Hope, Acculturation, and English Language Proficiency in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy of East Asian International Students

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Hope, Acculturation, and English Language Proficiency in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy of East Asian International Students

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A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Counseling

December
2020

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ABSTRACT

The present study explored the predictive abilities of hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency to career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students in the United States who are originally from China, South Korea, and Japan. A total of 167 international students from China, South Korea, or Japan participated in this study. This study used a correlational design to measure the relationship between four predictor variables, including hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency and an outcome variable, career decision self-efficacy, among East Asian international students in the United States. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and a four-step hierarchical regression analysis were conducted to test four study hypotheses. The findings indicated that East Asian international students with higher levels of hope, acculturation to American culture, and English language proficiency tend to have higher levels of confidence in completing career decision-related activities. Hope was the strongest predictor in predicting East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy in the present study. Hope made a unique contribution in explaining 31.9% of the variance in career decision self-efficacy. Hope and English language proficiency together accounted for 34.8% of the variance in career decision self-efficacy. In addition, all main predictor variables were found to have significant and positive relationships with career decision self-efficacy except the acculturation to the home culture variable. Limitations, implications for counseling, and recommendations for future research were discussed.
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forward to many more years with you. I love you, my love.

To my children, you make my heart smile every day and I love you more each day. This dissertation is dedicated to you, I want you to know the importance of education, just like how my parents have taught me.

My special thanks are given to my parents, Tonglin Ai and Yanli Yang, for teaching me the value of education and supporting me whatever and whenever you can. I finally understand your love while I am raising my kids. You are the best parents ever, and I love you both. Additionally, I would like to thank the rest of my family and my extended family for always stepping up when I needed help in this unforgettable journey.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2018-2019 international students arrived in the United States from over 221 countries, accounting for 5.5% of all higher education student populations in the country (Institute for International Education [IIE], 2019). The total number of international students who attended U.S. colleges and universities in 2018-2019 was 1,095,299 with 44.0% of international students in the United States coming from East Asian countries, including China (400,392), South Korea (63,710), and Japan (18,105) (IIE, 2019). The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that international students contributed nearly $44.7 billion to the American economy in 2018 (IIE, 2019). Not only are international students a significant revenue resource for scores of higher education institutions in the United States, but they also bring in international perspectives as well as cultural and linguistic diversity to U.S. campuses (Young, 2017).

Like any higher education student, international students are expected to make decisions about future career plans upon graduation. Many international students reported a strong motivation to obtain work experiences in the United States due to their parents’ expectations and financial benefit (Lin & Flores, 2013). When making career-relevant decisions, international students frequently, however, face unique challenges, including cultural adjustment issues, linguistic barriers, and work permit restrictions (Arthur, 2007; Crockett & Hays, 2011; Lin & Flores, 2013; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). East Asian international students, compared to other international student groups, may encounter even more serious barriers in their career decision-making process due to the distinct cultural differences between collectivist and individualist cultures (Mittal & Weiling, 2006) and the noticeable linguistic differences. As can be seen from Table 1, the number
of East Asian international students has been growing continuously in the past 15 years (IIE, 2019). Although East Asian international students are valuable assets to the U.S. higher education and economy, their needs, particularly their career development needs, are not being met (Singaravelu et al., 2005).

**Table 1**

East Asian International Students Enrollment in U.S. College and Universities

<table>
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*Note:* Institute of International Education, 2019

The gap between East Asian international students’ career needs and the resistance generated by the barriers mentioned above is obvious. University career centers, however, seem ill-prepared to fill this gap by providing quality career services to this population. Many international students were not satisfied with the services that their university career centers provided (Flores & Heppner, 2002; Shen & Herr, 2004). Given that East Asian international students’ lesser satisfaction with the university career services, the importance of following best practices for their career decision-making, and the key role that career decision self-efficacy plays in the career decision-making process
(Betz et al., 2005), it is essential for career development professionals to gain a better understanding of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Furthermore, the predictor variables in the present study (hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency) were selected based on the extensive theoretical and empirical studies indicating a relationship between personal inputs, contextual factors, and career decision self-efficacy in an individual’s career decision-making process. Considering that social cognitive career theory is the main conceptual framework of this study, predictors- including hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency- were selected. Hope and English language proficiency were considered as personal inputs, and acculturation was regarded as a contextual factor. In addition, this study focuses on examining those East Asian international students who choose to remain in the United States to gain work experience after graduation.

A number of studies have investigated the role of hope (Betz et al., 2005; In, 2016; Sari & Şahin, 2013), level of acculturation (In, 2016; Liu, 2019; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017), or English language proficiency (Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998; Rivera et al., 2017) in career decision self-efficacy among culturally diverse groups. No studies, however, have been found which explored the relationship between hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students studying in the United States. The current study intends to fill this important gap.

**Background of the Problem**

International students have contributed tremendously to the U.S. economy and brought immeasurable cultural values to campuses and local American communities
International students, differently from other types of visitors to the United States, are put into immediate and direct contact with the U.S. education system upon their arrival (Spradley & Phillips, 1972). Although domestic university students may struggle with academic, financial, and social difficulties, international students additionally immediately need to deal with a new cultural and linguistic environment (Sullivan, 2010). International students have considerable pressure upon them to get a better understanding of the American higher education system and the culture, to improve their English language skills, and to make new friends in a quite short period of time (Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Sullivan, 2010).

**Career Needs and Challenges of East Asian International Students**

Further, Leong and Sedlacek (1989) found that international students tended to have very different career needs from domestic students, and they also had a greater need for career counseling than their domestic counterparts. Given that the existing university career services were initially designed for American domestic students, U.S. university career centers, however, have been facing various challenges to providing quality career services to culturally diverse student groups, thereby making it difficult for international students’ career development needs to be met.

Young (2017) found that international students who reported challenges of the English language were mostly Asian international students. In addition, their cultural values have enormous differences from dominant values embedded in American society. As a result, compared to domestic students and international students from other regions (i.e., Europe, Africa, South America, and Australia), East Asian international students
may encounter more and greater difficulties in career development in the United States as they learn to function in American society and navigate the process of adapting to living in a new country (Sullivan, 2010).

Many studies (Andrade 2006; Choi 2006; Gong & Fan 2006; Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006; Mori, 2000; Poyrazli et al. 2002; Sato & Hodge 2009; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006) have explored adjustment issues and other challenges encountered by international students, such as academic, cultural, linguistic, social, and financial issues. Few studies have focused solely on the East Asian international student population. Given that international students from East Asian countries are often used to a more culturally homogeneous society than the United States, they may experience diversity differently than individuals from those countries where their society is composed of more cultural diversity (Young, 2017). Therefore, more research is needed for this population due to the high degree of complexity of their needs.

Further, an increasing number of international students want and need to gain U.S. work experience despite the obstacles of navigating academic challenges, acculturation issues, language barriers, discrimination, career exploration, and career-decision skills development, which are vital for them to succeed in the United States. Nonetheless, based on the current visa policy, it is usually not an option for international students to work outside of campus, reduce their course loads, or skip a semester, which are typically available to American students. Due to these visa-related work restrictions, international students, if they choose to remain in the United States after completing their education, may have a very high need for learning more about their career opportunities, gathering information about the career planning process, and receiving culturally
sensitive services when making career decisions. Beside other challenges mentioned above, East Asian international students also face heightened stress in navigating how their personal career goals and interests interact with the limited work opportunities in the United States (Crockett & Hays, 2011). Clearly, East Asian international students who choose to remain in the United States after graduation need to make their career decisions by balancing their values, interests, skills, barriers, goals, options, and resources between their collectivist cultural perspective and the American individualist cultural perspective. In other words, they need to make career decisions that best fit their background and the real situation in the United States.

Factors Affecting Career Decision Self-Efficacy of East Asian International Students

In the framework of social cognitive career theory (SCCT), career decision self-efficacy is a crucial construct, which plays an important role in connecting personal and contextual factors to career decision-making behaviors (In, 2016). Thus, the distinctive needs of East Asian international students’ career decision-making require a better understanding of how those personal and contextual factors affect their career decision self-efficacy while studying in the United States. In the current study, acculturation was selected as a contextual factor, and hope and English language proficiency were selected as personal factors.

In East Asian societies, both family and community are highly likely to be involved in all kinds of decision-making processes in an individual’s life (Pope, 2015). To this end, career decision-making is traditionally not a personal decision in collectivist cultures, but a family decision (Pope et al., 1998). As an East Asian international student acculturates into American culture, they may grow to value their personal preferences
over their family’s when making career decisions. Moreover, their career decision self-efficacy, the confidence level of successfully completing career decision-relevant tasks, may also shift in the process of acculturating to American life.

Career development researchers have explored the relationship between acculturation and career decision self-efficacy (Flores et al., 2006; In, 2016; Leong, 2001; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017). The findings consistently showed that higher levels of acculturation to the United States are associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy. In (2016) used a sample of 213 Korean international graduate students in the United States and found that acculturation to the home culture, however, may not be predictive of career decision self-efficacy. Furthermore, Leong (2001) suggested that Asian Americans with lower levels of acculturation (to American culture) were more likely to experience career adjustment issues, including occupational stress. As a result, acculturation may affect an international student’s behaviors of finding career information and engaging in cross-cultural interaction with a domestic person (Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017). Compared to the general international student population, East Asian international students have not received enough attention in research. To date, no studies have been found which investigated the relationship between acculturation and career decision self-efficacy for the East Asian international student population, including students from China, South Korea, and Japan.

Hope, as a human psychological strength, may have a positive impact on career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. According to Snyder’s (2002) hope theory, higher hope individuals likely generate more plans and greater motivation to reach their valued goals than their lower hope counterparts. Given that hope
and career decision self-efficacy are both beliefs toward expected goals, it is reasonable to assume that they are conceptually related constructs (Peterson & Byron, 2008). With that said, hope is possibly a valuable variable that deserves further investigation of its relationship with career decision self-efficacy.

Little research has examined the association between hope and career decision self-efficacy. The existing literature has suggested a strong positive link between the two (Betz et al., 2005; Sari & Şahin, 2013). To date, only one study has been found to explore this relationship in the East Asian international student population. Findings from this study seem to confirm previous researchers’ propositions. In (2016) found that hope was positively associated with career decision self-efficacy by analyzing a sample of 213 Korean international undergraduate students. In this study, hope was also the strongest variable in predicting career decision self-efficacy compared to acculturation to the United States and acculturation to Korea.

In Confucianism-influenced countries, an individual’s hope, including the meaning of goals, sources of agency, and types of pathways, may be greatly affected by their family and community (In, 2016). As East Asian international students continue to acculturate into American society, it is, however, unclear to what extent their original Confucian values continue to influence their hopes and career decision-making while studying in the United States. This being the case, more research is needed to explore this issue.

English is the predominant language in the United States. Thus, the capability of using the English language is generally thought to be the primary factor affecting international students’ success in adapting to American society (Gabriel, 1973; Surdam &
It is not difficult to understand that English language proficiency has been a popular construct for the international student population. Researchers have investigated the association between English language proficiency, social self-efficacy (Kuo, 2011; Lin & Betz, 2009), and career self-efficacy (Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998). The consistent findings suggested that higher English language proficiency was related to greater social and career self-efficacy in linguistically and ethnically diverse groups. There have been, however, no studies examining the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. More research is needed to better understand the effect of English language proficiency on East Asian international students’ sense of confidence in completing career decision-related tasks.

Finally, although the career development situation of East Asian international students can be broadly generalized, it is particularly worth noting that each student’s experience can differ considerably. East Asian international students, even from the same country, may have substantially different career development needs and challenges. As such, it is critical to understand that researchers should constantly question their assumptions in a study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency on career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students studying in the United States. By examining this relationship, it is hoped to gain a better understanding of how hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency as predictors relate to career decision self-efficacy for East
Asian international students. It is noteworthy that acculturation will be treated as two separate predictors in the present study, acculturation to American culture and acculturation to the home culture.

Significance of the Study

Although there have been investigations into career decision self-efficacy of culturally diverse populations (Betz et al., 2005; Sari & Şahin, 2013) and the role of acculturation in career decision self-efficacy among international students from South Korea (In, 2016; Nadermann & Eissensstat, 2017), no studies have been conducted to explore how hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency relate to career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students in general. Given that East Asian international students’ lesser satisfaction with the university career services, the high degree of complexity of their career decision-making needs while studying in the United States, and the important role that career decision self-efficacy plays in career decision-making process (Betz et al., 2005), research is needed to understand career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students as well as the predictors that can promote their career decision self-efficacy. This study proposes to investigate this important gap in the literature.

Definition of Terms

The key concepts used in this study are defined as follows:

East Asian International Student refers to a university student (either undergraduate, graduate, or non-degree) who is originally from an East Asian country and currently enrolled in a U.S. higher education institution with a temporary visa including F-1, J-1, or M-1 visa types. In this study, East Asian international students...
indicate those students from China, South Korea, and Japan, who are currently studying in the United States.

*Self-Efficacy* refers to an individual’s belief in their ability to successfully complete a particular behavior or a specific type of behaviors, and it is assumed to help determine their choice of activities, environment, effort expenditure, persistence, thought patterns, and emotional responses when encountered by obstacles (Bandura, 1977, 1986).

*Career Decision Self-efficacy* was initially defined by Taylor and Betz as the belief that an individual can successfully perform the tasks involved in making a career decision (Betz & Luzzo, 1996).

*Hope* refers to “a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally-derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed determination) and pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 571). In other words, the concept of hope contains three components: desired goals, plans to reach these goals, and the motivation to achieve these goals.

*Acculturation* refers to “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p. 698).

*English Language Proficiency* is the ability of an individual to use the English language in four language domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The specific research questions addressed in the study are as follows:

Research Question 1: To what extent does hope impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?
Research Question 2: To what extent do acculturation to American culture and acculturation to the home culture impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

Research Question 3: To what extent does English language proficiency impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

The present study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Hypothesis 2: Greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Hypothesis 3: Greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Hypothesis 4: Greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Summary

In 2018-2019 over a million international students attended U.S. colleges and universities from over 211 countries (IIE, 2019). East Asian international students from China, South Korea, and Japan, accounted for 43.0% of all international students (IIE, 2019). Chinese and South Korean international students were among the top three international student groups (IIE, 2019). Although East Asian international students are
assets for U.S. higher education and economy, their career development needs have not been met while studying in the United States (Singaravelu et al., 2005). Given that career decision self-efficacy is an essential factor affecting an individual’s career development (Huang, 2015), it is critical to gain information and a better understanding of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. Within the theoretical framework of the social cognitive career theory, the present study, therefore, will investigate the effects of two personal factors (hope and English language proficiency) and a contextual factor (acculturation) on career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students studying in the United States.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a summary and review of related empirical and theoretical literature pertaining to hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students in the United States. The chapter starts with an introduction to the cultural characteristics of East Asian international students. Section two introduces the hope theory (Snyder, 1994), the role of hope in career development, current research findings on hope with East Asian international students and hope with career decision self-efficacy. Section three focuses on the acculturation framework (Berry, 1991), acculturation experience of East Asian international students, and the empirical research findings on the relationship between their acculturation experience and career development, especially the association of acculturation and career decision self-efficacy. Section four concentrates on the role of English language proficiency in educational settings and social settings, as well as its relationship with East Asian international students’ psychological adjustment and social/career self-efficacy. Finally, section five describes the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1996) and career decision self-efficacy with culturally diverse university students.

Cultural Characteristics of East Asian International Students

The United States is the most popular destination for studying abroad in the world. Studying abroad is considered to be a beneficial avenue to enhance personal and professional growth for international students (Cao et al., 2017). The main purpose of studying in the United States for international students is to achieve their academic and career goals (Lin & Yi, 1997). The total population of international students in the United
States has climbed dramatically over the past decade, from 671,616 in 2008-2009 to 1,095,299 in 2018-2019, which was 5.5% of the total higher education enrollment in the United States (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2019). International students contributed tremendously to the American economy and brought immeasurable academic and cultural value to campuses and local communities (National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, 2018). Notably, many international students were from East Asia, including China (36.6%), South Korea (4.8%), and Japan (1.7%) (IIE, 2019). The total of which accounted for 43.0% of all international students in the United States during the 2018-2019 academic year (IIE, 2019). In the present study, the phrase “East Asian international students” will be used, and it especially refers to international students studying in the United States who are originally from China, South Korea, and Japan.

International students frequently encounter considerable academic, cultural, social, linguistic, and career development challenges while they are studying in the United States (Lee & Rice, 2007; McDowell et al., 2012; Pedersen, 1991). Mainly, international students who come from a collectivist culture reported that it is challenging to adjust to life in America due to the differences between collectivist and individualist cultures (Mittal & Weiling, 2006). Traditionally, individuals in collectivist cultures tend to value connectedness and social harmony, to have respect for authority and elders, and to place trust in group decisions. Individuals in individualist cultures, however, tend to value independence and self-expression, to prize uniqueness and autonomy, and to place trust in individual decisions (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Pope, 1999; Tata & Leong, 1994).

Despite the within-group differences among international students in the United States, this study mainly focuses on international students from collectivist cultures in
East Asia, particularly those cultures that are rooted in Confucianism, including China, South Korea, and Japan, as Confucianism is the core of East Asian culture (Young, 2017).

Confucianism, also known as Ruism, was developed from the teachings of Confucius, China’s best-known philosopher and educator during the Spring and Autumn Era (770-476 BC). Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system that highly focuses on the relationships and roles of people in the family and the community (Riegel, 1993). Confucius believed that every individual should act ethically and fulfill those roles (Yao, 2000). His thoughts are well demonstrated in the following quote: “Let the ruler be a ruler, minister be a minister, father be a father, and son be a son” (Legge trans., 1893, 12:11:2). Given that Confucian values emphasize people’s relationships and roles in society, the following three Confucian tenets will be particularly discussed: interdependent relationships, hierarchical relationships, and filial piety. This may lead to a better understanding of the way that East Asian international students make career decisions.

**Interdependent Relationships**

The way people define themselves and perceive their relationships with others is one of the most widely applied concepts to examine cultural differences (Brewer & Chen, 2007). In individualist cultures, such as in the United States, people tend to view themselves as independent of the environment and other people; inversely, in collectivist cultures, such as in East Asian countries, an individual tends to stay in an interdependent relationship with the environment, and one’s self-concept is primarily defined based on social embeddedness and interdependence with others (Ashman et al., 2006; Brewer &
Chen, 2007; Pope, 1999). East Asian international students, therefore, depending on their family’s adherence to traditional values, tend to value harmony and alignment with groups or society while putting less emphasis on individuation, differentiation, and autonomy (Weisz et al., 1984).

Drawing upon previous studies, researchers found that the influence of interdependent relationships could be merged in problem-solving or decision-making processes (Park-Saltzman et al., 2012; Pope et al., 1998; Roland, 2006). Pope et al. (1998) reported that, in Asian countries, decision-making processes are influenced by a broader social context of people rather than by individuals. Roland (2006) stated that interdependent self-concept might lead to flexible interpersonal boundaries. As such, East Asian international students are likely to attach great importance to family and friends’ advice when making decisions (Park-Saltzman et al., 2012; Yeh & Wang, 2000).

**Hierarchical Social Relationships**

Hierarchy has traditionally been fundamental at all levels of Confucianism-influenced countries such as China, South Korea, and Japan. The *Book of Rites*, also known as the *Classic of Rites* or *Liji* (礼记), is a core text of the Confucian canon (Riegel, 1993). In this Confucian classic text, the role of each family member is described,

…kindness on the part of the father and filial duty on that of the son; gentleness on the part of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of the elders, and deference on that of juniors. (Dai & Dai, ca. 202 B.C.E/2004, p. 41)
Every family member has a clearly defined role that was designed to minimize disagreements and to maintain harmony (Chen, 1982). For example, when East Asian international students make career decisions that differ from their parents' preferences, they are expected to show respect and obey their parents to reduce conflicts and maintain a harmonious relationship with their parents. If children followed their parents’ expectations, parents, in return, are expected to provide financial support and other relevant resources to their children.

Park-Saltzman et al. (2012) emphasized that clearly defined role expectations of family members can be extended beyond the boundaries of familial relationships, such as in professional relationships. In East Asia, people are hierarchically categorized into different social groups, such as seniors, equals, and juniors, and different hierarchical statuses are entitled to various amounts of power (Chiu, 1991). Traditionally, the senior is expected to take care of the junior in a professional relationship, while the junior is expected to respect the senior and maintain the senior’s dignity. A junior is regarded as “good” when he or she is humble, follows the rules, and obeys the senior unconditionally (Park-Saltzman et al., 2012). East Asian international students, therefore, may find it very difficult to object to the suggestions from those they would view as a senior person, such as their parents, teachers, and managers. For example, with regard to identifying career goals, if a respectable professor strongly suggests their student to become a university professor, this student may feel guilty and fear not being accepted by the professor for wanting to work at a technology company.

**Filial Piety**

Filial piety is a core concept in Confucianism, which includes underlying beliefs
about how children are expected to treat their parents (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). This prevailing cultural characteristic affects a wide variety of personal and interpersonal behaviors (Hsu & Wang, 2011). For example, it has a direct impact on an individual’s psychological, social, and financial well-being (Ikels, 2004). It requires children to fulfill the economic and material needs of their parents and take care of their emotional well-being, such as support, attendance, deference, compliance, respect, and love (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Additionally, the influence of filial piety goes beyond a person’s family. It also prescribes obedience and respect from young people to the elderly in society. An individual’s filial behavior is a crucial indicator of their maturity and well-adjustment in a Confucianism-influenced society (Ikels, 2004).

Yeh (2003) proposed the Dual Filial Piety model, addressing two types of filial piety: reciprocal filial piety and authoritarian filial piety. Reciprocal filial piety is associated with personal affection and gratitude, whereas authoritarian filial piety is related to role obligation and hierarchy (Yeh, 2006). Reciprocal filial piety includes the emotional and spiritual connection between children and their parents, and it encompasses equal treatment of both sides (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Authoritarian filial piety is primarily related to suppressing one’s wishes to meet parental expectations (Yeh & Bedford, 2003), and it emphasizes the treatment of people based on their positions in the hierarchy (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). The obligation of pleasing parents and fulfilling their needs is the key to authoritarian filial piety. The common ground of both types of filial piety is, however, the obedience and submission of an individual to those who are older or have a higher ranking in the hierarchy (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). As such, East Asian international students may experience stress if there are conflicts between their
career interests and their parents’ choices for them when it comes to career decision-making. For instance, there is often disagreement between international students and their parents about staying in or leaving the United States after graduation.

Hope

This section provides an overview of the conceptualization of hope and the role of hope in career development. Current literature on hope with barriers and career decision self-efficacy are also addressed.

Conceptualization of Hope

As a human strength, hope has received increasing attention over the last half-century. There are several theoretical conceptualizations of hope, as numerous theologians and philosophers have probed into the topic.

In the 1960s, Lynch (1965) argued that hope infinitely approaches the very center and heart of people. From the perspective of Fromm (1968), hope was a necessary condition for not only personal but also societal transformation. Fromm posited that hope does not mean waiting passively or unrealistically forcing circumstances which will never occur; instead, hope, featured by an internal readiness, is an always-ready state of unconsciously or consciously waiting for something unexpected, and intense activeness that is not yet consumed.

In the 1970s, according to Wu (1972), hope originated from the suffering and discontentment in life within horizons that presented possibilities and meanings. Hope is a persistent belief in the possibility that something will become different from its current status, which is a creationary pull between the future and the now. By restoring the confidence of people in the future, their government, and themselves, hope can be
revitalized (Cousins, 1974). Hope could be encouraged, but it neither relies on logic or
fact nor emerges simply because of being ordered. Further, it is the desire for better
things that generates the power of hope, providing the energy to get started and a sense of
purpose for people.

In the 1980s, Godfrey (1987) classified hope into two types, namely fundamental
hope and ultimate hope, which have different affective, cognitional, and conative
implications from his perspective. To be specific, fundamental hope is different from
ultimate hope in that it does not target a goal but orients toward a future featured by
spiritual openness; in contrast, ultimate hope prevails over other kinds of hope and is
concerned with actions taken for something believed to be possible and desirable, even
though it is hard to achieve.

More recently, Snyder and his colleagues began to work on their hope theory in
the 1990s, and they found that hope was an important factor in determining human
behaviors (Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006). Hope has been conceptualized as not only a
trait-like construct (Snyder et al., 1991) but also a state-like construct (Snyder et al.,
1996). A trait-like construct tends to be fixed and hard to change; conversely, a state-like
construct is likely to be momentary and very changeable (Luthans et al., 2007). Given the
purpose of the present study, hope is regarded as a trait-like construct, which also can be
understood as a personal psychological appraisal of hopefulness (Peterson & Byron,
2008), as this proposed study focuses on hope across time, settings, and situations.

Snyder et al. (1991) defined hope as “a cognitive set that is based on a
reciprocally derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed determination) and
pathways (planning to meet goals)” (p. 572). This definition indicates that hope has three
primary components: pathways, agency, and goals.

First, pathways are the perceived capabilities to find a workable route or multiple routes to the preferred goals, which is also called pathway thinking. Pathways are possible cognitive routes to the desired goals (Snyder, 1994). When people plan ways to achieve their goals, they are participating in pathway thinking (Feldman et al., 2009). When facing potential barriers, higher hope individuals tend to generate more pathways to their goals (Snyder, 2002). Second, agency refers to the willingness to use these pathways to reach their desired goals (Snyder, 2000). Agency refers to an individual’s motivation or willingness to begin and continue movement on devised routes (Snyder et al., 1991). Agency thinking serves as an engine in the goal-seeking process. Third, goals are the endpoint of a series of a human’s mental actions (Snyder, 2000; Snyder et al., 1997). Samuel Coleridge explained the core nature of goals in his book, *Work Without Hope*, mentioning, “Hope without an object cannot live” (1912, p. 447). Thus, goals are objective, and they are not vague. In other words, when people are attempting to get things done, the “things” are the goals they are seeking. Goals include everything that people want to get, do, be, experience, and create (Feldman & Kubota, 2004).

Additionally, it is essential to understand that hope is a perception, not a reality. Pathway thoughts do not have to be concrete, and agency thoughts do not have to coincide with reality (Feldman et al., 2009). People are motivated by their hope to figure out ways to achieve their goals. That means, in hope, there is some room for individuals to explore potential possibilities for their lives.

*Hope and Career Development*

Hope has a rich history in the positive psychology literature (Snyder et al., 1991).
Hope has been found to have positive relationships with a variety of outcomes across disciplines, including academic achievement (Gilman et al., 2006; Michael, 2000; Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Snyder et al., 2002), athletic performance (Curry et al., 1997), frequency of exercise and activity (Anderson & Feldman, 2019), psychological adjustment (Chang & DeSimone, 2001; Feldman & Snyder, 2005), social competence (Barnum et al., 1998), and a sense of life meaning (Feldman & Snyder, 2005).

Given that assumptions about human strengths can potentially enrich career research paradigms (Savickas, 2003), vocational researchers and vocational psychologists have investigated the relationship between career development and many critically positive personal traits, including hope. Juntunen and Wettersten (2006) have extended Snyder's (2000) theory of hope to the field of career development, operationalizing the construction of work hope and developing the *Work Hope Scale* (WHS). As a critical construct in the field of positive psychology, hope has been found to apply to career development research (Clarke et al., 2018; Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006; Niles et al., 2010; Pangelinan, 2015).

Over the years, empirical evidence has supported that hope has a positive relationship with various vocational constructs, such as job performance (Combs et al., 2010; Luthans et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2007; Peterson & Byron, 2008), job satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007; Tombaugh et al., 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), workplace creativity (Rego et al., 2009), work happiness (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), organizational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), career development skills (Sung et al., 2011), career development outcomes (Sung et al., 2011), career decidedness (Hirschi, 2014), career planning (Hirschi, 2014; Kenny et al., 2010), and vocational

Much attention has been given to the relationship between hope and job performance and job satisfaction in industry areas. Luthans et al. (2005) collected data from a sample of 422 Chinese workers in three factories in China. They found that Chinese workers’ hope, optimism, resiliency, and the combination of the three facets were all positively associated with their job performance rated by their supervisors. In a similar vein, Combs et al. (2010) conducted a study using a sample of 160 workers from a private company in India. The authors also found that Indian workers’ hope positively predicted their job performance. Peterson and Byron (2008) found that hope positively related to job performance, and that higher hope employees, which included sales employees, mortgage brokers, and management executives, were more likely to have higher ratings of job performance from their supervisors. Compared to less hopeful employees, the results suggested that more hopeful employees produced more and better solutions when they encountered impediments along the way to achieving their goals, which suggests that hope’s contribution to job performance may be associated with the way that employees deal with the difficult situations in their organizations.

Luthans et al. (2007), moreover, explored how hope, optimism, resilience, efficacy, and the composite factor of these four were associated with job performance and satisfaction separately. The total 259 survey participants consisted of 115 engineers and technicians from a large company and 144 employees from a midsized insurance firm. Their findings were consistent with other studies that the composite factor of hope, optimism, resilience, and efficacy positively related to job performance and satisfaction.
Additionally, this composite factor was a stronger predictor than its four individual facets. Youssef and Luthans (2007) explored the impact of positive psychology (hope, optimism, and resilience) on work-related outcomes, including job performance, job satisfaction, work happiness, and organizational commitment. All 1,032 survey participants were employees from a wide range of positions in 135 midwestern organizations in the United States. The findings suggested that hope was positively associated with all work-related outcomes. More recently, another study with a relatively large sample (N = 849) indicated that hope, as a mediator, partially mediated the relationship between positive affect and job satisfaction and fully mediated the relationship between positive affect and organizational commitment (Tombaugh et al., 2011).

Further, studies have also supported the positive relationship between the role of hope and workplace creativity (Rego et al., 2009), career development skills (Sung et al., 2011), and career development outcomes (Sung et al., 2011). Rego et al. (2009) explored the relationship between employees’ hope and their creativity in the workplace through hierarchical regression analyses on a sample of 125 individuals working in 43 small or medium-sized companies in the United States. In this study, employees’ hope consisted of two factors: waypower (pathway) and composite hope (agency); and employees’ creativity included three dimensions: novel ideas, creative ideas, and ideas championing. The authors found that employees with greater hope had higher levels of creativity, either directly or through the mediating role of happiness. In addition, the composite hope (agency) was positively associated with all three dimensions in creativity, and it predicted creative ideas and ideas championing through happiness as a mediator. The waypower
(pathway) positively correlated with overall creativity and ideas championing.

Sung et al. (2011) explored the role of hope in career development skills and outcomes by analyzing a sample of 132 undergraduate students from a public Midwestern university in the United States. The authors examined two components of hope—agency and pathways. In addition, career development skills (career exploration, person-environment fit, goal setting, social/prosocial/work readiness, self-regulated learning, and the utilization of emotional and instrumental support) and career development outcomes (self-efficacy, positive self-attributions, vocational identity, the magnitude of vocational interests, and proactivity) were examined. Findings suggested that higher agency aspects of hope were associated with higher levels of career development skills and outcomes. Pathways aspects of hope were not found to be predictive of career development skills and outcomes.

To summarize, the previous studies demonstrated strong evidence indicating that hope is positively associated with many career development variables, such as job performance, job satisfaction, workplace creativity, work happiness, organizational commitment, career development skills, career outcomes, and vocational identity. Most of these studies, however, focused on employees from organizations, rather than university students. Further, little attention has been paid to East Asian international student populations.

**Hope and Barriers**

Individuals with barriers based upon discrimination associated with gender, race, age, sexual orientation, social class, language, and immigration status may face a variety of impediments that influence their hope. These personal characteristics shape one’s view
of the world and the perception of goals (Snyder, 2000). Snyder (1993) stated that “To keep hope alive, we therefore must make certain that our society allows a wider segment of our citizens to have access to a more diverse and obtainable set of goals” (p. 285). It is notable that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds may have less accessibility in pursuing educational and career goals. Juntunen and Wettersten (2006) pointed out that Snyder’s hope theory may have the potential to address important vocational concerns and provide a helpful paradigm to understand factors associated with the career-related concerns of a diverse population.

Related literature examined the role of hope in the lives of culturally diverse populations, such as urban adolescents (Diemer & Blustein, 2007; Hirschi et al., 2015; Steward et al., 1998), university students outside of the United States (Bernardo et al., 2018; Yakushko & Sokolova, 2010), minority college students in the United States (Jackson & Neville, 1998; Thompson et al., 2014), and international students in the United States (In, 2016; Marks et al., 2018). Diemer and Blustein (2007) suggested that vocational hope potentially plays an important role in the work lives of urban teenagers based on their study of 220 urban high school students in the northeastern United States. Hope may help urban adolescents overcome systematic barriers by maintaining a positive avenue to their future (Steward et al., 1998).

In support of the argument that hope has a strong connection with career development issues of underrepresented populations, Juntunen and Wettersten (2006) posited work hope to be specifically linked to the career development of individuals who are members of underrepresented groups. They defined work hope as "a positive motivational state that is directed at work and work-related goals and is composed of the
presence of work-related goals and both the agency and the pathways for achieving those goals" (Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006, p. 97). Jackson and Neville (1998) conducted a study on how racial identities influence both vocational identity and hope among African American college students. They found that hope was positively related to vocational identity. Beyond that, hope was also significantly associated with parents’ highest education level and academic performance. Based on these findings, the authors called for further attention to the role of hope in the career development process (Jackson & Neville, 1998).

Additionally, Hirschi et al. (2015) investigated a sample of 228 at-risk Swiss adolescents in Switzerland. The authors found that hope was positively associated with career exploration behaviors. Given these findings, it is reasonable to believe that hope is a substantial construct that can increase our understanding of the career development process for underrepresented populations.

Little attention has been paid to examining the role of hope in the lives of international students in the United States, particularly East Asian international students. It is important to be clear that an individual’s cultural status in their home country is different from when they are in the host country, as they maybe a member of the dominant culture in their home country. The current study focuses on East Asian international students who are currently studying in the United States.

Both hope theory (Snyder, 2000) and work hope theory (Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006) suggested that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may experience specific difficulties that impact their goals, pathways, and agency. To that end, East Asian international students who were not born and raised in the United States
and whose native language is not American English may experience larger challenges when it comes to making career-related decisions compared to domestic students in the United States. As such, East Asian international students’ career goals, pathways to the desired goals, and motivation (agency) may be influenced by many factors such as language barriers, acculturation, work permit-related stress, financial situation, and family impact. Marks et al. (2018) examined the relationship between work hope and dimensions of acculturation using a sample of 340 international undergraduate students studying in the United States. It is notable that 90% of these 340 participants were from Asian countries such as China and South Korea. Results indicated that international undergraduate students with higher work hope tended to have greater levels of dominant society immersion, ethnic society immersion, and ethnic identity.

In summary, the study of the role of hope in East Asian international students has not yet received sufficient attention in the professional literature on career development. Considering that hope may help overcome obstacles (Snyder, 2000), it is essential to understand how hope can be helpful for East Asian international students in career development while they are navigating cultural adjustment challenges.

**Hope and Career Decision Self-Efficacy**

The vast majority of the existing empirical studies related to hope were based on Snyder's (2002) hope theory, which consists of three components: agency, pathways, and goals. According to Snyder's theory, higher hope individuals tend to possess greater levels of agency and to generate more pathways to reach their valued goals. Self-efficacy, somewhat similar to hope, refers to positive self-beliefs with regard to the capability to perform certain tasks successfully (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is conceptualized
similarly to some components in hope (Peterson & Byron, 2008). First, self-efficacy is also regarded as a trait-like and a state-like construct (Maurer & Pierce, 1998). Second, both constructs are about beliefs toward expected success (Peterson & Byron, 2008). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that hope and career decision self-efficacy are closely related conceptually (Peterson & Byron, 2008).

To date, few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between hope and career decision self-efficacy directly. According to the current literature, most studies indicated that there was a positive relationship between the two (Betz et al., 2005; In, 2016; Sari & Şahin, 2013). For example, Betz et al. (2005) conducted correlation analyses examining the relationship between hope and career decision self-efficacy in a sample of 400 university students. These students were all from a small, private university in the midwestern United States, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. The Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983) were used in the study. Findings indicated that there were low to moderate correlations between all the subscales of hope and career decision self-efficacy. Specifically, the correlation between the agency of hope and career decision self-efficacy was .52, and the pathways of hope demonstrated a correlation of .43 with career decision self-efficacy.

Moreover, Sari & Şahin (2013) found that high school seniors with higher levels of hope in Turkey tended to have greater levels of career decision self-efficacy. Three hundred two high school seniors from three schools in Trabzon participated in the study. In line with previous findings, the results also suggested that hope, along with locus of control, was a strong predictor of career decision self-efficacy.
One exception was Schemmel's (2000) study, which suggested that hope did not predict the improvement of career decision self-efficacy after completing a career decision-making workshop among adults. In other words, compared to lower hope groups in the pre-treatment, higher hope groups had no difference regarding the change in the levels of career decision self-efficacy after receiving the workshop. Nevertheless, it is notable that the sample size of this study was relatively small (n = 61). Of these 61 participants, 58 were Caucasian. Hence, it is arguable that the sampling of this study might be a limitation that impacted the results.

Moreover, only one study up to the present has been conducted to investigate the relationship between hope and career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students. In (2016) explored the importance of hope in career decision self-efficacy. The author examined how acculturation and hope predicted career decision self-efficacy using a sample of 213 Korean international undergraduate students studying in the United States. In also found that hope was the strongest predictor of career decision self-efficacy among all examined predictor variables, which included acculturation to the host culture and acculturation to the home culture.

Furthermore, under the influence of Confucian collectivist culture, the career decision process for East Asian international students may not be a personal matter, but more so a family decision. Culturally, in societies that value collectivism more than individualism, parents, family members, and communities usually play essential roles in one's career decision-making process (Kanomata, 1998; Pope et al., 1998; Pope, 1999). Realistically, most international students receive funding from their family (IIE, 2019). Without financial support from their immediate family, it would be very difficult for most
East Asian international students to study and live in the United States. A family may not force a student to make a career decision because they are providing financial support, but the student may feel guilty if they do not fulfill their parents' expectations. Given this information, it is not difficult to understand that an individual's career decision is a family decision in East Asian societies.

Consequently, East Asian international students’ hope may be hugely influenced by other members in their families, including the meaning of goals, sources of agency, and types of pathways (In, 2016). Confucian values tend to emphasize group harmony, family honor, academic achievement, and career success (Lowe, 2005; Pope, 1999). Therefore, East Asian international students may pursue a career goal based on their family's interests or wishes rather than their own; they may derive their motivation and willingness (agency) from the perceived obligation to the family, filial piety, and thoughts of paying or giving back to their parents, and additionally, they may produce interdependent pathways to their desired career goals (In, 2016).

**Acculturation**

This section focuses on the conceptualization of acculturation, acculturation experience of East Asian international students, and the studies that have explored acculturation and career development, especially the association of acculturation and career decision self-efficacy.

*Conceptualization of Acculturation*

The first known person to have used the term "acculturation" in the English language was John Wesley Powell in 1880 (Sam & Berry, 2006). Powell (1883) later defined “acculturation” as psychological changes that take place within an individual
through cross-cultural contact. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) proposed a formal definition of acculturation as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). According to Sam and Berry (2006), this definition is regarded as to be the classical definition for the concept of “acculturation”. Another more influential definition was proposed by Berry (2005) as “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (p. 698).

Acculturation can be understood as both a dynamic process and a relatively stable outcome (Sam & Berry, 2006). With respect to the process component, it is vital to be clear that acculturation is a two-way process that may create changes in either or both culture patterns when two or more cultural groups and their members come into contact (Berry, 1997). Most acculturation literature involves a dominant culture and a non-dominant or target culture. Importantly, dominance is not a necessity for acculturation to occur (Sam & Berry, 2006). On the other hand, acculturation can also be viewed as an outcome, or a strategy. These acculturation strategies include assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration (Berry, 1997) and are based on which approach individuals or their groups adopt in the cultural exchange.

More specifically, Berry (1997) proposed a two-dimensional model for the acculturation strategy, including original culture maintenance and host culture participation. Berry contended that there were two dimensions determining the strategies that individuals and groups adopt in the acculturation process: (a) cultural maintenance,
indicating the extent to which the original cultural identity is valued and preserved; and (b) host culture contact and participation, implying the degree to which groups and individuals become involved in new cultures. When the two dimensions are considered simultaneously, four strategies (assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration) for acculturation become available.

In addition, acculturation is a complex concept because it is associated with a variety of behavioral, cognitive, affective, and environmental factors that exist prior to and during the acculturation process (Berry, 1997). The concept of acculturation has been studied across academic disciplines such as anthropology, linguistics, history, political science, psychology, and counseling (Sullivan, 2010). It has been found that acculturation typically occurs in cross-cultural studies with culturally diverse groups such as immigrants, refugees, and international students.

**Table 2**

*Acculturation Strategies*

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*Note:* Berry, 1980

*Acculturation and East Asian International Students*

East Asian international students mostly come from collectivist societies. Their home cultures differ notably from the dominant American individualist culture. Starting from the very first day they arrive in the United States, they need to adjust immediately to
American society, an English-speaking environment, and the U.S. higher educational system (Arthur, 2004; Khoo & Abu-Rasain, 1994; Mori, 2000; Poyrazli et al., 2004). Compared to European international students who are from more individualist societies, East Asian international students may face more challenges and barriers (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Researchers provided an understanding of the challenges and barriers that East Asian international students frequently encountered while adapting to American university life. Major cross-cultural adjustment concerns for East Asian international students are mostly linked to their academic performance (Zhou et al., 2006), language challenges (Hayes & Lin, 1994), socio-cultural adjustments (Constantine et al., 2005; Swagler & Ellis, 2003), discrimination (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), and career development (Mau, 2000; Pope, 2011; Pope et al., 1998; Singaravelu et al., 2005).

Moreover, these challenges and barriers may lead to acculturative stress in East Asian international students. Berry (1995) proposed a definition of acculturative stress as one kind of stress, in which the stressors are identified as having their source in the process of acculturation; [with] a particular set of stress behaviors that occur during acculturation, such as lowered mental health status (especially confusion, anxiety, depression), feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion. (p. 479)

Many studies have also reported that the acculturation process can be very overwhelming for East Asian international students studying in the United States (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002; Wang et al. 2012; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). For example, Yeh and Inose (2003) investigated the predictors of acculturative stress, including age, gender, English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness, in a sample of 359
international students in the United States. Findings suggested that, although both European international students and Asian international students experienced acculturative stress, the stress levels were immensely different. International students from Europe exhibited much less acculturative stress than their counterparts from Asia. Sato and Hodge (2015) studied the views of eight Japanese exchange students on their experiences in the United States. The findings of this study indicated that these Japanese exchange students’ academic and social struggles were mainly from social distance with domestic students, the incongruence between collectivism and individualism, isolation in group discussions, and instructors’ negativity. Furthermore, previous studies suggested that international students who were less acculturated to the host culture reported both higher levels of acculturative stress in general (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002) and psychological distress (Wilton & Constantine, 2003).

East Asian international students in the United States may face fundamental cross-cultural differences due to the dissimilarities between Confucian values and American cultural values. It is important to recognize their specific challenges, barriers, and psychological distress while acculturating into American society. During studies in the United States, most East Asian international students are embedded in a pattern of dealing with stressful situations while absorbing the mainstream culture and maintaining their own cultural heritage.

**Acculturation and Career Development**

Researchers examined the link between acculturation and career development issues, such as career and academic decisions (Flores & O’Brien, 2002; Tang et al., 1999), career decision self-efficacy (In, 2016; Nadermann & Eisenstat, 2017), career
decision-making style (Mau, 2000), career consideration (Rivera et al., 2007), career aspirations (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007), career outcome expectations (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007), vocational identity (Shih & Brown, 2000), and perceived career barriers (Holloway-Frieson, 2018).

Acculturation is considered to be one of the most important contextual variables that has been investigated in explaining vocational behaviors among culturally diverse populations (Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998; Ojeda et al., 2012; Pope, 2011, 2015; Pope et al., 1998; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Rivera et al., 2007; Shih & Brown, 2000). For example, many studies explored the role of acculturation in career development among Latinx populations. Miranda and Umhoefer (1998) found that acculturation was the strongest predictor of career self-efficacy for Latino adults compared to other variables, including language use, educational level, country of origin, and length of stay in the United States. The findings of this study suggested that Latino adults with higher levels of acculturation tended to have greater career self-efficacy. Holloway-Frieson (2018) examined the association between acculturation and perceived career barriers of 138 Latino/a college students from two Hispanic-serving institutions in the United States. Those students with higher levels of acculturation were likely to have fewer perceived ethnic and gender career barriers.

Despite that acculturation has been given increasing importance as an essential variable in the career development of ethnic and racial minorities, relatively few studies have been conducted on the relationship of acculturation and career development for international students, especially for East Asian international students in the United States. Shih and Brown (2000) found that lower levels of acculturation were predictive of
higher levels of vocational identity by analyzing a sample of 112 undergraduate and graduate Taiwanese international students in midwestern universities in the United States. Mau (2000) explored the role of cultural differences in career decision-making styles and career decision self-efficacy by comparing two groups of college students in the United States. Mau studied 540 American domestic students and 1,026 Taiwanese international students. Furthermore, the positive relationship between acculturation and career decision self-efficacy has been found to be the most consistent finding related to the topic of acculturation for the East Asian international student population (In, 2016; Naderman & Essenstat, 2017).

In summary, given the numerous academic, linguistic, cultural, and financial issues relevant to East Asian international students studying in the United States, it is important to pay more attention to the applicability of acculturation to the career development context of East Asian international students.

**Acculturation and Career Decision Self-Efficacy**

An increasing number of international students stated that they want to work in the United States after graduation (National Career Development Association, 2015). More and more East Asian international students either hope to get a job and stay in the United States or get work experience prior to returning home. With respect to finding a job, East Asian international students may face tremendous barriers, including language barriers, complex immigration procedures, intricate work permit requirements, and even a lack of American work experience. Regardless, East Asian international students still place a high priority on career-related matters (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000).

In East Asian societies, an individual’s family and community participate in
almost all critical decisions throughout their life (Pope, 1999). For example, in China, parents and older family members often have much influence in their child’s marriage, although the levels of this familial influence vary in different families. In some families, parents may decide who their child should marry; in other families, parents may not allow their child to marry a person with a certain occupation. Similarly, career decisions are also made under the influence of family and community for East Asians (Pope et al., 1998). For example, parents may have significant input into high school senior’s university selection and major selection based on their values and beliefs.

One widespread career decision-making concern for East Asian international students is their residency plan after receiving their academic degree in the United States (In, 2014; Singaravelu & Pope, 2007). Khoo and Abu-Rasain (1994) stated that international students frequently need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages carefully concerning the decision of where to live after their graduation. This decision-making process could be very complicated as it is rarely solely a personal decision, but more typically, a family decision. The experiences that international students have during their studies in the United States inevitably impact their cultural beliefs, self-concepts, values, and worldviews (Liu, 2009). This may be directly illustrated by using Lin’s case. Upon arrival to the United States, a Chinese international student named Lin was sure that he would go back to China to seek a job after graduation due to the impact of filial piety. At that time, Lin considered his parents as a top priority when thinking about where he wanted to work after graduation. After four years of studying and living in the United States, Lin realized that he had more options because of his American degree. He, therefore, changed his mind and decides he does not want to return home after all. He
started to realize that this is his life, not his parents, and he could choose where he wants to live because there are more opportunities in the United States. Although Lin felt conflicted and guilty for not obeying his parents, he knew that he enjoyed the American lifestyle, and he wanted to stay. Lin had been absorbing American individualist culture while maintaining his Chinese collectivist culture for four years. Clearly, Lin was more acculturated into American culture today, and he valued his own preferences more, which led him to make a different career decision. This case provides a way to understand how the level of acculturation may affect career decision-making processes for East Asian international students.

With the more recent emphasis on the role of culture in the field of career development, researchers have also now begun to focus on the role of acculturation in the formation of a sense of career decision self-efficacy for culturally diverse groups (In, 2014; Liu, 2009; Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017; Wu, 2009). According to a content analysis of acculturation in career development research (Miller & Kelow-Myers, 2009), career decision self-efficacy has consistently been found to have a positive relationship with acculturation. Relatively fewer studies, however, have studied the combination of acculturation and career decision self-efficacy among international students, especially East Asian international students.

Liu (2009) found that international students' acculturation experience was a strong predictor of their career decision self-efficacy. Liu studied 190 international graduate students from a university in North Carolina. Of these 190 participants, 85.8% (n = 163) were Asian international students. In addition, 75.8% (n = 144) of the participants stated that they wanted to gain work experience in the United States before returning home, and
21.1% \((n = 40)\) indicated that they wanted to return after graduation. In this study, acculturation was measured by the *International Students’ Acculturation Questionnaire*, which was created by Liu. Career decision self-efficacy was measured by the short form of the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale* (Betz et al., 1996). Liu found that international graduate students from collectivist cultures tended to have lower levels of career decision self-efficacy than those from individualist cultures. Additionally, international graduate students’ overall acculturation experiences, including cognitive development, psychological acculturation, and behavioral learning, were positively associated with their career decision self-efficacy.

Nadermann and Eissenstat (2017) explored the relationship between acculturation, networking, and career decision self-efficacy in a sample of 172 Korean international college students studying in the United States. Among these research participants, 16.3% \((n = 28)\) were freshmen, 22.7% \((n = 39)\) were sophomores, 22.7% \((n = 39)\) were juniors, 20.3% \((n = 35)\) were seniors, and 10.5% were in their 5th year or more. The Korean version (Jang et al., 2007) of the *Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale* (Chung et al., 2004) was used to measure the level of acculturation. The level of career decision self-efficacy was measured by the short form of the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale* (Betz et al., 1996), at Korean version developed by Lee and Lee (2000).

By conducting a structural equation modeling analysis, Nadermann and Eissenstat (2017) found that the acculturation level of Korean international college students both directly and indirectly predicted their career decision self-efficacy. Students who were more highly acculturated to the United States reported higher scores on career decision
self-efficacy. Meanwhile, Korean international college students with higher scores on acculturation were associated with more comfort, competence, and involvement toward career-related networking. In addition, those students who had higher levels of comfort and competence reported higher levels of career decision self-efficacy. Based on these findings, Nadermann and Eisenstat suggested that Korean international college students might feel more comfortable, competent, and confident concerning job-seeking when they were more acculturated to American culture. Given that international students may share very similar challenges and barriers regardless of country of origin (Mori, 2000), Nadermann and Eisenstat (2017) suggested that there is a possibility that their findings can be extended to other international student groups.

A similar study was conducted by In (2016) that examined acculturation and hope as predictors of career decision self-efficacy for 213 Korean international undergraduate students in the United States. The findings of the relationship between acculturation to the United States and career decision self-efficacy aligned with Nadermann and Eisenstat's (2017) findings, which was a positive relationship. In addition, In (2016) found that there was a near-zero relationship between acculturation to Korea and career decision self-efficacy.

As has been discussed earlier, it is likely that acculturation plays a very important role in career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students. A better understanding of this area can potentially be helpful when mental health professionals work with East Asian international students regarding their career decision-making concerns. To date, only two studies (In, 2014; Nadermann & Eisenstat, 2017) have been found that directly investigated the relationship of these two constructs for East Asian
international students, and both were examining a sample of undergraduate-level students from South Korea who were studying in the United States. Thus, little is known regarding how the role of acculturation interacts with career decision self-efficacy for graduate-level East Asian international students as well as those students from China or Japan. As such, the present study will seek to investigate the association of acculturation and career decision self-efficacy in both undergraduate-level and graduate-level East Asian international students in the United States.

**English Language Proficiency**

English is not the native language for most East Asian international students. Before they entered the United States pursuing their academic degrees, they were highly likely required to take at least one English test to prove that their English language proficiency has reached a certain level. These tests are standardized English tests that are considered as an important admission requirement for many colleges and graduate schools in the United States. The most common tests are the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), and the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). For international students, a TOEFL, GRE, or GMAT score is usually required for an undergraduate-level, graduate-level (non-business major), or graduate-level business major admission, respectively. The minimum acceptable test score for each U.S. higher education institution is set by the institution and can be vastly different.

Based solely on one English test score, it is not guaranteed, however, that the English language competency of every East Asian international student is sufficient enough to help ensure success in U.S. colleges and universities. For example, TOEFL has
been found not to be a trustworthy measure to competence in English, particularly oral comprehension and communication skills (Mori, 2000; Trice, 2003).

As such, East Asian international students may find it difficult to adjust to using English both inside and outside of the classroom. In many non-predominantly English-speaking countries, students in English language courses mainly concentrate on reading rather than speaking, listening, and writing when learning English as a second language (Fletcher, 2013). In American university classrooms, English speaking skills are necessary, however, to participate in class discussions, English listening skills are required to understand professors’ lectures, and academic writing skills are fundamental when it comes to writing course papers. Further, outside of the classroom, English speaking and listening skills are heavily needed when interacting with student peers or networking in a career event.

In a number of studies, English language proficiency has been found to play an essential role to the experience of Asian international students in English-speaking societies (Martinez & Colaner, 2017), including in educational settings (Lee & Rice, 2007; Mori, 2000), in socio-cultural interaction (Hayes & Lin, 1994), in psychological adjustment (Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and for social and career self-efficacy (Chen, 1999).

**Educational Settings**

In educational settings, Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013) stated that English speaking skill had been regarded as the most anxiety-triggering skill in English preparatory classrooms by analyzing a sample of 383 Turkish university students in a Turkish university. With respect to English writing skills, Coates and Dickinson (2012) found that
many East Asian graduate students studying in the United States did not have prior experience in writing English essays longer than 1,000 words, which was far behind the average training that domestic students have received who were in the same classroom with them. The lack of English language proficiency may lead to adverse outcomes for international students’ academic performance and teaching performance as graduate teaching assistants (Mori, 2000). Asian international students, moreover, may have challenges in terms of understanding professor’s lectures, taking notes, freely participating in class discussions, and thoroughly articulating what they know (Liu, 2009).

**Social Settings**

When interacting with student peers in social settings, only acquiring academic English in the classroom was not enough (Lacina, 2002). International students also need to become familiar with slang words and idiomatic phrases if they want to have casual social interactions with their domestic student peers. For example, upon arrival to the United States, East Asian international students may not know how they are supposed to respond when someone says to them, “What’s up?” or “Hang in there.” This is because the English they have learned in their home countries were mostly formal standard English. Colloquial words and idiomatic phrases were usually not taught in their English class.

American primary and secondary schools can efficiently recruit foreign language teachers from mother-tongue countries. In most Asian countries and regions, however, there are very few but expensive teachers from English-speaking countries that are available to be hired. Thus, English language teachers in East Asian countries are mostly
local teachers whose first language is not English. Given that these local teachers may not know some of these slang words and idiomatic phrases themselves, it is not difficult to understand the challenges faced by East Asian international students when interacting with American peers in English.

Further, Hayes and Lin (1994) found that international students who were more adequate in English proficiency upon arrival were able to better adapt to their new American lives than those who were not, which may suggest that high English language proficiency can be considered as a helpful characteristic for East Asian international students to get involved more in social settings in the United States.

**Psychological Adjustment**

Regarding psychological adjustment, lack of English language proficiency may cause frustration when studying in the United States for international students. Their English proficiency may influence their socio-cultural and psychological adjustment as well as their academic success (Martirosyan et al., 2015).

Zhang and Goodson (2011) conducted a meta-analysis examining predictors of psychosocial adjustment of international college students in the United States using 64 studies from 1999 to 2009. The findings of this study suggested that more strong English language proficiency predicted fewer psychological issues. Consistent with Zhang and Goodson’s study (2011), Yeh and Inose (2003) also suggested that higher self-evaluated English proficiency was associated with lower levels of embarrassment and self-consciousness about their accent and background, and self-evaluated English proficiency was a strong predictor of acculturative distress for international students in their study.

Furthermore, the effects of a lack of English proficiency could lead to severe
problems such as insecurity, low self-esteem, confusion, and decreased motivation to become more socialized (Liu, 2009; Martinez & Colaner, 2017). English language deficiency may also lead to feelings of isolation when international students are not able to participate in class discussions (Lee & Rice, 2007) or to perform at a satisfying level in some courses (Kao & Gansneder, 1995). Notably, the less that international students interact with their student peers, the worse their social and language skills would be developed, and the less confident they are, all of which may generate a negative psychological cycle (Liu, 2009).

**Social and Career Self-Efficacy**

Social self-efficacy and career self-efficacy have been investigated in linguistic and ethnic minority groups. The consistent findings demonstrated that better English language proficiency was associated with greater levels of social and career self-efficacy (Kuo, 2011; Lin & Betz, 2009; Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998). Lin and Betz (2009) explored the relationship between English proficiency and social self-efficacy in a sample of 203 Chinese international students in a midwestern university. These Chinese international students reported lower social self-efficacy in an English-speaking environment than in a Mandarin-speaking environment. Findings also suggested that better English proficiency may contribute to higher levels of social self-efficacy in Chinese international students. Kuo (2011) studied 152 international graduate students attending a southern university in Alabama. Participants reported that they felt powerless for not being able to articulate their thoughts and feelings in English due to the language barrier. Also, it was reported that their self-esteem had been lowered since coming to the United States as they were not able to successfully perform what they had done well in
their home countries, such as bargaining and arguing freely.

To date, few studies have directly focused on the combination of English language proficiency and career-related self-efficacy in culturally diverse groups. In Miranda and Umhoefer’s (1998) study, the authors found that English language use was a relevant construct to one’s beliefs in their competence to perform jobs by analyzing a sample of 95 Latino career counseling clients at a social services agency. Among these research participants, 97.6% \((n = 93)\) were immigrants from other countries. English language use and acculturation were found to be the stronger predictors of career self-efficacy than other variables, including the length of stay in the United States, age, and educational level. Further, the results indicated that higher English proficiency predicted greater levels of career self-efficacy in Latino individuals.

Taken together, studies have demonstrated that English language proficiency was positively associated with social and career self-efficacy in linguistically and ethnically diverse groups. After an extensive review of the literature, no studies have been found to investigate the association of English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students. Accordingly, more research is needed to better understand to what extent English language proficiency affects East Asian international students’ sense of competence in completing career decision-related tasks.

**Career Decision Self-Efficacy**

This section focuses on the conceptualization of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1996), and career decision self-efficacy in culturally diverse university students, particularly East Asian international students.
Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). Self-efficacy is a set of dynamic and ever-changing self-beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Such beliefs affect how and to what extent individuals choose to pursue their courses of action when facing impediments and failures (Bandura, 1997). An individual with a high level of self-efficacy tends to persevere in a challenging task. On the contrary, an individual with a low level of self-efficacy tends to avoid a difficult task.

Bandura (1977) answered the question about what may affect an individual’s self-efficacy. He proposed four sources of self-efficacy beliefs: “performance accomplishment, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physiological states” (p. 195). In these four sources, performance accomplishment was identified to be the most influential element (Lent et al., 1994). Moreover, self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (2006) stated that “the efficacy belief system is not a global trait, but a differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of functioning” (p. 307). The specific domain associated with self-efficacy (i.e., social self-efficacy or career self-efficacy) should be explicitly defined by researchers when investigating self-efficacy relevant constructs (Betz & Hackett, 2006).

Furthermore, it is also important to note that self-efficacy is based upon previous experience but not the future. Therefore, there is a difference between knowing what they can do as opposed to hoping they can do something (Anderson & Vandehey, 2006). In addition, self-efficacy is not a general sense of self-esteem as it focuses on the process of completing a task (task-specific) rather than an actual outcome (Foltz & Luzzo, 1998).
Social Cognitive Career Theory

Drawing heavily from Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory, the developers of social cognitive career theory (SCCT), Robert Lent, Steven Brown, and Gail Hackett (1994) extended the original concept into the career development field. They stated, “in formulating SCCT, we tried to adapt, elaborate, and extend, those aspects of Bandura’s theory that seemed to be most relevant to the process of interest formation, career selection, and performance” (Lent et al., 2002. p. 258).

SCCT subscribes to Bandura’s triadic reciprocal model of causality, which includes three components, including overt behavior, internal personal factors, and external environment (Bandura, 1997). All three interact and affect one another as casual influences bidirectionally. In line with this model, SCCT provides a comprehensive model for conceptualizing career development, primarily focused on the personal and cognitive variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals, as well as how these three components interact with internal personal behaviors and external environmental influences (Lent et al., 1994).

More specifically, self-efficacy reflects people’s specific beliefs of their ability or inability to complete a particular task or set of tasks (Bandura, 1977). Outcome expectations refer to the estimate of what will happen if certain behaviors are performed (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). Personal goals are associated with eventual purposes beyond the activities around people that they participate (Bandura, 1986). Bandura found that self-efficacy beliefs are more influential in determining one’s behavior than outcome expectations (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, the interaction between self-efficacy and outcome expectations also influences interest development as individuals become
interested in things requiring abilities that they believe they either have or can develop, which may produce desired outcomes.

These three components that SCCT highlights are essential factors in career performance, interests, and decision making (Lent et al., 1994). According to SCCT, after an individual examines interests, abilities, and values, career decisions can be made. Career decision self-efficacy is a construct that has been demonstrated to be a reliable predictor of individuals’ beliefs in their ability to accomplish tasks typically associated with career decisions (Betz & Hackett, 2006).

**Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Culturally Diverse University Students**

Career decision self-efficacy refers to individuals’ beliefs of their capabilities to successfully perform tasks that are important for career decision-making (Taylor & Betz, 1983). The social cognitive model of career choice is a complex theoretical framework. It involves multidirectional interactions among self-efficacy, outcome expectations, learning experiences, interests, goals, choice actions, choice goals, personal inputs, contextual factors, and so forth (Lent et al., 1994). Within the SCCT framework, compared to career outcome expectations and other factors, career decision self-efficacy has become a popular topic of research in the career development literature due to its higher level of impact on individuals’ career decision-making behaviors (Lent & Brown, 1996).

Previous research findings indicated that career decision self-efficacy was positively associated with career decidedness (Betz & Luzzo, 1996; Robbins, 1985; Taylor & Betz, 1983, Taylor & Popma, 1990), vocational identity (Robbins, 1985), career maturity (Creed & Patton, 2003; Luzzo, 1992), career adjustment (Betz & Luzzo, 1996),
and career exploration behaviors (Blustein, 1989). Additionally, researchers explored the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and a variety of psychological variables, including curiosity (Kim & Choi, 2019), personality hardiness (Huang, 2015; Niles & Sowa, 1992), proactive personality (Hsieh & Huang, 2014), avoidant and anxious attachment pattern (Wright et al., 2017), and daily positive effect (Park et al., 2019). These findings demonstrated that career decision self-efficacy is essential for one’s career development and mental well-being.

Moreover, researchers have investigated career decision self-efficacy among culturally diverse university student populations (Kim & Choi, 2019; Kim & Yang, 2019; Park et al., 2019; Ulas & Yildirim, 2018). Hsieh and Huang (2014) discovered that a proactive personality trait was positively related to career decision self-efficacy by analyzing 336 Taiwanese college students in Taiwan. Garcia et al. (2015) analyzed 235 computer science college students from a university in The Philippines. In their study, career decision self-efficacy was investigated in predicting the relationship among the role of parental support, teacher support, and career optimism. Findings indicated that parental support and teacher support boosted career optimism through increasing one’s career decision-making self-efficacy. Further, Kim and Choi (2019) examined the role of curiosity in career decision self-efficacy among 425 incoming first-year Asian American college students in the United States. Kim and Choi found that students with higher curiosity tended to have greater levels of career decision self-efficacy with ethnic identity as a mediator.

Several studies concentrated on Korean university students in South Korea. For example, Park et al. (2019) explored how emotional intelligence influenced daily career
decision self-efficacy and daily career choice anxiety by conducting hierarchical linear model analyses in a sample of 103 Korean undergraduate and graduate students. The researchers found that the link between emotional intelligence and daily career decision self-efficacy was partially mediated by daily positive affect. Kim and Yang (2019) investigated the relationship between Korean college students’ self-identity and career decision-making self-efficacy using a sample of 160 middle-class students from two universities in Incheon, South Korea. They found that a stronger sense of self-identity was associated with greater levels of career decision self-efficacy.

Furthermore, it is important to note that there were many mixed findings when studying career decision self-efficacy on culturally diverse university students. For example, Harlow and Bowman (2016) found that first-generation community college students from high socioeconomic status (SES) in the United States tended to experience lower levels of career decision self-efficacy than moderate or low SES groups. Hsieh and Huang (2014), however, suggested that higher SES Taiwanese students in southern Taiwan were more likely to have greater levels of career decision self-efficacy than their lower SES counterparts.

Inconsistent findings have also been uncovered in other studies to focus more on the comparison between dominant culture groups and culturally diverse groups in university students. Mau (2000) examined and compared the levels of career decision-making self-efficacy between two college student groups in the United States by analyzing a sample of 494 American students and 870 Taiwanese students. Mau found that American students tended to have much higher scores on career decision-making self-efficacy than Taiwanese students. Among Taiwanese students, Taiwanese male
students have been found more likely to have higher levels of career decision-making 
self-efficacy than Taiwanese female students. In the American student group, however, 
the gender difference was not shown in the study. In a similar vein, Gloria and Hird 
(1999) suggested that Caucasian college students demonstrated higher career decision 
self-efficacy than their peers from other racially diverse groups. Lewis et al. (2018), 
however, found that African American college students had the highest levels of career 
decision self-efficacy, following by white students and Asian American college students. 

Given these mixed findings, career decision self-efficacy in culturally diverse 
university students needs more exploration as every group has its own characteristics and 
needs. According to SCCT, personal inputs and contextual influences from these 
culturally diverse groups may vary widely, which may influence individuals’ career 
decision self-efficacy very differently. East Asian international students have unique 
cultural and career needs that are different from non-Asian international students, Asian 
American college students, and other historically marginalized college student 
populations. Therefore, combined with what has been discussed earlier, more research is 
needed to investigate East Asian international student groups and their career decision 
self-efficacy.

Summary

A number of studies have explored the role of hope, acculturation, or English 
language proficiency in career decision self-efficacy among culturally diverse groups. 
Only a handful of studies, however, have focused on international student populations in 
the United States. No studies have yet been conducted to explore the relationship between 
hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy in
East Asian international students studying in the United States. Given the importance of career decision self-efficacy of an East Asian international student in successfully completing the career decision-related tasks under many barriers, it is crucial to have a better understanding on the predictors of career decision self-efficacy in this group. The current study intends to fill this serious gap in the literature.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the process and procedures for investigating the relationship between hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students studying in the United States. A discussion of research design, participants, instruments, recruitment, procedure, data analysis, and limitations are included in this chapter.

Research Design

This study used a correlational design to measure the relationship between four predictor variables (hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency) and an outcome variable (career decision self-efficacy) among East Asian international students in the United States. The following research questions and hypotheses were investigated.

The specific research questions addressed in the study are as follows:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): To what extent does hope impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent do acculturation to American culture and acculturation to the home culture impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): To what extent does English language proficiency impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

The present study proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 to be tested for RQ1 was that *greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian*
The hypotheses to be tested for RQ2 are as follows: (Hypothesis 2) greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, and (Hypothesis 3) greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Hypothesis 4 to be tested for RQ3 was that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Participants

Participants in this study were East Asian international students studying in the United States. The initial sample had 258 participants. Individuals were removed from the sample: Prior to the final sample, 57 participants with major cases of missing data were removed; 23 participants who did not pass two validity check questions were removed; five participants were not from the required countries or regions; three participants were not on an F-1 visa; and three participants reported that they were not planning to gain work experience in the United States after graduation. The final sample consisted of 167 participants.

To that end, there were 167 East Asian international students (n = 91, 54.8% women; n = 76; 45.2% men) recruited from across the United States. Participants were originally from China (n = 135, 80.8%), South Korea (n = 22, 13.2%), and Japan (n = 10, 6.0%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 59 (M = 28.5, SD = 7.1). Academic level (currently pursuing) among participants was bachelor’s (n = 66, 39.5%), master’s (n = 74,
44.3%), and doctoral (n = 27, 16.2%). Participants ranged in the length of residency in the United States from 0 to 132 months (M = 29.4, SD = 27.0).

The full survey, consisting of a total of 98 items, was estimated to take participants approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power (3.1) (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). A statistical power was anticipated to be at .80, with an effect size of .10 and an alpha level of .05. Result showed that a total sample of 159 participants was required to achieve a power of .80 for this study.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through email and various social media platforms that are widely used by East Asian international students, including WeChat, Kakao Talk, Line, and Facebook. Additionally, university-based international student offices and international student organizations in the United States were contacted. A snowball sampling recruiting method was used, in which participants were asked to advertise the study to their respective networks. The recruitment message briefly explained the research and contained a link to the online survey (see Appendix G).

Procedure

After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri – St. Louis (see Appendix H), the Demographic Questionnaire and all three standardized instruments were made available online through Qualtrics. First, participants clicked on the survey link, read the informed consent form, confirmed their voluntary participation, and read the potential risks and benefits to the study. They were able to start the questionnaires. Second, participants completed the demographic questionnaire
followed by the *Hope Scale* (12 items), the *Acculturation Index* (42 items), and the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* (25 items). By the end of the survey, participants received a debriefing statement, which indicated the purpose of the study and the researcher’s contact information. Finally, the data were downloaded and imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 26.0 for analysis.

**Instruments**

A self-report survey was developed for this study. This survey consisted of a personal demographic questionnaire and three standardized measures: the *Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1991), the *Acculturation Index* (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), and the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* (Betz et al., 1996).

**Demographic Questionnaire**

The following background information was collected on the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix B): 1) age; 2) gender; 3) country of origin; 4) current university; 5) academic level; 6) academic major; 7) length of stay in the United States for studies; 8) English language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and overall); and 9) COVID-19 impact.

**Hope Scale**

The *Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1991) was used to measure East Asian international students’ levels of hope in the present study (see Appendix C). The *Hope Scale* was also known as the *Goals Scale* previously, which is a self-report measure of 12 items. Consistent with the hope theory (Snyder et al., 1991), the *Hope Scale* includes four items that measure agency and another four items that measure pathways. The remaining four of 12 items are not scored but are intentionally used to make the scale content less
obvious (Edwards et al., 2007). Responses were obtained utilizing a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *definitely false*; 2 = *somewhat false*; 3 = *somewhat true*; 4 = *definitely true*), with higher scores indicating a higher degree of hope. Sample questions include: “My past experiences have prepared me well for my future” (agency), “There are lots of ways around any problem” (pathways), and “I usually find myself worrying about something” (distracter).

Studies have provided evidence supporting the reliability and validity of the *Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1991). The overall *Hope Scale* has demonstrated good internal reliability, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .74 to .91 (Anderson & Feldman, 2019; Cheavens et al., 2018; Feldman et al., 2009; Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Synder et al., 1991). Cronbach’s alphas of the Agency subscale ranged from .71 to .84, and Cronbach’s alphas of the Pathways subscale ranged from .63 to .87 (Anderson & Feldman, 2019; Cheavens et al., 2018; Feldman et al., 2009; Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Synder et al., 1991). The test-retest reliability coefficients for the *Hope Scale* were .85 over a 3-week interval (Anderson, 1988), .73 over an 8-week interval (Harney, 1989), and .82 over a 10-week interval (Yoshinobu, 1989).

The convergent validity and divergent validity of the *Hope Scale* have been tested by correlating it with other conceptually similar or divergent constructs (Fenigstein et al., 1975; Rosenberg, 1965; Scheier & Carver, 1985). For example, the *Hope Scale* had a moderate positive relationship with the *Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1965; *r* = .58) and the *Life Orientation Test* (Scheier & Carver, 1985; *r* = .60). The *Hope Scale* had a moderate negative relationship with the *Hopelessness Scale* (Beck et al., 1974; *r* = -.51) and the *Beck Depression Inventory* (Beck et al., 1961; *r* = -.42).
The divergent validity has been tested by correlating the Hope Scale with two subscales of the Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975) as there was no theoretical support for the prediction of differences in self-consciousness between high-hope and low-hope people (Edwards et al., 2007). These two subscales of the Self-Consciousness Scale are the Private Self-Consciousness Subscale that measures an individual’s inner thoughts and feelings and the Public Self-Consciousness Subscale that assesses the general awareness of the self as a social object (Snyder et al., 1991). The correlation between the Hope Scale and the Private Self-Consciousness Subscale was .06 and the correlation between the Hope Scale and the Public Self-Consciousness Subscale was -.03 (Snyder et al., 1991). Little shared variance, therefore, has been found between these scales.

**Acculturation Index**

Acculturation was measured utilizing the Acculturation Index (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) (see Appendix D). The Acculturation Index was developed based on Berry et al.’s (1987) bilinear acculturation model to measure acculturation to the host culture (AI-Host) and acculturation to the home culture (AI-Home). These two dimensions are treated as two subscales, and they are measured separately. This approach yields two independent scores, indicating acculturation to the home culture and acculturation to American culture, as appropriate. In this study, acculturation to the host culture refers to acculturation to American culture, namely, acculturation to the dominant culture in the United States; acculturation to the home culture refers to acculturation to Chinese, Korean, or Japanese culture. The Acculturation Index includes 21 cognitive and behavioral items on topics such as food, self-identity, values, communication styles,
social customs, and employment activities. Participants were asked to consider how they see themselves in relation to other people from their home country and American people through two questions: “Are your experiences and behaviors similar to other people from your home country?” and “Are your experiences and behaviors similar to Americans?” The Acculturation Index is a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all similar) to 7 (very similar).

Evidence of validity was provided by Ward and Kennedy’s (1994) initial study. They found that the two subscales of the Acculturation Index had a low positive relationship and were essentially independent ($r = .23$), indicating that these two subscales measure two different dimensions separately. Additionally, the results of their study suggested that the highest social difficulty related to the separation strategy (high home culture and low host culture identification), followed by the marginalization strategy (low home culture and low host culture identification). There were no available test-retest reliabilities. In terms of internal reliability, previous studies reported Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .91 to .95 for the Acculturation to the Home Culture Subscale and .89 to .96 for the Acculturation to the Host Culture Subscale (Jennings et al., 2006; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

**Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form**

The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form (CDSES-SF; Betz et al., 1996) was used to assess East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy in this study (see Appendix E). The CDSES-SF (Betz et al., 1996) was developed from the original 50-item Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSES; Taylor & Betz, 1983).
The *CDSES-SF* consists of 25 items in total. It includes five items for each of the five subscales: Self-Appraisal, Occupational Information, Goal Selection, Planning, and Problem Solving, which are rooted in Crites’s (1976) theory of career maturity.

Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *no confidence at all*; 2 = *very little confidence*; 3 = *moderate confidence*; 4 = *much confidence*; 5 = *complete confidence*). Sample questions include: “Make a plan of your goals for the next five years”, “Determine the steps to take if you are having academic trouble with an aspect of your chosen major”, and “Identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice.” Given that the total score is the sum of 25 individual item score, the maximum possible total score of the *CDSES-SF* is 125.

Previous studies have shown high psychometric properties of the *CDSES-SF* with regard to its internal reliability and validity (Betz et al., 1996; Kim & Choi, 2019). Cronbach’s alpha for the *CDSES-SF* was .94 and for the five subscales ranged from .73 (Self-Appraisal) to .83 (Goal Selection) in a sample of college students (Betz et al., 1996). Other researchers have reported Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .91 to .97 (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2011; Huang, 2015; Kim & Choi, 2019; Luzzo, 1996; Nilsson et al., 2002). In addition, a six-week, test-retest reliability coefficient of .83 for the *CDSES-SF* has been reported (Luzzo, 1993).

Evidence of convergent validity of the *CDSES-SF* was provided through statistically significant correlations with well-established measures, including the *Career Decision Scale (CDS, Osipow, 1987)* and the *My Vocational Situation (MVS, Holland et al., 1980)*. The *CDS* measures career indecision that includes two subscales: the *Certainty*
Subscale and the Indecision Subscale (Betz et al., 1996). The correlations of the CDSES-SF with the Certainty Subscale of the CDS were -0.68 for females and -0.31 for males. The correlations of the CDSES-SF with the Indecision subscale of the CDS were -0.63 for females and -0.48 for males. The MVS measures the need for career information and barriers to selected career goals (Betz et al., 1996). The correlation coefficients between the MVS and the CDSES-SF were 0.63 for females and 0.48 for males.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the relationship between hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students studying in the United States.

Preliminary Data Analysis

Outliers and missing data along with skewness and kurtosis were examined. In addition, data were examined for threats of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. Descriptive statistics were calculated on the main study variables and the demographic variables. The main study variables included hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy. The demographic variables included age, gender, country of origin, academic level, length of stay in the United States, length of work experience in the United States, and length of work experience in the home country. Pearson correlations were calculated to ascertain whether any demographic variables were related
to the dependent variable, in order to determine whether some of these demographic variables should be treated as covariates in the hierarchical regression analysis.

**Main Data Analysis**

A four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test all four study hypotheses. In the first step, the identified covariate (the age variable) was entered. In the second step, the total score of the hope variable on the *Hope Scale* (see Appendix C) was entered and used as a predictor variable. In the third step, the total score of the *English language proficiency* variable on the *Demographic Questionnaire* (see Appendix B) was entered and used as a predictor variable. In the fourth step, the score of the *Acculturation to American Culture Subscale* and the score of the *Acculturation to the Home Culture Subscale* in the *Acculturation Index* (see Appendix D) was entered. The *career decision self-efficacy* total score on the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy-Short Form* was entered and used as an outcome variable.

**Summary**

This study used a correlational design to assess the extent to which hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency affect career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students studying in the United States. A personal demographic questionnaire and three standardized measures were used to assess the variables in this study: the *Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1991), the *Acculturation Index* (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), and the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* (Betz et al., 1996). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and hierarchical regression analysis were also calculated.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The primary purpose of the current study is to explore how hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency affect career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students studying in the United States. The present study used descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and hierarchical regression analyses to test the study hypotheses. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and is divided into the following four sections: (a) study hypotheses, (b) preliminary data analysis, (c) main data analysis, and (d) summary.

Study Hypotheses

The research questions of the present study are as follows:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): To what extent does hope impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent do acculturation to American culture and acculturation to the home culture impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): To what extent does English language proficiency impact East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy?

The study hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1 to be tested for RQ1 was that greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

The hypotheses to be tested for RQ2 are as follows: (Hypothesis 2) greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of
career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, and (Hypothesis 3) greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Hypothesis 4 to be tested for RQ3 was that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

Preliminary Data Analysis

Data were collected from an online survey utilizing Qualtrics. A total of 258 international students participated in the survey. Of this number, eight participants were removed from the database either they currently don’t hold an F-1 visa, or they are not originally from China, South Korea, or Japan. Three participants reported that they were not planning to gain work experience in the United States after graduation. All 258 participants indicated they were above 18.

Missing Data

A total of 57 participants failed to complete at least 90% of the items on the instruments included in the main analyses. A total of 23 participants did not correctly answer both validity items on the instruments. One validity item in the Hope Scale was select mostly false for this item. The second validity item in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy-Short Form was select complete confidence for this item. Validity items are utilized to identify if participants actually read the survey items (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). Among the remaining participants who had more than 90% of the data entered, if missing data were not found to have a pattern, it was considered as missing completely at random (MCAR). Missing data on main variable instruments, therefore, were replaced by
inserting the mean score of a certain item. The final sample, therefore, consisted of 167 participants.

**Analysis of Outliers, Skewness, and Kurtosis**

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the absolute value of a standardized score in excess of 3.29 indicates a potential univariate outlier. Z-scores of continuous study variables, including hope, acculturation to the home culture, acculturation to American culture, and career decision self-efficacy were calculated. No univariate outliers were found. No multivariate outliers were found utilizing Mahalanobis distances (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

In addition, the main study variables were examined for skewness and kurtosis (see Appendix A, Table 4). The distribution of hope scores had acceptable skewness of -.01 (SE = .19) and kurtosis of -.26 (SE = .33), which was within the -/+ 1 range recommended for normality (Osborne, 2017). The distribution of acculturation to the home country scores had acceptable skewness of -.26 (SE = .19) and kurtosis of -.64 (SE = .33), which were inside the recommended limits for normality (Osborne, 2017). The distribution of acculturation to the U.S. scores had acceptable skewness of .41 (SE = .19) and kurtosis of -.07 (SE = .33), which was inside the recommended limits for normality (Osborne, 2017). Similarly, the distribution of English language proficiency had acceptable skewness of -.53 (SE = .19) and kurtosis of -.28 (SE = .33), which was inside the recommended limits for normality (Osborne, 2017). The distribution of Career Decision Self-Efficacy had acceptable skewness of -.12 (SE = .19) and kurtosis of -.29 (SE = .33), which was also inside the recommended limits for normality (Osborne, 2017).
In sum, the distributions of all main study variables of the present study were well within the recommended range of normality.

**Analysis of Linearity, Normality, Homoscedasticity, and Multicollinearity**

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), before conducting the main data analyses, the data needed to be observed for violations of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. To this end, all main study variables, including hope, acculturation to the home culture, acculturation to American culture, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy, were examined for the above assumptions needed to be met in order to trust the results of the hierarchical regression analyses.

The linearity test is to determine whether the relationship between predictor variables and the outcome variable is linear or not, which is required for the correlation analysis and linear regression analysis (Hansen, 1999). Utilizing the SPSS software, if the value of significance probability of Deviation from Linearity in an ANOVA table is greater than .05, the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable is linear. The value of significance probability of Deviation from Linearity between the career decision self-efficacy variable and the hope variable is .773, which is greater than .05. The value of significance probability of Deviation from Linearity between the career decision self-efficacy variable and the acculturation to the home culture variable is .498, which is greater than .05. The value of significance probability of Deviation from Linearity between the career decision self-efficacy variable and the acculturation to American culture variable is .816, which is greater than .05. The value of significance probability of Deviation from Linearity between the career decision self-
efficacy variable and the English language proficiency variable is .134, which is greater than .05. All these scores indicated that the main variables of the current study met the criteria for linearity.

To test normality, skewness and kurtosis were examined, as well as Normal P-P plots, and Normal Q-Q plots for each of the main variables. Both Normal P-P plots and Normal Q-Q plots were within limits of normality and data were not found to violate assumptions of regression. Normality test requirements are strict and difficult to meet. If the absolute value of kurtosis is less than 10 and the absolute value of skewness is less than 3, it means that although the data are not an absolute normal distribution, it is acceptable. To that end, all main variables met the criteria for normality.

To test homoscedasticity, a scatterplot of standardized residuals and standardized predicted values for the main predictors and the outcome variable in each of the study regression models were examined. The scatterplot of standardized residuals and standardized predicted values for the hierarchical regression model using the total score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form as the outcome variable met homoscedasticity criteria.

To test multicollinearity between predictor variables, Pearson correlations, Tolerance, and Variable Inflation Factors (VIF) were examined. Pearson correlations between predictor variables were examined to confirm that none were greater than .70 (see Appendix A, Table 5). Tolerance values were from .752 to .868, which were all above the 0.1 cutoff, indicating that all scores are within acceptable ranges (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). VIF ranged from 1.153 to 1.330, below the cutoff of 10 for multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). According to the tests above, no concerns
were found regarding the violation of multicollinearity. The main variables, therefore, were determined to have met the assumptions for linear regression.

**Identifying Covariates for Hierarchical Regression Analysis**

Pearson correlations were calculated between the demographic variables (*age, gender, country of origin, academic level, length of stay in the United States*) and the dependent variable (*career decision self-efficacy*). Given that demographic variables need to be continuous or binary variables, the *country of origin* variable and the *academic level* variable were dummy coded prior to conducting Pearson correlation analysis. As there were no students reporting that they were from a country other than China, South Korea, and Japan, the *country of origin* variable was dummy coded with 1 presenting China and 0 representing South Korea or Japan. Similarly, it was also dummy coded with 1 presenting South Korea and 0 representing China or Japan, and with 1 presenting Japan and 0 representing China or South Korea. That said, the *academic level* variable was used the same method to dummy code *bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree*. In addition, to reduce Type 1 error, a *p* value of .01 was used for significance.

Only the *age* variable was significantly associated (Pearson *r* (167) = .22, *p* < .01) with the *career decision self-efficacy* score on the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* (See Appendix E). The *age* variable, therefore, was identified as a covariate and was used as a control variable in the hierarchical regression analyses (see *Correlations of Main Study Variables and Covariates* in Appendix A, Table 4). No statistically significant correlations were found between the *career decision self-efficacy* variable and any other demographic variables.
The following statistically significant correlations were also found between main study variables. The *hope* variable was significantly associated with the acculturation to American culture variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .30, $p < .001$) and the *English language proficiency* variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .35, $p < .001$). The *acculturation to American culture* variable was significantly associated with the *acculturation to the home culture* variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .33, $p < .001$), and the *English language proficiency* variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .31, $p < .001$). The *career decision self-efficacy* variable was significantly associated with the *hope* variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .59, $p < .001$) and the *acculturation to American culture* variable (Pearson $r$ (167) = .23, $p = .001$).

**Main Data Analysis**

A four-step hierarchical regression analysis were conducted to test the following hypotheses: 1) Hypothesis 1: greater levels of *hope* will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students; 2) Hypothesis 2: greater levels of *acculturation to American culture* will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students; 3) Hypothesis 3: greater levels of *acculturation to the home culture* will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students; 4) Hypothesis 4: greater levels of *English language proficiency* will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. The *age* variable was identified and used as a covariate for the hierarchical regression analysis. The results of the data analysis for each of the study hypotheses are described below.
**Analysis of Hypothesis 1**

To test Hypothesis 1 that greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, a four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) as the outcome variable, while controlling for the age variable.

In the first step, the age variable, which was identified as a covariate according to the correlational analysis, was entered. The overall Model 1 was statistically significant \( (F (1, 165) = 7.97, p < .01) \), and the age variable accounted for 4.6% of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (See Appendix E). The age variable was a statistically significant predictor of the career decision self-efficacy outcome variable in this sample \( (B = .49, t (165) = 2.82, p < .01) \). The increase in the ages of participants predicted higher levels of career decision self-efficacy in this sample of East Asian international students studying in the United States.

In the second step, the hope variable from the Hope Scale (see Appendix C) was entered. The overall Model 2 was statistically significant \( (F (2, 164) = 47.08) \). The age variable and the hope variable together accounted for 36.5 % of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (See Appendix E). The addition of the hope variable accounted for an additional 31.9% of variance \( (R^2 \text{ change} = .319, F \text{ change} (2, 164) = 82.28, p < .01) \). Each standard deviation increase in the hope variable produced a .573 standard deviation increase in the career decision self-efficacy outcome variable while holding the age variable constant (\( \beta \)
Results from this analysis supported Hypothesis 1 that greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

**Analysis of Hypothesis 2**

To test Hypothesis 2 that greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, the same four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) as the outcome variable, while controlling for the age variable.

In the first step, the age variable was entered. The age variable was significantly and positively associated with the career decision self-efficacy variable. The $R^2$ of Model indicated that the age variable accounted for 4.6% of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) and the overall Model 1 was statistically significant ($F (1, 165) = 7.97, p < .01$). The result indicated that the increase in the ages of participants predicted higher levels of career decision self-efficacy in this sample of East Asian international students studying in the United States.

In the second step, the hope variable from the Hope Scale (see Appendix C) was entered. In the third step, the score of English language proficiency, which was the total score of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the Demographic Questionnaire, was entered (see Appendix B). In the fourth step, the score of the Acculturation to American Culture Subscale and the score of the Acculturation to the Home Culture
Subscale from the Acculturation Index (see Appendix D) were entered together. The results indicated that the overall Model 4 was not statistically significant \( F(5, 161) = 21.95, p = .206 \). Further, the acculturation to American culture variable was not significantly related to the career decision self-efficacy variable \( p = .675 \) while controlling for the age variable, the hope variable, and the English language proficiency variable.

A significantly positive correlation was found between acculturation to American culture and career decision self-efficacy (Pearson \( r = .23, p = .001 \)) among East Asian international students in the sample of the present study. This result supported that greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

**Analysis of Hypothesis 3**

To test Hypothesis 3 that greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, the same four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) as the outcome variable, while controlling for the age variable.

In the first step, the age variable was entered. The age variable was significantly and positively associated with the career decision self-efficacy variable. The \( R^2 \) of Model indicated that the age variable accounted for 4.6\% of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) and the overall model was statistically significant \( F(1, 165) = 7.97, p \)
The result indicated that the increase in the ages of participants predicted higher levels of career decision self-efficacy in this sample of East Asian international students studying in the United States.

In the second step, the hope variable from the Hope Scale (see Appendix C) was entered. In the third step, the score of English language proficiency, which was the total score of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the Demographic Questionnaire, was entered (see Appendix B). In the fourth step, the score of the Acculturation to American Culture Subscale and the score of the Acculturation to the Home Culture Subscale from the Acculturation Index (see Appendix D) were entered together. The results indicated that the overall Model 4 was not statistically significant ($F(5, 161) = 21.95, p = .206$). In addition, no significant correlation was found between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy (Pearson $r = .105, p = .089$) among East Asian international students in the sample of the present study.

These findings did not support the hypothesis that greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

**Analysis of Hypothesis 4**

To test Hypothesis 4 that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, the same four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E) as the outcome variable, while controlling for the age variable.
In the first step, the age variable was entered. The age variable was significantly and positively associated with the career decision self-efficacy variable. The $R^2$ of Model indicated that the age variable accounted for 4.6% of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (See Appendix E) and the overall Model 1 was statistically significant ($F(1, 165) = 7.97, p < .01$). The age variable was a statistically significant predictor of the career decision self-efficacy outcome variable in this sample ($B = .49, t(165) = 2.82, p < .01$). The result indicated that the increase in the ages of participants predicted higher levels of career decision self-efficacy in this sample of East Asian international students studying in the United States.

In the second step, the hope variable from the Hope Scale (see Appendix C) was entered. The overall Model 2 was statistically significant ($F(2, 164) = 47.08$). In the third step, the score of English language proficiency, which was the total score of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the Demographic Questionnaire, was entered (see Appendix B). The overall Model 3 was also statistically significant ($F(3, 163) = 35.26$). The age variable, the hope variable, and the English language proficiency variable together accounted for 39.4% of the total variance in the career decision self-efficacy score on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (see Appendix E). The English language proficiency variable solely accounted for 2.9% of variance ($R^2$ change = .029, $F$ change (3, 163) = 7.73, $p < .01$). Each standard deviation increase in the English language proficiency variable produced a .181 standard deviation increase in the career decision self-efficacy outcome variable while holding the age variable and the hope variable constant ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). In addition, a significantly positive correlation was found between English language proficiency and career decision
self-efficacy (Pearson $r = .37, p < .001$) among East Asian international students in the sample of the present study. Results from this analysis, therefore, supported Hypothesis 4 that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.

**Summary**

This chapter reviewed the findings from the current study. It included a description of study hypotheses, a description of preliminary data analyses used to determine the data were and ready for analysis, and a description of main data analyses by conducting four hierarchical regression analyses.

The results of the analysis of Hypothesis 1 supported the hypothesis that greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. The results of the analysis of Hypothesis 2 supported the hypothesis that greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. The results of the analysis of Hypothesis 3 did not support the hypothesis that greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students. The results of the analysis of Hypothesis 4 supported the hypothesis that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to explore the predictive abilities of hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency to career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students in the United States who are originally from China, South Korea, and Japan. This study presented the descriptive statistics and correlations of hope, acculturation to the home culture, acculturation to American culture, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy. After identifying the covariate (the age variable), a four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test all four study hypotheses. The following review and discussion of the findings is organized around these four study hypotheses.

Review of Findings

A four-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the study hypotheses. The age variable was identified and used as a covariate for the hierarchical regression analysis. The findings of the data analysis for each of the study hypotheses are as follows.

Hope

Hypothesis 1 that greater levels of hope will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students was supported by the data. The results from a Pearson correlation showed that hope was significantly positively correlated with career decision self-efficacy (Pearson $r = .59$, $p < .001$), indicating that East Asian international students with higher levels of hope experience higher levels of confidence in their career decision-related tasks.
Acculturation to American Culture

Hypothesis 2 that greater levels of acculturation to American culture will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students was also supported by the data analyses. The results indicated that East Asian international students with higher acculturation levels to American culture are likely to have greater levels of career decision self-efficacy.

Acculturation to the Home Culture

Hypothesis 3 that greater levels of acculturation to the home culture will be negatively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students was not supported by the data analyses. No significant correlation was found between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy (Pearson $r = .11, p = .089$) among East Asian international students in the sample of the present study.

English Language Proficiency

Hypothesis 4 that greater levels of English language proficiency will be positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students was supported by the data analyses, as expected. The results from a Pearson correlation showed that English language proficiency was significantly positively correlated with career decision self-efficacy (Pearson $r = .37, p < .001$), indicating that East Asian international students with higher levels of English language proficiency are likely to have stronger confidence in successfully completing career decision-making activities.
Discussion of Findings

The present study advanced the literature in two ways. First, it is built upon findings by In (2014), which examined the relationship between hope, acculturation to Korea, acculturation to the U.S., and career decision self-efficacy in a sample of Korean international undergraduate students studying in the United States. Second, this study is the first study exploring the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy in the Asian international student group. The discussion of the findings is described below.

**Hope**

According to the Pearson correlation, the *age* variable was significantly positively correlated with the *career decision self-efficacy* variable (Pearson $r = .22, p < .01$), indicating that the older an East Asian international student was, the more they were likely to have higher levels of career decision self-efficacy. According to the hierarchical regression analysis, the *hope* variable explained 31.9% of the variance of the level of career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students while controlling for the *age* covariate. According to Cohen (1988), when the $R^2$ value or the squared partial correlations value is between .02 to .13, it represents a small effect size; when the $R^2$ value or the squared partial correlations value between .13 to .26, it represents a medium effect size; when the $R^2$ value or the squared partial correlations value is greater than .26, it represents a large effect size. As such, the $R^2$ value of .319 for the *hope* variable indicates a large effect size. The *age* variable, as a covariate, explained 4.6% of the variance of the level of career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students, indicating a small effect size (Cohen, 1988).
These findings are consistent with previous research that hope, as measured with the *Hope Scale*, uniquely explained 35.8% of the variance in career decision self-efficacy while the *acculturation to the U.S.* variable and the *acculturation to Korea* variable in combination explaining 16.7% of the variance of career decision self-efficacy among Korean international undergraduate students (In, 2014). In the current study, compared to other main predictor variables (acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, English language proficiency), hope, as a personal strength, was the strongest variable in predicting career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students who are studying in the United States.

*Acculturation to American Culture*

According to the Pearson correlation, the *acculturation to American culture* variable had moderate-to-low positive correlations with all other main study variables, including the *acculturation to home culture* variable (Pearson $r = .33$, $p < .01$), the *hope* variable (Pearson $r = .30$, $p < .01$), the *English language proficiency* variable (Pearson $r = .31$, $p < .01$) and the *career decision self-efficacy* variable (Pearson $r = .23$, $p = .001$). This result is consistent with the literature showing that East Asian international students tend to have more confidence in career decision-making activities when they engage more with American culture. It is important to note that the most consistent finding regarding the connection of acculturation and career decision self-efficacy is the positive association between these two variables even among racial and ethnic minorities in the United States (Flores et al., 2006; In, 2016; Liu, 2009; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017; Patel et al., 2008; Wu, 2009).
In addition, Crockett and Hays (2011) found that the more acculturated international students are to American culture, they tended to face fewer barriers when looking for a job in the United States. In (2016) found that Korean international undergraduate students who scored higher on acculturation to the host culture reported higher levels of confidence in career decision-making, and acculturation to the host culture explained 3.4% of the variance in career decision self-efficacy in her study versus 4.3% of the variance in the current study. Nadermann and Eissenstat (2017) also found a positive relationship between acculturation (to American culture) and career decision self-efficacy in a sample of 172 Korean international undergraduate students studying in the United States. In their study, it is reported that Korean international college students with higher scores on acculturation were related to more comfort, competence, and involvement toward career-related networking, and those students who had higher levels of comfort and competence reported higher levels of career decision self-efficacy.

To this end, the results of the present study extend the current findings in the literature to a broader population, including East Asian international undergraduate and graduate students from China, South Korea, and Japan. Considering the cultural differences between East Asia and the United States, East Asian international students who immerse themselves more in American culture may encounter fewer cultural barriers. It might be easier for them to connect with American classmates, professors, university staff members, and future employers. That said, they are likely to feel more confident when they need to develop social networks, find career-related information, manage the interview process, and explore their career paths in the United States. These
experiences may lead to higher levels of confidence in successfully completing career decision-related tasks.

*Acculturation to the Home Culture*

The role of acculturation in career decision self-efficacy for culturally diverse groups has been increasingly explored by many researchers due to the more recent emphasis on the role of culture in the career development field (In, 2016; Liu, 2009; Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017; Wu, 2009). The vast majority of the literature, however, solely investigated the *acculturation to the host culture* construct rather than the *acculturation to the home culture* construct or both. To date, only one study (In, 2016) was found to directly investigate the relationship of acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy in international students, which focused on the population of Korean international undergraduate students in the United States. Thus, little is known regarding how the role of acculturation to the home culture interacts with career decision self-efficacy for the graduate-level East Asian international students as well as those international students from other parts of East Asia, such as China or Japan. The present study, therefore, extends the exploration of the association between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy to the East Asian international student population.

Contrary to In’s (2014) finding that acculturation to Korea accounted for 2.6% of career decision self-efficacy variance, the findings of the present study imply that East Asian international student’s levels of acculturation to the home culture have little to do with their confidence in completing their career decision-related tasks. Given the fact that East Asian international students are making career decisions within the U.S. cultural
context, acculturation to the home culture appears not to be that relevant to their career decision-making activities. Further, it is noteworthy that although a low correlation between acculturation to Korea and career decision self-efficacy was found in In’s (2014) study, acculturation to Korea would not be significantly correlated with career decision self-efficacy while controlling for both hope and acculturation to the U.S.

**English Language Proficiency**

According to the hierarchical regression analysis, English language proficiency uniquely accounted for 2.9% of the variance of career decision self-efficacy. English language proficiency has been consistently demonstrated in the literature as an important predictor variable among various research topics for international students, including academic performances (Mori, 2000), psychological adjustment (Zhang & Goodson, 2011), acculturative stress (Dao et al., 2007; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Yeh & Insoe, 2003) and social and career self-efficacy (Kuo, 2011; Lin & Betz, 2009). Although studies have demonstrated that English language proficiency was positively associated with career self-efficacy in linguistically and ethnically diverse groups (Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998), it was unexpected that no studies have been found to directly investigate the association of English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy for international students. The present study is the first study exploring the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy in the Asian international student population.

On the other hand, Yang et al. (2006) found that greater confidence with English language skills was related to less social isolation, fewer sociocultural challenges and stress, and a stronger sense of fitting in with the American culture. East Asian
international students with higher English language proficiency, therefore, are likely to be more confident in their ability to express themselves in order to build their own networks in the United States (Sullivan, 2010). This can help them gain a better sense of competence in completing career decision-related tasks, such as communicating with career counselors, writing a resume, and conducting an informational interview.

In the present study, the average score of reading ($M = 5.51, SD = 1.26$) in English language on the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix B) was greater than the average score of listening ($M = 5.42, SD = 1.31$), the average score of speaking ($M = 5.28, SD = 1.35$), and the average score of writing ($M = 5.19, SD = 1.37$). The results indicated that the writing component in English language proficiency was most challenging for East Asian international students as opposed to the reading component where they feel most confident. Consistent with this finding, Coates and Dickinson (2012) found that many East Asian international graduate students had poor English writing skills, and one of the reasons could be that they did not have enough training on the writing skills in their home countries as most of them did not have prior experience in writing English essays longer than 1,000 words.

In addition, the second-lowest average score was the speaking component in English language. Along with the writing component, these two pieces play very important roles when East Asian international students are expressing themselves in order to effectively socialize with other people. There is no doubt that these two English language domains are significant for East Asian international students to build the new networks of support in the United States. As such, it is not difficult to understand that
greater levels of English language proficient were positively associated with higher levels of career decision self-efficacy, and vice versa.

**Implications for Counseling**

In 2018-2019 the number of international students in the United States was 1,095,299. It is noteworthy that 44.0% of the overall international students coming from East Asian countries, including China (36.6%), South Korea (5.8%), and Japan (1.6%) (IIE, 2019). When making career-relevant decisions, East Asian international students, compared to other international student groups, may encounter more serious barriers in their career decision-making process due to the distinct cultural differences between collectivist and individualist cultures (Mittal & Weiling, 2006) and the noticeable linguistic differences.

Meanwhile, many international students were not satisfied with the services that their university career centers provided (Flores & Heppner, 2002; Shen & Herr, 2004). Given East Asian international students’ lesser satisfaction with the university career services, the importance of following best practices for their career decision-making, and the key role that career decision self-efficacy plays in the career decision-making process (Betz et al., 2005), it is essential for career development professionals to gain a better understanding of career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students in the United States.

A number of researchers have explored the role of hope, acculturation, or English language proficiency in career decision self-efficacy among culturally diverse groups. Only a handful of studies, however, have focused on international student populations in the United States. No studies have yet been conducted to explore the relationship between
hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students studying in the United States. Given the importance of career decision self-efficacy to an East Asian international student in successfully completing the career decision-related tasks especially with so many barriers, it is crucial to better understand the predictors of career decision self-efficacy in this international student group. The current study intended to fill this serious gap in the literature.

Based on the findings of this study, several implications were drawn. Having an understanding of East Asian international students’ career decision self-efficacy might allow counselors and other career practitioners who work closely with this population to better conceptualize students’ presenting concerns in order to develop effective treatment plans. Additionally, counselors and career practitioners may benefit from implementing these recommendations when addressing the career development needs of their East Asian international students (Martirosyan et al., 2015).

**Hope**

The findings of the present study suggest that an international student with a higher level of hope is likely to have a higher level of confidence in their career decision-making process. Additionally, the increased level of career decision self-efficacy may predict more effective career-related behaviors (Betz & Luzzo, 1996; Blustein, 1989; Robbins, 1985; Taylor & Betz, 1983, Taylor & Popma, 1990) and more positive career outcomes (Creed & Patton, 2003; Luzzo, 1992). In the present study, given that hope was found to be the strongest predictor in career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students, hope-focused interventions to enhance hope can be a beneficial way when working East Asian international students. In this vein, the literature reviewed
for this study suggests that the nature of solution-focused therapy, narrative therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy aligns with values in collectivist cultures (Chen et al., 2005; Cheung & Jahn, 2017; Rathod et al., 2010; Semmler & Williams, 2000). Hope enhancement, therefore, may be achieved by the integration of solution-focused, narrative, and cognitive-behavioral interventions in East Asian international students.

Furthermore, Snyder (2000) argues that dwelling on desired goals immediately prompts the agency thoughts and pathways thoughts that are crucial for an individual’s goal-oriented behaviors. Consequently, it might be helpful to enhance hope by facilitating East Asian international students to articulate their career decision-related goals. With that being said, counselors and other career practitioners can help East Asian international students in setting meaningful goals and conceptualizing their goals clearly, generating various pathways to achieve their goals, and maintaining the goal pursuit motivation and energy (Sydney, 2000).

More specifically, exploring and identifying potential pathways in pursuing their goals is important when working with international students. If international students choose to stay in the United States after graduation, they are likely to have a very high need to learn more about their career opportunities in the United States, gather information about career decision-making, and receive culturally sensitive services when making career decisions. Based on the restrictive visa policies, it is, however, usually not an option for international students to work outside of campus, which is typically available to domestic students. This policy certainly creates more difficulties for international students in producing potential pathways than their domestic counterparts. International students would benefit from working outside of campus to expand their
social networks, gain a better understanding on American work culture, and obtain first-hand occupational information. These benefits are critical when it comes to generating potential pathways to international students’ career goals. Hence, counselors and career practitioners can encourage East Asian international students to gain on-campus work experience, connect with people in the targeted industry, and attend career development training and workshops.

**Acculturation**

Although the *acculturation to American culture* variable was not found to be a strong predictor in the sample for this study, it had a small and unique contribution in explaining the variance of career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students. It is noteworthy to discuss how counselors and career practitioners can benefit from understanding these findings with respect to the association between acculturation to American culture and career decision self-efficacy. The findings of the current study are congruent with previous studies that East Asian international students who are more acculturated to American culture may have more confidence in their ability of completing career decision-related tasks.

As such, it might be useful for counselors and other career practitioners to assess where East Asian international students are in the process of acculturation into American culture. Specifically, this is to assess whether their needs to connect with American culture are being met. If the student’s needs are not being met and they also express the needs to expand their connection, counselors and other career practitioners can assist them in exploring potential strategies to foster their cultural engagement (Du & Wei, 2015; In, 2014). These strategies might include attending various English-speaking
events and activities, becoming a member of a student’s association, and getting a job on campus. In addition, counselors and other career practitioners may also want to discuss the influence of East Asian international students’ acculturation process on their career development in the United States as they navigate the process of adapting to a new culture.

Given the fact that East Asian international students are mostly from collectivist cultures, individuals in collectivist cultures tend to value connectedness and social harmony, to have respect for authority and elders, and to place trust in group decisions (Pope, 1999; Pope et al., 1998). Previous studies also suggest that, with appropriate cultural transformations, the nature of group career counseling can potentially work well with group-oriented Asian (Pope, 1999). Group-oriented cultures often value group survival goals, support conforming to authority, and encourage individuals to connect with other people (Das & Kemp, 1997; Pope, 1999; Sue & Sue, 1991). As such, counselors and other career practitioners can consider building career development support groups specifically for East Asian international students. Meanwhile, counselors and career practitioners can also play an essential role in assisting these international student groups. More importantly, similar backgrounds and experiences allow group members to connect quickly, share useful information with each other, and grow together. East Asian international students can benefit from the support and connection this type of group provide.

**English Language Proficiency**

Considering that international students who reported challenges of the English language were mostly Asian international students (Young, 2017), counselors and other
career practitioners are encouraged to be more patient and understanding with Chinese, Korean, and Japanese international students as they may have difficulties expressing their thoughts and feelings (Cox & Yamaguchi, 2010; Huang & Brown, 2009). Given that their average score of reading English in the present study was rated the most proficient among four English language domains, the following strategies and techniques can be presented while working with this group: providing background information in written format; writing notes on the board in session; and communicating through emails more often rather than over the phone or via videoconferencing. Moreover, what can be also helpful to East Asian international students is to speak slowly and clearly, listen carefully in order to understand their questions (Lee, 1997), and give space and room for them to talk and ask questions.

Furthermore, the findings also suggest that East Asian international students with higher levels of English language proficiency tend to have higher levels of confidence in the ability to complete career decision-related tasks. To support East Asian international students’ career decision-making process, it is critical to provide English language improvement support services that are particularly designed for this group of students at the university, college, and departmental levels (Andrade, 2006). These international-student-focused language support services may include but are not limited to one-on-one or group tutoring, writing labs, English language corners, English language courses and workshops, international student orientations, resume and cover letter writing workshops, and email writing workshops.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to the present study.
First, all participants were East Asian international students, and English was rarely their native language. All the instruments in this study, however, were written in English. Even though these international students were required to possess an appropriate level of English language proficiency upon entering their programs, the accuracy of understanding the questionnaires could still be a concern. As a result, if participants were not able to fully understand the questions or communicate their responses accurately, this linguistic issue could be a source of error and then would be a threat to the construct validity of the study.

Second, participants were required to self-report their levels of hope, acculturation to both home and American cultures, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy. It could be a challenge for East Asian international students who participated in this study to evaluate the exact quantity and quality of the experiences mentioned above due to the embarrassment of losing face. For example, when considering whether an item such as “prepare a good resume” should be marked “very little confidence” in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy-Short Form (see Appendix E), an East Asian international student may be inclined to select a higher rating such as “moderate confidence” in order to appear they are somewhat capable and to prevent themselves from losing face.

Third, all participants were from Confucianism-influenced societies. An important characteristic of this collectivist culture is to highly value interdependent relationships. In the Confucian culture, an individual tends to seek an interdependent relationship with the environment. Their self-concept can primarily be defined based on their social embeddedness and interdependence with others (Ashman et al., 2006; Brewer & Chen,
As such, East Asian international students tend to align with groups, while devaluing individuation and differentiation (Weisz et al., 1984). In other words, if they can choose, they tend not to be too different with other group members. Participants, therefore, might avoid extreme options in completing the questionnaires. For example, they might not select strongly agree or strongly disagree, even if this was precisely how they felt.

Finally, in this unique time in human history, everyone’s life has undergone drastic changes. Due to the impact of COVID-19, East Asian international students in the United States have been facing various unprecedented challenges. For example, many Chinese international students could not return home due to flight restrictions between the United States and China; East Asian international students’ visa statuses were affected by changing policies during this uncertain time; and East Asian international students might also experience increased mental distress due to COVID-associated racial animus and potential discrimination toward Asian individuals in the United States. To that end, when East Asian international students filled out a research questionnaire, their responses might reflect their current situation under COVID-19. The researcher, therefore, decided to instruct East Asian international students to recall their experiences and complete the questionnaire based on their situation prior to the outbreak in the United States, hoping to collect as much data as possible under a more normal circumstance.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Despite these noted limitations in the current study, this is the first study investigating predictors of career decision self-efficacy for East Asian international students in the United States who are originally from China, South Korea, and Japan. It is
among only a small number of studies that have explored the role of hope in career
decision self-efficacy for international students. The present study raises a few questions
and suggests that more research could be done to better understand career decision self-
efficacy for East Asian international students as they pursue their studies in the United
States.

Career decision self-efficacy has received much research attention over the last
two decades because of its essential role in the career decision-making process and
career interventions (Betz et al., 2005). The career decision self-efficacy construct was
developed in the U.S. cultural context by applying Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive
theory to the career development field. Significant correlations have been found between
career decision self-efficacy and a number of career development constructs such as
vocational identity (Gushue et al., 2006; Robbins, 1985), career decidedness (Betz &
Luzzo, 1996; Robbins, 1985; Taylor & Betz, 1983, Taylor & Popma, 1990), vocational
identity (Robbins, 1985), career maturity (Creed & Patton, 2003; Luzzo, 1992), career
adjustment (Betz & Luzzo, 1996), career exploration behaviors (Blustein, 1989), career
maturity (Patton & Creed, 2001), and career commitment (Chung, 2002). In addition,
Miller and Kerlow-Myers (2009) pointed out that the body of knowledge on career
behavior has been mainly based on white and upper/middle class male populations. That
said, it is unknown how well the findings of the present study can be generalized to other
populations, especially to other international student groups. Considering that the career-
related experiences of other international students might look differently from those of
East Asian international students, an additional inquiry is needed to further explore career
decision self-efficacy in other international student groups.
When examining the role of acculturation, research was found mainly focusing on international students’ acculturation to the host culture other than acculturation to the home culture or both dimensions. The present study is the first study that investigates the association between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy for the East Asian international student group in the United States. The finding that there was no significant relationship between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy in the present study is inconsistent with the findings from a previous study that found a low correlation (Pearson $r = .160, p < .05$) between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy in a sample of Korean undergraduate international students (In, 2014). Additional research, therefore, is needed to clarify the nature of interactions between acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students in the United States.

Notwithstanding abundant literature on English language proficiency in academic and career-related issues for Asian international students, there has been no research directly dealing with the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy in Asian international students. As such, research into clarification of the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy is another important area for future study.

Furthermore, the present study is a correlational research design. The nature of the findings in this study is about the relationships between hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy. It is important to note that, as such, correlation does not prove causation. To this end, research into the causal order of these predictor variables and career decision self-efficacy should be also considered as an
important area for future exploration. More experimental or quasi-experimental research is needed to explore what factors can directly or indirectly improve an international student’s career decision self-efficacy.

**Summary**

The present study investigated the influence of hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency on career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students studying in the United States. In examining this relationship, 167 international students from China, South Korea, or Japan participated in this study. The participants were recruited online and completed measures to assess their levels of hope, acculturation, English language proficiency, and career decision self-efficacy.

This study used a correlational design to measure the relationship between four predictor variables (hope, acculturation to American culture, acculturation to the home culture, and English language proficiency) and an outcome variable (career decision self-efficacy) among East Asian international students in the United States. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and a hierarchical regression analysis were conducted in this study. The present study’s findings indicated that East Asian international students with higher levels of hope, acculturation to American culture, and English language proficiency tend to have higher levels of confidence in completing career decision-related activities. All main predictor variables were found to have significant and positive relationships with career decision self-efficacy except the *acculturation to the home culture* variable. No significant correlation was found between acculturation to the home culture.
culture and career decision self-efficacy among East Asian international students in the sample of the present study.

The results of the present study contain a number of limitations. First, all participants were East Asian international students. English was rarely their native language. The accuracy of understanding the questionnaires, therefore, could be a concern which threatens the construct validity of the study. Second, the participants were required to self-report their experiences, it can be quite challenging to evaluate the exact quantity and quality. Third, East Asian international students are from collectivist societies. This culture supports individuals to align with groups while devaluing individuation and differentiation. As such, East Asian international students might avoid extreme options in completing the questionnaires. Lastly, due to the impact of COVID-19, East Asian international students have been facing a number of unprecedented challenges. Their responses might reflect their situations under COVID-19 when they completed a research questionnaire. East Asian international students, therefore, were instructed to recall their experiences and complete the questionnaire based on their situation prior to the outbreak in the United States, hoping to collect as much data as possible under a more normal circumstance.

Future research directions were also discussed in the present study. Considering that the career-related experiences of other international student groups might not be the same as those of East Asian international students, more research is needed to further explore career decision self-efficacy in other international student groups. In addition, little is known regarding the association of acculturation to the home culture and career decision self-efficacy among international students. Additional research is needed to
clarify the nature of the interactions between these two variables. Similarly, research into the clarification of the relationship between English language proficiency and career decision self-efficacy is another important area for future study due to lack of attention in the literature. Further, more experimental or quasi-experimental research is needed to explore the predictor variables’ causal order and career decision self-efficacy in East Asian international students.

The present study has several important implications for the counselors and career practitioners who work closely with the East Asian international student group. The findings of the present study suggest that East Asian international students can benefit from hope enhancement as their hope may be achieved by the integration of solution-focused, narrative, and cognitive-behavioral interventions due to their alignment with the values in collectivist cultures. When working with East Asian international students, it can be helpful to communicate with them in writing format as much as possible. Their average score of reading in English language was rated the most proficient among four English language domains, it may be easier for East Asian international student to understand the information in writing. It is also critical to provide English language improvement support services that are particularly designed for this group of students at the institutional, college, and departmental levels.

Furthermore, unlike the hope variable and the English language proficiency variable, the acculturation to American culture variable was not found to be a strong predictor in the sample of this study. It only had a small and unique contribution in explaining the variance of career decision self-efficacy. To this end, it may be helpful for counselors and other career practitioners to explore potential strategies to foster their
cultural engagement by encouraging them to attend a variety of English-speaking activities, becoming an active member of a local student’s association, and getting a job on campus. Last but not least, East Asian international students can benefit from engaging in group career counseling or career development support groups to get their career development needs to be met.
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Appendix A

Tables

Table 1

East Asian International Students Enrollment in U.S. College and Universities

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<th>Academic Year</th>
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<td>2016-2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Institute of International Education, 2019
Table 2

*Acculturation Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification with the original culture</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification with the host culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Marginalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Berry, 1980
Table 3

Studies of Hope, Acculturation, and English Language Proficiency in Career Development Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Development Issues</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Acculturation (to the host culture)</th>
<th>ELP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GP/ GCDP*</td>
<td>GUS/ CDUS*</td>
<td>IS/ EAIS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career decision self-efficacy</td>
<td>Sari (+)</td>
<td>Betz (+)</td>
<td>In* (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career exploration behaviors</td>
<td>Hirschi* (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career choice traditionality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived career barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career choice prestige</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development skills</td>
<td>Sung (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development outcomes</td>
<td>Sung (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace creativity</td>
<td>Rego (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job performance</td>
<td>Combs* (+); Luthans* (+, 2005); Peterson (+); Youssef (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>Luthans (+, 2007); Youssef (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GP=general population; GCDP=general culturally divider population; GUS=general university students; CDUS= culturally diverse university students (excluding international students); IS=international students; EAIS=East Asian international students; ELP=English language proficiency; +/- = relationship

Note: Betz et al., 2005; Combs et al, 2010; Flores & O’Brien, 2002; Hirschi et al., 2015; Holloway-Frieson, 2018; In, 2016; Jackson & Neville, 1998; Lin & Betz, 2009; Liu, 2009; Luthans et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2007; Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2017; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Rego et al., 2009; Rivera et al., 2017; Sari & Şahin, 2013; Shih & Brown, 2000; Sung et al., 2012; Tang et al., 1999; Youssef & Luthans, 2007
### Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Main Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>23.99</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation to the Home Culture</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>101.02</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>147.0</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation to American Culture</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>86.79</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>145.0</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Decision Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>89.42</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>125.00</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 167*

*Note a*: Standard error of skewness = .19

*Note b*: Standard error of kurtosis = .33
Table 5

Correlations of Main Study Variables and Covariates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Age</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>28.54</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hope</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>23.99</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Acculturation to the Home Culture</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>101.02</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Acculturation to American Culture</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>86.79</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Career Decision Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>89.43</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01.
Note a: Hope: The Hope Scale (Appendix C)
Note b: Acculturation to the Home Culture: The Acculturation Index Subscale (Appendix D)
Note c: Acculturation to American Culture: The Acculturation Index Subscale (Appendix D)
Note d: English Language Proficiency: based on items (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) from The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B)
Note e: Career Decision Self-Efficacy: The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (Appendix E)
Table 6
Hierarchical Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std Error B</td>
<td>beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>2.691</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>2.396</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.621</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>2.427</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AccUS</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>-.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AccHome</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 167

Note a: Dependent variable=Career decision self-efficacy: The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (Appendix E)
Note b: Age: The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B)
Note c: Hope: The Hope Scale (Appendix C)
Note d: AccUS=Acculturation to American Culture: The Acculturation Index Subscale (Appendix D)
Note e: AccHome=Acculturation to the Home Culture: The Acculturation Index Subscale (Appendix D)
Note f: English=English Language Proficiency: based on items (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) from The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B)
Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What’s your age (in whole years)?
2. What’s your gender? (0 = male, 1 = female, 2 = other, please specify)
3. Are you currently holding an F-1 student visa? (yes, no)
4. What’s your home country? (0 = China, 1 = South Korea, 2 = Japan, 3 = other, please specify)
5. Are you planning to gain work experience in the United States after graduation? (yes, no)
6. What university/institution are you currently attending in the United States (please spell out the full name)?
7. What degree are you currently pursuing? (0 = Bachelor’s, 1 = Master’s, 2 = Doctoral, 3 = other, please specify)
8. What’s your current academic major (please spell out the full name)?
9. How long have you been studying in the United States (in whole months)?
10. How many months of work experience do you have in the United States, including full-time and part-time job (in whole months)?
    How many hours per week, on average, did you work during this time?
11. How many months of work experience do you have in your home country, including full-time and part-time job (in whole months)?
    How many hours per week, on average, did you work during this time?
12. How many times did you visit in-person the career services center at your current university? Please enter zero if you never visited.
13. How would you evaluate the overall career services quality that you have received at your current university? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = good, 4 = very good)

14. How good is your English in terms of **listening**? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = somewhat poor, 4 = acceptable, 5 = somewhat good, 6 = good, 7 = very good)

15. How good is your English in terms of **speaking**? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = somewhat poor, 4 = acceptable, 5 = somewhat good, 6 = good, 7 = very good)

16. How good is your English in terms of **reading**? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = somewhat poor, 4 = acceptable, 5 = somewhat good, 6 = good, 7 = very good)

17. How good is your English in terms of **writing**? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = somewhat poor, 4 = acceptable, 5 = somewhat good, 6 = good, 7 = very good)

18. How good is your English **overall**? (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = somewhat poor, 4 = acceptable, 5 = somewhat good, 6 = good, 7 = very good)

19. How has COVID-19 impacted you in general? ((1 = no impact, 2 = minor impact, 3 = moderate impact, 4 = major impact)
Appendix C

The Hope Scale

Note: Please recall your experiences and fill in the questionnaire according to your situation before the COVID-19 outbreak in your home country.

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Mostly False</td>
<td>Mostly True</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam. (Pathways)
2. I energetically pursue my goals. (Agency)
3. I feel tired most the time. (Filler)
4. There are lots of ways around any problem. (Pathways)
5. I am easily downed in an argument. (Filler)
6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me. (Pathways)
7. I worry about my health. (Filler)
8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem. (Pathways)
9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future. (Agency)
10. I've been pretty successful in life. (Agency)
11. I usually find myself worrying about something. (Filler)
12. I meet the goals that I set for myself. (Agency)
Appendix D

The Acculturation Index

Note: Please recall your experiences and fill in the questionnaire according to your situation before the COVID-19 outbreak in your home country.

Directions: This section is concerned with how you see yourself in relation to other people from your home country and Americans. You are asked to consider two questions about your current lifestyle. Are your experiences and behaviors similar to other people from your home country? Are your experiences and behaviors similar to Americans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Very</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section A: Are your experiences and behaviors similar to other people from your home country?

Enter your response (1,2,3,4,5,6, or 7) in the parentheses. Please respond to all items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>People from your home country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pace of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Materials comfort (standard of living)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recreational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Self-identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Accommodation/residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Communication styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Employment activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Perceptions of people from my country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Perceptions of American people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Political ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Social customs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B: Are your experiences and behaviors similar to Americans?
Enter your response (1,2,3,4,5,6, or 7) in the parentheses. Please respond to all items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pace of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Materials comfort (standard of living)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recreational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Self-identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Accommodation/residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Values</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Friendships</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Communication styles</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Employment activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Perceptions of people from my country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Perceptions of American people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Political ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Social customs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form

Note: Please recall your experiences and fill in the questionnaire according to your situation before the COVID-19 outbreak in your home country.

Directions: For each statement below, please read carefully and indicate how much confidence you have that you could accomplish each of these tasks by providing the appropriate number under the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Confidence at all</td>
<td>Very little Confidence</td>
<td>Moderate Confidence</td>
<td>Much Confidence</td>
<td>Complete Confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much confidence do you have that you could:

1. Find information in the library or on the Internet about occupations you are interested in.
2. Select one major from a list of potential majors that you are considering.
3. Make a list of your goals for the next five years.
4. Determine the steps to take if you are having academic difficulties in your chosen major.
5. Accurately assess your strengths and weaknesses.
6. Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations that you are considering.
7. Determine the steps you need to take to successfully complete your chosen major.
8. Persistently work at your major or career goal even when you get frustrated.
9. Determine what your ideal job would be.
10. Find out employment trends for an occupation over the next ten years.
11. Choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle.
12. Prepare a good resume.
13. Change majors if you did not like your first choice.


15. Find out the average yearly earnings of people working in a specific occupation of your interest.

16. Make a career decision and then not worry whether it was right or wrong.

17. Change occupations if you are not satisfied with the one you enter.

18. Figure out what you want to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.

19. Talk with a person already employed in the field you are interested in.

20. Choose a major or career that will fit your interests.

21. Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your career possibilities.

22. Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live.

23. Find information about graduate or professional schools.

24. Successfully manage the job interview process.

25. Identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice.
Appendix F

Hierarchical Regression Analysis
Normal Probability Plots and Residual Scatter Plots
Appendix G

Letter of Invitation

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to better understand how hope, acculturation, and English language proficiency affect career decision self-efficacy of East Asian international students studying in the United States.

To participate in this study, you must:
(1) be 18 years of age or older,
(2) identify as an East Asian international student in the U.S., currently hold an F-1 visa (including F-1 OPT),
(3) be originally from one of the following countries: China, South Korea, and Japan, and
(4) planning to gain work experience in the United States after graduation.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer questions about your background information, acculturative experiences, and career development. This anonymous survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please note that this survey is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw. Your participation is confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. All your responses will be maintained in confidentiality.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Missouri -St. Louis Institutional Review Board as IRB# 2027087. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Yang Ai at aiy@mail.umsl.edu or my dissertation chair, Dr. Mark Pope at pope@umsl.edu.

Participants who complete the entire survey will be given the opportunity to participate a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift card (10 cards in total). At the end of the survey, please remember to provide your email address that will be used for the drawing and the gift card delivery.

Here is the link of the survey. Thank you so much for your time.

Best regards,
Yang Ai
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Missouri – St. Louis
Appendix H

University of Missouri – St. Louis
Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

August 05, 2020

Principal Investigator: Yang Ai
Department: Online Education

Your IRB Application to project entitled Hope, Acculturation, and English Language Proficiency in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy of East Asian International Students was reviewed and approved by the UMSL Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number 2027087
IRB Review Number 270171
Initial Application Approval Date August 05, 2020
IRB Expiration Date August 05, 2021
Level of Review Exempt
Project Status Active - Exempt

Exempt Categories (Revised Common Rule) 45 CFR 46.104d(2)(i)
45 CFR 46.104d(2)(ii)

Risk Level Minimal Risk

Approved Documents
2nd_dissertation_invitation_letter.docx
2nd_consent_form.doc
2nd_survey.docx

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. Enrollment and study related procedures must remain in compliance with the University of Missouri regulations related to interaction with human participants following guidance at http://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/Compliance/umsl-guidance-covid19-restart-6-25-2020.pdf.
2. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
3. All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation utilizing the Exempt Amendment Form.
4. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date to keep the study active or to close it.
5. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

If you are offering subject payments and would like more information about research participant payments, please click here to view the UM Policy: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/policies/finance/payments_to_research_study_participants

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the UMSL IRB Office at 314-516-5972 or email to irb@umsl.edu.

Thank you,
UMSL Institutional Review Board