill my partner's expectations.

Self Construals Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

Independent self-construal

1. I should be judged on my own merit.
2. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.
3. My personal identity is important to me.
4. I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others.
5. I am a unique person separate from others.
6. If there is a conflict between my values and values of groups of which I am a member, I follow my values.
7. I try not to depend on others.
8. I take responsibility for my own actions.
9. It is important for me to act as an independent person.
10. I should decide my future on my own.
11. What happens to me is my own doing.
12. I enjoy being unique and different from others.
13. I am comfortable being singled out for praise and rewards.
14. I don't support a group decision when it is wrong.

Interdependent self-construal

15. I consult others before making important decisions.
16. I consult with co-workers on work-related matters.

17. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.
18. I stick with my group even through difficulties.
19. I respect decisions made by my group.
20. I will stay in a group if it needs me, even if I am not happy with it.
21. I maintain harmony in the groups of which I am a member.
22. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member.
23. I remain in the groups of which I am a member if they need me, even though I am dissatisfied with them.
24. I try to abide by customs and conventions at work.
25. I give special consideration to others' personal situations so I can be efficient at work.
26. It is better to consult others and get their opinions before doing anything.
27. It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision.
28. My relationships with others are more important to me than my accomplishments.

Actual Conflict Management Behaviors

Instruction: Conflicts are common and natural within a romantic relationship. Please recall the conflicts you have had within your relationship and rate the extent to which each of the following conflict management strategies CHARACTERIZES how you ACTUALLY handle conflict with your romantic partner. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements, so please answer as honestly as possible.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

Integrating

1. I try to discuss a problem with my partner to find a solution acceptable to us.
2. I try to integrate my opinions with those of my partner to come up with a decision jointly.
3. I try to work with my partner to find solution to a problem that satisfies our expectations.
4. I exchange honest opinions with my partner to solve a problem together.
5. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.
6. I collaborate with my partner to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
7. I try to work with my partner for a proper understanding of a problem.

Obliging

8. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my partner.
9. I usually accommodate the wishes of my partner.
10. I give in to the wishes of my partner.

- 11. I usually allow concessions to my partner.
- 12. I often go along with the suggestions of my partner.
- 13. I try to satisfy the expectations of my partner.

Dominating

- 14. I use my influence to get my opinions accepted.
- 15. I try to persuade my partner that my way was the best way.
- 16. I insist my position be accepted during the conflict.
- 17. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
- 18. I dominate the argument to win a competitive situation.

Avoiding

- 19. I try to keep my complaints with my partner to myself.
- 20. I usually avoid open discussion of my complaints with my partner.
- 21. I try to stay away from disagreement with my partner.
- 22. I avoid an encounter with my partner.
- 23. I try to keep my disagreement with my partner to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
- 24. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my partner.

Compromising

- 25. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.
- 26. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
- 27. I negotiate with my partner so that a compromise can be reached.
- 28. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

Conflict Management Style Preferences

Instruction: Conflicts are common and natural within a romantic relationship. Please recall the conflicts you have had within your relationship and rate the extent to which of each of the following conflict management strategies you FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE USING. Conflict strategies you feel comfortable with may or may not correspond to the same way you actually handle conflict with your partner. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements, so please answer as honestly as possible.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = extremely uncomfortable, 9 = extremely comfortable)

Integrating

1. I try to discuss a problem with my partner to find a solution acceptable to us.
2. I try to integrate my opinions with those of my partner to come up with a decision jointly.
3. I try to work with my partner to find solution to a problem that satisfies our expectations.
4. I exchange honest opinions with my partner to solve a problem together.
5. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.
6. I collaborate with my partner to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
7. I try to work with my partner for a proper understanding of a problem.

Obliging

8. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my partner.

- 9. I usually accommodate the wishes of my partner.
- 10. I give in to the wishes of my partner.
- 11. I usually allow concessions to my partner.
- 12. I often go along with the suggestions of my partner.
- 13. I try to satisfy the expectations of my partner.

Dominating

- 14. I use my influence to get my opinions accepted.
- 15. I try to persuade my partner that my way was the best way.
- 16. I insist my position be accepted during the conflict.
- 17. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
- 18. I dominate the argument to win a competitive situation.

Avoiding

- 19. I try to keep my complaints with my partner to myself.
- 20. I usually avoid open discussion of my complaints with my partner.
- 21. I try to stay away from disagreement with my partner.
- 22. I avoid an encounter with my partner.
- 23. I try to keep my disagreement with my partner to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
- 24. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my partner.

Compromising

- 25. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.
- 26. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
- 27. I negotiate with my partner so that a compromise can be reached.

28. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

Personal-Enacted Identity Gap

Please think about your interaction with your partner and rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

1. When I communicate with my partner, he/she gets to know the "real me."
2. I feel that I can communicate with my partner in a way that is consistent with who I really am.
3. I feel that I can be myself when communicating with my partner.
4. I express myself in a certain way that is not the real me when communicating with my partner.
5. I do not reveal important aspects of myself in communication with my partner.
6. When communicating with my partner, I often lose sense of who I am.
7. I do not express the real me when I think it is different from my partner's expectation.
8. I sometimes mislead my partner about who I really am.
9. There is a difference between the real me and the impression I give my partner about me.
10. I speak truthfully to my partner about myself.
11. I freely express the real me in communication with my partner.

Relationship Satisfaction

Please think about the quality of your current relationship and answer the following questions.

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?

1 (not at all) ----- 9 (very well)

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

1 (not satisfied at all) ----- 9 (very satisfied)

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

1 (not good at all) ----- 9 (very good)

4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

1 (not at all) ----- 9 (very often)

5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

1 (not at all) ----- 9 (very well)

6. How much do you love your partner?

1 (not at all) ----- 9 (very much)

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

1 (no problem at all) ----- 9 (many problems)

The Equalitarian Roles Subscale from the ENRICH inventory

Instruction: Please think about your attitudes toward marriage in general and rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. We are interested in your genuine attitudes, so please provide your honest responses.

Each item is to be measured using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

1. I believe that the women's place is basically in the home.
2. If both of us are working, the husband should do the same amount of household chores as the wife.
3. In our family, the wife should not work outside the home unless it is an absolute financial necessity.
4. In our marriage, the wife should be more willing to go along with the husband's wishes.
5. Even if the wife works outside the home, she should still be responsible for running the household.
6. In our marriage, the husband should be the leader of our family.
7. For us, the husband's occupation is always regarded as more important than the wife's.
8. If there are young children, the wife should not work outside the home.
9. The husband should have the final word of the important decisions in our family.
10. The wife should trust and accept the husband's judgments on important decisions.

Demographic Survey

Please answer the following demographic questions. Your answers will be used to compile a demographic profile of participants in the study. All responses will remain confidential.

1. Age (in years): _____

2. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your relationship status?

☐ Dating

☐ Cohabiting

☐ Married

4. Please indicate your partner's racial identity _____

5. Please indicate your partner's national identity _____

6. How long have you and your partner been together? ____ (in year); ____ (in months)

7. Please indicate your current country of residence: _____

8. Please indicate your partner's current country of residence: _____

9. Please indicate your highest level of education

☐ Did Not Complete High School

☐ High School/GED

☐ Some College

☐ Bachelor's Degree

- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Advanced Graduate work or Ph.D.

10. Please indicate your partner's highest level of education

- ☐ Did Not Complete High School
- ☐ High School/GED
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Advanced Graduate work or Ph.D.

Appendix H: Measurements for Study 2 (Mandarin Version)

跨文化戀情文化適應量表

作答說明: 研究顯示,「文化」在跨文化戀情中扮演重要角色。跨文化戀人間如何調適文化差異,影響了兩人感情生活的眾多面向(如:兩人平常使用哪種語言溝通、兩人平時習慣慶祝哪方的傳統節日等等)。

下列問題想要瞭解您在您和您伴侶的這段跨文化戀情中,對於文化差異的態度。請您詳細閱讀以下敘述,並勾選您對下列敘述的同意程度(1分代表非常不同意,9分代表非常同意)。所有問題均無標準答案,請仔細閱讀填答說明,並依您實際的情況與感受作答。

整合型:

1. 在這段異國戀情中,我覺得不論是我或伴侶都應該要努力去適應雙方的文化。
2. 對我而言,「我和伴侶都能相互尊重雙方的文化價值觀」是一件很重要的事。
3. 不論我和伴侶各自語言能力好壞,雙方都有意願去學習對方的母語對我而言很重要。
4. 我希望有一天我和伴侶可以均衡地使用雙方的母語來交談。
5. 當我與伴侶相處時,我希望我們能更平均地觀賞來自彼此文化的媒體(例:影視娛樂、書籍等等)。
6. 當我和伴侶一同用餐時,我希望我和伴侶都有意願去享用對方文化的食物。

7. 對我而言，「我和伴侶各自都有意願去認識來自對方文化圈的朋友」是一件很重要的事。
8. 我覺得我和伴侶應該要能平等地慶祝雙方的文化節日(例: 端午節、聖誕節等等)。
9. 當我和我伴侶間有文化差異時，我覺得我們雙方都應該要互相調整各自的行為或觀念來調解文化差異。
10. 我希望我跟伴侶的感情能建立在雙方文化習俗與價值觀的統整上。
11. 如果我能夠自由決定我和伴侶未來的居住地，我希望我們未來居住的地區有很多來自雙方文化圈的成員。

同化型:

12. 在這段跨文化戀情中，比起致力在這段感情中維持我原本的文化習慣，能夠適應對方的文化對我來說更為重要。
13. 比起讓我的伴侶接受我的文化價值觀，能夠去適應我伴侶方的文化價值觀對我而言更為重要。
14. 不論我和伴侶各自語言能力好壞，對我而言，我有能力去流利地使用我伴侶方的母語比我伴侶能流利使用我的母語更為重要。
15. 我不介意我和我伴侶平常主要是以她/他的母語來交談。
16. 當我與伴侶相處時，我不介意我們平時觀賞的媒體(例:影視娛樂、書籍等等)主要是來自我伴侶方的文化。
17. 當我和伴侶一同用餐時，比起說服我伴侶品嚐我方文化的食物，我更願意我們享用來自我伴侶方文化的食物。

18. 我不介意我跟我伴侶平常來往的朋友主要是來自我伴侶方的文化圈。
19. 我不介意我們慶祝我伴侶方的文化節日(例:聖誕節)多過於我這方的文化節日(例:端午節)。
20. 當我和我伴侶間有文化差異時，我比較傾向去適應對方的文化以調節差異。
21. 我希望我跟我伴侶的感情生活主要是遵循我伴侶方的文化習俗與價值觀。
22. 如果我能夠自由決定我和伴侶未來的居住地，我希望我們未來居住地區的成員主要是來自於我伴侶方的文化圈。

分離型:

23. 在這段跨文化戀情中，比起去致力適應對方的文化，能在這段感情中維持我原本的文化習慣對我來說更為重要。
24. 比起去適應我伴侶方的文化價值觀，我覺得能在這段跨文化戀情中維持我原本的文化價值觀更為重要。
25. 不論我和伴侶各自語言能力好壞，對我而言，我的伴侶能流利使用我的母語比我有能力去流利地使用我伴侶方的母語更為重要。
26. 我希望我和我伴侶平常主要是以我的母語來交談。
27. 當我與伴侶相處時，我比較希望我們平時觀賞的媒體(例:影視娛樂、書籍等等)主要是來自於我這方的文化。
28. 當我和伴侶一同用餐時，比起品嚐我伴侶方文化的食物，我更願意我們享用來自我方文化的食物。
29. 我希望我跟我伴侶平常來往的朋友主要是來自我這方的文化圈。

30. 我希望我們慶祝我這方的文化節日(例:端午節)多過於我伴侶方的文化節日(例:聖誕節)
31. 當我和我伴侶間有文化差異時，比起去適應對方的文化以消弭差異，我更較傾向維持我原本的文化習慣或價值觀。
32. 我希望我跟我伴侶的感情生活主要是遵循我這方的文化習俗與價值觀。
33. 如果我能夠自由決定我和伴侶未來的居住地，我希望我們未來居住地區的成員主要是來自於我這方的文化圈。

邊緣型:

34. 不論是設法在這段跨文化戀情中維持我原本的文化，或是努力去適應對方的文化，這兩者對我而言都不是特別重要的事。
35. 無論我是否能在這段跨文化感情中維持我原本的文化價值觀，或我是否能去適應對方的文化價值觀，這兩者對我而言都不是很重要。
36. 就算我和我伴侶都無法使用對方的母語，我也不太介意。
37. 我不介意我和我伴侶平常交談的語言並不是任何一方的母語。
38. 當我與伴侶相處時，我比較希望我們平時主要觀賞的媒體(例:影視娛樂、書籍等等)並非是來自於我這方或我伴侶方的文化。
39. 當我和伴侶一同用餐時，我傾向我們享用的食物並非來自我這方或我伴侶方的文化。
40. 我希望我跟我伴侶平常主要來往的朋友並非來自我這方或我伴侶方的文化圈。

41. 我們有沒有慶祝我這方(例:端午節)或我伴侶方(例:聖誕節)的文化節日對我並不重要。
42. 當我和我伴侶間有文化差異時，我並不會想要堅持我的原生文化，但我同時也不會想要去適應對方的文化。
43. 我希望我跟我伴侶的感情生活不要遵循任何一方的文化習俗與價值觀。
44. 如果我能夠自由決定我和伴侶未來的居住地，我希望我們未來居住地區的成員大多不是來自於我這方或我伴侶方的文化圈。

關懷量表

作答說明: 請您依照您伴侶相處的實際情況，勾選你對下列敘述的同意程度(1分代表非常不同意，9分代表非常同意)。

關心自我:

1. 我很在乎我的期望是否能在這段關係中被滿足。
2. 我的伴侶能否滿足我的需求對我而言很重要。
3. 在這段關係中，我的幸福是我主要關心的事情之一。
4. 在這段關係中，我的幸福是我覺得最重要的事之一。
5. 能不能在這段關係中得到我想要的對我而言很重要。
6. 如果我不能在這段關係中得到我想要的，我會感到很失望。
7. 如果我的需求或願望無法被滿足，我會感到很難過。
8. 如果我的伴侶沒有達到我的期待的話，我會感到很失望。

關心對方:

9. 我很在乎我伴侶的期望是否能在這段關係中被滿足。
10. 我能否滿足伴侶的需求對我而言很重要。
11. 在這段關係中，伴侶的幸福是我主要關心的事情之一。
12. 在這段關係中，伴侶的幸福是我覺得最重要的事之一。
13. 伴侶能不能在這段關係中得到他/她想要的對我而言很重要。
14. 如果我的伴侶不能在這段關係中得到她/他想要的，我會感到很失望。
15. 如果伴侶的需求或願望無法被滿足，我會感到很難過。
16. 如果我沒有達到我伴侶的期待的話，我會感到很失望。

自我建構量表

作答說明：下列問題主要在了解您對於自身的理解，請勾選你對下列敘述的同意程度。(1 分代表非常不同意，9 分代表非常同意)

獨立自我:

1. 別人應該依我自身的價值與能力評斷我。
2. 有能力獨自照顧好自己對我是很重要的一件事。
3. 我的個人身分(personal identity)對我很重要。
4. 我情願信賴自己多於依賴他人。
5. 我是個獨特、與眾不同的個體。
6. 當我的價值觀與我所身處的團隊/群體的價值觀不同時，我會遵從我的價值觀。
7. 我試著不依賴他人。
8. 我會為自己的行為負責。
9. 能夠自主行動對我是很重要的一件事。
10. 我覺得自己的未來應該由自己決定。
11. 發生在我身上的事我會自己處理。
12. 我樂於與眾不同。
13. 當我被獨立表揚或獎勵時，我覺得很自在。
14. 如果我覺得我所身處的團隊/群體所做的決定是錯誤的，我不會去支持這個決定。

相依自我:

15. 做重要決策之前，我會先向他人徵詢建議。
16. 當我遇到跟工作有關的問題時，我會向我的同事徵詢建議。
17. 我所身處的團隊/群體的集體利益，我會犧牲自己的利益。
18. 當我身處的團隊/群體遭遇難關時，我會留在這個團隊/群體裡共同對抗難關。
19. 我尊重我所屬群體的決定。
20. 如果我身處的團體/群體需要我，即使我待的不開心，我也會留在這個團隊/群體裡。
21. 對我而言，和我身處的團體/群體裡的成員維持和睦是很重要的。
22. 我會尊重我身處的團體/群體多數人的意願。
23. 如果我身處的團體/群體需要我，即使我對這個團隊/群體不滿意，我也會留在這個團隊/群體裡。
24. 在工作上，我會盡量遵從我身處職場的常規。
25. 為了在工作上更有效率，我做決策時考慮每個人的個人狀況。
26. 在做任何行動之前最好能徵詢他人的意見。
27. 對我而言，在做決定之前，先向好朋友徵詢意見是很重要的。
28. 我覺得保持良好的人際關係比獲得個人成就更為重要。

實際使用的衝突處理模式量表

作答說明: 在一段親密關係中，衝突與爭執是很正常跟在所難免的。請您依照與伴侶發生爭執或衝突時的實際情況，並回答下列敘述是否反映您真正使用的溝通方式 (1 分代表非常不同意，9 分代表非常同意)。所有問題均無標準答案，請仔細閱讀填答說明，並依您實際的情況作答。

統整型:

1. 我一般會與伴侶共同討論爭執的原因，以找到雙方都能接受的解決辦法。
2. 我一般會整合我們兩人的想法，以達到共同的決策。
3. 我一般會和伴侶一起找尋能滿足雙方期待的解決辦法。
4. 我一般會誠實的告訴伴侶我的想法，以一同解決問題。
5. 我一般會試圖講明雙方關注的重點，以求找到最好的解決方式。
6. 我一般會不斷和伴侶溝通，直到做出雙方都能接受的決定。
7. 我一般會與伴侶一起努力弄清楚爭執或衝突的問題所在。

忍讓型:

8. 我一般會試圖滿足對方的需求。
9. 一般而言，我會改變自己的意見或行為以迎合對方的期望。
10. 我通常會為了伴侶的期待而妥協。
11. 我通常會願意為對方讓步。
12. 我通常會聽從對方的意見。
13. 我一般會試圖滿足對方的期待。

支配型:

- 14. 我一般會試著用我的影響力讓對方接受我的想法。
- 15. 我通常會試著說服伴侶我所提出的意見或辦法才是正確的或是比較好的。
- 16. 一般而言，我會很希望讓對方接受我的立場或看法。
- 17. 在爭執的過程中，我一般會堅持自己的立場或看法。
- 18. 在爭執的過程中我一般比較強勢，以讓自己能在爭執中獲勝。

逃避型:

- 19. 我一般會盡量把對伴侶的抱怨藏在心裡。
- 20. 我通常會避免公開地跟伴侶討論對她/他的不滿。
- 21. 我一般會避免與伴侶持有不同的意見。
- 22. 當爭執或衝突發生時，我一般會避開對方。
- 23. 我會把跟伴侶不同的意見或看法放在心裡以避免不愉快。
- 24. 我一般會試著避免與伴侶有不愉快的對話。

妥協型:

- 25. 我通常會試著找出折衷辦法以避免爭執陷入僵局。
- 26. 我會盡量找出彼此間的中間立場。
- 27. 我一般會試著與伴侶各退一步，以求順利解決衝突或爭執。
- 28. 我通常試著與伴侶互相取捨以妥協出一個折衷方案。

傾向使用的衝突處理模式量表

作答說明: 在一段親密關係中，衝突與爭執是很正常跟在所難免的。過去研究顯示因為個性或是生長環境的不同，不同人會傾向於使用不同種的衝突處理模式。當一個人使用不符合他/她傾向的模式來處理衝突時，她/他可能會感覺不自在或不舒服。

請您想像您和伴侶正發生一段衝突，勾選下列衝突處理方式你使用起來的(不)自在度(1 分代表非常不自在，9 分代表非常自在)。請注意，讓您感到自在的衝突處理方式可能不見得是您在這段關係中真正使用的衝突處理方式。

所有問題均無標準答案，請仔細閱讀填答說明，並依您實際的感受作答。

統整型:

1. 我會與伴侶共同討論爭執的原因，以找到雙方都能接受的解決辦法。
2. 我會整合我們兩人的想法，以達到共同的決策。
3. 我會和伴侶一起找尋能滿足雙方期待的解決辦法。
4. 我會誠實的告訴伴侶我的想法，以一同解決問題。
5. 我會試圖講明雙方關注的重點，以求找到最好的解決方式。
6. 我會不斷和伴侶溝通，直到做出雙方都能接受的決定。
7. 我會與伴侶一起努力弄清楚爭執或衝突的問題所在。

忍讓型:

8. 我會試圖滿足對方的需求。
9. 我會改變自己的意見或行為以迎合對方的期望。
10. 我會為了伴侶的期待而妥協。

- 11. 我會願意為對方讓步。
- 12. 我會聽從對方的意見。
- 13. 我會試圖滿足對方的期待。

支配型:

- 14. 我會試著用我的影響力讓對方接受我的想法。
- 15. 我會試著說服伴侶我所提出的意見或辦法才是正確的或是比較好的。
- 16. 我會很希望讓對方接受我的立場或看法。
- 17. 在爭執的過程中，我會堅持自己的立場或看法。
- 18. 在爭執的過程中我會保持強勢，以讓自己能在爭執中獲勝。

逃避型:

- 19. 我會盡量把對伴侶的抱怨藏在心裡。
- 20. 我會避免公開地跟伴侶討論對她/他的不滿。
- 21. 我會避免與伴侶持有不同的意見。
- 22. 當爭執或衝突發生時，我會避開對方。
- 23. 我會把跟伴侶不同的意見或看法放在心裡以避免不愉快。
- 24. 我會試著避免與伴侶有不愉快的對話。

妥協型:

- 25. 我會試著找出折衷辦法以避免爭執陷入僵局。
- 26. 我會盡量找出彼此間的中間立場。
- 27. 我會試著與伴侶各退一步，以求順利解決衝突或爭執。
- 28. 我會試著與伴侶互相取捨以妥協出一個折衷方案。

自我認同與自我展演代溝量表

作答說明: 請您依照您伴侶相處的實際情況，勾選你對下列敘述的同意程度(1分代表非常不同意，9分代表非常同意)。

1. 我覺得我伴侶可以在我們兩人的交流中，知道真正的我是什麼樣子的。
2. 我覺得我可以用我真實的性格與我伴侶互動。
3. 我覺得我可以在和伴侶互動交流的過程中做自己。
4. 當我和我伴侶談話或互動時，我所展現的樣子並不是真實的自己。
5. 我不對伴侶表達我內心深處的想法。
6. 在我和我伴侶互動的過程中，我偶爾會迷失自我。
7. 當我覺得真實的我並不符合伴侶的期待，我不會在伴侶面前展現真實的自己。
8. 我偶爾會試圖誤導伴侶真正的我是甚麼樣子的。
9. 我在伴侶展現的形象跟真實的自己是有所落差的。
10. 我會在伴侶面前真實地表達自己。
11. 當我和我伴侶談話或互動時，我可以很自在地展現真實的自己。

感情滿意度量表

作答說明: 請您依照您伴侶相處的實際情況回答下列問題。

1. 伴侶是否能很好地滿足你所提出的要求? (1 分代表完全不能夠, 9 分代表非常能夠)
2. 總體而言, 你對這段關係感到滿意嗎? (1 分代表完全不滿意, 9 分代表非常滿意)
3. 跟大多數的情侶相比, 你覺得你和伴侶的感情有多好? (1 分代表非常不好, 9 分代表非常好)
4. 你多後悔進入這段感情? (1 分代表完全不後悔, 9 分代表非常後悔)
5. 這段感情是否符合你最初的期待? (1 分代表完全不符合, 9 分代表非常符合)
6. 你有多愛你的伴侶? (1 分代表完全不愛, 9 分代表非常愛)
7. 你們的關係中存在多少問題? (1 分代表完全沒有問題, 9 分代表非常多問題)

ENRICH 量表

作答說明：下列問題主要在了解您對於一段異性戀關係中男女角色的看法。請勾選你對下列敘述的同意程度 (1 分代表非常不同意，9 分代表非常同意)。所有問題均無標準答案，請依您實際的感受作答。

1. 我認為女性主要就是應該要待在家裡。
2. 如果雙方都有工作，男性伴侶和女性伴侶應該承擔樣多的家務工作。
3. 除非有經濟上的需求，女性伴侶不需要外出工作。
4. 在一段關係中，女性伴侶應該要願意聽從男性伴侶的期望。
5. 即使女性伴侶在外工作，也應該管理家務。
6. 一段異性戀關係主要由男性伴侶作主。
7. 一段異性戀關係中，男性伴侶的職業比女性伴侶的職業更重要。
8. 如果家裡有年紀尚幼的子女，女性伴侶不應出外工作。
9. 在大多數重要的事情上，男性伴侶應有最後的決定權。
10. 在重要的議題上，女性伴侶應該相信和接受男性伴侶的判斷。

基本資料

作答說明：下列問題需要您提供您以及您伴侶的基本資料。您的個別資料將會受到嚴格保密。最終報告只會呈現所有受試者的統計數據。

1. 年齡:_____

2. 性別

☐ 男

☐ 女

3. 您與伴侶的感情現況

☐ 交往；未同居

☐ 同居

☐ 已婚

4. 請問您伴侶的種族身分是？

☐ 白人

☐ 黃種人

☐ 黑人

☐ 拉丁裔

☐ 混血 _____

☐ 其他 _____

5. 請問您伴侶的國籍身分是？(如果您的伴侶有多國籍，請填寫他/她所有的全部國籍) _____

6. 請問您和您伴侶的感情維持多久了呢(如果您已婚，請您加上您和伴侶婚前交往的時間)? _____年_____月

7. 請問您現居於哪個國家?_____

8. 除了您所列的現居地外，請問您在與您伴侶交往後，您曾居住過哪些國家呢?_____

9. 請問您伴侶現居於哪個國家?_____

10. 除了您伴侶的現居地外，請問您在與您伴侶交往後，您伴侶曾居住過哪些國家呢?_____

11. 請問您覺得您現居的社區，來自大中華文化區 (中國、台灣、香港..)的人佔了多少比例呢?

- ☐ 0~10%
- ☐ 11~20%
- ☐ 21~30%
- ☐ 31~40%
- ☐ 41~50%
- ☐ 51~60%
- ☐ 61~70%
- ☐ 71~80%
- ☐ 81~90%
- ☐ 91~100%

12. 請問您覺得您現居的社區，來自您伴侶文化圈的人佔了多少比例呢?

- ☐ 0~10%

- ☐ 11~20%
- ☐ 21~30%
- ☐ 31~40%
- ☐ 41~50%
- ☐ 51~60%
- ☐ 61~70%
- ☐ 71~80%
- ☐ 81~90%
- ☐ 91~100%

13. 請問您的最高教育程度是？

- ☐ 未取得高中(職)學歷
- ☐ 高中(職)畢業
- ☐ 高中(職)畢業，大學(大專院校)肄業
- ☐ 大學(大專院校)
- ☐ 碩士
- ☐ 博士或博士以上的高等學歷

14. 請問您伴侶的最高教育程度是？

- ☐ 未取得高中(職)學歷
- ☐ 高中(職)畢業
- ☐ 高中(職)畢業，大學(大專院校)肄業
- ☐ 大學(大專院校)
- ☐ 碩士

- 博士或博士以上的高等學歷

Appendix I: Study 2 Online Groups and Discussion Boards for Recruitment

This appendix lists all the online groups and discussions boards used to recruit Study 2's respondents.

Pilot Study

Online bulletin board	Facebook groups
PPT CCRomance Forum	Cross Cultural Romance
	International Relationship & Marriage
	Taiwanese in the U.S.

Main Study

Online bulletin board	Facebook groups
PPT CCRomance Forum	Cross Cultural Romance
	International Relationship & Marriage
	Taiwanese in Australia
	Taiwanese in Austria
	Taiwanese in Europe
	Taiwanese in Germany
	Taiwanese in Poland
	Taiwanese in the U.K.
	Taiwanese in the U.S.
	Taiwanese in Toronto
	Taiwanese women in the U.S.

Appendix J: Study 2 Scripts for Respondent Request

Pilot Study

Dear all,

My name is Hsin-Yi Chien, and I am a doctoral candidate of the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland. I am now working on a study that aims to explore the influence of culture on intercultural couple's relational dynamics.

If you (a) are currently engaged in a heterosexual intercultural romantic relationship, (b) are older than 18-year-old, and (c) have grown up in Taiwan, you are invited to participate in this research project. Information regarding how you balance the influence of your own and your partner's cultures within their intercultural romantic relationship is valuable to the present study. The study involves filling out an online survey, which will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. Your response will be anonymous and only my advisors and I will have access to your data. The current research is supervised by my advisors, Dr. Anita Atwell Seate (aseate@umd.edu) and Dr. Sahar Khamis (skhamis@umd.edu).

After proper completion of the questionnaire, you will be entered into a lottery for a prize of 30 US dollars. Five lottery winners will be randomly chosen after data collection is completed (the chance of winning the lottery is 1 in 50).

Will you be willing to participate in this study and share your experiences? If you are interested in participating in the present study, please contact me at email. My email is hchien@umd.edu. After receiving your email, I will provide you with a link that will direct you to the online questionnaire. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information about the present study.

Main Study

Dear all,

My name is Hsin-Yi Chien, and I am a doctoral candidate of the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland. I am working on a research project that seeks to explore how cultural and relational factors influence intercultural couples' conflict management.

If you (a) are currently engaged in a heterosexual intercultural romantic relationship, (b) are older than 18-year-old, (c) have grown up in Taiwan, (c) your partner is from a Western country (i.e. United States, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Hungary, Netherlands, New Zealand, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, France, Sweden, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, South Africa, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Czech Rep., Israel, Spain, Russia, Turkey, Greece), and (d) have not participated in my previous study that is titled "Acculturation and Intercultural Romantic Relationship," you are invited to participate in the present study. Your experiences of how you manage relational conflict with your partner will provide valuable insight. The study involves filling out an online survey, which will take approximately 60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. Your response will be anonymous and only my advisors and I will have access to your data. The current research is supervised by my advisors, Dr. Anita Atwell Seate (aseate@umd.edu) and Dr. Sahar Khamis (skhamis@umd.edu).

After proper completion of the questionnaire, you will be entered into a lottery for a prize of 50 US dollars. Ten lottery winners will be randomly chosen after data collection is completed (the chance of winning the lottery is 1 in 45).

Will you be willing to participate in this study and share your experiences? If you are interested in participating in the present study, please contact me at email. My email is hchien@umd.edu. After receiving your email, I will provide you with a link that will direct you to the online questionnaire. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information about the present study.

Appendix K: Study 2 Consent Forms

Pilot Study

Project Title	Acculturation and Intercultural Romantic Relationship
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Hsin-Yi Chien under the supervision of Dr. Atwell Seate and Dr. Sahar Khamis at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you're currently in an intercultural romantic relationship. The present study seeks to explore if intercultural couples differ in their orientations toward acculturating their partner's culture. Information regarding how you view the role of your and your partner's culture in your intercultural romantic relationship provides valuable insight to the present study.
Procedures	The procedures involve filling out an online survey about your perception the role of your and your partner's culture in your intercultural romantic relationship as well as your concerns for self and your partner. Example questionnaire items include: "Please rate the extent to which the following statement reflects your attitudes toward your and your partner's cultures when you are interacting with your partner: When my partner and I are spending our time together, I prefer if we consume more media from my culture than media from my partner's culture" and "Please indicate the extent to which the following statement represents your feelings in your current romantic relationship: My happiness is one of the most important things to me within the relationship." The questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes. After proper completion of the questionnaire, you will be entered into a lottery for a prize of 30 US dollars. The chance of winning the prize is 1 in 50. Five lottery winners will be randomly chosen after data collection is completed. Results of the lottery will be sent to you via email. If you are the lottery winner, you will be contacted by the principle investigator via email and will be asked if you prefer having your monetary award transferred to your bank account or having the award sent to your provided address. Emails containing personal information you provide during the process of discussing the preferred way of receiving your prize will be deleted immediately and permanently once these emails are made into physical copies, which will be securely stored in the principle investigator's home office. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on the compensation.
Potential Risks and	There are no known risks from participating in this research study. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the

Discomforts	questions regarding your perception of your intercultural romantic relationship. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You can decline to answer any specific questions or to end your participation at any time without penalty. A potential risk is the possibility of disclosing your personal information while discussing results of the lottery via email, for emails may be accessed by third parties. To reduce the risk, exchanged emails that contain your personal information will be deleted immediately and permanently.
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits to participants. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of intimate intercultural relationships as a potential site where acculturation could occur.
Confidentiality	In order to protect your privacy, your response will remain anonymous. Data will be stored securely on the principal investigator's computers and hard disks, which are password-protected. Hard copies of data will remain in the principal investigator's home office in a locked file cabinet. All data will be destroyed (shredded) when their use is no longer needed but not before the minimum of 10 years after data collection. Results of the lottery will be sent via emails. If you are the lottery winner, you will be contacted by the principle investigator via email and will be asked if you prefer having your monetary award transferred to your bank account or having the award sent to your provided address. Emails containing personal information you provide during the process of discussing the preferred way of receiving your prize will be deleted immediately and permanently once these emails are made into physical copies, which will be securely stored in the principle investigator's home office. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
Medical Treatment	The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating

	at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Hsin-Yi Chien Department of Communication University of Maryland 0107 Skinner Building College Park, MD 20742-7635 1-(301) 405-8077 hchien@umd.edu
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 1-301-405-0678 This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	By clicking on the button below you indicate that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. If you want a copy of this consent form, feel free to email the principal investigator of this study. You may also print this information for your records. <i>If you agree to participate, click on the button below.</i> ○ I have read the above information and I agree to participate in this study. ○ I have read the above information but I decline participation in this study.

Main Study

Project Title	Conflict Management in Intercultural Romantic Relationship (II)
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Hsin-Yi Chien under the supervision of Dr. Atwell Seate and Dr. Sahar Khamis at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you're currently in an intercultural romantic relationship. We are interested in exploring how cultural and relational factors influence intercultural couples' conflict management. Your experiences of how you manage relational conflict with your partner will provide valuable insight to the present project.
Procedures	The procedures involve filling out an online survey about your perception of the self and your intercultural relationship, what strategies you prefer and what strategies you actually enact when dealing with relational conflict with your partner, and your relationship satisfaction. Example questionnaire items include: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements: I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others" and "Please recall the conflicts you have had within your relationship and rate the extent to which each of the following conflict management strategies CHARACTERIZES how you ACTUALLY handle conflicts with your romantic partner: I insist my position be accepted during the conflict." The study will take approximately 60 minutes. After proper completion of the questionnaire, you will be entered into a lottery for a prize of 50 US dollars. The chance of winning the prize is 1 in 45. Ten lottery winners will be randomly chosen after data collection is completed. Results of the lottery will be sent to you via email. If you are the lottery winner, you will be contacted by the principle investigator via email and will be asked if you prefer having your monetary award transferred to your bank account or having the award sent to your provided address. Emails containing personal information you provide during the process of discussing the preferred way of receiving your prize will be deleted immediately and permanently once these emails are made into physical copies, which will be securely stored in the principle investigator's home office. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on the compensation.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There are no known risks from participating in this research study. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions regarding your conflict experiences within your relationship and/or your relationship satisfaction. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You can decline to answer any specific questions or to end your

	participation at any time without penalty. A potential risk is the possibility of disclosing your personal information while discussing results of the lottery via email, for emails may be accessed by third parties. To reduce the risk, exchanged emails that contain your personal information will be deleted immediately and permanently.
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits to participants. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how cultural and relational factors may work in tandem to influence intercultural partners' conflict experiences and their relationship satisfaction.
Confidentiality	In order to protect your privacy, your response will remain anonymous. Data will be stored securely on the principal investigator's computers and hard disks, which are password-protected. Hard copies of data will remain in the principal investigator's home office in a locked file cabinet. All data will be destroyed (shredded) when their use is no longer needed but not before the minimum of 10 years after data collection. Results of the lottery will be sent via emails. If you are the lottery winner, you will be contacted by the principle investigator via email and will be asked if you prefer having your monetary award transferred to your bank account or having the award sent to your provided address. Emails containing personal information you provide during the process of discussing the preferred way of receiving your prize will be deleted immediately and permanently once these emails are made into physical copies, which will be securely stored in the principle investigator's home office. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
Medical Treatment	The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

	If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Hsin-Yi Chien Department of Communication University of Maryland 0107 Skinner Building College Park, MD 20742-7635 1-(301) 405-8077 hchien@umd.edu
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